MEDIA ADVISORY

Privacy is still a local decision. Voters urged to question Board candidates.

Palatine, IL – While many voters may think the debate over children’s privacy in schools will be settled by the Supreme Court or in Springfield, local school officials can still act on their own to violate student privacy—even though neither federal nor state law currently dictates such actions. It is crucial that every voter find out if their local candidates support or oppose student privacy, and vote accordingly.

D211 Parents for Privacy, a grassroots group of parents and community members, is pleased to announce its support for Township High School District 211 Board of Education candidates Ralph Bonatz, Katherine Jee Young David and Jean Forrest in the April 4th election. In addition to being highly qualified and well-versed on the many D211 issues, these non-incumbents have pledged to restore basic privacy to all students in the private spaces of our high schools if elected, while providing a compassionate solution to children struggling with their gender identity.

In the fall of 2015, our shocked community discovered opposite sex access to the girls’ locker room at Fremd High School was being considered. A demand had been made resulting in the Department of Education and Department of Justice threatening to withhold funds designated for low-income and special needs students. Against overwhelming public opposition, in December of 2015, five of the seven board members voted in favor of locker room access where female students would be viewed unclad.

“Five Board members, including the two who are up for re-election, refused to protect the dignity and well-being of the girls, even after hearing from some of these girls who had been belittled and bullied. They refused to honor the dignity of all children; instead telling the girls who bravely voiced concern that their well-being didn’t matter,” said Vicki Wilson, Parents for Privacy spokesperson. Previously, privacy had been afforded to all students in district locker rooms with safe and private accommodations for students with different requests. The Bonatz, David, Forrest slate support returning to a policy respecting modesty for all students.

Another decision made in 2016, again without parental input and outside of public view in a Board meeting, granted opposite-sex access to a locker room at Hoffman Estates High School. Nationally, the demands for access have incredulously moved to overnight school field trips where female and male students are assigned to the same hotel rooms without notification to parents.

These practices of putting children of the opposite sex together in intimate spaces have serious unintended consequences for vulnerable children with a sexual abuse history. Statistics show 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before the age of 18. For them, these practices are especially dangerous as they can experience flashbacks and serious emotional and psychological distress when exposed to the opposite sex in an intimate space.

“Most parents expect when they send their children to school, they will be using locker rooms where they won’t see or be seen by the opposite sex. Schools have a duty to protect the privacy, dignity, and well-being of all students,” said Vicki Wilson. Ralph Bonatz, Katherine David, and Jean Forrest are excellent candidates by any measure and D211 Parents for Privacy is very pleased to endorse them. They encourage the community to visit the candidates’ website at www.vote211bdf.com and to follow this issue on the D211 Parents for Privacy Facebook page.

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