
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL]Concerns/Questions

Date: Tuesday, November 9, 2021 at 4:43:14 PM Central Standard Time

From: Vinson, David

To: Mrs. Randi Jackson

CC: Tracy, Rhonda, Cunningham, April

Mrs. Jackson,

We appreciate you providing your thoughts and questions in advance. This is very helpful and allowed for adequate preparation for tomorrow's meeting. We also wanted to take the opportunity to provide answers to your questions and provide additional information that will hopefully alleviate some of your concerns. Of course, if questions remain or if clarification is needed, we are more than happy to discuss tomorrow morning.

Does the district have current or potential litigation or a settlement discussion required to be consulted with legal counsel at every monthly board meeting? If not, why is it listed as an exemption to the Texas Open Meetings Act requirements for consultation with legal counsel to be done in a public meeting/forum/workshops? If so, understood.

No. The reasoning for including it for every meeting is so that we may consult with legal counsel should the need arise. However, yes, there are some months in which we need to consult with counsel. More about this can be found in the Texas Open Meetings Act Handbook.

Was there any discussion of the selection of the independent contractor for the program "Inversity" done during ANY closed session, walking quorum or deliberation done through a series of communications (referenced in Texas Senate Bill 1640 revision of section 551.143)?

No.

Can you define and distinguish the differences between the exemptions of "Personnel" and "Additional Personnel/Additional Personnel Units" used for going into closed session per the Agenda for the August, September and October Regular Session meetings?

Yes — Personnel may include, but is not limited to any issue, concern or need for discussion regarding a Wylie ISD employee. Additional Personnel/Additional Personnel Units, relates to a request to trustees for additional teachers and or staff. Due to our fast growth, this is often needed and or requested several times per year in Wylie ISD.

Can you assist me in understanding if the meeting called in order to approve the Virtual Vikings program with Pearson EMS (a program I have absolutely no problem with, and think is a good alternative for parents still concerned with health measures, etc) was specifically called as an "Emergency Meeting"? If so, what was the specific reasoning given for the "Emergency" part of that moniker.

This was not an emergency meeting. The board meeting regarding the Pearson EMS program was a special called meeting. The meeting and [agenda](#) were posted in advance in the same manner other board meetings are posted. The meeting's timing was determined by the need to engage Pearson prior to a regularly scheduled meeting.

With the understanding that with the district growing as it is, can you provide assurances that the exemption for closed session for the same agenda items under "Real Estate" are covered under the TOMA for deliberation about Real Property, and no other real estate related items? I am not as familiar with the terms of the exemptions, nor definitions as to what type of real estate discussion qualifies for this exemption, but I would like to simply get assurances anything with regard to real estate that is supposed to be discussed in public meetings, is. (I was pleased with the discussions in the October meetings in regard to considerations on future expansion and the effects on the district as well as the community as a whole.)

Absolutely. No real estate transactions have been or will take place without being placed on the board agenda as an item for consideration that includes the details of the transaction for the public to see, in advance.

Regarding discussions in the October meeting. That was about demography planning, not real estate. This is a report provided annually (typically) to guide our plan for zoning and future construction if needed.

Please share the details of the TEA investigation of the "cartoon controversy". I understand any specific disciplinary action, if any, taken on the teacher in question cannot be divulged, but there are many other factors of the investigation aside from specific disciplinary measures that have not been made public. If the details are to remain classified, please provide a reason as to why.

There is no additional information to release concerning the cartoon issue. The Texas Education Agency reviewed the district's response and closed the case.

If there is an assertion/accusation with *any* potential legitimacy (ie; a claim of signing an online petition) of a teacher intending to willfully violate district policy/state law by surreptitiously or openly teaching Critical Race Theory or any similarly anti-American ideologies, what action, if any, will the district take? If no action will be taken (ie; opening an investigation, etc) why not?

Our teachers are expected and required to teach the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) and follow scope and sequence. CRT has not, is not and will not be taught, practiced nor discussed in Wylie ISD. However, there is no indication that any Wylie ISD teacher is doing anything other than teaching the TEKS and following scope and sequence. If there is evidence of a teacher doing otherwise, please let us know immediately. It is our policy to follow state education laws, and this includes making sure our staff is aware of the law's provisions and the consequences for failing to follow curriculum guidelines.

What is the basis for the legal advise to elected trustees not to answer questions or give their personal opinion on matters that have not been placed on the agenda? (A claim of "I'm conservative!" means little when they won't take a stance on an issue or answer a question posed to them as a person.)

Our district's legal counsel has never advised the board that they cannot comment on issues. The board's policy has been to direct inquiries to those who can best provide a factual answer or otherwise address the issue and to follow board policies and the law regarding confidential information.

When an employee of WISD reports the abuse of a Special Education student and the employee is subsequently transferred from the school where the alleged abuse

occurred, doesn't this seem odd to you? I understand the need to keep employee disciplinary actions confidential, but if the parent of the student involved wants information, is there any way the district can provide details (even if simply reasons provided in regard to the transfer) in order to satisfy the parent, as well as all of our concern that someone IS looking out for our children and willing to report abuses (God forbid) if they do occur?

While we cannot comment on personnel matters, we can assure you that the safety and security of students is our top priority. Parents trust us with their children, and we are committed to their safety and wellbeing while they are in our care. We move staff, especially special education employees to different campuses often based on need. Please know, the district also trains staff on child abuse annually, and we follow all the reporting protocols. **Per the PPRA, we, as parents, have a right to review instructional material provided by a third party. The proposed D&I program's vendor program "Inversity" instructional material has yet to be provided for review. The PPRA states specific things (surveys, instructional material, etc) that we are entitled to review, but it also states the list of things subject to review is "not limited to" those specified earlier. This gives you (the "district") some room to decide. If you decide against allowing us, as the parents, to review the instructional material you wish to approve for the distribution to our children, that is unacceptable.**

The PPRA allows a Wylie ISD parent the right to inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for their Wylie ISD student.

As for Inversity, there is zero instructional material to review or inspect. Wylie ISD has not purchased any instructional materials for Inversity nor has the district signed a contract with Inversity. As we have shared before, we do not plan to provide D&I-related curriculum to students.

What month can we expect to celebrate European Heritage month?

That would be a question for the State Board of Education, who approves curriculum standards and the Texas Education Agency who writes the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.

Why were some students within the district asked their preferred pronouns? If this action by a teacher or any other form of employee was done in direct violation of district policy, or done without the knowledge or approval of the district, what, if any, action was taken to rectify the lack of policy preventing this, or a simple verification that it was addressed with the offending teacher/employee?

It is not the district's policy or practice to solicit information from students regarding preferred pronouns. We cannot comment on personnel matters, however, Board Policy DGA (LOCAL), prohibits activities that result in any political or social pressure being placed on students, parents, or staff.

What is the specific reason you will not meet with multiple parents at once? Even via zoom? It appears, from the outside, as if there is a concerted effort to discourage any type of organizing in order to achieve results or even *answers* from the administration/board. Please add an agenda item to the next meeting addressing adding a mechanism by which a group or organization may petition the administration and/or the board for communication.

Great question, I understand and appreciate your perspective. I have tried this before. It was not effective for the entire group. In my past experience, one person would begin with questions and then it would turn into a less than productive discussion. I admit, meeting with people individually takes more time. However, the more quiet people of the group have a better chance to be heard and their perspectives considered in a one-on-one manner.

Why did the administration as well as the board "take a knee" at the Wylie HS graduation ceremony in 2020? According to the blog post from June 9th 2020, you, Dr. Vinson, claimed it was "in solidarity to honor those facing racial inequality within this country." I have heard claims that it was also in honor of all those that lost their lives during the last year (including Covid). If this was, in fact, the case, why take a knee? In years past and for as long as I have observed any remembrance, a simple moment of silence- perhaps accompanied by a bowed head- was the observational action taken in these circumstances. This, then, is a change in behavior. What precipitated this change in behavior? I can only think of the trend started by Mr. Kaepernick in protest to police brutality- a narrative that is not factually supported by the statistics itself- and rose to national popularity in 2020 during the protests and riots when we saw celebrities, community and national leaders as well as sources of authority (police chiefs, etc) taking a knee "in solidarity" with those pushing this racist and factually inaccurate narrative. If this was, the case with you, your administration and the board members, please just own up to it.

Everyone in attendance was asked to join with their thoughts and prayers for "those who have lost loved ones due to the coronavirus and for our fellow Americans who have lost their lives to civil injustice." It had nothing to do with the National Anthem. You can view the graduation ceremony [here](#). This was an all-encompassing moment, with law-enforcement.

Was there ANY discussion or deliberation at all between the Board President, and either you, or any of the other board members in regard to adjusting the speaking time for the public? If so, consider this my written request that that information/discussion/deliberation be made public. (Legal consultation is only a legitimate exemption for closed session under the TOMA if it is in regard to pending or current litigation or a settlement.)

Deliberation or discussion by the Board is not necessary to adjust public forum allotment time. The presiding officer has the authority to make adjustments to the public forum portion of the meeting. This is stated in BED(LOCAL) and is in compliance with state law.

To be honest, it was never a concern. We have received a very similar question from a community member a few months ago, and below is some of what we shared with the community member:

- BED(LEGAL) was updated to ensure compliance with House Bill 2840, which went into effect Sept. 1, 2019. As a reminder, legal policies are not adopted by the Board, only local policies.
- The result of HB 2840? Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code was amended with the addition of Section 551.007. Section 551.007(c) states, "A governmental body may adopt reasonable rules regarding the public's right to address the body under this section, including rules that limit the total amount of time that a member of the public may address the body on a given item."
- BED(LOCAL) was revised by TASB policy consultants to incorporate the new

requirements for public comment from HB 2840.

- o More specifically, the provisions on procedures and meeting management for BED(LOCAL) provide a Board's presiding officer flexibility in implementing the new requirements from HB 2840.

What, if anything is being done about ensuring books of a concerning nature are not available in our Wylie ISD school libraries? A list of offending titles is being put together if you (the district) have not started one already. I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not saying these books should not exist. I am not a proponent of book banning or the like. If they are in the public library I personally feel they perhaps should be under an age restriction, but that's fine. The public library is not the school system. These types of books do NOT belong in our schools! (I understand you mentioned something *is* being done or discussed, etc, on the issue, but *what?* This is the kind of thing that transparency can help! Let us know what you are doing so we can support you on these kinds of things!)

Our district is home to several hundred thousand books. While our school librarians routinely review books and remove those that no longer meet collection standards, due to the vast array of literature, it is impossible for staff to know the content of each book. However, any literature that is available to students must be age and grade-level-appropriate and should be suitable for an educational setting. If a parent is aware of inappropriate literature, we ask that they bring it to our attention. Campus staff will review books to see if they meet district guidelines. If a parent chooses to challenge an instructional resource, they are encouraged to follow Board Policy EF (LOCAL), which outlines the process for the reconsideration of instructional resources. More information can be found in the FAQ section of our Library Media Services [webpage](#).

Who was responsible for censoring me during my speech to the board during September's board meeting live stream? During previous speaker's turns, the framing of the shot for the live stream toward the audience, showing the face of the speaker, had the speaker in the center or slightly to the right. When it was my turn, the framing changed and I was in the left of the frame, cutting off the ability of the live streaming audience to see my visuals. That time was mine and I was censored. I would like to know who was responsible for that, and would like to know what, if any, action will be taken to ensure similar violations will not happen in the future.

The camera angle was changed prior to your allotted time at the podium due to disruptive behavior in the audience. The adjustment continued throughout the rest of the speakers. If you watch the speaker prior to you (approximately 39:00 in) and speaker after you (approximately 45:22 in), the camera angle is the same.

We look forward to meeting with you tomorrow.

David Vinson, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Wylie Independent School District
972-429-3000
www.wylieisd.net

From: Mrs. Randi Jackson [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 2, 2021 7:44 PM
To: Vinson, David <David.Vinson@wylieisd.net>
Cc: Tracy, Rhonda <Rhonda.Tracy@wylieisd.net>; Cunningham, April <April.Cunningham@wylieisd.net>
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Concerns/Questions

Dr. Vinson,

I want to start off by saying thank you for taking the time to go over the questions and concerns I have as a parent. I understand there is so much more involved in your job of administering this district than what we see on the public face of it. Thank you for your dedication to your work, our students, and the district employees.

With that being said, I have a plethora of concerns.

The first one I'd like to bring forth, if addressed satisfactorily, could resolve a number of the others with relative ease.

Transparency.

I understand that you have laws, policies and regulations of varying natures and from varying authorities that govern what you are allowed to divulge and discuss with the public. I also understand that in order to protect certain aspects of "the way things are done" here in Wylie, operating within a "gray" area makes possible some things I personally would approve of. (I was president of my high school's FCA, for example; and I would not want to create a situation or environment within the district of Wylie that would prohibit groups or clubs like that to be able to exist.)

I do not claim to understand everything, however. This is a large part of why I have requested a meeting with you. This is a large part of why there is a feeling, in general, that the district is less than transparent with the public. We do not know all the regulations and policies and laws governing your job as well as the board's authority to take action on, discuss and/or divulge different types of information.

(As a side note, I think the district would be MUCH better off spending \$168,000 on an educational campaign for the public and parents as to what the specific legal and policy-driven capabilities the board and the superintendent have in order to get us all on the same page, than a Diversity and Inclusion program... but we'll get to that...)

Hopefully I have made clear my intent is not to accomplish anything other than furthering an understanding between your administration, the board, and the public as to what you ("the school district") are capable of within the confines of the law, regulatory authorities and policy dictates, and what, if anything, is being done about a number of issues of public concern.

I will itemize my remaining concerns and questions for readability and ease of access:

- Does the district have current or potential litigation or a settlement discussion required to be consulted with legal counsel at every monthly board meeting? If not, why is it listed as an exemption to the Texas Open Meetings Act requirements for consultation with legal counsel to be done in a public meeting/forum/workshops? If so, understood.
- Was there any discussion of the selection of the independent contractor for the program "Inversity" done during ANY closed session, walking quorum or deliberation done through a series of

communications (referenced in Texas Senate Bill 1640 revision of section 551.143)?

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- Please share the details of the TEA investigation of the "cartoon controversy". I understand any specific disciplinary action, if any, taken on the teacher in question cannot be divulged, but there are many other factors of the investigation aside from specific disciplinary measures that have not been made public. If the details are to remain classified, please provide a reason as to why.
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- What is the basis for the legal advise to elected trustees not to answer questions or give their personal opinion on matters that have not been placed on the agenda? (A claim of "I'm conservative!" means little when they won't take a stance on an issue or answer a question posed to them as a person.)
- When an employee of WISD reports the abuse of a Special Education student and the employee is subsequently transferred from the school where the alleged abuse occurred, doesn't this seem odd to you? I understand the need to keep employee disciplinary actions confidential, but if the parent of the student involved wants information, is there any way the district can provide details (even if simply reasons provided in regard to the transfer) in order to satisfy the parent, as well as all of our concern that someone IS looking out for our children and willing to report abuses (God forbid) if they do occur?
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- What month can we expect to celebrate European Heritage month?
- Why were some students within the district asked their preferred pronouns? If this action by a teacher or any other form of employee was done in direct violation of district policy, or done without the knowledge or approval of the district, what, if any, action was taken to rectify the lack of policy preventing this, or a simple verification that it was addressed with the offending teacher/employee?
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- Was there ANY discussion or deliberation at all between the Board President, and either you, or any of the other board members in regard to adjusting the speaking time for the public? If so, consider this my written request that that information/discussion/deliberation be made public. (Legal consultation is only a legitimate exemption for closed session under the TOMA if it is in regard to pending or current litigation or a settlement.)
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Thank you for taking the time to look into all these concerns and questions for me. I look forward to our meeting on November 10th, at 8am.

Sincerely,

-Mrs. Jackson-