

WILL SECURES PUBLIC RECORDS VICTORY IN EAU CLAIRE SCHOOL DISTRICT, VOWS TO HOLD SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACCOUNTABLE WHEN PARENTS ARE IGNORED

Kiel spends months and even years

Sounds just like Kiel with Dr. Ebert getting paid to be the custodian of records

FOR WEEKS, THE EAU CLAIRE DISTRICT DISREGARDED THE RIGHTS OF PARENTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

The News: The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) and its client have received a completed open records request from the Eau Claire Area School District, securing an important victory for open records and transparency. **The school district spent weeks concealing the information** and chose to provide it the day before an August 11th court appearance triggered by our lawsuit.

The Timeline of Events: On the morning of June 5th, 2023, the second-to-last day of the school year, a scripted statement discussing an educator's gender transition was read aloud to middle-school students and other classes across the district. **Parents were not notified this was happening, nor provided any information ahead of time.**

After parents in the school district requested a copy of the scripted statement, the school declined to provide it, with one district employee stating, "the script I read on Monday needed to be a verbal presentation only and was not to be shared electronically."

This response from the District prompted open records requests from WILL client Leah Buchman and WILL. The District declined to comply with the open records requests on June 12th and July 7th, respectively, citing an "investigation" into the matter.

After WILL filed a lawsuit on July 25th, an initial court appearance was scheduled for August 11th. The afternoon prior, on August 10th, the school district complied with the open records request stating that its investigation was complete.

The Quotes: WILL Associate Counsel, Cory Brewer, stated, "Every public school district has an obligation to comply with open records laws, but the Eau Claire Area School District acted like it was an exception. WILL is voluntarily dismissing our lawsuit since the documents requested have been provided, but from the beginning of this process **the school district disregarded applicable laws and rights of parents in the district.**"

Eau Claire parent and WILL Client, Leah Buchman, stated, "Parents shouldn't have to go to court to get answers from their school district. Unfortunately for parents, the school chose to initially conceal this information from parents, delay its release for weeks due to an 'investigation' and frankly act like they were above the law. I would hope going forward the school district acts as a partner with parents to foster a positive and collaborative learning environment at the benefit of our whole community."

Public Record Now Available: The point of our lawsuit was to establish that school districts have an obligation to be transparent with parents and community members. If parents, citizens, the press or others are interested in seeing these documents, they can make a request to the District. WILL is free to provide them to third parties but will not perform the school district's legal obligation to be transparent and to produce public records for the public.

HELP US PROTECT PARENTS' RIGHTS!

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VIA EMAIL

May 24, 2024

Re: **Matt Piper Record Requests**

I represent Matt Piper regarding several record requests he has made to the Kiel School District that have gone unfulfilled. I am writing to insist that you meet your obligations under the law by providing him these records and charging him no more than those fees allowed by law.

CONCLUSION

Kiel Area School District has been blatantly and repeatedly violating the Open Records Law. We are providing you this opportunity to correct your mistakes and produce the records Mr. Piper is lawfully entitled to. Should litigation become necessary, he would seek punitive damages against the district and the officials who failed to fulfill their legal obligations, as well as attorney fees and statutory damages.

I look forward to hearing back from you. Please let me know if you have any questions or I can clarify any of these issues.

Sincerely,

Tom Kamenick