

Public Comments 4/21/2020 School Board Meeting

Comment #1(Randy Bertrand): Agenda Item Number or Topic: 20.01 "Policy 217"

Comment:

Today is the day. Today, you have the opportunity to vote to include "gender identity" in policy 217. Before you do this, I'd like to recap the past 6 months.

Back in November I shared my son Elliott's story of discrimination and bullying from a teacher at his high school prompting him to change schools. Then in December, I made a plea to the Board only to be met with a verbal attack from another community member. Let's not forget how my son was called "mentally ill" and "a confused girl" while the Board members did nothing to protect him from this assault. Next was January where members of the community heard my son's story and decided to address the Board during public comment and make similar pleas. Oh, and in January, that same community member who attacked my son threatened the Board, using the words "Don't you Dare..." Next was February where public comment on the inclusion of "gender identity" into policy 217 was made clear with somewhere in the area of 20-30 community members echoing my petition. Some kids poured their hearts out sharing their stories and you did nothing but thank them for their comment. March was a virtual meeting so there isn't much to reflect on there. This brings us to today. Finally, after 6 months you get a chance to vote on this policy.

In this debate and vote, do not lose focus that my son was the victim of bullying by a teacher and my family was subjected to verbal tirades while you looked on from your seats. Do not forget your duty to protect kids, even those whose choices you may disagree with. The judgement of them is not yours to render, but your duty is to protect them. Protect them you must. The most vulnerable ones. The one's who are often the subject of joke punchlines and public ridicule. Affirm to this community that you are 100% for all kids and not just the ones who look, talk, act, believe and identify in ways you agree with. Be a human and protect transgender kid's rights to a free public education absent of discrimination. Vote to include "gender identity" in policy 217.

I would like e-mail follow up from each Board member explaining why you voted the way you did.

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Comment #2 (Jennifer Bertrand): Agenda Item Number or Topic: 20.01 "Policy 217"

Comment:

Over the last 6 months you have all been presented with a multitude of information from different resources, some credible and some not so credible, from members of our community. I sincerely hope that you have all given this information the attention it deserves. I won't be rehashing any of that tonight.

Instead, lets put all that aside. My question to you this evening is this: Why is it so hard to do the HUMANE thing and add 2 simple words to Policy 217, to bring Flagler County up to the standards of the majority of counties in the state of Florida, to treat ALL students in our county with the respect they deserve, as human beings?

It amazes me daily that so many of the kids within our schools are so accepting of their friends and classmates for who they are, yet the very people ELECTED to protect them won't do just that. You all heard stories, firsthand from several students who have been bullied for being who they are. Those students showed such incredible bravery and poured out their hearts to you to show you how much this policy change means to them and nothing was done for these students. No compassion shown, just a "thank you for your remarks".

That shows me as a parent, that maybe...just maybe, this board's main concerns lie not with the students but elsewhere. By all means, please address the issues of bullying, which my family has also endured, and even by a member of this very board in our presence, and nothing was done. I'll be addressing that particular issue once this one has been voted on.

If you vote against adding those 2 simple words...GENDER IDENTITY...to Policy 217, we're prepared. We'll be disappointed, but we're not going away. We'll continue to fight BECAUSE EVERY SINGLE CHILD MATTERS. It's a shame not everyone in our community believes that.

Please follow up with how you voted and why in an e-mail.

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Comment #3(Kristin Dunham): Agenda Item Number or Topic: 20.01 "Policy 217"

Comment:

I know you all have been given ample statistics, actual facts, and heard opinions across the board. I would like to add my personal standpoint on this incredibly sensitive topic.

I have a two sons. I did not give birth to two males. I gave birth to one male, a 2018 graduate of FPC. I also gave birth to a female, who, since late last year, identifies as a male. I am a proud, fearful, grateful, humble, fierce mother of a female to male transgender 14 year old son, who once attended Flagler County Schools but is now currently enrolled in FLVS, due to personal reasons. I am here, imploring the school board to specifically word transgender students safety. Our children deserve it. My son will eventually be returning to FPC. He left as a female. He will be returning as a male. He is one of a number of incredibly brave kids in Flagler. Braver than any one of us can ever be.

He deserves it.

She deserves it.

THEY DESERVE IT.

Thank you for your time.

Comment #4(Abbey Cooke): Approval of changes to policy 217

Comment:

Good afternoon. I must take a moment away from mourning the loss of a current student in order to leave this public comment. That fact alone is despicable to me. This issue has been put before the board since NOVEMBER. The board has officially known this was an issue in our county for over six months and has not acted. Your inaction is inexcusable. The facts are that this may have just come before you in November, but this has been an issue in Flagler Schools long before that. Why, at the workshop, where the changes to policy 217 not indicative of what a majority of the public, YOUR CONSTITUENTS, have asked for. The facts are simple, more of the people that have emailed and made public comments have asked for something so simple it is insane that it is not being done. Your job, as elected members of a school board is to represent your constituents. It is time to do that. I will not plead as a teacher or a parent, doing that fell on deaf ears. I will say, as a VOTER, do what you have been elected to do...listen and represent the voters. Add gender identity and/gender expression to policy 217. You have voters to answer to, and we are listening to what you say. Thank you.

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Comment #5(Nicole Graves): 20.01

Comment:

Petition email to be sent separately, there are 145 unique supporters with the majority from Flagler County. When we look at adding ", and gender identity" to this statement we are not "indoctrinating" our youth in schools. We are helping to ensure a safe place of learning and broadning the scope of the word "all" in the same way we already list preganacy or marriage. FCPS should not yeild to a "professional troll" who has no children in FCPS and had to solicitate supporters from outside the county and utilize fear mongering and distorted facts in attempts to persuade (obviosuly by some of the board reactions successfully so) and bully children repeatedly. The board needs to enusre the protection of all it services. If it cannot bring itself to include ", and gender identity" then it should revise the whole statement "No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices conducted by this School District, except as provided by law" and exclude all the specifics that it already has deamed necessary to list.

Comment #6(Angela Raimondo): Policy 217

Comment:

If someone told you that you could insert subjective worldviews into your job, which is protecting and providing a safe and educational environment for ALL students, they were wrong. Protecting all students, including ones with different gender identities than what you may have been taught when you were 8, is your job. Not separating church and state, and entertaining someone hell-bent on inserting her dangerous and pseudoscientific views into a public school system is not your job. Please consider adding those three words, "and gender identity," to this policy. We want to get back to issues that will further our district and put us on the map as an A district, coupled with one that is inclusive to all students. Trust me, if you are tired of hearing about this, it is more tiring living it for those that feel disrespected by a place that is supposed to be the safest for them.

Comment #7(Jen Ziegler): School policies

Comment:

I want to see gender identity added to the list of protected classes. It's our job as the adults to help kids feel safe ALL kids!!! Calling someone male or female and a chosen name should be no question. It's a new age we need to progress in protecting everyone's rights not just the ones we agree with!!

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Comment #8(Srinivas Moluguri): Dual Enrollment Students

Comment:

Dear School Board, Sorry I was late in writing at about 3-00PM APRIL 21st 2020 for HIGH School students who are taking dual enrollment classes were limited to take only 2 online classes during summer despite of covid 19 situation(which made students go online for all the classes.) as per the agreement between school board and DSC. Can this agreement turned off(waived) so Kids can take all semister classes upto 16 credits like fall and spring semesters...the guidance counselors at FPC and DSC can share more details regarding this. that would be wonderful!!!
Thanks!