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Parents outraged at Round Rock School District's 'Don't tell parents' policy

Covert directive to withhold student sexual orientation and pronoun information from parents is drawing loud protest from the community

ROUND ROCK, Texas — Round Rock ISD Counselor **Tara Strain** broke ranks Thursday to speak out against her district's administration and legal department for misleading the public about a directive that has had parents and taxpayers furious since January.

That directive: Specific instruction to teachers and counselors to **withhold information from the parents of children who identify as a different gender or sexual orientation at school than they do at home.**

In January, Round Rock ISD came under significant controversy on numerous fronts — one of which involved a school policy training telling teachers to not disclose the transgender identity of students to the parents of the student ([read more](#)). Round Rock ISD responded to the public's reactions with the statement “Our district's practice is to

include parents in their child's education, this slide was not a district prepared training [sic].”

Strain said Thursday during the RRISD board meeting that although it was not a district prepared training, "We try to include the parents in their child's education. We actually were advised to not tell parents about their child's preferred names and pronouns.”

“... We were also informed that if we believed a parent's or guardian's unwillingness to use their child's preferred name and pronouns is causing 'harm to the child,' as mandated reporters, we can contact CPS [Child Protective Services],” she added ([watch video](#)).

“This isn't the first time RRISD Board of Trustees and its leadership has been caught up in misrepresentation of the facts”, said **Robert Lesieur**, co-founder of parent group Focus On Education, “but is part of a pattern of behavior.” The following statement may be attributed to Lesieur:

*“Four of the seven board members — Trustees **Amber Feller, Tiffanie Harrison, Amy Weir, and Cory Vessa** — have repeatedly concealed information pertaining to the hiring, investigation, and subsequent reinstatement of superintendent Dr. Hafeedh Azaiez, who is the subject of a permanent restraining order for alleged family violence. The reinstatement was based on the false premise, as suggested by the superintendent's attorney and taken at face value by a majority of the board, that the Travis County Sheriff's Office had closed the investigation. That office says otherwise.*

The district routinely stonewalls requests for information by the community ensconced in the Texas Public Information Act and engages in process abuse in their appeals to the Texas Attorney General's office for permission to withhold or redact information. This is not a sign of transparency.

School boards and district administration and staff have a duty to include parents in the educational goals and well-being of their children. As duly elected representatives, they are obligated to put the best interests of the community first. The pattern of behavior by this school board in these matters is fraught with scandal and a lack of transparency that is alarming. Coupled with significant declines in enrollment, the actions of this board have far ranging implications for the reputation and desirability of the community as a whole, affecting not just parents, children and taxpayers, but the businesses that underpin it as well.

This November, we must elect Round Rock ISD board members with more integrity."

Just two days before this bombshell revelation, Texas Attorney General **Ken Paxton** issued an opinion ([KP-0406](#)) stating "Texas and federal law mandate that parents have the right to access all educational information about their children, which includes medical or health information."

"[...] Far from creating a partnership among parents, educators, and administrators regarding a child's education, efforts to withhold health or medical information about their child relegate parents to a subordinate status, which violates the parents' constitutional rights. Limiting parents' access to information in this way impairs their ability to 'actively participate' in their child's education, contrary to parents' fundamental rights and state law. See TEX. EDUC. CODE § 26.001(a)."

Focus on Education is a parent-led, 100% volunteer-driven movement to move Round Rock schools away from divisive politics and back to the basics of education. For more information visit FocusOnEducationInRRISD.org.

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