

Enough

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Still disagrees

"A senior member of administration suggested to me that we 'turn down the volume' on my concerns," Mergener said. "He went on to say that it is polarizing the community, and these issues are best dealt with behind closed doors. I could not disagree more. The community deserves to know what is transpiring in our schools, and what action or inaction is being taken. I believe in accountable and responsible behavior on the part of all."

Mergener — who filed but quickly withdrew his candidacy in the June school board election — said original efforts (in late March and early April) to discuss his concerns at a public meeting were ignored by board members.

Determined to be heard, he said he will bring individual issues to the board over the next several sessions, at the Lewis School Administrative Center.

"Everyone is entitled to request a brief audience each meeting, so I will return next meeting to address one of my issues," Mergener continued. "And then the following meeting I will address another, and at the next meeting yet another, until my voice has been heard, and people recognize that while we live in a wonderful community, there is much work to be done in holding people accountable and responsible for their behavior, and that our children will be treated with the respect and human dignity they deserve."

Trustees Cathy Webb and Linda Enberg also defended the board and district administration for how they addressed Mergener's myriad concerns.

"You made a statement that our administration is either incapable or disinterested (in addressing) your concerns," said Webb to Mergener. "Quite honestly, Mr. Mergener, you're incapable and disinterested in accepting the administration's response. ... Quite simply, I think you can't let go."

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—School trustee

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During their comments toward Mergener, Webb and Enberg referred to an April meeting in which Mergener met with FHS Principal John Barrett and central office administrators.

During that meeting, according to Enberg, a list of four specific action plans was apparently agreed upon, including provisions to talk to new teachers and

remind existing staffers about their language and behavior in the classroom and to at least consider Mergener's request for the implementation of a stringent teacher code of conduct.

"I thought there was a very big agreement" at that meeting, Enberg noted.

Time to stop

Webb asked Mergener to consider one of his own statements. "In your words, Mr. Mergener, children need to be treated with the respect and dignity they

deserve," Webb said. "(But) we just had four students sit through a very boring board meeting for three hours, to passionately tell us how supportive they are of their teachers and how they want this to result in a positive outcome. We just had these four students ask you to stop."

Those students included Brouillette's daughter, Catherine, a junior at Farmington High and a good friend and classmate of Mergener's daughter, Lindsey. Also speaking were senior Matt Gwynn and junior John Sloan, III, while senior Patti Wheeler read a letter she wrote, which summed up the thoughts of some other students.

"The teachers at this school care so much about each and every student that they will go out of their way to do anything that they can to help," Wheeler said. "They are great people and great teachers. ... The people

being targeted are phenomenal educators and ... have committed no crime. They are innocent, and deserve to be left alone."

Wheeler also defended the teachers and the decisions they make in suggesting classroom reading materials. She said, many top American novels throughout history have contained profanity and other behavior, including the kind found in *The Color Purple*, one book criticized by Mergener for being included on a recommended reading list.

"The teachers at Farmington (High) are greatly respected by every student," Sloan said. "But at the same time, none of them are perfect. They are not gods or angels. Mistakes get made. And I don't have a problem with anyone expressing their opinion."

"... The only problem I have is when one person's personal rights restrict me, oppress me."

Police will give away bike safety helmets

Continuing a program that was highly successful last year, Farmington Hills Police Department has begun distributing bike safety helmets to Hills children.

The helmets will be distributed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at the command desk at department headquarters, 31655 11 Mile Road, near the intersection of 11 Mile and Orchard Lake Roads. A parent or legal guardian must accompany any child who wants a helmet and show proof of Farmington Hills residency.

Partnership, bicycles are associated with more childhood injuries than any other consumer product except the automobile. The organization believes helmets use by all children ages 4 to 16 would prevent 135 to 165 deaths per year.

Hills Police Chief Bill Dwyer said, "It's easy to see why this issue is of such concern to us. We should all do what we can to ensure that our children are protected. Last year, the Farmington Hills Police Department distributed nearly 700 helmets to local children."

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