

TO THE GALLATIN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD: APRIL 19 MEETING

MY NAME IS TIM URBANSKI AND I HAVE BEEN A GALLATIN SCHOOLS PARENT FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS. I RETIRED EARLY FROM TEACHING IN ANOTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT TO BE A STAY-AT-HOME PARENT. BEFORE COVID I OCCASIONALLY VOLUNTEERED IN THE SCHOOLS AND WAS A PART TIME SUBSTITUTE TEACHER. I STARTED TEACHING IN 1995 AND HAVE SEEN MANY SCHOOL BOARDS OVER THE YEARS, GOOD, BAD, AND IN BETWEEN. TONIGHT I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE ON THIS SIDE OF THOSE TABLES YOU ARE SITTING AT.

I'VE BEEN LOOKING AT THE SCHOOLS' WEBSITE FOR THE LAST 2 MONTHS AND ASKING QUESTIONS ABOUT BOARD ACTIONS GOING BACK NUMEROUS MONTHS. I CAME TO THE REALIZATION THAT YOUR JOB IS EVEN HARDER THAN I OR MOST PEOPLE THINK. BUDGETS, PERSONNEL, FACILITIES, STATE REGS. THATS A LOT. THEN COVID HITS AND YOU NEED TO CONDUCT A SUPT. SEARCH, MAKING FOR TWICE THE WORK. I DOUBT YOU EVER DREAMED IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS WHEN YOU SIGNED UP. I DOUBT ANY GALLATIN SCHOOL BOARD EVER HAD TO WORK THIS HARD OVER A 2 YEAR PERIOD. THANK YOU. THE FISCAL COURT AND SUPT. THANKS YOU EVERY YEAR. BUT REALLY, THANK YOU IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT RIGHT NOW. I HOPE PARENTS AND STAFF HAVE ALSO THANKED YOU. MOST OF YOU OPPOSED A MASK MANDATE BUT WERE WILLING TO TRY IT AFTER HEARING FROM NURSE AND PARENT SHELLEY SIMPSON. THAT SPIRIT OF COMPROMISE DIDN'T GO UNNOTICED. WITH A NEW SUPT. HIRED AND HOPEFULLY COVID BEHIND US, YOU CAN BREATHE A LITTLE EASIER. YOU DESERVE IT.

BUT I AND OTHERS HAVE CONCERNS RELATED TO YOUR ACTIONS OF THE LAST 10 MONTHS.

1. JAN 10TH WAS A BAD DAY FOR GALLATIN SCHOOLS. IF YOU REMEMBER THAT MONDAY, COVID WAS SPIKING AND THE SCHOOL WAS FORCED TO CLOSE BECAUSE OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF ILLNESSES OF STAFF AND STUDENTS - AND REMAINED CLOSED ALL WEEK. EVERYONE IS DEMORALIZED WONDERING AFTER NEARLY 2 YEARS OF COVID IF THIS WOULD EVER END. THAT VERY SAME MORNING THE SCHOOL BOARD MET AND RELAXED ITS MASKING POLICY. I'M NOT HERE TO DEBATE THAT POLICY - THAT'S WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE. ITS A QUESTION OF HOW YOU ARRIVED THERE AND HOW PARENTS AND STAFF PERCEIVE YOU. EVEN IF I AGREED WITH YOU ON A MASKING POLICY I WOULD CRINGE THAT YOU PICKED THAT DAY TO DO IT, IN A SPECIAL MEETING THAT FEW PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT, AT 11AM, SPENDING TAXPAYERS' MONEY TO DO IT. ITS LIKE YOU WERE TRYING TO HIDE YOUR ACTIONS. IF THE NEW POLICY WASN'T GOING TO GO INTO EFFECT FOR 21 DAYS, WHY COULDN'T YOU WAIT 8 DAYS TO CHANGE THE POLICY AT THE REGULAR MEETING? PARENTS AND STAFF WANT YOU TO CONDUCT AS MUCH BUSINESS AS POSSIBLE AT REGULAR MEETINGS. I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT THE POLICY CHANGE UNTIL 3 WEEKS LATER, WHEN PARENTS RECEIVED AN E-MAIL FROM "DO NOT REPLY.COM" THAT ANNOUNCED THE POLICY STARTED THE NEXT DAY. MINIMAL INFO, COMING LATE, NO CHANCE FOR PARENTS TO ASK QUESTIONS. SCHOOL BUS TOO? PRINCIPALS' DECISION? BOARD DECISION? ETC. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, ALREADY STRESSED TEACHERS WOULD LITERALLY HAVE TO KEEP A SCORECARD OF WHO'S MASKING AND WHO'S NOT TO DETERMINE WHO MUST QUARANTINE IF A CLASSMATE GOT SICK.

NO MATTER WHAT DECISION YOU MADE ABOUT MASKS, A GROUP OF PEOPLE WAS GOING TO BE UPSET. SO THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO IS MAKE THE BEST CALL YOU CAN AND STICK TO YOUR GUNS. BUT YOU FLIP FLOPPED YOUR DECISIONS FOR REASONS I CAN'T UNDERSTAND. THAT MAKES YOU LOOK INDECISIVE OR TRYING TO PLEASE EVERYONE - WHICH ENDS UP PLEASEING NO ONE. YOU ALSO LOOK LIKE HYPOCRITES WHEN YOU PLACE A CAMPUS WIDE MASK MANDATE AND THEN DON'T WEAR ONE YOURSELF. THE VIDEO OF THE DEC 14 SCHOOL BOARD MEETING - A TIME WITH A MASK MANDATE AND CASES SPIKING AND NEARLY ALL OF KY IN THE "RED" ZONE - SHOWS ONLY 2 OUT OF 7 PEOPLE ON CAMERA WEARING A MASK WITH VIRTUALLY NO ATTEMPT AT SOCIAL DISTANCING. ~~WALCERDIA~~

2. THAT BAD DAY IN JAN IS WHAT SPURRED ME TO LOOK INTO OLD VIDEOS OF MEETINGS, AGENDAS, AND MINUTES. TURNS OUT, THAT WAS THE

TIP OF THE ICEBERG. YOU MET FOR 1 EMERGENCY AND 12 SPECIAL MEETINGS IN THE PAST 10 MONTHS. THEN 4 MORE MEETINGS WERE LISTED ON THE APRIL 19 AGENDA. I'M HAVING TROUBLE KEEPING TRACK ANYMORE. I THINK ITS 17 EXTRA MEETINGS IN 11 MONTHS. THATS IN ADDITION TO 11 REGULAR MEETINGS. COVID AND SUPT. SEARCH COULD EACH ADD A FEW - BUT 17?! I DOUBT VERY MANY PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT THOSE MEETINGS UNTIL AFTER THE FACT IF AT ALL. THIS SOWS DIS-TRUST WITH PARENTS AND STAFF. YOU ARE PAID \$150 FOR EVERY MEETING. I KNOW YOU'RE NOT GETTING RICH OFF OF APPROXIMATELY \$400 PER MONTH, BUT LOOK AT IT FROM THE TAXPAYER'S POINT OF VIEW: 5 OF YOU EQUALS \$750 PER MEETING PLUS LAWYER AND OTHER POSSIBLE COSTS. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A THOUSAND DOLLARS PER MEETING TIMES 17 MEETINGS. \$17,000 WILL REPAIR A LOT OF CHROMEBOOKS. IT ONLY TAKES 10 MINUTES TO GO TO OWEN COUNTY SCHOOLS WEBSITE AND FIND OUT WHEN THEY MEET. WHEN YOU LOOK AT NUMEROUS SCHOOLS IN OUR AREA, ALL OF THEM COMBINED HAVE LESS THAN HALF AS MANY "SPECIAL OR EMERGENCY" MEETINGS AS GALLATIN.

3. THE AUG 12 EMERGENCY MEETING WAS NOT TO ADDRESS A SCHOOL BUILDING BURNING DOWN OR CIVIL UNREST ON CAMPUS. IT WAS TO DRAFT A STATEMENT THAT HAS YOU JUMPING INTO THE MIDDLE OF AN ARGUMENT IN FRANKFORT BETWEEN STATE EMPLOYEES IN EDUCATION AND POLITICIANS. FROM THE MEETING MINUTES: "MRS. BURGETT ASKED 'IS THIS NECESSARY?'. BOARD LAWYER: "NO. BUT LEGALLY IT CAN'T DO ANY HARM". SO TAXPAYERS PAID \$1000 FOR A MEANINGLESS POLITICAL PIECE OF PAPER WRITTEN IN A MEETING THAT THEY LIKELY DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED.

4. POLITICS ARE CREEPING INTO YOUR MEETINGS TOO MUCH. IF ADRIENNE SOUTHWORTH WANTS TO GIVE YOU A LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AS IT RELATES TO SCHOOLS - SHE CAN SEND YOU AN E-MAIL. I SEE NO RECORD OF HER ATTENDING NEARBY SCHOOLS IN "SPECIAL" MEETINGS. WHY HERE? WHEN YOU RAN FOR OFFICE YOU RAN AS A CITIZEN, NOT AS A DEMOCRAT OR REPUBLICAN. THIS IS INTENTIONAL - TO KEEP POLITICS OUT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. THIS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER NOW THAT POLITICS IS BECOMING SO NASTY AND TOXIC. ON JUNE 15 YOU VOTED TO BAN CRITICAL RACE THEORY IN GALLATIN SCHOOLS.

I'LL CALL IT CRT. CRT IS POPULAR POLITICAL BUZZWORDS THAT ONLY START ARGUMENTS THAT NOBODY WINS. I DO NOT FAVOR CRT BUT YOUR STATEMENT IS WORTHLESS. CRT IS CURRICULUM - OUT OF YOUR JURISDICTION. CRT IS ABOUT IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFINE ON PAPER AND IS DISCUSSED IN TERMS OF PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY AT A COLLEGE LEVEL. CRT IS NOT TAUGHT AT GALLATIN OR ANY OTHER K-12 KY SCHOOL. NO CREDIBLE SOURCE IS TRYING TO INSERT IT INTO GALLATIN SCHOOLS. YOUR STATEMENT IS UN-ENFORCIBLE. IT IS A SOLUTION LOOKING FOR A PROBLEM, A POLITICAL WITCH HUNT SEARCHING FOR THE LIBERAL BOOGYMAN. USE THE WORD "BAN" VERY CAREFULLY - NOT OFTEN. PEOPLE DON'T LIKE TO BE TOLD THAT THEY ABSOLUTELY CANNOT OR MUST DO SOMETHING. LOOK AT THE MASK MANDATE CONTROVERSY. BANNING CRT IS POLITICAL THEATER AND FEAR MONGERING. AN INFLUENTIAL NBA BASKETBALL PLAYER CLAIMS THAT ~~THE~~ EARTH IS FLAT. ARE YOU GOING TO DRAFT A STATEMENT BANNING GALLATIN SCHOOLS FROM TEACHING THAT THE EARTH IS FLAT? YOUR STATEMENT ON CRT IS ABOUT AS USEFUL AS YOU TELLING THE SHERIFF OR JUDGE EXECUTIVE HOW TO DO THEIR JOB.

5. YOUR JOB IS TO WORK HARD TO FIND, HIRE, AND RETAIN THE BEST ADMINISTRATORS YOU POSSIBLY CAN. THEN YOU STAND BACK, GET OUT OF THEIR WAY AND LET THEM DO THEIR JOB. YOU RUBBER STAMP MOST OF WHAT THEY DO AND ONLY INTERVENE IF THEY BREAK BOARD POLICY OR ACT OUTRAGEOUSLY. IT HAS BEEN ALMOST 5 YEARS SINCE TRAVIS HUBER WAS SHOWN THE DOOR. WE'VE MADE DUE WITH AN INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT WHO CAME OUT OF RETIREMENT FOR A SHORT TERM EMERGENCY. (NO DISRESPECT TO MR. HAMMOND, HE MAY HAVE DONE A GOOD JOB) THIS SCHOOL BOARD MUST GIVE MR. CASH EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED - FAILURE ON YOUR PART IS NOT AN OPTION. TWO DESCRIPTIONS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD FROM THE TRAVIS HUBER ERA WERE "APPALLING" AND "A CIRCUS". WE MUST NEVER GO BACK TO THAT
6. LASTLY, I AM NOT MAD AT THE SCHOOL BOARD. ITS EASY TO GET MAD, RANT, AND DO NOTHING CONSTRUCTIVE. I'M NOT NITPICKING 1 OR 2 MISTAKES - WE ARE ALL HUMAN. ITS PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR AND THE COUNTY'S PERCEPTION OF YOU THAT I'M CONCERNED ABOUT. I ONLY ASK THAT YOU TWEAK YOUR ACTIONS IN ORDER TO MAKE THIS SCHOOL SYSTEM BETTER FOR EVERYONE. DON'T MICRO-MANAGE, AVOID SPECIAL MEETINGS, STAY OUT OF POLITICS, COMMUNICATE BETTER. TIM.URBANSKI@YAHOO.COM