

Nelson County parents sue school board over controversial merger

The controversial merger was rejected by every principal in the district and sparked district-wide protests for days after its approval.



NELSON COUNTY, Ky. — The [Nelson County Board of Education](#) was in court Friday after parents filed a lawsuit against the school board last September.

Ruling over the case, Judge Mike Thurmon gave a March 1 deadline to the school board's defense attorneys to turn over text messages and emails of board members to plaintiff attorney Matthew Hite. He also declined Hite's request to put an order on the board preventing them from ending Superintendent Wes Bradley's contract.



According to the lawsuit from Nelson County Forward, there were two years of consensus and progress on a district facilities plan, approved by a local planning committee made up of teachers, parents and county officials.

In 2021, the Kentucky Board of Education approved the initial plan which involved building two new wings for middle school students on the high schools' campuses.

The suit claims the county board failed to fund the plan, instead devising a separate proposal to merge Nelson County High and Thomas Nelson High Schools. The board [moved forward with the new plan](#) in October of 2023.



The proposed school merger was rejected by every principal in the district and sparked [district-wide protests](#) over concerns schools would lose their identity, offer less individual instruction and limit opportunities in sports.

Supporters of the high school merger said those buildings are almost

half-empty and that a single campus would let them offer more challenging classes.

READ THE LAWSUIT:

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But some parents feel like they're being left out of the discussions.

"Our community has not been met with any response to emails, phone calls, texts, community forum invitations, town hall invitations, from our board and it's unacceptable," Jeff Parrish, a father of five Nelson County students, said after watching the hearing.

Although Parrish isn't named in the lawsuit, he wanted to know more about what's going on in the district where his kids go to school.



A former Nelson County school board member, [Bill Osborne](#), previously said it's [nearly impossible for the board to conduct business](#) because public meetings are getting out of hand.

Just this week, a board meeting ended early after [heckling from the audience and a tense exchange](#) between members.



This lawsuit against the board claims individual members have acted outside of their roles to [push out Superintendent Bradley](#)—who has rank-and-file support from many of the district’s staff—by contacting outside attorneys to try and buy Bradley out of his contract for the job.

A lawyer for the Nelson County school board [resigned](#) at the end of 2023 citing ethical concerns, but he’s still serving as their legal counsel until a replacement can be found. Someone else stood in for his replacement during the court hearing for the lawsuit.

As of Jan 1, 2024, District 4 board member Amanda Deaton took over as board chair.

Deaton was part of a different lawsuit against the board seeking to overturn the 2021 district facility plan, but dropped out of the case before being elected.

Defense attorneys for the board did not speak after the hearing.



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