

Do Parents Have a Say over Education?

By OLIVIA THIESSEN

While many concerned parents are storming to school board meetings to debate Critical Race Theory (CRT), sex education, and mask mandates in their public schools, some have begun to ask a broader question: do parents have a say over education at all?

Virginians say “yes”

The recent Virginia gubernatorial race addressed this question. Democrat candidate Terry McAuliffe admitted plainly, “I don’t think parents should be telling schools what they should teach,” while his Republican opponent Glenn Younkin said the opposite: “I believe parents should be in charge of their kids’ education.”

Republican Governor Younkin ultimately gained the victory, partially because of this answer, in the same state that helped secure President Biden’s victory by 10 points earlier this year.

While the people of Virginia have shown their answer through the election process, the question of whether parents have a say in education remains a debate across much of the nation. School boards have become a battleground, and in some cases, board members feel threatened by those in their district speaking out against their curriculum or mandates.

NSBA says “no”

On September 29, the National School Board Association (NSBA) released a letter to President Biden, which it recently removed and apologized for, requesting “federal law enforcement and other assistance to deal with the growing number of threats of violence and acts of intimidation occurring across the nation,” likening concerned parents who disagree with their school district’s practices to domestic terrorists.

The letter also claimed that “violence” in school boards (though they did not cite examples or define their terms) stems from the “propaganda” surrounding CRT, further claiming that “critical race theory is not taught in public schools and remains a complex

law school and graduate school subject well beyond the scope of a K-12 class.”

In response to the NSBA’s letter, Attorney General Merrick Garland released his memorandum for the FBI on October 4 which detailed the “disturbing spike in harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence against school administrators, board members, teachers, and staff,” and called for the FBI to convene meetings to “facilitate the discussion of strategies for addressing threats against school administrators, board members, teachers, and staff, and will open dedicated lines of communication for threat reporting, assessment, and response.”

The memorandum, like the NSBA’s letter, did not define the terms “harassment,” “intimidation,” or “threats,” nor did it cite examples. It also did not explicitly exclude civil dissent as a form of harassment.

Questions have arisen whether the Department of Justice ever investigated the claims of the NSBA before issuing the memorandum, which Garland admitted, under oath, was the basis of his letter. So far, no proof of any investigation into the NSBA’s claims has been provided.

It seems as though the DOJ was hasty to accuse concerned parents of terrorism, indicating their answer to the overarching question at hand.

The federal government says “no”


Furthermore, leaked emails indicate that the NSBA colluded with the White House before penning the letter, raising questions about whether the White House ordered Garland and the FBI to investigate parent activity in school boards.

It was also found that the FBI’s Counterterrorism and criminal division created a “threat tag” to track potential investigations into parents they deem as threats, according to an FBI whistleblower. Again, parents who voice concerns through civil dissent are not explicitly excluded.

The actions of the NSBA, the attorney

From: Peeples, Carlton L. (INSD) (FBI) <[redacted]>
 Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 10:02 AM
 To: FBI_SACS <[redacted]>
 Cc: Greenberg, Jay (CID) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Shivers, Calvin A. (CID) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Cohen, Brian M. (CID) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Langan, Timothy R. Jr. (CTD) (FBI) <[redacted]>; Vorndran, Kevin (CTD) (FBI) <[redacted]>
 Subject: Guidance: Threat to violence against School Administrators --- UNCLASSIFIED

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED



A JOINT MESSAGE FROM CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE DIVISION & COUNTERTERRORISM DIVISION
 FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

All,

On October 04, 2021, the Attorney General forwarded a memorandum addressing a spike in harassment, intimidation, and threats of violence against school administrators, board members, teachers, and staff. The memorandum directed each United States Attorney, in coordination with the FBI, to convene meetings with federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial leaders in each federal judicial district within 30 days of the issuance of the memorandum.

We share an obligation to ensure all individuals are able to do their jobs without threats of violence or fear for their safety. This can only be accomplished with effective coordination internally between relevant Divisions and through effective coordination and engagement with our law enforcement partners and United States Attorney Offices.

As a result, the Counterterrorism and Criminal Divisions created a threat tag, EDUOFFICIALS, to track instances of related threats. We ask that your offices apply the threat tag to investigations and assessments of threats specifically directed against school board administrators, board members, teachers, and staff. The purpose of the threat tag is to help scope this threat on a national level and provide an opportunity for comprehensive analysis of the threat picture for effective engagement with law enforcement partners at all levels. When evaluating potential threats, we ask that you attempt to identify the following:

- Is there a federal nexus?
- Are there potential federal violations that can be investigated and charged?
- What’s the motivation behind the criminal activity?

general, and the White House indicate that those in the highest authority believe parents should not have a say over education. The NSBA letter and the AG’s memorandum seem to lump all parent concerns together as domes-

tic terrorism, never clarifying that civil dissent be encouraged or even permissible.

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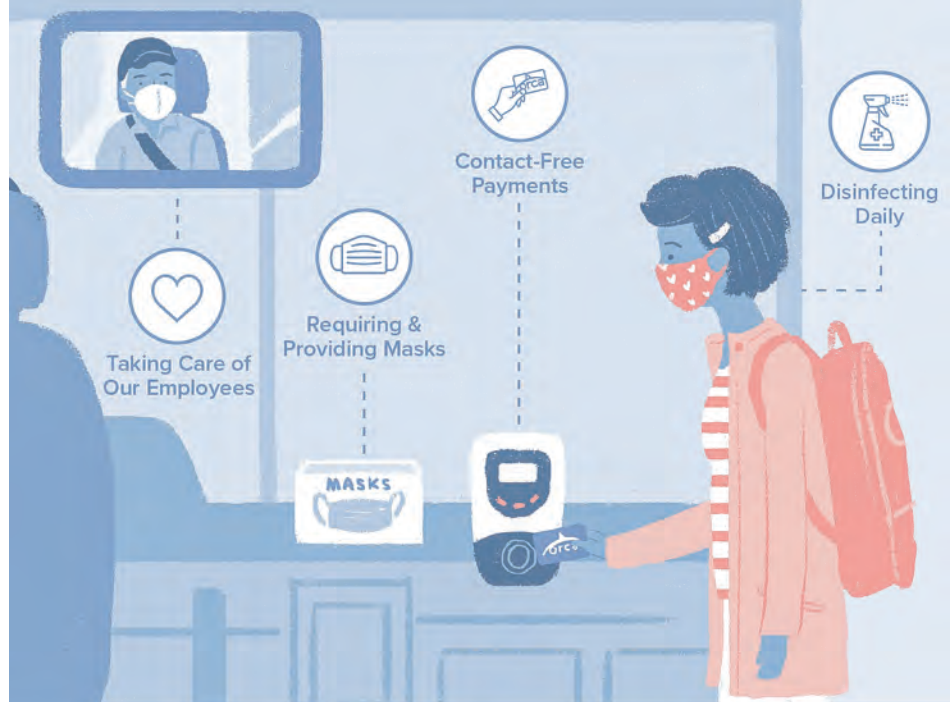
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We appreciate your attention to this matter and welcome any engagement to identify trends, strategies, and best practices to accomplish discouraging, identifying, and prosecuting those who use violence, threats of violence, and other forms of intimidation and harassment pertaining to this threat.

On behalf of,

AD Timothy R. Langan Jr.
Counterterrorism Division

AD Calvin A. Shivers
Criminal Division

Respectfully,
Carlton Peoples
A/Deputy Assistant Director
Criminal Investigative Division

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED

What do local school districts say?

While the federal authorities have shown they believe parents have no say in public education, many local school boards are fearful to take a stand.

The Lynnwood Times contacted nine local school districts, including Mukilteo, Edmonds, Everett, Lake Stevens, Snohomish, Marysville, Arlington, Northshore, and Monroe school districts to ask if they agree with the sentiments discussed in the NSBA letter,

which at the time was still upheld by the association.

Each district was asked the following questions:

1. Does the district agree with the letter's substance and tone? If not, have you contacted the NSBA to let them know?
2. Can you please tell us how, going forward, your organization defines "intimidation," harassment," and "threat"?

from page 6 **COLLEGE FOOTBALL**

as UW's Athletics Director Jen Cohen fired head football coach Jimmy Lake on November 13, before Lake could finish his second season.

According to Cohen, the termination conversation was "professional."

In 2019, Lake was Cohen's top pick to replace Chris Petersen. "I had so much confidence in him I really believed he was the best person for the job," she said during a zoom conference the day after Lake's termination. "I'm just disappointed and really sad that this has not worked out."

During the conference, Cohen was pelted repeatedly by the same question: Why did you fire him? Cohen never did offer any details, simply stating and

restating that "it wasn't just one thing" and that she made the decision after a holistic evaluation.

"These decisions are always difficult and in this case, complicated," she said. "It was a combination of things, and I came to the conclusion that I just didn't have confidence in Coach Lake's ability to lead the program moving forward."

It is believed by some, including a few who questioned Cohen during the conference, that Lake's termination is linked to a sideline incident during their November 6 game against the University of Oregon.

After a brief rift between players, Lake shoved and swatted at Huskies' linebacker Ruperake Fuavai and was suspended immediately thereafter.

3. Finally, do you plan to report individuals in your state to the U.S. Department of Justice – or do you believe that concerns can be adequately managed by local and state law enforcement?

Seven of the eight school boards did not respond. Lake Stevens School District, the only district to respond even after follow-up, did not answer the questions directly but left the following message, attributed to their Superintendent Dr. Ken Collins and the Board President, Mari Taylor:

"The Lake Stevens School District and our Board of Directors welcomes and encourages engagement in school board meetings. Civil discourse is an integral part of public education, and our Board has appreciated hearing the different perspectives of our students, families and residents. We have had to remind participants about the procedures related to the public comment portion of our board meetings and required protocols for public health and safety—and the overwhelming majority of attendees have been courteous and respectful. We take seriously our responsibility to ensure that students and their families are heard and respected. Running safe and civil meet-

Lake would later comment on the incident, saying, "I separated him. I did not strike him. I separated him."

NFL Analyst and former professional quarterback Ryan D. Leaf spoke with King 5's Steve Bunin about the incident. "There's no reason why I thought he should have been suspended," he said. "The reason he's being suspended is because of the backlash from the fan base."

Leaf concluded his remarks predicting the suspension would mark Lake's exit.

When asked if the suspension and termination were connected, Cohen said, "The decision to terminate was a completely different decision based on a holistic review."

Cohen made it clear that the university will honor the terms of Lake's contract, putting UW on the hook for about \$9 million, according to the Associated Press. In the 13 games Lake coached, the Huskies went 7 – 6.

While defensive coordinator Bob Gregory will serve as interim coach for the last two games of the season, Cohen stated that UW has already begun searching for Lake's replacement.

ings is key to our democratic process.

"We have a strong partnership with the Lake Stevens Police Department, and have had an officer present at several board meetings to provide assistance as needed. While we are aware of situations at school board meetings that have gotten out of control locally and nationally, we do not anticipate needing to take any additional precautions in Lake Stevens."

When it comes to topics that matter greatly to parents, such as sex education, CRT, and mandates, parents need to know whether their school district will value their voices, or if their district will consider them a threat, worthy of an FBI investigation.



LEGAL NOTICE OF HEARING

TO: NICHOLAS DORAN HUNDLEY, 4217 164TH STREET, APT. #C101, LYNNWOOD, WA 98087

In the Matter of the Welfare of the children of, Cynithia Zimmerman, Charles Deherra and Nicholas Hundley, Parents.

District Court CHIPS File No. 10-JV-20-227
District Court PERM File No. 10-JV-21-167
County Attorney File Number JC-20-55366

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE: That a hearing will be held at the Carver County Government Center, Justice Center, 604 East Fourth Street, Chaska, Minnesota, 55318, on Wednesday, December 22, 2021, at 10:00 AM, or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard, to determine the permanent placement of your children.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED: The children and the children's parent, guardian, or custodian have the right to be present and to be represented by an attorney at the above hearing, and if they cannot afford an attorney, an attorney will/may be appointed at public expense for any and each one of them.

The Court will consider and decide the children's need for protection or services and other disposition regarding the children including the possibility that the children may be removed from their parent and placed OR remain in permanent out of home placement and that your parental rights will be limited. Even with failure to appear in response to this notice, the hearing may still be conducted and appropriate relief granted on the petition or motion.

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