

Subject: Re: Board of Education Agenda Change

From: maire faddah [REDACTED]

Date: 2/20/2024, 12:48 PM

To: Mark Cohen <cohenm@mokena159.org>, SchoolBoard@mokena159.org

Dear Dr. Cohen and Mokena BOE,

This email serves to follow-up on our call on 2/8. Over the past week, I have been thinking about how I would respond to your call and there are now 2 additional events which have occurred that add to my concern.

During our call, you inaccurately stated that PTA falls under OMA and as a result of that, recordings are allowed. Please be aware that we do not fall under OMA. Please reference the attached screenshot of OMA guidelines. You inaccurately informed me that a BOE member is within her rights to secretly record a meeting, thereby excusing her behavior. PTA meetings are not open to the general public and you must be a member to conduct business, this means, you cannot record meetings without the knowledge of all parties involved. You informed me that I was wrong in my timeline of events. I can assure you that I was not misinformed or wrong in my timeline of events. Mrs. Tunney was not even present at the January meeting.

I outreached the BOE to investigate my complaint. You were only included in the email to highlight repeated instances where you are speaking to parents and directing them to PTA meetings but not informing me of issues. It is not your place to speak on behalf of the BOE or on behalf of the PTA. It is not your place to tell me I am wrong in my timeline and that I do not know OMA guidelines. This was done in a deliberate manner to shut down and cover up the actions of a BOE member.

From my understanding, at the February 13th meeting, you brought a BOE member with you, who is not a PTA member. I was not present at this meeting due to a work obligation and it is the first PTA meeting or event I have missed since taking over as President. Was this done in retaliation for my complaint the previous week? Our bylaws were sent to you at the beginning of the year, per your request. PTA meetings are for members. They are not open to the public.

Now, I've received an email from you regarding changes to the agenda. This is seemingly done to penalize the PTA for complaints against a BOE member. Why has the BOE decided to restrict the amount of time allocated to a parent organization? I find this to be a huge disconnect and a very non cohesive approach to remedy a situation. It has been so disheartening to hear that the agenda at the board meetings are being changed after many years.

The events that have transpired and the lack of camaraderie amongst the BOE and parents organization has been extremely discouraging, I hope that we can finish out the year without any further incidents, while keeping the mission of the PTA at heart.

Best regards,

Maire Faddah

On Thu, Feb 15, 2024 at 7:37 PM Mark Cohen <cohenm@mokena159.org> wrote:

Dear Maire,

I want to let you know of a slight change to the Board of Education agenda. In the past the Board has earmarked time for Board members, our two labor unions, PTA, and MEF on the public comment section of the agenda. In a recent Board workshop the IASB Field Services Director recommended to the Board that agenda spots for specific groups be removed. Public comment will be on the agenda as a stand alone item. The PTA is ALWAYS welcome (and encouraged!) to speak during public comment, but no individual groups will have a standing place on the agenda. If you have any questions about this change just let me know- it will not change the way the Foundation addresses the Board in any way other than signing up in advance. Thanks for all you do for our students and staff!

Mark

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Dr. Mark A. Cohen
Superintendent
Mokena School District 159
(708) 342-4900



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— 5 ILCS 120 Open Meetings Act.jpeg —

business.

Accordingly, for a 5-member public body, 3 members of the body constitute a quorum and the affirmative vote of 3 members is necessary to adopt any motion, resolution, or ordinance, unless a greater number is otherwise required.

"Public body" includes all legislative, executive, administrative or advisory bodies of the State, counties, townships, cities, villages, incorporated towns, school districts and all other municipal corporations, boards, bureaus, committees or commissions of this State, and any subsidiary bodies of any of the foregoing including but not limited to committees and subcommittees which are supported in whole or in part by tax revenue, or which expend tax revenue, except the General Assembly and committees or commissions thereof.

"Public body" includes tourism boards and convention or civic center boards located in counties that are contiguous to the Mississippi River with populations of more than 250,000 but less than 300,000.

"Public body" includes the Health Facilities and Services Review Board.

"Public body" does not include a child death review team or the Illinois Child Death Review Teams Executive Council established under the Child Death Review

established under the Child Death Review Team Act, an ethics commission acting under the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, a regional youth advisory board or the Statewide Youth Advisory Board established under the Department of Children and Family Services Statewide Youth Advisory Board Act, or the Illinois Independent Tax Tribunal.

(Source: P.A. 97-1129, eff. 8-28-12; 98-806, eff. 1-1-15.)

—Attachments:—

5 ILCS 120 Open Meetings Act.jpeg

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