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May 16, 2018

Dear Dr. Nevergold,

Please accept this letter as formal notification that I am resigning in protest from my position as Park District representative to the Board of Education. In light of the recent situation regarding the RFP for school based nursing and the manner in which it was handled I cannot in all good consciousness continue on in my role with the Buffalo Board of Education.

I am painfully aware of the limitations of my role relative to the school nursing matter given that I have a conflict of interest. That being said, I cannot be complicit in this matter. From my perspective it is unethical to knowingly limit the knowledge an individual or group of individuals has regarding the future of their employment status. I fully recognize the importance of following policies and regulations, but I cannot ignore that it seems as though the district administration intentionally strung along some 70-plus nurses in addition to the parents who are expecting high quality nursing care in their children's schools without pause. An active choice was made to withhold critical information from both the parents and children living in our district as well as the nurses who provide medical care for our children.

I cannot ignore that it seems the district is working hard to control the flow of information and in some cases limit the voices of parents and community members. Not only were emails filtered out so that parents and other invested community members were limited in expressing their concerns (or possible support) to board members and district administration, but the BPTO ran into difficulties with holding a press conference; a decision was made to exclude the recommendation to the Board from the initial agenda posted to Boarddocs on Friday, May 11th and parents and community members attempts to get information were thwarted. Whether it's intentional or not, when it appears that an organization is attempting to limit citizen action and mute the voices of opposition, it raises questions as to what may be hiding beneath the surface. I cannot stand back and pretend that this is acceptable. It is counter to everything I believe about public service and community involvement.

While I recognize that it is not the Board's nor the district's role or responsibility to take such things into consideration, I do believe that we have an obligation to utilize community resources whenever possible as that only serves to strengthen the community in which the children served by the Buffalo Public Schools live.

Prior to becoming a board member I had the opportunity to visit a number of Buffalo Public Schools to educate staff and address concerns related to the life-limiting medical conditions of their students.

Highly qualified school nurses are an integral component to meeting the myriad of needs children come to school with every day.

Moreover, I have never felt so helpless as a parent. My role on the Board is limiting my ability to advocate for my child at a time when she needs it most. I fully acknowledge my bias as it relates to her school nurse. I know that her nurse's experience with medically fragile children in a previous setting provided her with the knowledge to address everything from a standard cold to a serious medical situation and I need that level of assurance when it comes to my daughter. I need to be able to advocate for my daughter. I need to be able to stand up for providing high quality medical care in an educational setting and unfortunately, as a member of the Board of Education, I am unable to do what my child needs me to do for her.

I have learned a great deal on my short time on the board and I will forever stand by the statement I made to you when I was chosen over numerous highly qualified candidates. It is an honor to be able to serve my community and at this point in time I need to serve my community by focusing on advocating for my family and the children and families I work with every day in my role as a psychologist.

Sincerely,

Catherine Flanagan-Priore, PhD