

From: Daniela Hamm
To: Board of Education
Subject: SD23 is Inclusive, unless you are Christian
Date: Saturday, June 21, 2025 6:24:11 PM
Attachments: image.png
image.png

WARNING: This email originated from outside Central Okanagan Public Schools. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear SD23 Board:

I read with great interest the article by Kelowna Capital News titled 'Lake Country school trustee refuses to pose with award winning drag queen' dated June 17, 2025. I have waited to see a SD23 response to this article condemning this open bullying towards Trustee Amy Geistlinger, but have seen no such response from you the board supporting your trustees right to freedom of conscience.

This article stated that Trustee Amy Geistlinger silently sat in her seat and did not pose for a photo with Tyson Cook, who was winning an award not for his role as a CEA at the district but for his role as drag queen Frieda Whales. Somehow her quiet abstaining from this photo was defined as micro-aggression towards Tyson Cook as depicted by Wilbur Turner-activist for equality and education. I was not at this meeting but I would like clarification that Trustee Amy Geistlinger did not hold up a sign, make a verbal statement of protest or call upon others to protest, rather sat quietly and abstained from a photo? To the point that Tyson Cook was not even aware of this micro-aggression as stated in the article until it was pointed out to him. The article stated that she released a statement when questioned by the reporter saying she works at Flex Academy, which is a Christian School and she was simply respecting her own personal convictions. Is this not allowed? Is freedom of speech and freedom of religion not allowed at SD23? Does she not have the right according to our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to not stand and pose in a photo honouring someone that is not even directly related to school district activity? Are school trustees not allowed to abstain from certain activities based on religious beliefs? Does inclusivity not only include tolerance of others (which she did, no protest just silently sat) but rather requires one to endorse and promote as well? That goes quite a bit beyond the actual definition of inclusivity. Are we inclusive of all religions in SD23 or is it just open bullying of Christians (and their beliefs) that the board will tolerate? These are fair questions to ask.

Advocate Wilbur Turner has a well established pattern of openly and publicly attacking the Christian community. I should not be surprised he has yet again ran to the news to openly bully Trustee Amy Geistlinger over her Christian faith. Back in 2021 Mr. Turner read a doctrinal statement of faith posted on a new church's webpage (a doctrinal statement taken directly from the Bible, the Holy Book Christian's follow) that a marriage is between one man and one woman. He then proceeded to launch a very public campaign against this church regarding this statement. He went again to the press to call out this church and organize protests and an onslaught of vicious online activity and vandalism of the church ensued. The church ended up not being able to lease from that property any further and needed to move to a different location. When the new location of this church was released, Mr. Turner again went to the press to express his objections that a Christian Church be allowed to exist in the building it was renting. I would define these actions as more than micro-aggression actions that he claims occurred towards Tyson Cook by Amy Geistlinger and that Mr. Turner has an established pattern of attacking and bullying anyone in the Christian community.

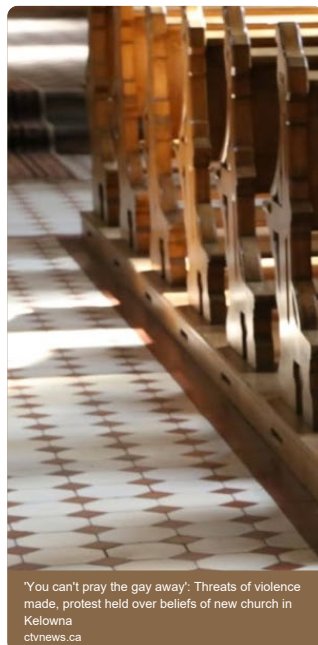
I do not personally know Trustee Amy Geistlinger, nor is she a member of the church I described above. I am however a Christian and a parent who has 2 children within the SD23 system. I also have volunteered extensively within the district including at the levels of CoPAC, PAC and coaching. I am asking the school board to openly condemn this news article and the statements made in it regarding Trustee Amy Geistlinger and stand behind her right to abstain based on her freedom of speech, conscience and religion. Your silence on this matter is condoning this escalating behaviour by Wilbur Turner and sets a precedence that any school district trustee can be bullied based on their religious views. This behaviour in the past allowed a church to be vandalized, what is the possibility of these same types of actions happening to Trustee Amy Geistlinger as a direct result of this article and your lack of response to it?

Trustee Amy Geistlinger should not be allowed to be publically shamed and bullied and told she is not inclusive because she sat quietly and did not pose in a photo with a individual that was not even being honoured for SD23 activities, rather his activities outside of his SD23 job.

I will be emailing Trustee Amy Geistlinger personally as well to thank her for standing up for her Christian values. She is an elected member and there are many Christian families within SD23 that support her actions. There are also many conservative minded individuals within SD23 that support her actions as well. Her behaviour was not aggressive (micro-aggression) as portrayed in this news article and the SD23 School Board needs to write a retraction on this and a statement of support for her.

Sincerely

Daniela Hamm





LGBTQ group questions Kelowna venue's decision to host church that 'does not condone' homosexuality
kelownanow.com

<https://globalnews.ca/news/10486026/kelowna-arts-centre-rental-right-wing-church/>



Peaceful protest planned against homophobic church in Kelowna
kelownacapnews.com

Turner explained that the actions that make up a micro-aggression are subtle and are often only

noticed by those directly impacted.

Further, Turner said that as an elected official and teacher, Geistlinger's decision to not join the photo with Cook will send a message to kids that it's not acceptable to be queer.

"She is signalling that she does not want to be associated with queer people or drag queens."

Turner said he hopes Geistlinger issues a public apology to Cook for her discriminatory actions.

Cook is not new to being the target of disdain for being a queer Drag Queen who advocates strongly for the acceptance of all people.

"Love always wins," said [Cook, before leaving the interview to get ready for a Pride Month event.](#)

school board trustee, Geistlinger works as an educational assistant with Flex Academy, an online Christian educational school that replaced Heritage Christian School, after it closed in 2023.

The stated goal of Flex Academy is: "To develop innovative Christ-centered educational opportunities for learners to explore and embrace God's unique purpose."

In addition to a brief phone conversation about her decision to abstain from the photo, Geistlinger gave a prepared statement to Capital News.

"It was his drag queen persona, Frieda Whales, that was being recognized, not Tyson Cook as a CEA. Why would we celebrate work unrelated to board and school district business?"