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franzj@blsk12.org

Boys in the girls' restrooms

Jessica Franz, Bethel School Board member

Bethel Board of Education — On January 10, during my first official board meeting, the president of the board read a statement on a highly controversial issue from the superintendent and an attorney, announcing that a male student who identifies himself as a female would immediately begin using the girls' restrooms.

During the public speaking portion of the meeting, several parents voiced their opposition. In response, the president announced that the decision was board policy and that the board was following the law. What was not said is that although a federal workplace case is often cited, it does not apply to school bathrooms, locker rooms, and other accommodations. In addition, the board did not vote on the proposed policy during a public meeting as required by law. As such, the policy may well be invalid. Accordingly, I have sought independent legal counsel regarding the legalities of enacting a policy absent a vote in an open meeting, attempting to implement a highly controversial issue in the absence of well-settled law, and the process for investigating whether professional licensure standards have been violated.