

Parents in Greece air concerns on EEOC

• School board probe and leave for superintendent raise angst.

Background

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GREECE — Greece parents want to know more about the school district's investigation into complaints of discrimination. So on Wednesday some parents hosted a forum to help each other uncover answers.

More than 100 teachers, parents, and community members gathered Wednesday night at Greece Olympia High School to learn more about the actions that led the district's school board to place its superintendent on leave and temporarily hire a replacement.

Last month, Greece Superintendent Margaret Keller-Cogan and two other top administrators were placed on paid leave for the duration of the investigation. This week, the board hired an interim superintendent, Josephine Kehoe.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has determined that the Greece Central School District discriminated against five teachers. As a result, the district could face five lawsuits with costs running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. Superintendent Margaret Keller-Cogan and two other administrators are on paid leave while the district conducts an independent investigation. Josephine Kehoe has temporarily taken on the district top job.

Inside Kehoe receiving \$890 a day 3B

Parents, like board members, don't agree on the move. But they do agree that they want more details

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on the progress of the investigation and what it could wind up costing the district.

"The infighting, whether right or wrong, is pushing people away from our district," said Angela Penkin, a Greece parent and a Realtor with Columbus ERA in Rochester. "People hear about the problems going on, and they're reluctant to buy in Greece. They don't know what the future will be in the district."

Tom Shay of Greece, who moderated the forum, said he wants to make sure that his children have every opportunity to do well in Greece, to have the tools they need for a top-notch education. Under the current circumstances, he's worried that that may not happen, he said.

He said he's also frustrated because he's having a tough time getting answers for questions that he believes should be public knowledge.

Some Greece parents, such as Carolyn Hauer, have taken matters into their own hands. She researched the process one follows when filing a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The next step is conciliation, which is basically a forced mediation. And that next step hasn't taken place, said board member Joe Moscato.

"We all want accountability," said Greece parent Dan Streicher. "It just seems that we're rushing to a conclusion. We need to give the process a chance to follow its course."

Board member Bill Russell said he learned a lot at the meeting. He was one of five of the nine board members to attend the public forum. Besides Russell and Moscato, the other members who attended were Charlie Hubbard, Eric Peterson and Larry Sweet.

Russell noted that some community members seem to know more about the charges than some board members, particularly the four board members who voted against hiring an educational consultant to investigate discrimination charges and who also voted against placing Keller-Cogan on a paid leave. The four were Russell, Sweet, Peterson and Gerald Phelan.