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## School Board Meeting Recap

1 message

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Thu, Dec 14, 2023 at 4:05 PM

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## RECAP OF THE 12/11/2023 MEETING OF THE PINE-RICHLAND SCHOOL BOARD

[Watch the meeting](#) • [Email the board](#) • [Board directory](#)

### A Concerning Action

In the first voting meeting of the new school board, the majority called for a vote that could result in a change in the district's legal representation. The action item listed on the agenda was to put out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for legal representation for the district. In itself, this is a reasonable action. However, we are dismayed by the lack of transparency and question the timing. Typically, there is full-board discussion in public view and an opportunity for public input prior to adding a vote (action item) on a meeting agenda. There was neither.

Things to consider:

- The board was voting on an incomplete, draft version of the Request for Proposals, and this draft was not shared with the public prior to the vote.
- There is no legal reason to avoid public discussion of this matter.

- New board members have not yet had a chance to work with the current legal services. What is the reason for the rushed timing?
- During a time of board change, stability elsewhere is helpful.
- The current legal firm has worked with our district for decades and knows the ins and outs of our district and policies.
- There has been no public discontent with current legal services.
- Has the board considered how a change in representation might affect ongoing legal cases?
- Why is the board focusing on legal services instead of ways to better prepare our students and teachers?

While it's wise to occasionally compare costs and services, the board has a duty to act transparently and in good faith. And common sense governance demands common sense timing. This was a failure of governance, and we are left questioning the majority's motives.

We applaud board members Ashley Fortier and Marc Casciani for advocating for transparency and common sense. And thanks to board members Joe Cassidy and Amy Terchick for joining Ashley and Marc in voting to table the RFP vote. Unfortunately, they were outnumbered. We will provide updates as we learn more.

## WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

Conservative school boards across the state and country have fired lawyers and replaced them with lawyers who will help them find ways to limit/ban books, limit LGBTQ expression, and push conservative religious values in schools. We're including three PA examples. Click on a school district to see news coverage of what happened there: [Central York](#) • [Penncrest](#) • [Central Bucks](#)

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## Other Items of Interest

### Update on library book review committee

The committee is composed of 5 staff members and 5 community members/parents. They are currently reading the [14 titles under consideration](#). They will work through discussion of those books in January and will make a

recommendation for each book in writing to superintendent Dr. Brian Miller. Dr. Miller will then review comments and make his own recommendation for each title to the board.

### **Grade 4 Assessment in February**

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) will assess randomly selected 4th grade students on February 5. Student participation is voluntary. Parents will be made aware if their students are selected for participation, and they can choose to opt out.

### **Evaluation of Grade 6-9 English & Language Arts Resources**

- Jan. 2024: Round 2 Comprehensive Evaluations and Analysis
- Community and student input collected Feb.–Mar. 2024
- Final recommendations: April–May 2024

### **9th Grade Core Text Selection**

Parents, students, and community members have the opportunity to review the three texts being considered for 9th grade. Only one of the three books listed below will be recommended for board approval in January.

- Randi Pink: *Angel of Greenwood*
- Sabaa Tahir: *All My Rage*
- Ruth Sepetys: *I Must Betray You*

Copies are available at the Pine-Richland High School and Northern Tier Libraries. Those who read one or more of the texts can complete [this evaluation form](#), due by 5 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 5. The board will receive a recommendation in January and vote on the selection.

### **2024-2025 Academic Calendar Approved.**

[Click here to view the calendar.](#)

**Next Meeting: Monday, Jan. 8, 2024, at 7 p.m.**

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## DONATE

We have a lot of work ahead of us, and some of it requires funding. Our primary non-electoral expenses include: maintaining our website (which we'll be updating soon) and a dedicated email account; boosting informational posts in order to expand reach in the community; continuing a presence at Pine and Richland Community Days; and holding our own outreach and educational events. We're in this for the long-term — for our students, our teachers, and for you.

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This newsletter is produced entirely by in-district Together for PR volunteers.

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