

## **Statement by Chairman Tom Hearn of the Coeur d'Alene School Board re: May 3 meeting:**

I apologize to the patrons in our district who feel I have let them down. Everyone has a right to their feelings and opinions but I am compelled today to clarify facts regarding the events that led up to Ms. Susan Moss speaking at our Board meeting Monday night. I will, however, not allow mudslinging or personal attacks on my character to stand without setting the record straight.

I have been a Board member for eight months and have taken the role of Chairman seriously. I received communications, starting earlier this fall, regarding Susan Moss's desire to present to the Board her concerns regarding our non-discrimination notice. It was my responsibility as Chair to begin to manage this situation, as I knew it could easily become emotionally charged. Were there communications on how and when she wished to address the school board? Yes.

Last fall, a constituent, (Ms. Moss) presented me, as Board Chair, with this issue informally after she had inquired with school district staff about the Board's Non Discrimination Policies. Vice Chair Hazel, Superintendent Handelman, and I began the process of due diligence regarding the topic, including engaging our legal counsel in a preliminary discussion. During our monthly board agenda planning we decided to have Ms. Moss speak during public comment rather than granting her request for a specific agenda item at one of our board meetings.

Citizens did speak during public comment in both the January and February Board meetings regarding their personal concerns about the School Board's approach to issues related to sexual orientation. Ms. Moss, however, had not yet come to present her concerns to the entire Board. So, it would have been premature for any Board member to engage in a discussion with other speakers about another citizen's concerns not yet heard by the School Board.

The first public step was to listen to Ms. Moss's concerns through open public comment at our Board meeting. This occurred Monday night. Ms. Moss has now made a formal request to the entire School Board to review our policies and how they comport with non-discrimination protection for students and adults regarding sexual orientation. The School Board will now have our legal counsel do a thorough analysis of this topic and the impacts on our Board Policies and our school system. Once this legal analysis has

occurred, the Board may choose, as a collective body, to further consider this request.

I have and will always be available to any person wishing to communicate with me on any subject regarding my duties as a Board member. If there are any questions or concerns please feel free to email me at [thearn@cdaschools.org](mailto:thearn@cdaschools.org).