

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 5th, 2024

On May 21st, David Burns, the President of the Douglas County School District (DCSD) School board, expressed his “personal opinion,” in the opinion piece, “OPINION: Dear DCSD Redshirts, We will NOT Resign,” in *The Nevada Globe* and made false and inflammatory claims about a community group he calls “Red Shirts,” more accurately known as We Deserve a Better Board (WDaBB), as well as other community members. Here are some of the unsubstantiated assertions President Burns makes in his opinion piece in *The Nevada Globe*:

- “. . . the ‘Redshirts’ are a group of progressives who are backed by the national teachers union and other far-left groups.” The truth is that WDaBB is a community group of over 800 members that was formed to monitor the decisions and actions of the Douglas County School District Board of Trustees. We are comprised of parents, students, grandparents, district staff, DCSD alumni, and other concerned stakeholders in the community. Our group has no affiliations with any teachers’ unions, period. We also do not associate with any groups outside of the Carson Valley and Lake Tahoe. All of our contributions have come from private individuals. So, this claim is completely false.
- “They promote an Anti-American, Marxist agenda that has infected our education system in Douglas County, and across the country, with disastrous results.” This is offensive, especially to those in our group who have served in the military and the many proud Americans who only want the best education for our children and accountability for the finances and other decisions of our school board. A few others who support the majority of the current board have made claims during public comment that Marxism is being taught in our schools and that WDaBB is made up of Marxists. When we question them, they are unable to provide any specific examples of this in our school district’s curriculum or within our schools. This is a national talking point that is completely false. Burns and his supporters who make such claims must provide specific examples and details; if they cannot, they should stop.
- “Based on the information obtained through the Nevada Department of Education [website](#), the proficiency scores are averaging about 33 percent. The test scores for our Hispanic and Native American students are worse, averaging 10 percent.” President Burns has repeatedly made this claim; however, the results for Douglas County School District posted in the Nevada Report Card data do not support this claim. Marty Swisher has emailed President Burns and requested he share the specific information as proof, but he does not respond. Based on what he has found in the Nevada Report Card for DCSD and shared with all school board trustees. This is another inaccurate and damaging comment by President Burns.

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In addition, President Burns identifies eight community members by name who are either part of WDaBB, local attorneys, or two fellow trustees (Mrs. Mae Hiatt, Ms. Leslie Holkenson, Mr. Robbe Lehmann, Mr. Rich McGuffin, Mrs. Sharla Hales, Mr. Jim Hales, Mrs. Linda Gilkerson, and Mrs. Yvonne Wagstaff). His disparaging comments and disrespectful name-calling are unbecoming of the president of our school board.

The opinion article in its entirety violates Douglas County School District Bylaws under Article VII No. 070 Code of Conduct Section 7: *"Trustees carry a public trust and should carry out their duties in a professional and courteous manner both as trustees and in their interaction with the public. Trustees should strive to present their views in a professional and respectful manner, avoiding personal attacks. Trustees should extend every courtesy to those who appear before the Board. Nonverbal communication must be respectful."* Additionally, Section G of Bylaw Article VII No. 070 Code of Conduct *"Recognize that authority rests with the whole Board assembled in public meetings, make no personal promises and avoid any private action which may compromise the Board or its policies;"*.

Please read Burns's opinion article at <https://thenevadaglobe.com/fl/opinion-dear-dcsd-redshirts-we-will-not-resign/> and decide for yourself.

We Deserve a Better Board calls on DCSD School Board President David Burns to apologize for his False and Inflammatory Statements.

The truth is that President David Burns, along with Past President Susan Jansen, have worked to dismantle our school district. They led the call to fire Maupin, Cox, and LeGoy Law Firm, and Burns and Jansen have caused six key leaders to resign, (Keith Lewis, Joe Girdner, Adam Dedmon, Tony Magnotta, Mark Rhodes, and Caryn Harper), and we predict more will follow.

Change must happen. We Deserve a Better Board will continue to hold our Douglas County School Board accountable, and we support Melinda Gneiting and Erinn Miller in the November general election for school board trustees. Let's return our focus on students and their needs.