

SAD 17 resignations continue amid board rancor

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By Nicole Carter

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PARIS — A third director of Maine School Administrative District 17 has resigned, saying her requests to have all directors trained in the board’s mandated code of conduct were rebuffed.

Shauna Broyer of Oxford, who was elected this year, submitted her resignation Dec. 22, effective immediately.

“There are some people on the board who are not working” for the sake of the district,” she said Tuesday. “Some are not following the directors’ code of conduct, which is separating the board and putting its integrity at risk.”

[She is the third member of the 22-person board to resign this month.](#)

[On Dec. 5, Stacia Cordwell of Oxford stepped down citing the “new game being played with school board directors: ‘vote how we want or we will have you removed.’”](#) She referred to the effort to recall Paris Directors Julia Lester and Sarah Otterson, who were targeted for their support of the district’s proposed Gender Identity of Students policy.

Lester resigned Dec. 4. Sarah Otterson has opted to stay on the board at least until Jan. 10.

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The board voted Dec. 5 to table the policy indefinitely while it reviews community feedback from a Nov. 1 forum and continues consideration of laws and court decisions regarding [the document, which can be read at https://tinyurl.com/yty6p7fr](https://tinyurl.com/yty6p7fr).

[Opponents of the five-page policy have cited concerns](#) about use of restrooms and locker rooms by students according to their gender identity and requiring staff to not disclose information to parents without the approval of a student. The nondisclosure issue involves instances where a student has asked to be called by their preferred rather than legal name in school or use their gender identity on school records. However, parents would be able to access any information contained in their children’s school records by request.

Broyer said Tuesday that she felt directors would benefit from reinforcing the idea that they are elected to represent the eight-town district as whole, not their individual towns.

After witnessing at least five incidents where the code of conduct has been violated, Broyer said she requested Chairwoman Natalie Andrews of Paris to schedule Steven Bailey, executive director for the Maine School Management Association, to provide refresher training on boardmanship and conduct at the board's next scheduled meeting. Broyer also requested that Andrews schedule an executive session.

During an email exchange between Broyer and Andrews, Andrews suggested that Broyer take on the task of working with Bailey to schedule training. Over the course of several more days, the two also disagreed on the provisions to call for an executive session and its terms, according to Broyer.

Finally, on Dec. 22, Broyer tendered her resignation, effective immediately.

It reads, in part: "My intentions with this executive session have been clear from the beginning. It is to hold a board member accountable for their multiple infractions of our Directors Code of Conduct. Within my time here on the board there have been 5 infractions of that Code of Conduct by that board member alone.

"His behavior has been allowed to continue without any action from you, though I know it has been requested," Broyer wrote. "Not only have you allowed him, and a few others, to show inappropriate behavior in the board meetings, you also partook in that behavior and have had to make phone calls personally apologizing to me for your behavior . . ."

"There are good people serving on this board, but it is in disarray," Broyer said.

Andrews has not responded to a Dec. 23 request for comment.

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