

Members of the Tewksbury Township Board of Education,

For various reasons, the majority of people in the United States, don't volunteer to serve on local boards of education. Members of local school boards are amateurs, but are asked to accept the mantle of "Government Official". It's a service for which one isn't compensated (at least not in most districts) but which demands the acceptance of fairly substantial responsibility. It's a special sort of person who chooses to join their local board of education

Because of this responsibility, NJ has established a code of ethics by which local board of ed. members are obligated to abide. The provisions of this code of ethics aim to protect the members of the board, the school district, the students, and the local community from possibly well-intentioned, but inappropriate actions by individual board members, among other things. Training is offered to board members regarding this code to assist them in understanding its provisions and how they must work within it.

The faculty, of course, has substantial responsibilities as well, not the least of which is to protect the quality and integrity of the education students in their district receive, and which the people of that same district pay for. Part of this includes acting appropriately when they see actions, or patterns of actions which not only violate a code of ethics, but which their centuries of combined experience and education as professional educators tell them will lessen the quality of the education which their district provides.

Unfortunately such a situation currently exists in Tewksbury. Over recent months, members of this board have, a number of times, acted in ways which we believe violate the Code of Ethics, over-step the bounds of their mandate, and at times over-reach the limited range of activities which volunteers on a local board of education are qualified to engage in. The Tewksbury Education Association, the representative body of the Faculty and staff in Tewksbury, is obligated, as in fact every citizen is, to follow the appropriate course of action. And despite our trepidation, we are too heavily invested in the education of the children of Tewksbury to shirk that responsibility.

We will communicate further with representatives of the Board of Education regarding these matters when it is appropriate.

Respectfully,
The Tewksbury Education Association,
Co-Presidents Stephen Strange and Bonnie Mendralla

