

Public Comment:

- **Against/Contra** 3.a - Spotlights

Jim Scheppke

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

The disgraceful leadership of Board Chair Satya Chandragiri has reached a new low with delaying recognition of Eddy Binford-Ross as the Oregon Student Journalist of the Year. He claims it has nothing to do with her expose of his dysfunctional leadership and that of the majority of the School Board. No one is buying that. Of course it has everything to do with that. Binford's article exposes for all time the fact that Chandragiri, and his fellow directors Lippold, Goss, Bethell and Heyen are nothing more than political hacks and pawns of Oregon Right to Life and the Marion County Republicans. They ran for the School Board not because they cared about our schools, but merely as a stepping stone to higher office. Their positions were bought and paid for with over \$100,000 in contributions from Oregon Right to Life. Their tenure on the Board has been a total disaster and we are lucky that our highly competent School Superintendent did not resign a long time ago in disgust at their dysfunction. That is why on May 18th we need to elect a new majority to the School Board: Osvaldo Avila, Ashley Carson Cottingham, Karina Ortiz, and Maria Hinojos Pressy. Then two years from now Chandragiri, Bethel and Heyen have to go. We've had enough. I hope we have learned our lesson and will never again let big money special interests take over our school board.

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Kirsten Manning

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

Your decision to remove an extraordinary South Salem High students from spotlights, stating that it might be politically construed is a thinly-veiled attempt to silence her coverage of the school board. Her coverage was factually accurate, and if exposes the funding sources of school board members in a way that is harmful to them, perhaps they shouldn't have taken that funding I the first place. Chair Chandrigiri, silencing recognition of outstanding students and their extraordinary achievements is the OPPOSITE of the mission of a school board. Your politically-motivated behavior, disguised as "protection" of said student is deplorable and transparent. I am, once again, ashamed that this school board represents our community, because it does not reflect majority opinion. I recognize the outstanding achievements of this student and you should too, in a timely manner. NOT in a manner which works for your political agenda. Do better.

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Breanna Webb

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

Don't not deny the journalist her spotlight because YOU have an issue with the politics. It's obvious by you even questioning it that you are the problem and further sharing this, already available information, shines a light on the problems within our school board, to punish the student for speaking the truth shows every bit of how much the board does not care for it's students. Give her her spotlight.

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Ellen Keithley-Garcia

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

It is wrong to rescind the invitation to spotlight Eddy Binford Ross. Student achievement should be celebrated! The Chair's claim that recognizing this incredible student might possibly be seen as unintended political endorsement is disingenuous, at best. (Especially considering the Chair has already publicly endorsed candidates.

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Erin McGrath

District Staff / Personal del distrito

Salem

Be grown-ups and acknowledge that a student has done an outstanding job, is being recognized for doing that outstanding job....even though it is critical of you. Your lack of support shows your pettiness.

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Cynthia Coggin-Antone

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

I am strongly opposed to delaying recognition of Eddy for the journalism award. It is shameful, and an embarrassment to the SKPS board and our educational system.

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- **Against/Contra** 3.a - Spotlights

Lori Lassen

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

I am completely against the delay in Eddy Binford-Ross's receiving her recognition. The S/K school board has gone completely rogue! What is wrong with you!

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Nancy MacMorris-Adix

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

I have been watching the school board meetings for the past 9 months with increasing concern about the motives of the board as a whole and the lack of civil discourse directed from the board toward District staff. I have watched the board ignore community concerns, especially those from students. I have seen the board limit public input to written comments that I have no confidence are even read by most board members. I have been shocked at the board's leadership and it's handling of both the superintendent's evaluation and the resolution about voting by zone.

Now, the leadership has requested that a student journalist be removed from the spotlight on success. Eddy Binford Ross has done extensive research and published articles on issues very important to our community. For these efforts, she has been named Oregon's Student Journalist of the Year. Because her most recent work does not reflect well on our current school board, she has been removed from the Spotlights for this meeting. This is unacceptable and demeaning to a student who deserves to be acknowledged by her District. The heavy hand of the current board leadership seems contrary to board policy and devoid of the spirit of nonpartisanship that characterized the Salem-Keizer school board for many years. This latest action is yet one more reason that the chair and vice chair should step down.

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Kristen Grainger

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

Public relations advice to S-K school board: when you excuse a wrong-headed decision as a desire to avoid politicizing an already apolitical matter, you've just politicized it. Nothing about the meritorious and noteworthy efforts of a student journalist could be construed as politicized, since a central tenet of journalism is objectivity, meaning, "free of bias or partisanship." If a student journalist's work has already been deemed excellent by organizations representing professional journalists, trust that it is empirically excellent and objective. You need not fear adding your recognition to the heaps of accolades her reporting has already received. In fact, the S-K school board should be shouting her achievements from the rooftops instead of a series of statements and actions that are perceived, at best, as snubbing her for doing a journalist's job - shining a light in dark places - or at worst, retaliating against her for shining that light a little too close to home for your own comfort. Here's another profession where objectivity is essential to good outcomes: education.

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Danielle Hoffman

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

I am writing to express my grave concern over the effort to delay honoring Eddy Binford-Ross for her being named Oregon Student Journalist of the Year. While Board Chair Chandragiri noted that honoring her according to the original schedule would "politicize" the award, I strongly believe that not doing so is politicizing this recognition that was already planned and scheduled. This move further speaks to the growing public distrust of our current board and unfairly delays this young person's well deserved and earned recognition.

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The Rev'd Calvin K. Steck and Gail Kelch Steck

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

We are upset about the decision taken by the Board Chair and Vice Chair, removing a student's award presentation from this Tuesday's meeting agenda. The rules of so called avoiding "political issues" is inappropriate in an educational institution, and an insult to the integrity of this young woman. This action is unworthy of any educational enterprise and had diminished the respectability of the Salem-Keizer School Board.

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Jennifer Salazar

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

I am disappointed the Board has delayed the recognition of SKSD student journalist Eddy Binford-Ross. She deserves the accolades for her journalistic accomplishments. She is not affiliated with Democratic Socialists of America. Their local chapter shared Binford-Ross' article and added their own commentary. It appears you are penalizing her for their action. In this instance, the Board is making a partisan choice. Shame on you for not recognizing the difference.

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Robert J Glasgow

SKEA

Keizer

Dear Superintendent Perry and Members of the Salem Keizer School Board:

I am a proud member of OEA, educator for the Salem Keizer School District, and a World Language teacher in the South Salem IB program.

Many times I have seen my students excel, acquire a high level of fluency, receive scholarships, and become accomplished contributors in related fields after graduation. The majority of these students were also students that learned a great deal of Spanish and enjoyed my class.

And like many teachers, there have been times when students that were critical of me, my methods, my class, and even my subject area received accolades from other sources. How did I handle this disconnect? I did it by offering my sincere congratulations and support.

When dealing with students that are about to take the leap into adult society, small and petty is not a good look to be wearing. We should model the society where we also want to live. For me, this would be a society where people can accept varying viewpoints and even allow the critical lens that they apply to others to be applied to their individual self.

As in the classroom, my role as teacher is to teach my subject area (linguistically and culturally) and to allow space for my students to be autonomous individuals capable of thinking for themselves. This includes moments when they disagree with me or may express support for an ideology that I do not support.

In the future, let's give our students credit where (and when) credit is due. We need to be the grown ups.

Thank You

Robert J Glasgow

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Daniel M. Potter

Parent / Padre de familia

Keizer

The failure by the Chair and Vice-Chair to not honor and recognize the student journalist from South Salem HS during the spotlight portion of the agenda for the amazing reporting done on the current board is wrong, and a slap in the face to journalism and to all the students of our district. Chair Chandragiri and Vice-Chair Bethell are NOT serving the best interests of our students, and both should resign immediately.

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Sarah Shinn

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

I am strongly against your removal of the Spotlight of a nationally recognized student journalist at Tuesday's board meeting. It is unacceptable that a "nonpartisan" body such as the school board takes partisan stances (especially in their social media accounts) and is effectively retaliating against this student. The student's recognition should be reinstated.

Please note: this form is not clear regarding the for/against notation. I am AGAINST the board removing the spotlight and I am FOR reinstating it.

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Patrice and Michael Pollard

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad
Salem

Director Chandragiri:

You were wrong to delay the recognition of a South Salem senior student, the Oregon student journalist of the year.

You stated that you did not want the board distracted by politics so that the board could focus on the students. Your decision appears to be both punitive and political. The article by this student journalist, which you referenced as being on another site, was very well researched and described clearly the role that money and politics played in your election campaign and those of other board members.

If political is defined as the way power is used, then you definitely used your power to delay her well deserved recognition.

You stated that if you recognized this student journalist at this time it could possibly be construed as an endorsement of the candidates who are listed on the referenced post. The 2021 voters pamphlet already lets community members know who you and Danielle Bethell have endorsed. That argument rings hollow.

To delay a recognition of a student journalist because it could be construed as political "at this time" is a political decision that you made. It was not an equitable decision.

Patrice and Michael Pollard

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Paul Krissel

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

I am appalled, but not surprised, that Chair Chandragiri, removed the recognition of a student journalist from the spotlight agenda. She has been recognized and awarded statewide for her full body of work as an exceptional journalist. She did some good old fashioned investigative reporting to expose the political and financial ties of current board members. An organization chose to post the story on their social media. Many organizations and individuals post news stories to their members, this is not a first. Yet now the chair determines that to be a political move that could influence the upcoming school board elections, so removes her recognition. This is the same board and chair that could not agree on an evaluation for their superintendent, who received statewide awards and national recognition. If you are going to start removing the voices of people whose actions might influence the school board election, then you yourself, chair Chandragiri, should have recused yourself from chairing this meeting. You appear in the upcoming voter pamphlet endorsing several candidates for school board. Surely that could have an influence in the election. One of the candidates you endorsed took the statements of your student advisor out of context and used her to advance a position on SROs in her voter pamphlet statement. Are you going to suspend the student advisor because someone referred to her in a political context? This just illustrates the pattern the majority of the members of this board have engaged in for several years. You reject and repress the voices of students and parents who challenge you. The fact that we have to put this testimony in writing and cannot personally tell you what is on our minds is part of that suppression of voices you find uncomfortable. I hope this community will elect four new members of the board who support student and parent voices, including members of the BIPOC community and working and poor families that you have ignored and abused.

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Carol Papinchak

Community Member / Miembro de la comunidad

Salem

I am appalled at the removal of the recognition of an outstanding student journalist at this meeting, just to be added back in after the election. If that doesn't stink of politics, nothing does. The school board should be proud and honored that a nationally recognized student journalist arose from our school district. You are showing your pettiness and are not a good model for the conduct befitting a school board.

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Levi Herrera-Lopez

Parent / Padre de familia

Salem

I'm in writing in support of recognizing student journalist Eddy Binford-Ross for the pride and honor her achievements have brought to the Salem-Keizer community.

Pulling her recognition is pure act of partisanship.

It is also a pure act of retaliation against Ms. Binford-Ross, a student for whose wellbeing this Board is responsible, for the content of her writing.

It is also an attack on the free press the likes of which are normally reserved for dictators, autocrats and anti-democratic regimes the world over.

Shame on Board leadership for doing this.