

## Press Clippings 4/15/2018

---Courier News--- 4/15/18

### **Official: No laws violated by board**

State attorney general's office rules on Ward's closed session complaint

BY RAFAEL GUERRERO

School District U46 board members did not violate state law when they met in closed session to conduct self-evaluations and discussed members' use of social media, the Illinois Attorney General's Office ruled this week.

U46 board member [Jeanette Ward filed a complaint](#) charging the board violated the Open Meetings Act during a February meeting at which one of the topics discussed was using social media to address district issues. Ward, who did not attend the meeting, listened to the audio tape of the meeting and charged that the board conversation was aimed at curbing her use of social media.

Assistant Attorney General Shannon Barnaby reviewed the tape and found the discussion fit within the "context of the board discussing its practices and procedures and how to improve certain practices."

State law allows publicly elected bodies to meet behind closed doors to evaluate themselves and to discuss practices, procedures and professional ethics as long as there is a member of a statewide association present, Barnaby wrote in her ruling. The U46 meeting was attended by two representatives of the Illinois Association of School Boards.

Ward said that while she did not agree with the ruling, she would not challenge it.

"I appreciate that the attorney general took time to look into the situation but I disagree with their conclusion profoundly," she said.

She also said she believes the General Assembly should change the Open Meetings Act so that board self-evaluations are open to the public. Ward has said she boycotted the self-evaluation process because it was being conducted in closed session.

School board President Donna Smith the findings from the investigation speak for themselves.

"This is their answer to their complaint," Smith said. "If they had found anything wrong, they would have put it in their answer on how we need to change our practices."

Smith has previously said the social media guidelines considered at the [February meeting](#) were to be something board members took under consideration as suggestions. They were not meant to be a mandate for members' future actions, she said.

Ward has had a contentious relationship with some board members and drawn the ire of district residents with comments she had put on social media sites such as Facebook.

In one instance, she questioned an assignment given to her sixth-grade daughter in which students were to discuss an article in which the author argued that Christians, Jews and Muslims worship the same god, a position with which Ward disagrees.

She's also come under fire for using Facebook to quote African-American author Jason L. Riley during Black History Month, whose position is black America's problems stem from "values and habits, not oppression from a manifestly unjust society," a stand that many saw as offensive and racist.

Ward has also voiced opinions on such topics as climate change and transgender issues on social media that some have found questionable given her position as a school board member.

**---Daily Herald--- 4/15/18**  
**Larkin clubs host McTeacher's Night**  
SUBMITTED BY MELISSA THORSEN

Larkin High School in U-46 School District held a McTeacher's Night Fundraiser at the Elgin McDonald's on Larkin Ave. A McTeacher's Night is organized to help raise money for local schools by having teachers work at McDonald's and then giving a percentage of the night's sales back to the local school.

On Wednesday, March 21st, teachers and students from Larkin High Schools Yearbook and Broadcasting clubs came together to raise funds to help support both clubs. During this event the teachers and students volunteered to work a shift handing out orders, cleaning tables, making ice cream treats, working the drive-thru, and even dressing up in a Pie costume while selling fresh hot apple pies. Student Sky Aranda dressed in the Pie outfit the entire night and had a blast mingling with the students and taking pictures.

Added to this night of FUNdraising was a photo booth area ran by student Yesenia Munoz. The Larkin High School Students enjoyed stopping to get their picture taken.

A special thank you goes to Larkin High School student Jaime Munoz, who organized the event as well as everyone who worked and attended.

Funds raised from this event will go to help support both the yearbook and the Broadcasting Clubs.

The McTeacher's Night was courtesy of the Elgin McDonald's owner/operators, the Bear family.

For more information about events provided by the Elgin McDonald's, contact Julie Travers, community relations director, at [Julie.travers@comcast.net](mailto:Julie.travers@comcast.net), or visit [www.bearfamilyrestaurants.com](http://www.bearfamilyrestaurants.com).

## SPORTS

---Daily Herald--- 4/15/18

### **Common bond brings rivals together form Elgin, Larkin**

BY MIKE MIAZGA

Elgin High School wrestling coach Mark Woollard and his Larkin counterpart Mike Hodge have developed a friendship in recent years fostered through the sport.

"Mike does his summer camp and my guys will go over there and I do a spring camp and we have the Larkin kids over," Woollard explained.

Woollard and Hodge's friendship runs even deeper due to a commonality both wish they never had to endure.

Woollard lost his father after a second battle with cancer in 2014. Unfortunately, Hodge finds himself in a similar situation. His dad, Michael Sr., currently is battling the disease. Michael Hodge Sr., is a Larkin graduate.

"Mike called me personally to tell me what was going on," Woollard said. "My first thoughts were that my father went through that and I feel for the family. I know what they are going through and what they are going to go through. You know the ups and downs. It's a terrible disease."

Woollard has taken the initiative to help the family from a financial standpoint. In addition to a GoFundMe page the family has set up, [gf.me/u/hqy3ig](https://www.gofundme.com/u/hqy3ig), Woollard is spearheading a benefit on Saturday May 5 at the Owl's Athletic Club in Elgin (214 E. Chicago St.). All proceeds will go to the Hodge family. The benefit will feature raffles, food and entertainment.

"Mike is a personal friend and being he is part of the wrestling community I am trying to reach as many people as possible to assist," Woollard said. "We're going to see what we can do to make the best out of a bad situation. We're going to bring the east side and the west side and the mutual schools together and we'll go from there."

Woollard, who has reached out to the wrestling coaches fraternity throughout the state, also is thinking of starting other fundraising endeavors for the family such a charity basketball game between wrestling coaches and wrestlers, as well something along the lines of a benefit takedown wrestling tournament.

"It will be terrible basketball, but it will be an event," Woollard said.

Hodge is more than appreciative of his east-side coaching counterpart's efforts.

"It's awesome," he said. "I really appreciate everything Mark is doing for my family and for myself. He's a true man that is helping out one of his comrades."

Hodge said he enjoys the camaraderie he enjoys with Woollard on and off the mat.

"We work well together," he said. "At tournaments, we'll help each other and give each other advice. Except on the nights we wrestle each other, we have a good relationship. When our teams are wrestling each other, all bets are off. The second we step on the mat we're competitors and the second we step off, we're all good friends. I'm glad we have that kind of relationship."

Hodge also is thankful for the advice and encouragement he's received from Woollard regarding his dad's illness.

"Mark tells me to keep my head up," he said. "He's told me what his dad went through and the tough time they had and how they tried to keep their heads up and pray for the best. Mark is there for me. He's given me all his heart and that's something myself and my family truly appreciate."