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Sept. 10, 2021

To Oregon School Board Members,

Before joining an Oregon school board, each and every appointed or elected individual is required to take an oath of office. The wording can vary by district, but generally follows this template:

“I ...do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, the constitution and laws of the state of Oregon, and the policies of (my district). During my term, I will faithfully and impartially discharge the responsibilities of the office to the best of my ability.”

Powerful words, but pretty simple ones, too: I will obey the law, and I will do my very best.

Yet at a time when Oregon’s school boards have never been more tested, we are also lamentably seeing a remarkable number of board members doing their very best to ignore the law or openly defy it. Such behavior is simply unacceptable.

We are duly elected leaders of our communities. We set examples for young people. We are sworn to follow the law – whether we like that law or not. Whether the issue involves court-sanctioned health safeguards during a deadly pandemic or constitutionally protected forms of speech, our oaths bind us. We must do better, even in the face of divided and sometimes hostile communities.

Our actions should be centered on positive outcomes for students. Creating even bigger divisions in our schools and communities does not serve that end. We call on Oregon’s more than 1,400 school board members to carefully weigh the consequences of your actions, to heed your oaths, and to lead by example.

Our children deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

Jim Green
Executive Director

Maureen Wolf
President

Sami Al-Abdrabbuh
OSBMCC President