

## **Inaccurate Coverage of Recent District Policy Considerations**

Recent coverage by a Milwaukee area news channel about Arrowhead was one-sided, sensationalized and incomplete, failing to give fair coverage to incredibly pertinent information. When the actual facts of the matter are considered, there is nothing newsworthy about the situation.

CBS 58 did a disservice to Arrowhead and to anyone who saw the broadcasted segment. The news station failed to emphasize the indisputable facts included in this press release. Rather than provide accurate, balanced, fact-based news, the station featured a distorted story that negatively portrayed the district and the school board.

CBS 58 was asked to correct its coverage, but minimal effort was made to do so. After multiple conversations, the headline of the on-line article was finally changed, but the station continues to portray the issue as “controversial” when there is no controversy. Unfortunately, the two days the misleading headline was on-line cannot be undone.

This press release provides the facts that CBS 58 either chose to ignore or failed to gather before broadcasting an irresponsible story. It is not clear why the station was so reluctant to give viewers the correct information so the true story is told. The reasonable assumption is that a sensational headline/story creates controversy and generates clicks. An accurate headline in this case would completely lack any controversy and likely generate little to no interest.

Approximately 350 public Wisconsin school districts, including Arrowhead, use Neola's Policy Services to make sure their policies are current and legally correct. Neola regularly provides recommended updates to policies. Those updates are based on court rulings, state law, federal legislation and any other circumstances that contribute to, if not legally require, modifications to the terms of any given policy. Sometimes language changes are as simple as correcting a misspelling or grammatical error. Some changes merely involve deleting redundant information.

In its latest round of policy updates, Neola recommended removing language in Policy 2210 - Curriculum Development because the same language exists in Policy 2131 - Educational Outcomes. Neola determined the language as not appropriate for Policy 2210. Neola's explanation for this particular change is:

"This policy is updated by removing a reference that is not pertinent to this policy and the curriculum items in the citations. The removed language is part of the educational outcome goals and expectations reflected in Section 118.01 of the Wisconsin statutes, not the curriculum development standards in PI 8. Therefore, this reference is removed from this policy, but remains in Policy 2131 - Educational Outcome Goals and Expectations."

Policy 2210 connects back to state curriculum development standards identified in PI 8. Policy 2131 ties back to goals/expectations language in Wisconsin statute 118.01 (that correction is

included in the reference section of the policy). In both (all) cases, the Board must abide by state laws that apply to public school districts. Arrowhead's curriculum, expectations/outcomes and our curriculum development process abide by all applicable laws.

To be clear, the language that is being stricken in policy 2210 already exists, and continues to exist, in policy 2131. ***The changes to Policy 2210 are non-substantive, "clean-up" language modifications PROPOSED BY NEOLA that result in no changes to how the district operates.*** The language being removed relates to actual curricular goals/expectations, so it is more appropriate to keep that language in Policy 2131 - Educational Outcome Goals and Expectations.

The language in question was originally included in the policy by Neola, not the Arrowhead School Board. Neola, not the Arrowhead School Board, determined the language was not appropriate for that particular policy. Neola, not the Arrowhead School Board, recommends deleting the redundant language. If this is a story worth covering, the accurate headline should be: ***"Neola recommends all 350+ school districts eliminate redundant language that is not appropriate for Policy 2210 but appropriately remains in Policy 2131."*** Another equally accurate headline is: ***"Arrowhead Policy Committee recommends keeping statutorily required inclusive practices language in Policy 2131."***

This language change is not about Arrowhead changing inclusive language or practices. Neola is simply clarifying its own recommended wording to this policy. This particular language change is one of approximately 60 changes that are part of the regular, routine updates that Neola provides to ALL districts that use Neola's policy service.

The Arrowhead Union High School District School Board's policy approval process is as transparent as it can be. Every policy change is included on the BoardDocs website for the public to see. The agendas for every meeting are posted for the community to see. All policy changes are reviewed by a policy committee at public meetings anyone can attend. The changes are then forwarded to the full School Board at another public meeting that everyone can attend and all policy language changes are again made public via BoardDocs.

Every school board member is an elected official so the board is totally accountable to the community.

All of the information in this press release is accurate and verifiable. CBS 58 ran a story based on what appears to be one individual's misrepresentation of simple facts and transparent processes. The misleading headline was kept on-line for two days, and no retraction or correction was provided by the TV news broadcast or on the website. Caution must be exercised when watching CBS 58 or reading its articles.