



An Open Letter to the District 201 School Board and Local Political Leaders:

Berwyn C.A.R.E.S. (Citizens Aligned to Renew Education for Students) is a 501c3 organization created to unite residents interested in renewing and sustaining an enthusiasm, interest and passion for the education system in Berwyn. Like you, our Members share a commitment to ensuring the best education for local students.

We would like to bring your attention to a recent situation in the District that raised the concern of parents and community members alike and to encourage you to **consider new policies which strictly prohibit student recruitment by teachers, coaches, school staff and district officials for political campaigns.**

In late February our organization was contacted by numerous parents who shared that high school teachers and coaches had recruited students to participate in what was portrayed as a 'Community Service Project' on Election Day in Cicero. Students were advised that they would be transported to various locations in Cicero, and would be provided lunch, dinner and \$50 for their 'work'. Concerned parents shared that their children who subsequently participated were asked to pass out campaign literature at polling places and were directed to go door-to-door on behalf of a specific candidate with ties to the District 201 School Board.

If true, this situation created unnecessary and inappropriate conflict for parents, teachers, students and coaches and has the appearance, if not reality, of intimidating those, who may fear retribution for non-participation in what was without question a political campaign.

By addressing this issue publicly, we hope to bring positive change that benefits students and removes tension from the learning environment. We encourage the District 201 School Board to evaluate whether influence was used to mislead or coerce students and faculty and to move quickly to denounce such activities. To prevent such a situation from occurring in the future, we urge you to create and adopt a policy that strictly prohibits teachers, coaches, school staff and district officials from engaging in any type of student recruitment for political campaigns. We strongly suggest that parents and community members be involved in drafting such policy and are willing to work together on such an initiative.

Thank you.

Berwyn CARES Board of Directors