



FOUNDATION  
AGAINST  
INTOLERANCE  
& RACISM

June 8, 2022

Dr. Deborah Sixel  
Principal, Kiel Middle School  
Board of Education, Kiel Area School District  
416 Paine Street  
Kiel, WI 53042

*Sent via email*

Dear Dr. Sixel and Members of the Board of Education:

I write to follow up to our May 31 letter regarding the Title IX complaint filed by the district against three Kiel Middle School students. The district accused those students of sexual harassment for not using the preferred “they/them” pronouns of a classmate.

Although we have received no response to our letter, we have learned of a June 2 letter from the board to the school community. That letter states that the board has “issued clear directives and expectations to all students involved in this matter for the purpose of preventing bullying and harassment and ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all of our students” and “the District considers this matter closed.”

We urge the board to clarify to the community that First Amendment rights will be respected. As explained in our May 31 letter, forcing students to use the preferred alternative pronouns of others (and punishing them if they do not) violates their First Amendment rights. The district has already filed a complaint against students for engaging in protected speech. Unless it provides clear assurances that it will neither compel ideological speech nor punish protected speech going forward, the district’s actions will have a chilling effect across the community.

Very truly yours,

Letitia Kim  
Managing Director of the Legal Network  
Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism