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# Second FOIA request made 1

## Details sought about school rules on homosexuality

TRAVERSE CITY — The founder of a religious-based website that discourages homosexuality filed a second request of records from Traverse City's public schools.

Bill Wiesner's second inquiry under the state's Freedom of Information Act is shorter than his first, received by TCAPS on March 24. Both seek information about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues in schools.

The founder of TCFamily.org asked for "any procedures or guidelines or lesson plans or conversations that have been used when talking to any TCAPS students regarding any LGBT issues," along with "TCAPS funding, sponsorship, promotion, discussion, correspondence, and/ or relationship with any TCAPS students regarding any LGBT issues."

The students' identities can be protected, Wiesner wrote. But, he added, names of adults who broach the subject with students and information about how parents are notified when the topic comes up should be included.

Wiesner's first letter, to be answered by Thursday, sought information on the school district's relationship with a Central High School Gay-Straight Alliance, various community groups and specific individuals.

It was prompted in part by a school board review of a policy against bullying that would include sexual orientation as a protected class, along with race, gender and religion.

Wiesner did not respond to messages seeking comment Monday.

The state's FOIA law allows anyone to request documents, emails, budgets and other items from public entities. Governments have five days to respond to the initial letter and can request 10 extra business days to complete the order.

"We'll provide all the information that we can within the time limits for anything that's already prepared," Superintendent Steve Cousins said. "If we have it, we'll share it."

Information generally isn't free. TCAPS charges \$15.06 per hour, based on the lowest-paid clerical worker, to search for and pull the material. Copies cost 27 cents each.

Wiesner's first request was received just prior to spring break. Christine Davis, executive director of human resources, said she wants to notify him of cost estimates by the end of the day today.

"If it looks like, when I start sorting through it, that it might be extensive, I'll let him know," she said.

Wiesner told school board members in March that by specifically protecting students based on sexual orientation, "you are endorsing it to some degree."

Opponents also have said the board should adopt a policy without designated protected groups.

Proposed rules include language that prohibits "bullying, taunting, stalking, hazing and other forms of harassment" of any kind. Expanding the list of protections has been supported by the federal Office of Civil Rights.

The board is not expected to adopt the bullying policy at its April 11 meeting. Members want to review guidelines for enforcing the policy in committee, the next meeting of which isn't until April 20, Davis said.

The next full sessions at which a vote could happen are a study session April 25 and a regular meeting May 9.

Cousins said Wiesner's request isn't likely to spark significant changes to the outcome. It already has been reviewed by administration and a board committee.

"It's an issue that people feel very passionately about, and so we're going to hear from people," board President Marjie Rich said. "As a board, we can't let that unduly influence us, because we have to do what's best for the children."

It's still important to keep students from becoming bullies, and presentations about diversity and tolerance can be beneficial, she said. Past TCAPS speakers were among those Wiesner cited in his original FOIA request.

Rich attended one such elementary program that talked in broad terms, not specifics.



"I would hardly point a finger at them and feel that they are contributing to additional problems in our district," Rich said. "It's not persuading students to try different lifestyles that they might not be inclined to on their own."

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