

Media Release Act 31

5/25/23

Dear Community Members,

The District recently received notification from the DPI that the **preliminary** finding is that the District is not in compliance with components of Wis. Stat. §121.02(1)(h) and **some** components of Wis. Stat. §121.02(1)(L)4. We have the right to a public hearing prior to any ultimate finding of non-compliance. This would require a petition to the State Superintendent. If that is not the path the Board would like to take, DPI will help the District develop a plan for compliance. The information presented by the Ashland Daily Press and a community member's FB posts are loaded with inaccuracies.

The headline stating “fail to meet standards” is misleading. DPI clearly stated that these are **preliminary** findings.

- It was not a “**parent**” who filed the complaint, it was a resident of Mellen with no children ever attending Mellen School.
- The statement “Mellen textbooks don’t reflect cultural diversity” is also misleading. There is nothing in the report that specifically states “textbooks.”
- “Mellen’s library doesn’t reflect...” The report references “library services, not Mellen’s library.
- “Library materials are so old that they’re not relevant or accurate” is also false. The report says “relevance and accuracy of available items is questionable.” (the items submitted for review)
- “District will have 90 days to submit to DPI a plan on creating a curriculum...” Is not accurate either. The report says “DPI is eager to help Mellen develop a plan for compliance” and “a time period of 90 days for a district to achieve compliance.”
- The paragraph “asking students for preferred pronouns” has nothing to do with the DPI’s review of Act 31 compliance.
- And lastly, “teachers told me they have almost nothing, no teaching about Native Americans other than a skit at Thanksgiving with some Pilgrims eating turkey...” Absolutely false, no teacher ever said this; pure rhetoric.

The Ashland Daily Press, in a rush to print an article to create media hype, failed to do any fact checking nor confirmed any information with the Mellen School District.

We are currently receiving legal counsel on how to proceed. As always, if you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me.

Rhonda Elmhurst-Friemoth
Superintendent
Mellen School District