

# Formal Complaint Against Board Chair Cynthia Wright

**Submitted by:** Michael Williams, School Board Director  
**Medford School District**  
**Date:** February 16, 2025

On **January 23, 2025**, my attorneys sent a formal letter to the Board demanding that the restrictions placed upon me be lifted, citing their unconstitutional nature, lack of due process, and retaliatory intent. This letter outlined how the restrictions violated my rights as an elected official and requested mediation to resolve the dispute. However, on **February 5, 2025**, Board Attorney Thaddeus Pauck, acting under the direction of Board Chair Cynthia Wright, formally denied this request, stating, "That ship has sailed, and his request for an opportunity to respond now, at the meeting on February 6, is therefore denied." Given the Board's refusal to engage in any good-faith resolution, I am now filing this formal complaint.

Over the past several months, Cynthia Wright has played a central role in coordinating, approving, and enforcing retaliatory actions against me. Rather than ensuring fair and neutral governance, she has weaponized Board procedures, facilitated false narratives, and blocked any attempts to de-escalate tensions. Under her leadership, my attempts at dialogue have been ignored, my requests for mediation denied, and policies meant to ensure fairness have been selectively applied against me in a retaliatory manner.

The timeline of events is critical in understanding the retaliatory nature of these actions. **On July 24, 2024**, I spoke publicly regarding my concerns about the reassignment of SRO Doney. This was a matter of public interest, and I was fulfilling my duty as an elected official. Shortly after my statement aired, I received unsolicited communication (from another board director) informing me that efforts, led by Cynthia Wright and Superintendent Bret Champion, were already underway to punish me for speaking out.

Less than two weeks later, **on August 6, 2024**, a formal complaint was filed against me by Ron Havinear. The complaint referenced an event that allegedly took place **on March 12, 2024**, four months prior. If this complaint was based on legitimate concerns, why did Havinear wait until after my public statement to come forward? The timing strongly suggests that the complaint was not brought forward as a neutral grievance, but rather as a direct response to my public comments, coordinated by Cynthia Wright.

Further supporting this conclusion, I have timestamped communication proving that I was made aware of the complaint days before it was officially filed. There is no reasonable explanation for how I could have known about the complaint in advance unless someone with knowledge of the plan to file it had alerted me ahead of time. This strongly indicates coordination among Cynthia

Wright, Superintendent Champion, and others seeking to undermine me in retaliation for my public statements.

Despite my continued efforts to de-escalate tensions and find a resolution through mediation and professional discussion, Cynthia Wright has refused to allow these efforts to move forward. Instead, she has enforced restrictions on my ability to perform my duties, allowed district resources to be used to discredit me, and has actively obstructed my ability to function as a Board Director. These actions, taken as a whole, raise serious concerns about whether Cynthia Wright has abused her position as Board Chair to retaliate against me for exercising my right to free speech and fulfilling my role as an elected official.

- **July 25, 2024** – I was warned by another Board Director that Superintendent Bret Champion and Board Chair Cynthia Wright were actively working to manufacture complaints against me in an attempt to discredit me. Despite this, I did not respond with accusations but instead continued to seek collaboration.
- **October 15, 2024** – I met with Superintendent Champion to address concerns and find a way forward. However, rather than engaging in a productive discussion, he yelled at me, stopped me from leaving, and escalated the situation into a hostile confrontation.
- **November 15, 2024** – I reached out to Board Chair Cynthia Wright in an effort to discuss a resolution that was respectful, collaborative, and restorative. Instead of a productive conversation, she pressured me to resign, stating that *"the walls are closing in on you"* and that I would face *"serious consequences"* if I did not step down.
- **December 13, 2024** – The Board imposed severe and unprecedented restrictions on my ability to perform my elected duties, requiring me to seek written permission from the Superintendent before visiting schools. This was done without due process and with clear retaliatory intent.
- **December 19, 2024** – I sought clarification on the imposed restrictions and requested an opportunity to address the Board publicly regarding my concerns. I was denied any meaningful opportunity to respond.
- **January 23, 2025** – At the same meeting where I was censured, Board Member Kinsella was caught on an open microphone telling a public commenter to "go f\*\*\* yourself", a blatant violation of Board Policy BBF. Unlike me, he faced no disciplinary action, further demonstrating the unequal application of Board policies.
- **January 29, 2025** – My attorney, Charles Bolen, sent a formal letter to Board Attorney Thaddeus Pauck and Board Chair Cynthia Wright, demanding the removal of the restrictions placed on me and requesting mediation. This was denied in a comment stating *"That ship has sailed, and his request for an opportunity to respond now, at the meeting on February 6, is therefore denied."*
- **February 3, 2025** – I emailed Board Chair Wright and the Medford School Board Governance Team formally requesting a reconciliation process and an opportunity to address the Board. I was once again denied any meaningful opportunity to speak.
- **February 5, 2025** – Attorney Thaddeus Pauck responded, stating that the complaints against me had been "fully and finally resolved" and that no mediation or dispute

resolution process would be considered. My request to speak at the February 6, 2025 Board meeting was denied.

Despite my persistent efforts to resolve these conflicts professionally and fairly, I have been denied at every turn. Rather than seeking resolution, actions were taken against me. These actions include but are not limited to public discrediting, excessive restrictions, intimidation, and even baseless criminal allegations, and they have only escalated in severity. The current restrictions are an example of the ongoing bullying and retaliation that I will outline in this complaint.

It has become increasingly clear that these measures are not about good board governance or accurate policy enforcement but rather a targeted campaign to suppress, silence, and remove me from my elected role. With no other viable options left to ensure that I can fulfill my responsibilities as a duly elected Board Director without fear of harassment, retaliation, or intimidation, I am left with no choice but to formally submit this complaint.

This is not a step I take lightly, but it is a necessary one to hold those responsible accountable, to protect the integrity of the Board, and to ensure that no other Board member or public servant is subjected to similar abuses of power in the future.

## **Violations of Board Policies and Request for Investigation**

I am submitting this complaint against Board Chair Cynthia Wright for her unethical, coercive, and retaliatory actions against me as a duly elected Board Director. Under Policy KL – Public Complaints, I am requesting the removal of the restrictions placed upon me or a formal investigation into her conduct, as her actions appear to violate multiple district policies, including but not limited to:

**BBAA** – Individual Board Member’s Authority and Responsibilities

**BBF** – Board Member Standards of Conduct

**BCD** – Board-Superintendent Relationship

**GBNA** – Anti-Harassment, Intimidation, and Retaliation

Her actions include intimidation, retaliation, suppression of my board duties, and attempts to coerce my resignation through threats and undue pressure. Below, I outline these violations along with the relevant policy language that has been violated.

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## **Violations of Policy GBNA – Anti-Harassment, Intimidation, and Retaliation**

*"The Board is committed to providing a positive and productive learning and working environment. Hazing, harassment, intimidation, menacing, bullying, and acts of cyberbullying of staff, students, or third parties by staff, students, or third parties are strictly prohibited and shall not be tolerated in the district. Retaliation against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry is also strictly prohibited."*

## **Violations**

**Board Director Wright threatened retaliation and attempted to pressure me to resign.**

**On November 15, 2025**, I reached out to Wright in an effort to find a way forward that was respectful, collaborative, and restorative. I wanted to address the ongoing tensions within the Board and explore potential resolutions that would allow us to work together productively. However, rather than engaging in a constructive discussion, she attempted to coerce my resignation, stating:

*"The walls are closing in on you" and "You are going to get some serious consequences."  
"The only way that these complaints aren't brought forward is if the board director these complaints are against (you) resign."*

At the time, I was unaware of the full scope of the complaints being prepared against me, making her statements appear to be a deliberate attempt to pressure, intimidate, and coerce me into stepping down. When I asked the board chair to tell me what I was being accused of and who was making the accusation, she refused to tell me. I asked once more stating that I believed that this would only cause more division and it would be an unnecessary escalation, as I was willing and wanted to find a way to address the issue.

**On January 23, 2025**, Wright followed through on her threats by publicly excoriating me and calling my competency into question in a News Channel Five report, both in print and on camera. She stated:

*"His conduct did not meet the standards of professionalism and competence required and expected of a board member."*

Not only was she not a witness to the alleged incident, but her comment was completely unnecessary unless the purpose was to retaliate for my refusal to resign.

Wright supported excessive restrictions, including barring me from visiting schools without written permission, which interfered with my ability to perform my elected duties. These restrictions were put in place shortly after I went public with concerns about misconduct within the district, further demonstrating a pattern of retaliation.

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## **Violations of Policy BBF – Board Member Standards of Conduct**

*"Board members will treat other Board members, the superintendent, staff, and the public with dignity and courtesy and will provide an opportunity for all parties to be heard with due respect for their opinions."*

### **Violations**

Wright failed to treat me with dignity and respect by supporting public messaging that questioned my credibility.

On multiple occasions she ignored my requests for mediation and instead escalated conflict, rather than working toward resolution.

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## **Violations of Policy BCD – Board-Superintendent Relationship**

*"The Board holds the superintendent responsible for carrying out its policies and goals within established guidelines and for keeping the Board informed about school operations."*

### **Violations**

Instead of ensuring neutral oversight, Wright collaborated with the superintendent to undermine me rather than exercising independent judgment.

She actively participated in the creation of complaints against me, violating the expectation that the Board functions as an independent oversight body.

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## **Request for Action**

Given the seriousness of these violations, I request the following:

Immediate removal of restrictions placed upon me that were approved or enforced by Cynthia Wright. This is the requested remedy for this complaint. If removal is denied the following is an alternative to this request to satisfy the complaint:

A third-party investigation into Cynthia Wright's actions, including her role in coordinating complaints and pressuring me to resign.

A full review of her conduct as Board Chair to determine whether she has violated district policy and Board ethics.

A commitment from the Board to ensure that I will not face further intimidation, coercion, or retaliation for fulfilling my elected duties.

This complaint is being submitted under Policy KL – Public Complaints, and I expect a fair, transparent, and impartial review of these concerns.

Thank you for your time and attention to this serious matter. I look forward to your response and the Board's next steps.

Respectfully,

Michael Williams  
School Board Director  
Medford School District

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