

ACT Ardsley Congress of Teachers

May 5, 2023

To the Members of the Ardsley Board of Education,

At the Board of Education meeting this past Tuesday, you willfully – with obvious premeditation – chose to deny publicly the awarding of tenure to two members of our Ardsley School community. These individuals were singled out and professionally humiliated. We would like you to understand the impact of these egregious acts. It is impossible to overstate the extent to which you have violated the trust of the entire faculty and staff in our district.

We understand that it is the role of the Board to discuss personnel. We also understand that the majority of these discussions happen in executive sessions. You had every opportunity – over the course of many years – to discuss these matters regarding these two employees privately. Historically, when a person is not awarded tenure, this decision is not aired during a public forum. The decision is not broadcasted on a video that lives in the permanent and public record of our BOE, viewable by all, including potential future employers. By breaching this past protocol, you have caused unnecessary harm to these individuals and to the integrity of the District's reputation.

It is universally known that board members are able to amend the agenda at any point before a meeting is called to order. You chose not to. You had ample opportunity to treat these educators, who have invested many years of service, with dignity and respect. You chose not to. You had the opportunity to model kindness and compassion. You chose not to.

If, as was made evident at the meeting, the Board is dissatisfied with district protocols surrounding tenure appointments, it is incumbent upon the Board to change these protocols. Any problem with the process as it stands is the result of the Board's own culpability and complacency. Two district employees now pay the price for your negligence.

Your actions this past Tuesday evening have broader implications for our learning community. There are approximately seventy untenured employees — roughly 25% of our faculty and staff — who are now painfully aware that the Board may purposefully choose to publicly humiliate them and further compromise their chances for future employment. It should not come as a surprise that some are already seeking employment elsewhere. Your callous actions have severely damaged the Ardsley School District's ability to attract and retain high quality educators in the future.

The students of Ardsley and their families will be dealing with the aftermath of the Board's appalling conduct at Tuesday's meeting for years to come. As president, teacher, parent, and colleague, I am profoundly disturbed by the board's marked departure from past protocols and its appalling lack of humanity in its treatment of District employees.

Compassion and dignity must be at the forefront of decisions made by leaders in education. We urge you to return to the protocols of decorum and decency that have made Ardsley an exceptional place to live, learn, and work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alyson Tina', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Alyson Tina
President
Ardsley Congress of Teachers