

From: [Pamela Carlson](#)
To: [Board of Education](#)
Subject: regarding: Ms Geistlinger and Mr Cook issue
Date: Thursday, June 19, 2025 7:10:04 PM

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Dear Board of SD 23

I am in receipt of this issue regarding trustee Amy Geistlinger and her exercising her option to sit out a photo op. I have read the story in the Capital News and I have watched the Youtube clip. I understand that SD 23 decided to recognize a member of the community at large for his efforts in the community, and NOT for efforts within the school district's purview.

This would be my objection #1. Why recognize this person at all, if his craft as a drag queen has no connection to teaching in SD23? I am sure there are many notable people in our community with talents and contributions worth noting, who are not awarded.

Let's consider the line in the capital news "she *deliberately* sat in her chair." Pulling out a weapon, or punching someone in the face are examples of deliberate actions. Sitting in silent disapproval is just that, sitting one out. She said nothing, she just exercised her right to NOT partake.

If this had been a religious award, for example, and a certain trustee did not believe in God and sat one out, would that have been offensive?

"...sends a message to kids that it's not acceptable to be queer.." Amy said or did nothing about or to a queer person. Queer is not the same thing as a drag queen. Most drag queens are likely queer, but by no means are all queer people drag queens. So don't equate them. Who knows Amy's feelings on queer? I am sure she keeps them to herself. Also totally permitted in this society!

I think Amy's actions are totally reasonable, and I support her.

If Mr Cook "stands up to protesters" as the Youtube clip indicated, then I am sure that he has the personal fortitude to accept one person sitting one out! I am certain that he is stronger than that. You will NOT win people over by forcing or punishing them for having an opinion. Of this I am certain.

Folks, if we all end agreeing with everything and everybody and are forced to attend to the most miniscule of "potential offenses" this will become a VERY boring place to live.

Mr. Cook is free to celebrate his art as a drag queen and those who love his style are free to attend. Equally, those for whom this is not entertainment are also free to abstain.

thank you for reading this, sincerely, Pam Carlson,