

A statement from Palo Alto parent Cathy Kirkman on the board's OCR resolution:

I have a Paly grad class of 2012, another class of 2020 and myself as class of 1980. So I've been around here longer than most and can share that perspective. I usually don't come to board meetings because I prefer to spend my time helping underserved students. But I'm here to state my strong objection to this notion of fighting the federal government and the Office of Civil Rights. It shocks the conscience that we would consider aligning our community with Alabama and other places of ignominy that have resisted the vindication of our civil rights by the federal government. Palo Alto has always been an open and welcoming community, and it's just shameful that we would even consider this course of action. It's outrageous and disrespectful to protected classes and everyone else who cares about social justice. So I have three quick comments: first, it makes me feel that as a voter I need to know about the personal politics of my school board reps. I am a Democrat and proud of the Obama administration's work. So I would ask each of you and future candidates to clarify your party affiliation. I need to make sure that I'm not inadvertently voting for people with whom I have profound ideological differences, such as Libertarians or Tea Partiers. Second, no one is perfect and we should not pretend to be. Instead we should keep working to better our schools, plain and simple! And we should also know our business as a public school, and follow the law, plain and simple, not cherry pick it. For example, we should know that in a public school a student can start a black student union, and that a public school district can't charge for summer school. Flaws like these don't diminish our successes, but we must address them, own our mistakes and try to improve. Third, we should hire a general counsel, one with experience from a large public district. We shouldn't keep wasting our resources reinventing the wheel; we should strive always for best practices in what we do. Finally, we will miss Dr. Skelly, but I think we have another meeting for that.