

WILL: Kenosha Schools to allow parent to observe classroom after WILL letter

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The News: The Kenosha Unified School District (KUSD) agreed to allow a parent to observe her son's classroom after the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) issued a [letter](#) reminding the district of the requirements spelled out in federal law. WILL issued the letter to KUSD, last week, on behalf of a parent concerned that persistent classroom disruptions may be causing a drop in her son's academic performance.

The Quote: WILL Deputy Counsel, Dan Lennington, said, "My client is grateful to KUSD for recognizing the right of parents to observe classrooms. We hope that other parents and public-school districts around the state will move towards collaboration, rather than conflict, as we all seek to improve educational outcomes."

Background: WILL issued a letter to Kenosha Unified School District Superintendent, Dr. Bethany Ormseth, on November 3, urging the district to allow a parent the right to observe her son's classroom, at [Kenosha School of Technology Enhanced Curriculum](#) (KTEC), as provided for by federal law and school-board policy. This parent is concerned about her son's poor grades, particularly in light of reports of regular classroom disruptions, including use of profane language, racial epithets, physical altercations, and property damage.

In September, this parent sought permission to observe the classroom to better understand the academic environment and the source of her son's struggles. But officials at KTEC and KUSD denied multiple requests and cited multiple inconsistent reasons.

Parents have a legal right to observation and transparency. The federal [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA), signed by President Obama in 2015, requires public schools to implement policies and procedures to ensure “the involvement of parents” in the educational setting. Under this law, districts like KUSD are required to implement a policy allowing the “observation of classroom activities.”

And KUSD has adopted several policies to comply with ESSA. For example, Policy 1120 states that “parent/guardian engagement is key to academic achievement.” According to this policy, schools must be “open and inviting” to parents, allowing parents opportunities to “participate in classroom activities.” Policy 1600 states that “parents/guardians/caregivers of District students and the public shall be encouraged to visit schools” and specifically allows for “classroom visits.”

On November 5, KUSD agreed to allow the parent to observe her son’s classroom. And the KUSD school board will be clarifying their classroom visitation and observation policy in light of COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

Read More:

WILL Letter to KUSD, November 3, 2021