

Dear Easton Valley Community,

For the past two years, Easton Valley staff, board members, and supporters have been the subject of false information that has been spread through our community by a resident of our district. This individual's actions have included the spreading of misinformation, personal character attacks, and deliberate attempts to damage the reputation of our school community. These efforts to discredit our schools have not only been shared locally, but have also been distributed to nearly every school leader and school board member in Jackson, Clinton, and Scott counties. This resident has also made every effort to share his false narratives with countless educational organizations and state leaders throughout Iowa, including the Iowa Association of School Boards, Iowa Association of School Business Officials, Iowa Department of Education, state legislators, and the governor of Iowa. Sadly, this individual's actions go well beyond any sort of constructive dialogue and make it clear that his only intent is to damage the credibility of our school community and its leadership.

Until now, our approach as a school district has been to rise above the false, yet harmful accusations, by not engaging with him publicly, believing that our time and resources are best directed toward serving our staff, students, and families. We have gone above and beyond to respond to him privately, repeatedly correcting his misrepresentations and providing accurate information. It was our hope that honesty and transparency would put an end to his persistent efforts to discredit and defame our school system. Unfortunately, these good faith efforts did not stop his pattern of spreading falsehoods, despite clear and accurate evidence that has been provided to him. When one allegation is proven to be untrue, it is quickly followed by another baseless accusation.

In April of 2024, this resident took his complaints to the Iowa Department of Education and received a clear and direct response from the lead attorney for the Iowa D.E., which is pasted below in its entirety.

On Tue, Apr 15, 2025 at 11:29 AM Mayes, Thomas <thomas.mayes@iowa.gov> wrote:

Dear [REDACTED]

This is a summary of the status of your current complaints about the Easton Valley Community School District. The Iowa Department of Education has "general supervision" over school districts. Iowa Code section 256.1 (2025). This means that the Iowa Department of Education enforces the minimum requirements of school law. Your concerns about the Easton Valley Community School District have been reviewed. While you may disagree with the choices made by the District, none of the choices made by the District depart from the minimum standards required by law. While the Department will continue to monitor the communications you forward to the Department, the Department will reach out or reply only if your communications suggest the need to investigate noncompliance with the law, as opposed to noncompliance with ideal or best practices.

The Iowa Public Information Board (www.ipib.iowa.gov) can provide you with resources about open meetings and open records laws. IPIB also has mechanisms to investigate complaints and resolve disputes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Thomas A. Mayes
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The Department reviewed his concerns and confirmed that Easton Valley has met all legal standards. Their lead attorney stated plainly: "While you may disagree with the choices made by the District, none... depart from the minimum standards required by law."

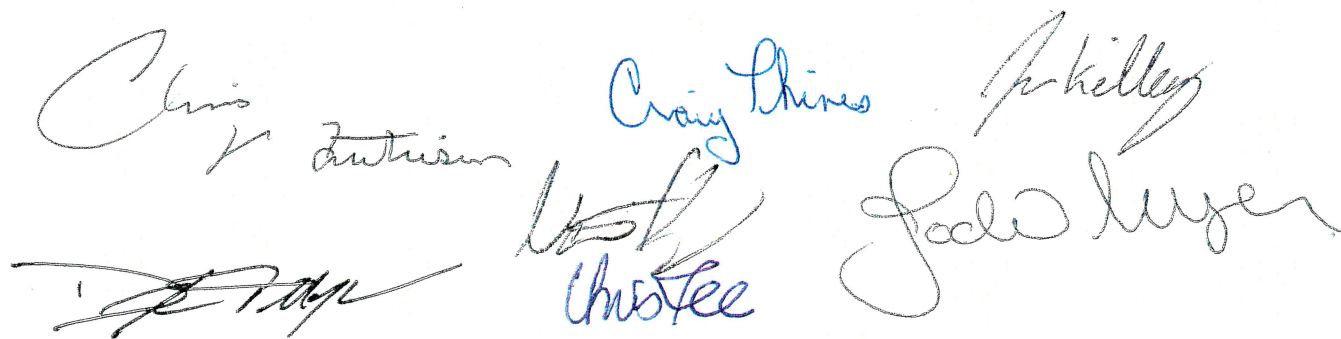
It is now clear to us that no amount of reasoning or even confirmation of facts from leading authorities, such as the Iowa Department of Education, will deter this individual from spreading misinformation. For that reason, we will no longer sit idle while one individual attempts to harm our school community. His actions erode trust, damage relationships, weaken partnerships, discourage enrollment, and undermine the dedication of those who work tirelessly for our students.

We strongly urge the public to look past the false information and continue to rely on accurate information from the school. We are incredibly fortunate to have a seven-member school board consisting of your neighbors, community leaders, and peers. Our community's school board members are not distant decision makers; they are people you know and respect – fellow parents, business owners, coaches, and volunteers who voluntarily stepped forward to serve. They, along with our team of Easton Valley educators, care immensely about our community, our schools, and most importantly, our kids.

To honor all the incredible community leaders who helped establish and build the Easton Valley Community School District, we ask for our communities continued support for the incredible work that is going on in our schools. When presented with outlandish information from disreputable individuals please seek clarification of the facts from the leaders in our community that you know and trust. We will remain committed to our mission of serving students with integrity, providing a safe and supportive learning environment, and working in partnership with our students and families. Together, we can rise above the ongoing attempts to divide and discredit us, by instead, drawing strength from the countless successes happening in our schools, programs, and classrooms. As "Former President" Theodore Roosevelt so famously reminded us in his "Man in the Arena" speech:

*"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles,
or where the doer of the deeds could have done them better.
The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena,
...who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at worst,
...fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those
...who neither know victory nor defeat."*

Our school board, our staff, and our community leaders are in that arena every day— teaching, learning, and working together for our children. We invite our families, neighbors, and community partners to stand with us in that arena, united by our shared belief in the power of education and our deep commitment to serving Every student, Every day.



Sincerely,

Craig Thines, Board President
Jodi Meyer, Vice President
Dana Olson, Director
Chris Matthiesen, Director
Joe Kilburg, Director
Walt King, Director
Dylan Meyer, Director
Chris Fee, Superintendent