

Media Alert: Hartland-Lakeside School District Families Ask Wisconsin Attorney General to Investigate School Board Corruption

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HARTLAND– Today a coalition of families in the Hartland-Lakeside School District sent a letter to Wisconsin Attorney General Josh Kaul seeking the support of the Wisconsin Department of Justice in addressing long-running government transparency and ethics issues on the District's school board.

Under state law, when a government entity like a school board fails to respond to an open records request, the persons requesting the records can ask the state Attorney General to file a legal action. Some open records requests in the Hartland School District have been pending as long as 9 months.

The unanswered records requests seek documents related to ethics issues that have roiled the district in the past year, including former School Board President Tom Harter's failed attempt to unilaterally appoint his son to the Hartland Municipal Library Board, and his apparent complicity when another son ran for and won another school board seat by falsely claiming to reside at Tom Harter's address, when in fact the son lived outside the district. District residents have asked both the school board and the Waukesha County District Attorney to investigate Tom Harter's misconduct, but they have not done so.

The unanswered record requests also seek records that would help illuminate whether Harter and other school board members met or coordinated with each other regarding school board business outside of properly noticed public meetings, in violation of Wisconsin's open meetings laws.

"In this moment of hyperpartisan school board politics, transparent and ethical board conduct is a matter of pressing statewide concern," said Elisabeth Lambert, an attorney advising the group. "When school board members resort to secrecy and dishonesty in order to tighten their grip on power, students and communities suffer. I urge Attorney General Kaul to pursue release of the records, and to investigate and prosecute the ethics violations we expect those records to reveal. Only by revealing and addressing the truth can trust be rebuilt between school boards and the communities they serve in Wisconsin."

A copy of the letter to the Attorney General can be found [here](#).