

Members, Not District, Endorsed Candidate

(KNZA)--Individuals, and not the Board of Education for the Royal Valley school district, is endorsing a state candidate.

That's the key message delivered Friday evening during a special meeting of the Board of Education for USD 337.

Superintendent Aaric Davis tells MSC News the Board discussed the issue, arising from political endorsements voiced publicly by two board members. "It was just a conversation between board members regarding whether a board member should use their USD 337 title in the endorsement of a candidate or not, and there were several points given both directions by board members as to what is ok and what they feel is not ok."

The voices of the two board members, Jeff Stitham and Ann Kelly, are featured in recent broadcast political advertisements on behalf of the Dennis Pyle for State Senate campaign.

Both Stitham and Kelly identify themselves in the ads as USD 337 Board members as they offer their endorsements. "I don't know that the board has a right to limit somebody in what they're allowed to say and what they're not allowed to say. The board recognizes that it is not illegal to do such a thing, but it also causes some confusion on whether or not the whole board itself is supporting a candidate or just one or two individuals."

Davis says, in lite of the endorsements, the Board of Education Friday did pass a resolution to make clear that only individual board members, and not the board itself, were speaking on behalf of the political campaign.

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