

FILED

2026 APR 24 PM 1:34

OFFICE OF CLERK OF
BUCHANAN COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF BUCHANAN COUNTY, MISSOURI
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Do Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

STATE OF MISSOURI, ex rel. Cydney Puckett, Dakota Allen, LaTonya Williams, Stacie Sanders, and Sydney Pinion,

al Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an

Relators,

an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

v.

nt Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court I

KIM MILLER,

t Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official

Respondent.

cial Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not

Case No. 26BU-CC00574

st an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Docum

PETITION IN QUO WARRANTO

ent Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court

COMES NOW the Relators, Cydney Puckett, Dakota Allen, LaTonya Williams, Stacie Sanders and Sydney Pinion, and respectfully inform the Court as follows:

ficial Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not

I. JURISDICTION AND PARTIES

lot an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Docum

1. The Respondent, Kim Miller, holds herself out as a member of the Board of Education of the St. Joseph School District in Buchanan County, Missouri.
2. This Court has jurisdiction over this quo warranto action pursuant to Missouri Supreme Court Rule 98 and Section 531.010, RSMo, because Respondent resides and holds office in Buchanan County, Missouri.

Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document N

II. STANDING OF RELATORS

Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Docu

3. Relator Cydney Puckett is the founder of Herzog-free SJSD, a nonprofit organization dedicated to monitoring and opposing undue influence by Herzog-related entities in the St. Joseph School District. Relator is also the sibling of a current teacher employed by the District, giving her a direct family interest in the lawful composition of the Board and the validity of its

decisions affecting District employees.

4. Relator Dakota Allen is a current teacher employed by the St. Joseph School District. As a District employee, his working conditions, salary, professional reputation, classroom resources, and job security are directly affected by who sits on the Board of Education and whether Board decisions are legally valid. A Board that illegally seats a member who has forfeited her office places every Board action at legal risk, including employment decisions affecting teachers. Relator Allen therefore has a direct, tangible, and particularized interest in this action that is distinct from the interest of the general public.

5. Relator LaTonya Williams is a current member of the St. Joseph School Board and served as Board President at the time of the violation. As Board President, she immediately sought legal counsel's guidance, received the opinion that Respondent had forfeited her seat, and attempted to address the violation with Respondent and Vice President Chesney. She has a direct, ongoing interest in the lawful composition of the Board because she serves alongside Respondent, and Respondent's unlawful presence affects every vote and official action she takes as a board member. Her interest is distinct from the general public and is particularly strong as a sitting board member with a fiduciary duty to ensure the Board is lawfully composed.

6. Relator Stacie Sanders is a resident of the St. Joseph School District and the parent of children currently enrolled in District schools. As a parent, she has a direct, daily stake in the education of her children, the safety and quality of the school environment, and the lawful expenditure of District funds. The unlawful presence of Respondent on the Board jeopardizes the validity of Board decisions that affect her children and every other student in the District.

7. Relator Sydney Pinion is a concerned community member who, in response to book challenges that occurred in the District, started a banned book club and has given away free copies of the challenged books to other community members. Relator is also the sibling of a current student enrolled in the St. Joseph School District. As a sibling of a current student, Relator has a direct family interest in the intellectual freedom of District students, the quality of the school library system, and the lawful composition of the Board. Respondent's continued unlawful presence on the Board directly affects Relator's sibling and every other student in the District, as well as Relator's ability to advocate against future censorship efforts. This interest is particular to Relator and is not shared by the general public.

8. Each Relator has a special interest in the subject matter of this action that is peculiar to them and distinct from the interest of the general public, as more fully set forth above.

III. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

9. On March 24, 2026, at a regular meeting of the St. Joseph School Board, a personnel report was presented for approval. A true and correct copy of the video link of the meeting is attached as Exhibit A. At the 1:06:17 mark, the personnel report is presented. At the 1:06:38 mark, Respondent motions to approve the report. At the 1:06:54 mark, Respondent votes "yes."

10. That personnel report listed Kristopher Miller, the son of Respondent Kim Miller. A son is a relative within the first degree of consanguinity, well within the fourth degree prohibited by the Missouri Constitution.

11. On March 25, 2026, Board President LaTonya Williams sent an email to Rachel Meystedt of Ed Counsel, the district's legal counsel, requesting guidance on the matter. A true and correct copy of that email is attached as Exhibit B.

12. On that same day, March 25, 2026, Rachel Meystedt responded on behalf of Ed Counsel. A true and correct copy of that response email is attached as Exhibit C. In that email, Meystedt stated the following:

a. "If the Board member voted to hire her son, then that Board member has forfeited her position as a Board member under the Missouri Constitution and the cases interpreting it."

b. "The Board member can resign her position, or there may be an enforcement action taken by the Missouri Ethics Commission and/or the Attorney General's Office to remove her from office if she does not."

c. "Based on the above, the vote could not be rescinded to correct the error – the action has been taken, and the result is forfeiture of the Board position, unfortunately."

d. "The law also does not require a specific intent, so even if this was not purposeful, the result is the same."

e. "The law also doesn't require her vote to be the deciding vote – meaning

even if it were a unanimous vote, the action of voting resulted in forfeiture."

f. "It would also not be possible for her to resign and then be reappointed by the Board to serve the remainder of her term under the Board vacancy process, as 'an officer removed from the office cannot serve the remainder of the term as his or her own successor.'"

13. Meystedt's email cited *Nixon v. Wakeman*, 271 S.W.3d 28 (Mo. App. W.D. 2008), a case in which a mayor who appointed his brother-in-law was removed from office after attempting to resign and be reappointed. The court upheld the removal, finding that forfeiture of the office includes the entire designated term.

14. On March 27, 2026, Board President Williams forwarded the legal counsel's opinion to all board members, including Respondent, and provided a detailed timeline of her efforts to address the violation. A true and correct copy of that email chain is attached as Exhibit D.

15. In that email chain, Williams reported that Vice President Ronda Chesney informed her that Respondent "doesn't plan to resign."

16. On April 2, 2026, Respondent sent a letter to the board requesting to rescind her vote. A true and correct copy of that letter is attached as Exhibit E. In that letter, Respondent claimed the request was "a proactive measure to avoid any potential appearance of a conflict of interest, not an admission of a violation of law or board policy."

17. Despite legal counsel's clear opinion that rescission is legally ineffective, Respondent has refused to resign and continues to hold herself out as a board member.

18. Since March 24, 2026, Respondent has attended and participated in every regular and special meeting of the St. Joseph School Board. She has voted on board business, including but not limited to the April 13, 2026 reorganization meeting at which she voted on a motion to remove discussion of her own constitutional violation from the agenda and participated in the election of board officers. Respondent has no lawful authority to participate in any board meeting after March 24, 2026, because she had already forfeited her office on that date. Her continued presence and participation are ultra vires and void.

IV. VIOLATION OF THE MISSOURI CONSTITUTION

19. Article VII, Section 6 of the Missouri Constitution provides: "Any public officer or employee in this state who by virtue of his office or employment names or appoints to public office or employment any relative within the fourth degree, by consanguinity or affinity, shall thereby forfeit his office or employment."

20. By voting to approve a personnel report that included her son, Respondent "named or appointed" her relative to public employment "by virtue of her office" within the meaning of Article VII, Section 6.

21. As a result, Respondent "thereby forfeit[ed] her office or employment" effective immediately upon casting her vote on March 24, 2026.

22. The district's own legal counsel has confirmed this conclusion in writing, as set forth in Exhibit C.

23. The Missouri Court of Appeals for the Western District, which has appellate jurisdiction over Buchanan County, has held that forfeiture is automatic upon a vote or appointment involving a relative. *Nixon v. Wakeman*, 271 S.W.3d 28 (Mo. App. W.D. 2008).

V. RESPONDENT'S REFUSAL TO RELINQUISH OFFICE

24. Despite having forfeited her office under the Missouri Constitution, Respondent continues to hold herself out as a board member and continues to participate in board votes.

25. Respondent has been informed of the legal counsel's opinion and has been asked to resign, but she has refused.

26. Respondent's request to rescind her vote, even if granted by the board, cannot undo the forfeiture that already occurred on March 24, 2026, as legal counsel has explicitly advised.

VI. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Relators pray that this Court:

A. Grant Relators leave to file this Petition in Quo Warranto;

B. Issue a judgment of ouster declaring that Respondent Kim Miller forfeited her office as a member of the St. Joseph School Board effective March 24, 2026;

Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

C. Declare that any vote, motion, or other official action taken by Respondent at any board meeting occurring after March 24, 2026 is null and void and of no legal effect;

D. Order Respondent to immediately vacate her seat and refrain from any further participation in board activities;

E. Grant such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

Cydney Puckett

Cydney Puckett 04/20/2026

Dakota Allen

Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

LaTonya Williams

LaTonya Williams 4.20.2026

Stacie Sanders

Stacie Sanders 4/20/2026

Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

Sydney Pinion

Sydney Pinion 4/20/2026

Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

Not an Official Court Document

VERIFICATION
STATE OF MISSOURI)
) ss.
COUNTY OF BUCHANAN)

We, Cydney Puckett, Dakota Allen, LaTonya Williams, Stacie Sanders, and Sydney Pinion, being first duly sworn upon our oaths, state that we have read the foregoing Petition in Quo Warranto and that the facts stated therein are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief, except as to matters stated on information and belief, and as to those matters we believe them to be true.

Not an Official Court Document

Cydney Puckett
Cydney Puckett 04/20/2020

Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document
Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document Not an Official Court Document

Dakota Allen

[Signature] 4-20-2026

LaTonya Williams

[Signature] 4-20-26

Stacie Sanders

[Signature] Stacie Sanders 4/20/26

Sydney Pinion

[Signature] Sydney Pinion 4/20/2026

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 20th day of April, 2026.

[Signature]

My Commission Expires: 9/17/2029

Randall R Henley
Notary public - Notary Seal
Buchanan County - State of Missouri
Commission Number 25239002
My Commission Expires 9/17/2029

INDEX OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit Description

- A Video recording of March 24, 2026 school board meeting
(<https://www.youtube.com/live/URpPYPAFHmI?feature=shared> and timestamps: 1:06:17, 1:06:38, 1:06:54)
- B March 25, 2026 email from LaTonya Williams to Rachel Meystedt requesting legal guidance
- C March 25, 2026 email from Rachel Meystedt to LaTonya Williams with legal opinion
- D March 27, 2026 email chain from LaTonya Williams to all board members, including timeline and forwarded legal opinion
- E April 2, 2026 letter from Kim Miller to the board requesting to rescind her vote