

Cindy Wilson
P.O. Box 184
Madon, TN 38356

September 18, 2007

Dear Mrs. Wilson,

This is a request that the Madison County Ethics Committee investigate what we believe to be an ethics violation with the current Madison County Ethics policy. This issue involves one of the School Board members, Mrs. Carol Cater Estes.

Recently, the School Board met with our school board attorney, Mr. Dale Conder. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss recent issues regarding the Unitary Status lawsuit and the status of the Nov 2000 Consent agreement. During these special attorney/client meetings, it is our understanding that Board members are legally allowed to only direct questions and/or comments directly to the Board attorney on issues that are presented, and Board members are not allowed to discuss the issues that are shared by legal council with other school board members either during, or following such meetings. This legal requirement has been repeatedly clarified to all Board members, and Board members are aware of this expectation.

During this most recent meeting, Mrs. Carter Estes engaged several of the other School Board members in discussion following her comments which were not directed at the Board attorney. As the Board member-to-Board member exchange continued, Mrs. Carter Estes was reminded by School Board Chairman, Bob Alvey, that she was making inappropriate comments directly to other Board members rather than directing her questions and comments directly to the attorney. When confronted, Mrs. Carter Estes said that she "could certainly frame her comments so that would sound like questions."

As fellow Board members, we are concerned that the integrity of our Board not be compromised by the inappropriate actions of individual members during these private meetings. We believe Mrs. Carter Estes understands what the legal requirements are as related to these meetings, and intentionally violated these requirements. Also, when she was reminded that she was violating the intent of the statute regarding proper Board actions during this meeting, she implied that she could get around the law by framing her comments as questions. This comment implies that Mrs. Carter Estes is not interested in meeting the spirit or the intent of the law governing the proper conduct of publicly elected officials during private attorney-client privilege meetings.

We would ask that the Madison County Ethics Commission investigate this issue and decide what, if any, action or recommendation, might be appropriate to ensure that all School Board members continuously comply with the full intent of laws regarding attorney-client privilege meetings.

Respectfully submitted by

Bob Alvey
Karen Bell
Ben Rudd