

May 17, 2021

The Board of Education, Community High School District 99, met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2021 at South High School.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, the following Board members answered present: Nancy Kupka, President; Mike Davenport, Vice President; and Members Christopher Espinoza, Terry Pavesich and Joanna Vazquez Drexler. Member Jennie Hagstrom arrived at 6:32 p.m. Member Sherell Fuller was absent.

Also present were Hank Thiele, Superintendent; Gina Ziccardi, Associate Superintendent for Student Learning; Rob Lang, Assistant Superintendent for Staff Services; Scott Wuggazer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services; Mark Staehlin, District Controller; Janice Schwarze; North High Principal; Ed Schwartz, South High Principal; Student Board Members Zoe Boyd and Sam Bull; and Juli Gniadek, Secretary.

There were sixteen visitors. A copy of the Visitor Roster is attached.

1. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Member Pavesich moved and Member Vazquez Drexler seconded the motion that the Board of Education approve the Minutes of the May 3, 2021 Workshop Meeting, May 3, 2021 Reorganization/Workshop Meeting and the May 12, 2021 Parent Teacher Advisory Committee Meeting.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Pavesich, Vazquez Drexler, Davenport, Espinoza and Kupka voted AYE. The President declared the motion carried.

2. **RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no Public Comments.

3. **RECOGNITION OF CURRENT STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS**

Dr. Thiele recognized retiring Student Board Members Boyd and Bull and thanked them for representing the student perspective on the Board. Board members thanked the students' for their insights and contributions. The Student Board Members expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Board and share their post-secondary plans. Dr. Thiele presented the students with a token of appreciation for the students' service.

Ed Schwartz introduced Scarlett O'Hara, who will be serving as the new South High Student Board Member and Janice Schwarze introduced new North High Student Board Member Jade Toledano. The students shared information about themselves and their thoughts on serving on the Board.

4. 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR UPDATE WITH SURVEY RESULTS

Dr. Thiele stated he is continuing to advocate for a change in the quarantining rules and noted there are vaccination clinics planned at Hinsdale Central (May 20) and South High (May 26) for anyone over the age of 12. Dr. Thiele shared the District is planning for a regular 8 period day next year and is awaiting ISBE and IDPH guidance.

Jill Browning, Director of Communications, and Gina Ziccardi shared information from the final survey, which came out the end of April. Ms. Browning shared the majority of students want to be back in school full time; are more engaged when in-person; want to talk about mental health and cultural issues; and found “Paper” a valuable resource. Ms. Ziccardi shared teachers and staff reported they want to be back to school in-person full time; that in-person learners are more engaged; that students did not take advantage of all the help that was available; and they want to continue to talk about equity and inclusion. According to Ms. Ziccardi, families also want students to be back in-person full time, want more communication from teachers, are concerned about the toll the pandemic took on the students and feel that all students should be treated equally.

Dr. Thiele stated the District will be starting work on a strategic plan for next year.

5. EDUCATIONAL TOURS

Ms. Ziccardi stated no new tours have been brought to the Board because of the pandemic and all existing tours were cancelled, except for the Costa Rica Tour, which was postponed. She shared the District, working with legal guidance, revised the Travel Agreement so there is strong language advising families they may incur a financial loss if there is a cancellation and, in order to protect families, families will be required to provide proof of purchase of travel insurance.

Gina Ziccardi stated the Administration would, on a case-by-case basis, recommend Educational Tours to the Board for approval, and, as part of the approval, the Board would approve Administration to cancel, postpone or adjust a Tour when the Administration believes the health, safety and/or welfare of students or staff may be compromised. She shared previously postponement of a Tour would be brought back to the Board for separate approval.

Ms. Ziccardi presented information on a proposed tour to Germany the Summer of 2022, and stated the Board would be asked to approve the Tour and allow Administration to make changes to the Tour if needed.

6. PARENT FEEDBACK OFFERED AT THE PARENT-TEACHER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Scott Wuggazer stated the annual Parent Teacher Advisory Committee Meeting was held on May 12, 2021, with 33 virtual participants. He shared Gina Ziccardi presented information on the Consolidated District Plan; and Kelly Zuerner, North High Associate Principal, and Karen Taylor, South High Associate Principal, shared information on the PATH program, discipline and interventions. Mr. Wuggazer noted Board Members Fuller and Vazquez Drexler attended the meeting. Member Vazquez Drexler stated there was good feedback received.

7. STUDENT DATA PRIVACY

Rod Rousseau, Director of Technology and Information Services, stated the Student Online Personal Protection Act (SOPPA) was established in 2017 and is being significantly amended as of July 1, 2021. He shared the amended Act requires the District to: sign a Data Privacy Agreement with any vendor the District shares covered student data with; approve who can sign contracts; implement reasonable security measures; staff a Data Privacy Officer role; and publicly post on the District's website, among other things, specific information about data elements and who they are shared with, how to correct inaccuracies, and information on any data breaches. Mr. Rousseau shared the status of District 99 in meeting these requirements.

Dr. Thiele informed the Board that Rod Rousseau is a national leader in this area.

8. ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NOVELS

Mr. Staehlin shared the novels went out for competitive bid and there were seven bidders, with BookPal being the lowest bidder. He stated the Administration recommends the Board approve the bid from BookPal in the amount of \$111,526.92

9. MASTER FACILITY PLAN PROGRESS

Dr. Thiele stated there is \$800,000+ in the aggregate between contingency and allowances and the project continues to be on time and on budget. He shared pictures of the South High Auditorium and Learning Commons and the North High Learning Commons. Members Hagstrom and Vazquez Drexler toured the buildings with Dr. Thiele. Member Hagstrom commented on how spectacular the buildings were, how at North High the history of the building is captured and on the new outside spaces. Member Vazquez Drexler commented on how the old and new are blended at North High, the South High Auditorium and the culinary facilities; she noted the project is money well spent.

10. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

Dr. Thiele reported the District had Freedom of Information Act requests this month and they are posted on the District's website.

11. CONSENT AGENDA

President Kupka recognized their Foundation for their donation.

Member Davenport moved and Member Pavesich seconded the motion for the Board of Education to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, which includes: A. Personnel Report - Appointments-Certified; Leave of Absence-Classified; Appointments-Classified; B. Personnel Report - Retirements-Classified; Resignations-Classified; C. Personnel Report - Termination-Classified; D. Personnel Report - Salary and Benefits Wages - Wage Increase-Classified; E. Financial Pages; F. 2020-2021 Final School Calendar; G. 2022-2023 Recommended School Calendar; H. Acceptance of Donation - District 99 Education Foundation; and I. Resolution Authorizing Depositories.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Davenport, Pavesich, Vazquez Drexler, Espinoza, Hagstrom and Kupka voted AYE. The President declared the motion carried.

12. APPROVAL OF EDUCATIONAL TOUR

Member Vazquez Drexler moved and Member Davenport seconded the motion for the Board of Education to approve the orchestra tour to Germany and Austria June 9-22, 2022, and allow Administration to adjust, cancel or postpone the educational tour if the Administration believes that the health, safety and/or welfare of our students and staff could be compromised.

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Vazquez Drexler, Davenport, Espinoza, Hagstrom, Pavesich and Kupka voted AYE. The President declared the motion carried.

13. AWARD OF BID - ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NOVELS

Member Pavesich moved and Member Vazquez Drexler seconded the motion for the Board of Education to accept the lowest responsible bid of \$111,526.92 from BookPal to provide novels in accordance with the specifications, instructions and requirements provided in the April 23, 2021 "Request for Proposals for Community High School District 99 English Department Novels."

Upon the Secretary's roll call, Members Pavesich, Vazquez Drexler, Davenport, Espinoza, Hagstrom and Kupka voted AYE. The President declared the motion carried.

14. OLD BUSINESS – APPOINTMENT OF BOARD COMMITTEES/LIAISONS

President Kupka reported all Board member requests were honored and reviewed the appointments.

15. NEW BUSINESS

None.

16. RECEPTION OF VISITORS – PUBLIC COMMENT

Noel Manley, District 86 resident, expressed concerns about a staff seminar held in District 86 regarding race. Laura Hois, North High parent, advocated for defeating Illinois House Bill 2789; a return to full in-person learning with no masks; and rejecting the culturally responsive teaching and learning standards. Jim Wool addressed the Board about a survey given to students every two years sponsored by the University of Illinois School of Social Work and expressed concerns about the purpose of the questions on the survey and the benefits of the survey. Art Ellingsen, Navy Vietnam Veteran, stated he felt Critical Race Theory is harmful to our children and our country and should be resisted and there are veterans, including himself, who would welcome the opportunity to speak to students in history classes. Christine Martin, District 99 resident, shared her opposition to the Critical Race Theory curriculum. Michael Hahne, Downers Grove resident, expressed opposition to the policy of wearing of masks in school and advocated removing the policy as soon as possible.

Dr. Thiele shared Mr. Rose resubmitted his comment online from last month, noting Mr. Rose felt Dr. Thiele did not accurately reflect the contents of his comment. Dr. Thiele stated all comments submitted online become part of the Board record and encouraged the Board to read Mr. Rose's comment in full. Dr. Thiele shared Mr. Ellingson also submitted an online comment, which reflected the comments he made this evening, and would also be a part of the record.

17. REPORT ON LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION NETWORK OF DUPAGE (LEND)

Dr. Thiele reported LEND is meeting on Friday.

18. REPORT ON SCHOOL ASSOCIATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN DUPAGE COUNTY (SASED)

Member Vazquez Drexler reported administration is meeting weekly and registration for 2021-2022 has been mailed.

19. REPORT ON DISTRICT 99 EDUCATION FOUNDATION

No report.

20. REPORT ON ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS (IASB)

President Kupka reported the annual meeting will be in person this year.

21. UPCOMING BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

President Kupka announced the following meeting dates.

June 2, 2021 Workshop Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

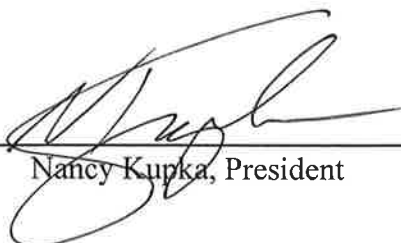
June 7, 2021 Workshop Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

June 21, 2021 Regular Business Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

Graduation on Friday

22. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business or discussion, Member Pavesich moved and Member Davenport seconded the motion that the meeting be adjourned. Upon the unanimous voice vote of the six members in attendance, the President declared the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.



Nancy Kupka, President



Juli Gniadek, Secretary

Community

HIGH SCHOOL District 99

BOARD OF EDUCATION

MAY 17, 2021

VISITOR ROSTER

NAME

JEFFREY MACK
Noel Mack
STEVE WILMES
USA LACRO
MICHAEL HAHNE
Laura His
Jonah Sprandel
Christine Martin
Laura Olson
Ellen Kanyan
Dina Wood
David Rose
ART ECCINGSEN
Yvonne Hall
Stephen E Wall
Colleen Kerestury

**Public Comments Submitted via Google Form
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David Rose	<p>I hope to present these remarks in person. But I submit them to appear as part of the minutes.</p> <p>My name is David Rose.</p> <p>I speak this evening to follow up remarks I submitted electronically to last month's business meeting. To my disappointment, Superintendent T did not read those remarks but instead chose to sum them in a notably vague and I believe misleading manner.</p> <p>I had originally hoped to make remarks to this board long ago, but then the pandemic changed the world and we all had to deal with it. Mr Bull's presence on the board gave me the idea of raising my topics in a way that called attention to the important and challenging role the media and education play in a democracy, and their relationship to authority and to the citizenry, particularly in cases when journalists or educators try to cover a subject those in authority find uncomfortable, to say the least, and might want to censor.</p> <p>As such, my remarks were directed not only to Mr Bull and his fellow students in both high schools but to the board and to the community. In effect, I was trying to kill multiple birds with one stone. And I believe I did.</p> <p>I take the superintendent's misleading description of my remarks last month, the minutes' misleading characterization of them, and the minutes' display of those remarks in landscape rather than portrait view as implicit admission that yes, the board is not comfortable having a discussion critical of DG's and the nation's wholehearted belief in capitalism, and how that belief underpins our inability both to live environmentally sustainably and to fund education adequately and equitably here in IL.</p> <p>If I'm wrong in that inference, I'm happy to stand corrected.</p>
David Rose (Cont.)	<p>Part 1</p> <p>I want to elaborate briefly on topics 3 and 4 from my prior remarks to emphasize my reason for raising them.</p> <p>The third topic dealt with the need to teach about environmental sustainability in DG high schools. I use this phrase instead of the more widely used phrase "climate change" because environmental sustainability (ENVS) makes the challenge humans face both clearer in its nature and more understandable in its difficulty.</p> <p>Most people use the phrase in the weaker sense of "environmentally friendly," as in "I will try to recycle, pollute less, buy green products, and so on." The more sound definition takes the notion of sustainable literally and applies it to human consumption of resources. The difficulty of the challenge is exposed by distinguishing resources into two types: renewable and non-renewable. Up till now humans have used non-renewable resources to consume both renewable and non-renewable resources at an increasing rate. Climate change is one effect of this behavior. This pandemic is another. Peak oil is a third. Indeed, the list of problems we have created for ourselves is long and growing. In short, much as we want to believe otherwise, our present way of living is not environmentally sustainable.</p> <p>A proper definition then allows one to ask a key interdisciplinary question: Is capitalism compatible with living environmentally sustainably? This question leads to the fourth topic.</p> <p>The fourth topic concerned the fact that the generations preceding that of your student members — we adults — have been taught to believe in capitalism wholeheartedly, in religious-like fashion. Believing in capitalism on the one hand and behaving oblivious to the objective of living ENVS on the other, we older Americans find ourselves unable to deal properly with the fact our way of life is NOT ENVS. We're concerned about the environment, just not all that much ... if it means having to change our way of life too much.</p>

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The question of compatibility is a nasty one because it asks how capitalism, as an economic system oriented toward growth because of capitalists' (aka owners) relentless pursuit of ever increasing financial wealth, will need to change. Why? Because the only way for humans to live ENVS is not only to stop trying to grow the global economy but to decrease our species overall rate of resource consumption to a sustainable one. That objective poses a really nasty challenge because under capitalism the current system-wide lack of sustainability manifests as a high rate of consumption by a select few and a much lower rate of consumption by the vast many.

Given this inequality, the objective of lowering the system-wide rate to a sustainable one is achieved most expeditiously by giving priority to lowering the high rate of consumption of the select few. [If the lower rate of consumption by the many is to be raised in parallel, the high rate of consumption needs to be lowered even more.] But that's precisely the approach we select few are unwilling to take[, both absolutely and relatively.] to the degree required. [We see precisely this resistance in the international debate over reducing CO2 emissions, to name one prominent example. A standard tactic of politicians is to seek credit for doing something as an improvement over doing nothing; the concept of sustainable invokes the metric "are you doing enough?"]

Instead we select few prefer the bottom-up approach, which means — much as we may try to claim otherwise — we are willing to accept the vast many dying off, however many it takes in order for us to maintain our way of living for as long as we can. It's the same logic as the one underlying IL's unequal funding of K12 education.

As immensely difficult as the problem of our species finding a path to living ENVS is, the problem is not going away and becomes only more difficult the longer we keep going in the wrong direction. It is the paramount, all-encompassing challenge of our times. It is why I hoped that as persons responsible for educating our high schoolers here in DG, the board of CSD99 would recognize the time has come and education is the means to help our children begin to figure it out.

David Rose
(Cont.)

Part 2

The insightful will recognize the bottom-up versus top-down approach lies at the core of the conflict between Right and Left in US politics.

The conflict is recognized more deeply as the clash between a zero-sum (I win, you lose) and a non-zero sum (everybody wins something) worldview. When the economy is growing, the two can find ways to compromise. When the economy is not growing, compromise is almost impossible.

The clash reflects a difference in preference over how to distribute the surplus that workers produce beyond that which they need for their own survival. The material well-being of those on the upper rungs is wholly dependent on the size of the surplus.

By definition, the surplus when harvesting any resource is a "resources returned on resources invested" (RRoRI) issue. This may be thought of as a density and proximity problem, aka a "long-hanging fruit" problem. Once the low-hanging fruit has been picked, the resources required to harvest the fruit more difficult to pick increases. At some juncture as the difficulty continues to increase, it becomes uneconomical to keep picking — the amount returned is less than the amount invested. It becomes suicidal if one keeps picking thereafter ... regardless.

It's the size of the surplus that is endangered by a fall in the supply of fossil fuels; its more accessible forms and types (the low hanging fruit) having been 'picked' first. Fossil fuels have been the principal source of the energy-slaves driving machines that underlie the economic concept of productivity and the belief in the inevitability of progress and rising material standards of living. Those pushing for 'clean energy' wish to believe the source of energy-slaves can be shifted without any reduction in either productivity or standards of living in both the short and long term. They downplay and/or ignore that renewable energy requires non-renewable resources for the collection, storage, and distribution of energy-slaves. They sidestep the amount of such resources required if the energy-slaves generated by 'renewable sources' (wind and solar) are to replace the amount of energy-slaves generated by fossil fuels.

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Even when aided by energy-slaves, one still faces the need to consume renewable resources at a sustainable rate and to share equitably — and thereby sustainably — in the production and distribution of the resources to be consumed. Growth sometimes ameliorates inequality, but as we have seen in recent years, it need not; and nothing material grows without limit. Thus, the combination of great societal inequality AND lack of environmental sustainability is an extremely difficult combination for humans to address.

The ratio of energy-slaves to productive workers (that is, workers contributing to the material output needed to live) as the foundation of social complexity (aka real wealth) is a straightforward math problem. As the number of energy-slaves declines, causing the ratio to fall, the number of people needed to engage in productive work must increase to make up for the drop in energy-slaves. But the rate of replacement can never be one-to-one. Thus, the prior level of complexity cannot be maintained; societal and physical complexity must be simplified. The need to simplify stops only when sustainability has been achieved. Because our present level of complexity is so far from being sustainable, we in the rich nations opt to pretend the problem does not exist, or imagine we can solve it technologically, in the process deceiving ourselves by denying that more technology means increasing complexity even MORE! This delusion distracts us from the tragic meaning of our preference for the bottom-up approach.

Starting from the bottom up means that at every rung of the social hierarchy if the die-off of those on the rung is not enough to reach the sustainable rate those on the next rung up are expected to step up and accept their unpleasant responsibility. Note: To the extent those on the 'chosen rung' contributed to the total social product before their demise, some portion of those on rungs above may need to give up their current work in order to fill the vacancy created by the newly-deceased workers, setting off a chain of vacant-filling downward as necessary. The logic of capitalism justifies a bottom-up approach under the rationale one's rank in the hierarchy reflects one's economic value to the capitalist system. Eventually, once enough of the economically less valuable have died off, the remaining humans will — at least in principle — be able to live ENVS.

This bottom-up approach 'works' a) so long as those on each of the required lower rungs accept their fate when it's their turn, AND b) so long as those on the lower rungs don't find a way to resist the capitalist method of evaluation and prioritization. [We're seeing this debate over prioritization play out in real time in the international debate over the handling of the pandemic.]

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David Rose
(Cont.)

Part 3

The insightful will also recognize that the latter two topics of my April remarks are thus intimately related to the former two, IL's methods of school funding and pension funding. Americans are encouraged to believe everyone in the country believes in equality of opportunity. But given the economic inequality in American society, equality of opportunity can be achieved if and only if those with more are willing to fund the education opportunities for those with less. IL's heavy reliance on property tax prevents that from happening.

If growth had been uniform across social classes or if those social classes benefiting from economic growth had distributed themselves randomly across the state's municipalities, the problem IL has in funding education adequately and reasonably equally would not be so severe. But growth wasn't and they didn't; and IL has taken woefully belated and inadequate steps to address the resulting impact on education funding. Which should make self-evident the problem of relying on property taxes as the primary source of school funding if a society wants good quality schools beyond those districts fortunate enough to benefit from property values rising thanks to the vagaries of the economy's localized effects.

As is obvious in IL, the only communities NOT subject to those vagaries are the districts located in towns serving principally the extremely WTD, the ones who under capitalism determine the direction of the economy because they own its most important businesses. Owners of the economy's dominant companies will make sure their children get the best education possible. Their commitment to good public education beyond that priority extends only slightly farther — to their related desire to have competent workers in their businesses. But their willingness to support public education stops there.

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	<p>Indeed, this metric is implicit at every level of the social hierarchy. Education funding and thereby local politics then becomes an arena of competition mimicking the competition that occurs in the private sector.</p> <p>The net effect then is a conflict between the claim that education is intended to help each person reach their potential on the one hand and the level of education required by capitalism on the other. The latter standard is that no enterprise wants to pay a worker for the education they receive beyond that which a worker needs to do the job. This conflict results in the likelihood the amount and type of education individuals receive are mismatched with those needed in the workplace.</p> <p>In that regard, capitalism as an economic system strives to reduce the political economic power and focus of most people to the role of 'consumer.' If one finds oneself over-educated in the workplace, that mismatch is to be ameliorated outside the workplace and in a way that does not threaten faith in capitalism. For those with qualms about capitalism's effects, the charitably minded may even be encouraged to undertake endeavors deemed ameliorative ... of some of the effects and of the qualms. Thus, my topics challenge a core underlying presumption of education within a capitalist society: Do NOT cast doubt on the inevitability of capitalism. Do not elevate democracy above capitalism; teach rather that democracy must serve capitalism. By omission and commission, teach — as the expression goes — "there is no alternative to capitalism."</p> <p>That position however wends back to the question I raised: Is capitalism compatible with environmental sustainability? If there is no alternative to capitalism, but if capitalism is not compatible, what are we to do? If capitalism is compatible in theory but hasn't been in practice, what changes are capitalists introducing to realize it in practice? Is capitalism compatible with consuming resources at a sustainable rate? That's the core question. And please recognize: it's a system-wide question; sustainability is a system-wide objective. Individual companies (or states, regions, or nations) doing this, that, or the other to lower an individual company's/consumer's consumption of resources is NOT enough.</p>
David Rose (Cont.)	<p>Part 4</p> <p>The objective of environmental sustainability challenges capitalism at its core in at least two key ways. For one, it challenges it in the notion of (private ownership of) property itself. Property gives a legal right to exploit that which one owns as one sees fit. That right pays no attention to system-wide effects of that exploitation, for either the short or long term. In so doing, the notion of privately owned property permits and encourages localized depletion of resources (people and things), leaving whoever comes afterwards to pick up the pieces and clean up any messes. Capitalists and their minions at the pinnacle of the social hierarchy are oblivious to such local impacts, because their lifestyle is maintained simply by tapping the previously untapped and/or squeezing harder on those below them in the hierarchy, as I suggested above. With capitalism, those at the pinnacle presume there will always be plenty of both resources and people to exploit!</p> <p>The land property on which they reside has exchange value (should they opt to sell) thanks to the exploitation that occurs elsewhere — "out of sight, out of mind." The use value of the land in any residential area, that is, the nature of the land in its non-man-made state or even in its quasi-natural state as farmland, has been completely replaced by man-made structures and goods made from resources imported from elsewhere for non-productive use. This resulting transformation of the landscape then becomes both an intellectual and an economic barrier to returning a local region to sustainability ... because doing so necessarily means reducing its financial value.</p> <p>Similarly, land that has been transformed for productive manufacturing use, and its adjacent residential areas, loses financial value if and when its core enterprises fail. This is seen by apologists of capitalism as a natural ebb and flow that has no long-term negative consequences. But recent history calls that expectation into question. Much of the Midwest witnessed this drop in financial value of land when the post WWII manufacturing boom ended, as both heavy and light industry jobs were shifted overseas, and the residual retail operations serving local populations were transformed from small businesses owned by people in the community to ownership by corporations by people living who-knows-where. The resulting devastation to cities and towns garnered the name "Rust Belt," a devastation from which many are still struggling to recover. The resulting increase in the class and spatial concentration of wealth underlies the tension between American urban and suburban areas and its rural areas; America's capitalists and their minions no longer need rural Americans to produce things. This is the reason so many working class and small</p>

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business-owning white people in rural areas feel resentful for being 'left behind,' it's the reason white supremacy has become such a force in US politics.]

Thus, environmental sustainability challenges capitalism in a second key way — at its financial core. Under capitalism, the presumption is that society as a whole benefits from the individual desire to get rich, aka from businesses that produce for the market so that their owners make more money from the sale of products than they invested to produce them. Recent history has shown however, that once RRoRI becomes negative, the standard approach of using debt to reignite 'animal spirits' postpones the day of reckoning for individual unprofitable businesses while also shifting investments mainly to financial speculation. This yields in money terms an ever-growing accumulation of debt and further concentration of financial wealth. The end result is at some juncture a critical mass of the society realizes the debt cannot be repaid and merely contributes to worsening inequality and widening immiseration.

When that happens, growth expressed/measured in money terms becomes exposed as a deception of the failure to grow in real terms: the search for profit becomes exposed as inadequate basis for deciding allocation of resources and society's work effort. Profitability in one corner of the economy is recognized as the equivalent of being a lottery or casino winner: money simply changed hands or became concentrated in fewer hands, but nothing real was produced. The debt holders and business owners, i.e., the wealthy, then are recognized not as the fount of well-being for the society but as the intellectual and material drag on it, incapable of helping it shift adequately (in rate and degree) toward an environmentally sustainable way of life.

Thus, both targets make self-evident why so few in the US (and other rich nations) talk about environmental sustainability (except in misleading use of the term) and instead deflect attention toward trying to solve climate change by technological means. The latter permits continued declarations of faith in capitalism! of faith in growth as the solution of social and societal problems. of faith in not having to address both the personal and societal need to change.

For those willing to change, the task then becomes redressing the societal inequality and lack of environmental sustainability without destroying the society in a futile attempt to sustain financial values now exposed as an unsustainable distortion.

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Part 5

The cultural barrier to thinking and operating systemically runs deep in a capitalist society.

What predominates instead— in both the public and private sector — is a siloed way of thinking in which a social role has a 'self-interest and prescription of action attached to it that is expected to dominate all other concerns for the occupant of that role. An individual thinking beyond the narrow definition of one's immediate job is deemed to be getting out of line.

Given a capitalist firm's orientation toward profit, employees of the firm are NOT supposed to question the company's efforts to sell as much product as possible, even if that effort results in additive behavior on the part of the consumer of said product. Such siloed thinking yields an absurdly inimical arsonist-firefighter mentality and pattern of action when for example one company sells nutrition-less food that contributes to obesity while another sells weight-loss meals. The height of the absurdity occurs if the two are divisions of the same corporation. Measured at the macro-level of the (company or) economy, this activity is claimed to be all good because the economy is 'churning away' as both the arsonist and the firefighter contribute to a rise in GDP. The same logic applies in the claim that the social role of the idle rich (those who do not work but live off dividends and land rent) is to consume. That the 'health' of the US economy has become so reliant on consumption should affirm to every American the substance of the nation's reputation to the rest of the world.

David Rose
(Cont.)

Likewise, in the public domain, personnel in government agencies are supposed to keep the interests of one's specific agency paramount, and ignore other considerations. The siloed way of thinking in the public sector is known pejoratively as the 'blue wall of silence,' a reference to the silence fellow police officers are expected to maintain when one of their own is suspected of having engaged in some inappropriate act. The notion of

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	<p>'whistleblower' refers to the individual (or group) who opts to break down the wall for the greater good. The inimical absurdity in the private sector is mirrored in the public sector ... in agencies representing constituencies with competing purposes.</p> <p>The chain of command makes the leader at the top of the hierarchy in each agency responsible for its well-functioning. If government is set up as a set of agencies, the leader at the top of the set is the only role deemed responsible for determining its direction. Which is why the role of President of the US is often referred to as the "most powerful position in the world," based on the notion the US is the most powerful nation in the world. In other words, democracy in American capitalist society is understood to elect the sole person ostensibly responsible for the welfare of both the nation and the world.</p> <p>Checks and balances within the American system of government are intended to prevent private actors from exercising excessive individual control through government over the economy. Government in that regard is intended to help further the interests of capitalists as a class, by acting as 'referee' whenever members of the class are unable to restrain the effects of their zero-sum worldview. Belief in capitalism however means 'the market' ultimately determines the direction and state of the society as a whole, and that direction cannot and should not be controlled in any direct, explicit way by government. The same subservience of government to the market and private entities is an article of faith at the international level as well, at least in those portions of the world benefitting most from capitalism's operation.</p> <p>Stated in ecologic terms, giving the market precedence derives from the claim the level of complexity is so high, it is too expensive (in terms of resources) to try to monitor and control via a 'centralized' governmental decision-maker. And if one presumes resources are unlimited, as capitalists do, one need not bother 'wasting' resources trying.</p> <p>During the expansion phase (when resources are so plentiful as to seem unlimited), such disregard is not so self-evidently problematic. During the contraction phase (when resources are no longer so plentiful), however, such disregard is problematic; and the political battle between the zero-sum and non-zero-sum worldview becomes a 'brawl' to decide how to deal with the unavoidable need to reduce complexity. The brawl exposes the zero-sum worldview as fundamentally anti-democratic, resistant to having too many people with a system-wide perspective who want to participate in decision-making and figure out how to share resources more equitably while using them sustainably.</p> <p>In other words, an exception to the presumption of democracy serving the market arises in one form as an acceptance of fascism if and when the society's dominant classes come to believe direct government control/repression is needed to overcome the market's internal contradictions, its failure to operate with a sense of stability and hope for the long term. To reiterate, as mentioned above, the lack of environmental sustainability is the principal reason we witness so many cases of fascist movements emerging around the world.</p> <p>Finally, it is worth noting that the implicit emphasis on class in all of the preceding discussion said virtually nothing about the so-called identity politics of the US. The phrase emphasizes socio-cultural identity — one's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc., indeed, anything BUT social class — as the societal wrong that needs to be righted. Close examination suggests however that each of these groups voices resistance to their being targets of capitalism's way of operating, particularly when the economy is unable to deliver benefits beyond a closed, small set of people. The relevant questions then are: What must change in the way the polity and the economy operate for the set of beneficiaries to be open to anyone? What must change for the set to include everyone? Stated differently, what must change if our political economic system is not to exploit either people or the environment?</p>
<p>David Rose (Cont.)</p>	<p>Closing comment</p> <p>By raising the topics as I did, i.e., as topics inviting potential censorship, I was inviting the board's student members and their fellow students to begin thinking about each of these four topics, since they will be facing them as adult — hopefully, economically productive, politically active, and culturally inquisitive — members of society in the not-too-distant future.</p>

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	<p>The media and education are the key realms of our society tasked with developing and sustaining people's capacity to have these traits. But we live in very interesting times, to invoke the euphemism. I contend the need to live environmentally sustainably is the core challenge around which all other challenges revolve. My disappointment with DG and IL voters' apparent willingness to tolerate worsening inequality in education and elsewhere is why it occurred to me to try to bring these topics to your student members' attention.</p> <p>IL's approach to governance by independent taxing bodies — each with a defined set of functions — institutionalizes an anti-systemic approach to governance, reinforces the siloed thinking and operation in government, and formalizes the dependence of government on the market. All of which wreaks havoc and rips the society apart when the market fails to deliver equitably and adequately, as is happening because our society's way of life is not environmentally sustainable. In other words, I contend the taxing bodies of DG are a textbook example of our problems, and of the difficulty in facing and correcting them. Extrapolating, I further contend that IL as a state is a poster child for the difficulty of thinking and acting beyond self-interest, and that, at the international level, one is hard pressed to find a more cogent example than our own nation for the grave difficulties we face.</p> <p>I hoped my April and these May remarks might serve as an example of critical thinking — "critical" in at least four senses: 1) objective analysis, 2) disapproving current handling 3) of a deteriorating situation 4) to which we urgently need to respond.</p>
Art Ellingsen	<p>I am opposed to the teaching of this thing called, "Critical Race Theory" and this thing the New York Times calls its 1619 Project. America is one of the most race free countries in the world. America, fought a bloody civil war to free the slaves and end slavery once and for all. The proposals on the table would teach an extremely distorted view of American History. I do not want my children and grandchildren lied to by teaching them this nonsense. This is all part of the Communist Agenda the far left is pushing in America today. I am a Vietnam Veteran. I went to Vietnam to prevent the spread of Communism, and now there are people who want to implement Communism here at home. I am STRONGLY OPPOSED to this.</p> <p>I am a Navy Vietnam Veteran and an Officer in three different Veterans Service Organizations, the American Legion, the VFW and the Vietnam Veterans of America.</p>