

Nonrenewed Hinsdale teacher speaks out about student safety

By Chris Mays, Brattleboro Reformer

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HINSDALE, N.H. — A teacher, who will not be returning next school year, raised alarm about student safety at Hinsdale Middle High School.

Timothy O’Neil, a business and engineering teacher at Hinsdale Middle/High School, said he and his wife Susannah O’Neil, a science teacher at the school, were notified that their contracts will not be renewed for the 2026-27 school year.

“Both teachers received strong performance evaluations,” an announcement from Timothy O’Neil states. “The non-renewals came while a formal workplace grievance filed by Susannah O’Neil against Principal Anna Roth and Superintendent David Ryan remains unresolved, and while multiple student safety concerns reported through proper channels had not received appropriate administrative follow-up.”

The teachers have not been “provided a documented, performance-based rationale for their non-renewal,” according to the announcement shared with the Reformer before the School Board meeting Wednesday. At the meeting, Timothy O’Neil addressed the board.

A policy read in part before the public comment period says the time is “not designed to be a discussion, and in general, the board does not respond during public comment period.”

“We take personnel concerns very seriously, and on those matters, we ask that you go through the appropriate administrative channels written out in policies ...,” the policy states. “We take your comments seriously, and we want to have a sufficient time to process and research issues. If need be, we will, however, respond to your questions and concerns at future meetings or have the proper staff member get back to you in appropriate time.”

Timothy O’Neil said he and his wife will be taking five teams of students to a design competition on Friday at the University of New Hampshire on a bus that he paid for himself.

“They won’t be letting me ride that bus,” he told the board, as he and his wife had been put on administrative leave. “I’m going to have to drive myself. Apparently, we’re not the kind of teachers that Hinsdale wants.”

O’Neil told the board he wasn’t at the meeting to ask for “our jobs back.”

“We’re pursuing every formal remedy available to us,” he said. “Those processes will run their course.”

O’Neil said he wants to let the board know he has witnessed and documented “a consistent pattern administrative decisions that directly harm students” over three years, including “teaching assignment changes without notice days before the school year began, dismantling months of carefully prepared curriculum, student led projects dismissed and left to die, [and] commitments made to educators in front of witnesses broken without explanation or apology.”

O’Neil also alleges multiple student safety concerns reported to administrators “through proper channels did not receive the response they warranted.” He said the incidents have now been reported to local law enforcement and the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth and Families.

A parent of a child being harmed at the school called for “an active investigation.”

“Our children are in your care during the school day,” he said. “They deserve to be protected.”

Dr. David Ryan, superintendent of the district, told the Reformer, “We are always grateful when members of the public provide their thoughts to the School Board in public session.”

“It definitely helps put things into perspective for them and helps them understand firsthand some of the issues that we are facing in the school district,” Ryan said. “As always, the board will take the specific comments under advisement and follow up as needed.”

O’Neil’s announcement states that Roth was hired by the Hinsdale School District despite her record as principal at Twin Valley Middle High School in Whitingham, Vt.

“During that tenure, she was the subject of a formal complaint filed by the ACLU of Vermont with the Vermont Human Rights Commission in December 2021, alleging that she failed to take meaningful action in response to repeated and escalating racial harassment of a Black student, including conduct she reportedly characterized as normal student behavior,” the announcement states. “The matter was resolved through separate settlements with the U.S. Department of Justice in 2023 and the ACLU of Vermont in 2024.”

In February, students at Hinsdale Middle/High School staged a walkout to protest Roth’s handling of a racial harassment complaint involving a student.

“The affected student’s family withdrew their daughter from the school, stating she was no longer safe,” the announcement states. Ryan “issued a public statement acknowledging that the district had ‘failed at preventing harm to individuals.’”

This article was updated at 7:25 p.m., Friday, May 15, 2026 to correct when the University of New Hampshire design competition was being held.