

EXHIBIT C

**JOINT PRESS RELEASE
FROM
BOARD OF TRUSTEES of TRI-CREEK SCHOOL CORPORATION
AND
DR. ROD GARDIN**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lowell, Indiana – April 1, 2021 Tri-Creek School Corporation today announced that its Board of School Trustees has accepted the resignation of Dr. Rod Gardin as Superintendent of Schools, effective March 31, 2021. The school board and Dr. Rod Gardin have reached an amicable resolution for his separation from the school district.

The resignation of Dr. Gardin follows an anonymous campaign on the internet of false sexual allegations of misconduct to discredit Dr. Gardin. In January, without providing any supporting proof, an anonymous person sent an email to school corporation staff members and the school board accusing superintendent, Dr. Rod Gardin, of misconduct. Multiple requests were made for the person who sent the anonymous email to come forward with evidence of the alleged misconduct and to participate in the investigation. This individual did not come forward.

This anonymous email and its false sexual allegations were subsequently spread by additional emails and other electronic means throughout our school community and Northwest Indiana. This widespread distribution of false sexual allegations over the internet has damaged Dr. Gardin's professional and personal reputation.

Performing its due diligence, the school board authorized a Title IX investigation of the allegations. The Title IX investigation was conducted by trained individuals who interviewed students, teachers, and other school corporation employees. The investigation found no evidence of the false allegations of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, or sexual misconduct contained in the anonymous email.

Despite the findings of the Title IX investigation, debate and speculation fueled by social media postings concerning this matter continues. The school board concluded that Dr. Gardin could no longer effectively serve as superintendent and lead the school district with the confidence of the community.

The school board advised Dr. Gardin of its decision to change superintendents and has asked Dr. Gardin for his resignation as superintendent for Tri-Creek School Corp. It was a carefully considered and difficult decision, but the school board concluded that it was in the best interest of the school district to seek a new superintendent.

Dr. Gardin and the school board have amicably agreed that while the allegations of sexual misconduct against Dr. Gardin were false, in order for the school corporation to be able to fully focus on the mission of educating children in preparation for the future, Dr. Gardin will step aside and allow the school board to choose a new leader.

Both Parties are deeply disappointed that the circumstance have warranted a situation that required the Board to ask for Dr. Gardin's resignation. He will miss the students, teachers, and staff at Tri-Creek, and he knows they will continue to thrive as they move on to even greater achievement.

Douglas Ward, President of the School Board stated "We thank Dr. Gardin for his service and many accomplishments during his tenure as superintendent. The school board appreciates the significant

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contributions that Dr. Gardin made to Tri-Creek and the positive impact he had on many programs, and most importantly, the lives of our students. We are grateful for his leadership at the critical time during the COVID-19 Pandemic. His work as Superintendent has put our School District in a strong position both financially and academically. The future is bright for the Tri-Creek School Corporation. We wish Dr. Gardin well in his future professional and personal endeavors.”

Dr. Gardin effectively guided the Tri-Creek School Corporation during the critical period of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Dr. Gardin led the re-entry team in the development of the plan that allowed our students to return to school, in person, for the 2020-2021 school year. During Dr. Gardin’s time as Superintendent, our district maintained its overall District “A” Rating.

Dr. Gardin’s efforts to provide increased opportunities for all students, led the initiative to double the size of our Red Devil Trades building so more students could become skilled in welding, automotive technology, and precision machining.

Under Dr. Gardin’s guidance, staff served over 50,000 meals provided at no cost to our students, and he was on the frontline with foodservice staff members to distribute the meals to families. Dr. Gardin coordinated with the Greater Northwest Indiana Foodbank to provide food for residents in Lake and Porter counties. Hundreds of families received the food, which was crucial to those who had lost their jobs during the pandemic.

In 2020, Dr. Gardin led the founding of the Northwest Indiana Schools Insurance Trust to partner with other school corporations to provide health insurance and healthcare benefits to employees. Membership in the Trust has increased benefits to employees while containing costs for the school corporation.

Dr. Debra Howe has been serving in the role of interim Superintendent since February 19, 2021 and will continue during the search process for hiring a new Superintendent. Dr. Howe previously served as the district’s superintendent from 2011 – 2018.

Signed,



Douglas Ward
President of the Board of Trustees
Tri-Creek School Corporation



Dr. Rod Gardin