

# Relationship between scho

BY DAN HUST

**LIBERTY** — Liberty Central School's Board of Education weathered a firestorm of criticism Monday, March 12.

Former Middle School Librarian Angela Page, sickened by mold and resultant toxins in the middle school library three years ago, has won her worker's compensation case, but the district is attempting to strip her of tenure through an arbitration process later this month.

District officials did not give a reason during the meeting or afterwards, although Board President David Burke read the following statement:

"On behalf of the Board of Education, I am stating for the record to the Liberty students, parents, faculty, and taxpayers of Liberty that the Board of Education is committed to upholding their ethical and fiduciary responsibilities to our community.

"While we are unable to discuss personnel matters with you, we do want you to know that this Board of Education requires and reviews all documentation from parties in order to make informed decisions.

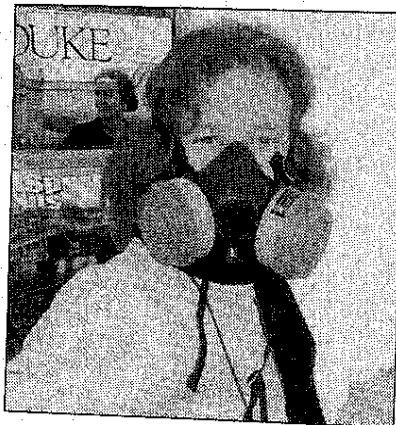
"As in all cases of personnel matters, the Board of Education is committed to following the laws set forth by the State of NY as outlined for due process hearings. Rest assured we are prepared to uphold the law. Thank you for your attention."

That did little to assuage the quiet anger brewing in the audience that evening. Holding signs demanding the board rethink its actions, more than a dozen teachers and students criticized the board — although a few residents asked everyone to remain calm

and work together.

That's what Page herself would like to do — work with the district. Instead, she's found herself at odds with them.

Her multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS) — developed from exposure to mold and resultant toxins created by a leaking middle school roof more than three years ago — require her to avoid everything from perfume to household cleaners. The slightest odor of these chemicals can induce fainting spells — or worse.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Angela Page

A respirator mask helps her deal with these products should she encounter them, but due to her extreme sensitivity and the embarrassment of having to be masked in public, Page is largely confined to her home.

It's that reason, according to Page, that Liberty is unwilling to take the 29-year educator back — because she can't be around the general public.

"They're scared, I suppose," she said — scared of setting a precedent by allowing a teacher to work from home.

But, she and others argue, the district has accommodated teachers in the past for various disabilities.

"I can't just take a pill for this," Page explained. "All I'm asking for is to be in a room that doesn't have these triggers."

Page has proposed everything from creating a virtual (online) library to writing grants for the district, but officials have ignored them, she said.

"So far, they're pretending to accommodate me," she remarked, explaining that she hasn't received a paycheck in a year but the district continues to