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Retired Irmo High principal opens up about Gay-Straight Alliance opposition

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COLUMBIA, SC (WIS) - He hasn't talked about it publicly until now. It was a decision that caused uproar in the Irmo community and made worldwide headlines.

In May 2008, then Principal Eddie Walker announced he would retire because the school district forced him to allow a Gay-Straight Alliance at Irmo High.

Walker's decision drew lots of criticism, including a protest outside of one of the school board meetings.

After two years of silence, Eddie Walker sat down with News 10's Brandi Cummings to explain things in his own words.

Eddie Walker is a dedicated educator of 31 years, who has left the career he knows so well.

Walker's reign as principal of Irmo High School is coupled with both triumph and controversy.

Although Irmo has been named among best in the nation, the world watched as the school went through its share of turmoil starting in 2008.

Walker said, "I didn't intend for it to become so public, that's why I didn't interview during that time period."

In December 2008, a student asked Walker if he would allow the formation of a Gay/Straight Alliance.

"I didn't want to approve it because all of my life, as an educator, I felt like it's been my mission to help kids and I saw this as something that could be potentially damaging or could be hurtful to kids," Walker said.

So he told the student that he would not allow the club to form.

Then, according to Walker, that student went to school district officials in protest.

The Lexington/Richland 5 School District, referring to a federal law, forced Walker to allow the club.

In response, Eddie Walker sent an email to faculty, staff and the PTSO, telling them a conflict of his professional and religious beliefs is leading him to resign June 30, 2009.



Eddie Walker



Eddie Walker talks to Brandi Cummings



Irmo High School Gay/Straight Alliance yearbook picture