

**The January 12, 2016 Board of Education meeting video** (erroneously labeled January 7, 2016) describing ECRA Group’s proposed data collection on LFHS students and families is posted [here](#). It is well worth watching. A few interesting notes:

ECRA Group President Dr. John Gatta begins his presentation in the 6<sup>th</sup> segment called “Action Items” (the meeting video is divided into 6 segments). It’s interesting to note at 1:00 into the segment, Superintendent Simeck praises ECRA Group saying they are “universally very, very highly regarded.”

Really? A Chicago Tribune [report](#) indicates Nanciann Gatta, daughter of Louis Gatta and relative of Dr. John Gatta (listed as CEO and COO, respectively on ECRA Group’s [website](#)) had been Superintendent at Niles starting in 2008. She was abruptly ousted by the School Board in August 2015. One of many [Journal Online](#) reports noted:

*“[Nanciann] Gatta faced harsh criticism during the last school board election from several candidates, who charged Gatta with nepotism and conducting the district’s business with a lack of transparency. It is unclear whether those allegations of nepotism lead to Gatta being placed on administrative leave.*

*The Journal looked into those allegations last year, filing several Freedom of Information Act requests related to an educational consulting firm ECRA-HYA, which has long contracted with Dist. 219. The firm’s chairman and CEO is Louis Gatta, Nanciann Gatta’s father. Another relative, John Gatta, is also a high ranking officer in the company. At the time the FOIA requests were filed, district officials said ECRA was a consultant to the district before Gatta was hired as superintendent.*

*ECRA-HYA’s most recent contract runs from July 2014 through 2019. That contract pays ECRA-HYA \$96,382 for an annual “subscription” and charges the district an additional \$700 per person per day for staff on site working at Dist. 219 schools.”* (See: [http://www.journal-topics.com/news/article\\_63731a2e-4050-11e5-9342-c30252844834.html](http://www.journal-topics.com/news/article_63731a2e-4050-11e5-9342-c30252844834.html))

We leave it to LFHS stakeholders to ponder Mr. Simeck’s above-description of ECRA Group as “universally very, very highly regarded.” See, also, this [Tribune article](#)....

(And interestingly, ECRA is charging extras at Niles at \$700/person/day, but charging LFHS \$250/person/hour in its proposed [Agreement](#)).

Once again, the LFHS School Board is tasked with more than cursory oversight. The Board should perform its own independent research (using Google) of assertions by our Superintendent. Skepticism is a highly regarded trait in many professions that involve due diligence; we had assumed that to be the case for fiduciaries such as Board of Education members.

**Finally, regarding personal judgment (or lack thereof) .....**

See the second segment in [the meeting video](#) called “Superintendent’s Report” at 8:41. Listen to Superintendent Simeck congratulate a female business office employee (now on maternity leave) on the birth of her son “Emmett Michael.” Simeck says: “We thought it might be called “*Allen* Michael,” as he glances over at the [business office chief](#), Allen Albus, in this public (recorded and published) meeting, “but it didn’t work out that way....”

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