

Critical Truth

From: kayla mccarley
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2021 3:12 PM
To: don grotting
Subject: Response to your message today

Hello Don and Happy Friday!

I am sure it is a common occurrence for you to receive emails from various random staff members, but I am reaching out because I felt passionately about opening up a dialogue regarding addressing your colleagues and staff of color.

While I appreciate your willingness to always address the ugly and uncomfortable, and to do it with an anti-racist lens, I was faced with challenges in reading your response to the Fox News article. I hope to provide some perspective for moving forward. I understand that as a superintendent working for a public school district, there are many requirements about your work that I don't know details about. However, I do have extensive knowledge about white-supremacy and anti-racism, which is the lens I bring to you today (along with special educator and Asian-American).

It is harmful to group in BIPOC, particularly Black staff, in with the "District" at large, as victims of hate rhetoric. It recenters the "District" (which many of us envision as, and associate with, a board of authoritative white men) and essentially erases the actual harm it causes to the many folks in our community. The harm that is caused by these actions, particularly the action of recording and pawning off PD information, is not really "undeterrable" for our Black and Brown staff members. The harm has already been inflicted and felt. Part of that harm is no longer feeling safe. I know that myself, as well as others, will not feel comfortable speaking on Zoom to the staff at large, leaving us out of future events and committees in which our voices are desperately needed.

This is not about the District. This is about people, humans. There is a direct correlation between "rhetoric" and direct, violent action. I am fully aware that the District is made up of actual people, but it is not an entity that can be considered "harmed" in the same way that we as POC are by white supremacy. And I am afraid of the implicated messages that get sent to insensitive (racist) white staff when we do not explicitly call out this act as violent or hurtful.

By not condemning, or even acknowledging, the act of someone recording and subsequently (I'm assuming) selling that information to an openly racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic media source only perpetuates racism. Knowing that folks can blatantly disregard confidentiality and safe spaces to enact harm (as this is what the article both intended to do and accomplished) and that our change-makers respond with what feels like a shoulder shrug makes me extremely uncomfortable, frightened, and disappointed in our community. I know I'm not the only staff that feels this way in Beaverton. The lack of accountability for this action sends an overarching message that our safety is not prioritized and that, in fact, WE have to be at the front lines of the warfare that white supremacists have violently brought to our door step since the beginning of time. We're tired of doing that. Moreover, we have nothing left to give.

I know that there is most likely no way to identify a single party. However, the fact that it's not even frowned upon, and more or less completely disregarded, doesn't feel right. And the responses to the article thus far have certainly not displayed anti-racism. I am not seeking punishment or scolding, but I do expect a "district"

that hails BLM and ABAR work to do better in responding to major acts of racist disrespect and overt white supremacy.

Again, I appreciate your willingness to step up as our superintendent and prioritize this work. But it's not enough. When responding to a direct threat to safety of BIPOC staff in BSD, the response should in and of itself feel, look, and BE anti-racist and anti-white-supremacy. I look forward to the day when there is a large team for the Equity and Inclusion Department that can guide us in how to respond to white supremacy in productive and protective ways, while still meeting state and federal guidelines for family communication, media interviews, etc.

Though we have not formally met, I look forward to that opportunity! I realize that I have a tendency to be very forward, but I hope that my message is heard, not for me, but for the Black and Brown people in Beaverton and world-wide that are routinely made to feel like they don't matter. I sincerely thank you for your time and dedication to the BIPOC staff in Beaverton, and hope to chat with you in the future about ABAR work in BSD.

Kayla McCarley

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(she/her)

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Go Cougars!

From: Superintendent <Superintendent@beaverton.k12.or.us>
Date: Friday, April 23, 2021 at 1:52 PM
To: ALL Staff <ALL-Staff@beaverton.k12.or.us>
Subject: Message from Don

April 23, 2021

Dear BSD Staff,

I want to start by congratulating all of you for successfully launching our In-Person Hybrid Instruction at all grade levels. It was a monumental task that required a tremendous amount of time, dedication and unity. I hope you all are drawing joy and energy from once again having students in our buildings. They are the reason for our work.

Just as importantly, I want to address a Fox News article that was published yesterday morning regarding our February Equity Summit. I offer this as information: The District was asked by the reporter to respond to very

specific comments that were made by staff members during the summit. Those comments did not reflect our District's position or policies. However, we were not given the opportunity to comment on our District's ABAR work itself or the role that our dedicated BIPOC staff plays in moving this work forward.

While not supporting the *comments* as presented out of context, make no mistake, we do support the *staff members* who made the comments. They and the District have been on the receiving end of hurtful and in some cases, hateful rhetoric in response to this article, but we are undeterred. Let me repeat that, **we are undeterred**. We are continuing to encourage, create and maintain affinity spaces for staff at the local and district level to ensure safety. We are entering into contractual agreements with outside experts in the field to help us identify and mitigate our systemic blind spots. We are developing policy and procedures to ensure reporting and response protocols to respond to instances like those that resulted in this very instance of harm. And we are listening with more intention and more frequency than we have in the past.

The Beaverton School District is taking action steps on the road to becoming an anti-biased, antiracist school district. We will have detours and roadblocks set in our path. But just as we banded together to meet the challenge of reopening our schools for In-Person Hybrid Instruction, we must unite and move this work forward. Granted, it is a longer road, but we are on it as a team, all working together so that we can guarantee safety and support of our BIPOC students and staff.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to the process.

Don



ected by law, including but not limited to, an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, familial status, economic status, veteran status or because of a perceived or actual association with any other persons within these protected classes.

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