

Critical Truth

From: kelly o'brien-carnevale
Sent: Friday, April 23, 2021 4:26 PM
To: don grotting
Cc: kalay mcnamee;sara schmitt
Subject: Re: Message from Don

Dear, Superintendent Grotting,

I am writing to you today to express my outrage with the district's handling of two Black women in our district being targeted by Parents Defending Education and the Fox news organization, two organizations that actively work against what our district believes: that Black Lives Matter.

I look forward to reading the **public** statement by our district that supports and believes in the pain and trauma of our Black women employees, women who volunteered their time to present their truth in a safe place, knowing that in our district, Black Lives Matter is not a political statement, but an assertion that the lives of Black people matter.

Stephanie Yelder was not encouraging violence; she was encouraging passion; passion for eradicating the systemic racism in our midst. Now her name and face are printed in an article that puts her in actual danger of violence.

Katherine Watkins was obviously sharing her own truth and was not speaking in official HR capacity. The district's response, "being a teacher in the district and a member of the planning team for this particular summit, she has no official role in the equity efforts of the district", is both demoralizing and demeaning; words causing trauma towards one of BSD's own.

Was it a colleague who did this? How is that supporting the staff members? How are the staff members being taken care of? How is this added trauma being addressed?

We MUST do better to support our BIPOC colleagues.

Thank you for your time,
Kelly Carnevale

Kelly Carnevale
ELD/Intervention/TAG
Elmonica Elementary School
Pronouns (she/her/hers)

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



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