

Sent: 1/12/2021 11:27:18 AM
From: Andrea Parmenter <aparmenter@durangoschools.org>
To: "Dan Snowberger" <dsnowberger@durangoschools.org>
Cc:
Bcc:
Importance: Normal
Subject: Re: Equity Resolution - Concern

Dan,

For crying out loud - take a leave if you need it! You cannot be of service to anyone if you don't put your own well-being first. Don't try and be anything but what you are - which is human. I cannot even imagine being able to breathe if I put myself in your shoes. You must take care of you, no question. 2020 was already living hell for most of the planet and you were subjected to that PLUS.....take a leave or whatever you need. Please.

I was not aware the other 3 board members were gung ho on the equity resolution (I assumed just Erika who wrote it). Any talks outside meetings have not included me and I do not think that is going on outside Kristin soliciting a pulse from board members every so often. From my vantage point, it is no different from Shere or meeting individually with you prior to meetings.

I will object to the language in the resolution on my own no matter what you choose to do. I have had an issue with this language from the very beginning.

Take care of yourself and don't overthink any of this. If you need a leave, take a leave. Please let me know how else I can support you, or how the board as a whole can provide better support.

You WILL get through all of this and emerge a better person for it. If that means taking leave to get through, then it is necessary that you do that.

a.

On Jan 12, 2021, at 7:34 AM, Dan Snowberger <dsnowberger@durangoschools.org> wrote:

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There seems to be a lot of meeting and talking outside of the public eye going on. It seems Kristin, Erika and Mick are pretty solid on this. I'm not sure this would end effectively for me and I don't want to put you in a bad spot.

To be honest, I'm not sure I should be at work right now. My dad is getting progressively worse and I can say my life is in shambles. I will be speaking with Kristin this morning about a leave of absence. I've worked hard in my 35 years in education. These last two years have been HELL and I can say I'm starting to question my own worth as an individual, at the same time having a hard time setting aside my principles. I've gone non stop in helping Olga and my dad these past few weeks and really feel I'm at a breaking point emotionally.

Thanks for letting me share. I'll keep you posted. Here's my edits I'm providing to Kristin this morning.

Dan

On Mon, Jan 11, 2021 at 10:16 PM Andrea Parmenter <aparmenter@durangoschools.org> wrote:
Dan,

FYI - I couldn't agree with you more on this. The previous draft was even more inflammatory and my all my edits around the misguided mea culpa and the assigning of the burden of blame and accountability were rejected. It reads like someone with an agenda on a political rant with a megaphone and crowd of agitated supporters. Not to mention all the clearly personal opinions littered throughout with no

references. Three of the “whereas” statements don’t even make sense - all pointed out in my edits and not accepted.

There are many ways to acknowledge past mistakes and show an awareness and commitment to improve such situations in the future without throwing an entire race under the bus and shaming everyone associated with 9-R forever into the future. It is ridiculously biased. Why not just adopt a statement along the lines of “White people really suck and we have been and will always be collectively racist and we know it. Except for the current board members who are so enlightened we wrote a declaration as proof of how non-racist we are!”

And as usual, none of the time, energy, emotion, and discussion of this has had any real-time or quantifiable impact on student achievement - especially for those this document vows to help and protect. Another rabbit hole like the one we went down with BLM with no students the better for it.

It feels to me as though image is being promoted over action.

I intended to speak with Kristin before the meeting and ask to remove this item with my Plan B being to bring it up during approval of the agenda during the meeting and ask to pull it. I have not spoken to Kristin but I have shared my opinion which you mostly captured in your email as well as my intent to ask to remove the item from the meeting agenda as I do not feel it is ready to go and would not approve it for adoption.

I was so appalled by the language that I shared it with my family hoping for some validation, I guess. They were in disbelief of what was expressed in the document. The comment at the dinner table was “wow. Hope you have a really good lawyer”. I am far from the only one that finds the tone and content objectionable and the many expressed sentiments untrue.

From the outset, I agreed with Shere that any resolution or statement/stance should be in your wheelhouse. The BOE would charge you (the superintendent) with making/adopting such a statement for public distribution and then discuss/make iterative edits and finally bring to a vote.

a.

On Jan 11, 2021, at 2:42 PM, Dan Snowberger <dsnowberger@durangoschools.org> wrote:

I feel it is my responsibility to point out that a large number of 9-R staff members are highly insulted by the wording of your equity resolution. My day has been spent on the phone with leaders from across the district expressing deep concern. It contains information that is not factual, it clearly condemns the employees of the district as being the culprits of this inequity, fails to acknowledge the work that has been done in the district to address the issue of opportunity and achievement gaps, and elevates the BOARD as the body that is intending to fix it. If that is the message you wish to send to our community and our staff, please feel free to proceed with passing it as written.

I am unsure who the board wishes to satisfy by doing so, but your statement clearly is pandering to an element of our community who wants you to admit something that is not supported by fact. It is clear that we can always do more and I - as well as every member of the district - is more than willing to partner in doing so. If your point is to somehow paint me as a racist since I - as the leader of the district - have allowed all of these injustices during my 8 1/2 years of leading the district, I'd rather you pass a resolution that targets me instead of pointing the finger at all of our employees who will remain. That would be unfactual, but at least the great people who remain will not feel as if they are being painted in a light undeserved.

Since 2016, we've been recognized among all 178 school district for the following:

- 2016 - One of the top five districts with the highest growth in English Language Arts for students who are Hispanic/Latino

- 2016 - One of the top five districts with the highest growth in English Language Arts for Multiracial students
- 2016 - One of the top ten districts for improved growth in graduation rates over a four year period
- 2018 - One of the top five districts with the highest matriculation rates in post secondary education for students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
- 2020 –“The districts we highlight in this section on college access and readiness are: Cheyenne Mountain 12, Douglas County, Durango 9-R, and Lamar RE-2. All of these districts had a comparatively high share of students going to college, and most students did not need to take remedial coursework once there.

I do feel I owe you the respect to notify you of my intent to object tomorrow evening publicly and present facts that cast doubt on your resolution. The district administration and school administration would welcome a partnership in truly defining the facts around this issue and passing a resolution that is representative of the team atmosphere that should exist if we truly hope to achieve a change.

Thanks for reading,
Dan

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Durango School District 9-R
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