

Misconduct & Divisive Ideologies:

*A Parents' Plea for Course Correction,
Transparency, and Political Neutrality in the
Southern Lehigh School District*

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October 18, 2023**

One of the most cowardly things ordinary people do is shut their eyes to the facts.

C.S. Lewis

If you have to hide what you're doing, you probably shouldn't be doing it.

If you're more concerned about people knowing about what happened than you are about what actually happened, it's time to rethink your priorities.

If you change the status quo by introducing something new and then people notice and object, it's not the objection that caused the problem, it's what you introduced.

If you didn't know it was happening then, how do you know it isn't happening now?

That which can be asserted without evidence can be dismissed without evidence.

Christopher Hitchens

You Keep Using that Word. I Do Not Think it Means What You Think It Means.

Princess Bride

By all means let's be open-minded, but not so open-minded that our brains fall out.

Richard Dawkins

Prepare the child for the road, not the road for the child.

Folk Wisdom, Origin Unknown

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Attachments

<u>No.</u>	<u>Title</u>
1.	Evison Capstone Paper
2.	Evison Capstone Presentation
3.	Proposal: Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Services (the “Allen Proposal”), June 17, 2020
4.	2020 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Needs Assessment and Action Plan, July 1, 2021
5.	Conflict of Interest: Records evidencing provision of data sets, training materials, and other information and materials by Allen to Evison
6.	Conflict of Interest: Records evidencing provision of guidance and advise by Allen to Evison
7.	Conflict of Interest: Evison submission to Vanderbilt University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) in respect of her “Capstone Project”
8.	Conflict of Interest: Letter in support of Evison by Allen to Vanderbilt University relating to Evison’s Capstone Project

9. Conflict of Interest: Records evidencing Evison’s participation in the award of the contract to Allen
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11. Conflict of Interest: Records evidencing Evison’s direct participation in the administration of the contractual relationship with Allen
12. Allen DEI Training Modules
13. Resolutions of School Board (i) calling for investigation of Evison’s conflict of interest vis-à-vis Allen and the “DEI Proposal,” and the improper disclosure of student records, (ii) evaluate the district compliance under the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law, (iii) appointing of the Levin Legal Group, P.C. as outside counsel to conduct the investigation and provide other legal services, (iv) confirming that no further services will be requested of Allen, and (v) terminating the DEI “initiative”
14. Resolutions of School Board establishing process for release of investigation report
15. The Levin Report
16. White Fragility Discussion Guide and White Fragility Reading Guide
17. Resources for White Parents to Raise Anti-Racist Children
18. Lunch & Learn Training Presentation on Issues Facing Schools with Transgender Students, June 3, 2016
19. GLSEN Model Location Education Agency Policy on Transgender and Nonbinary Students (Revised October 2020)
20. Presentation from Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia titled “Supporting Transgender and Gender Expansive Youth,” presented by Samantha King, Family Support and Education Specialist at CHOP’s gender clinic, and Anson Goo, HRC Youth Ambassador (undated)
21. Email Thread regarding “SOGIE” and related matters, November 3, 2021
22. Pronoun Master List
23. Black Lives Matter Document from Harris Sokoloff of PennGSE

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1.0 Preface

On May 28, 2021, I found myself, for the first time in my life, at a public school board meeting, arguing that “if you have to hide what they’re doing, you probably shouldn’t be doing it” and making an urgent plea for transparency. My wife found herself, for the first time in her life, speaking before the board multiple times after that. Almost a year prior, that same school board approved a proposal to engage a diversity, equity, and inclusion consultant to provide various services, including sending “equity” surveys to the community, our students, and our teachers and staff. The survey results, together with an analysis of student academic and discipline data, would form the basis of a three-year “action plan” for the district. Professional development training was also to be provided to our teachers and staff. I e-mailed our superintendent at the time, Kathleen Evison, a handful of basic questions about the surveys. My key question to her was how the district defines “equity.” She artfully dodged each of my questions in her responses. To this day I still don’t have an answer from the district to that most basic of questions.

By 2021, many in our community were aware of what was being done in the name of “diversity, equity, and inclusion” in other school districts across the country. When the community began to look into what was happening with our district’s “equity surveys” and the DEI proposal from which they sprang, many, us included, became concerned. The DEI proposal, it turned out, was in fact expressly based on and driven by critical race theory, including the concepts of “oppression,” “marginalization,” “race as a social construct,” “systemic racism,” “intersectionality,” and “culturally relevant pedagogy.” The reference list included seminal thinkers in CRT and its application in education, including Derek Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Gloria Ladson-Billings. It would have been difficult to create a more CRT-centered proposal if one had tried.

The question many were compelled to ask was whether DEI training and DEI-related curricula changes based on or driven by CRT were right for our schools. The proposed DEI program focused on our racial differences rather than our shared humanity and shared values. The framework literally divides us into separate subpopulations and labels us as oppressor or oppressed, assigning collective guilt based on our skin color as dictated by our DNA. Many in the community answered with a firm “No.” Many community members rose up for the first time in their lives to speak at public school board meetings, often invoking the civil rights movement and quoting Martin Luther King, Jr., that we should judge people not by the color of their skin but instead by the content of their character. Tempers flared and important longtime friendships were damaged or lost entirely.

After being stone-walled by the district despite repeated attempts to get answers to basic questions (like how the district defines “equity”), we filed a request for DEI-related records under Pennsylvania’s “Right to Know” law, which allows citizens to obtain copies of records in the district’s possession in the interest of transparency in governance. It would take *more than a year* for the district to produce the requested documents, with the district suffering three separate rulings against it from the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records for failure to comply with the Right to Know law.

The records that we ultimately obtained evidenced shocking misconduct, corruption, and violations of law by district employees and board members and an ideologically driven attempt to transform our schools in the name of “social justice.” Much of this was being done outside of the school board’s oversight and obviously outside of the cleansing sunlight of public review and comment. The Allen DEI proposal, it turns out, was just the tip of the iceberg, as this Report will evidence. We had no idea just how far down the road the district had gone under the guidance of Evison and her like-minded compatriots.

In July of 2021, we notified the school board of some of the things we found in the records. That notification triggered an investigation by an outside law firm into the conduct of our former superintendent and various actions taken in connection with the DEI project she drove and our school board approved. A portion of the report prepared by that outside law firm was released to the public and validated the allegations we had made based on the district’s own records. The relationship with the DEI consultant was terminated as a result and the entire project was halted at the August 9, 2021 meeting of the school board.

We would like to say that the story ends there, but it does not. The fact remains that the school board terminated the district’s relationship with the DEI consultant not because it rejected the “oppressor”/ “oppressed” worldview, but instead because of the misconduct and violations of law that we identified based on the district’s own documents. In fact, at that August 9, 2021 meeting, the interim superintendent stated that while the new superintendent that district was working to hire “*should not be saddled with an initiative from a past administration,*” the expectation was that the new superintendent would make “*further recommendations,*” meaning, obviously, that DEI is likely to be back on the administration’s and our school board’s docket at some point in the future (<<https://youtu.be/mfVCJzJmZGY>>, 2m 3s, last visited August 1, 2023).

Further, in the documents we received from the district after that August 9, 2021 board meeting, we discovered numerous other examples of extremely concerning actions that have been taken by administrators and others that the community should find deeply concerning. It should be noted that we only have documents from a limited period of time and there were numerous documents in which the district blacked out large blocks of text and another set of documents that the district withheld entirely based on various exceptions under the Right to Know law. This compels one to ask what else is being hidden and why, and, obviously, what has gone in in this area after the date range of our RTK request. If we didn’t know all this was happening then, how do we know similar things aren’t happening now?

It is fair to ask whether any of this matters now because Evison and other key players are gone, most of the Board members referenced are no longer on the Board, etc. What good does dredging up things from “years ago” do now? Aren’t we just sullyng the good name of our school district? However, the reader should remember that except for the proposed work by Dr. Allen, the public is entirely unaware of the vast majority of the content of this Report. ***If we didn’t know what was happening then, should we be concerned that inappropriate things are happening right now, again hidden from the public?*** It’s not as though our school board has at any time rejected the “Social Justice” approach, nor has our school board been forthcoming on a number of important and difficult issues (see, e.g., Section 13.0 of this Report regarding the secret policy to hide gender identity information from parents just uncovered last year, well after

the period of time covered by our original request for records). Our view is that we can't have faith in our district now if we aren't able to address what happened then. To those who would question making the matters detailed in this Report public, we say that **if you're more concerned about people knowing about what happened than you are about what actually happened, we respectfully suggest that your priorities are dangerously misguided.**

The purpose of our efforts is to provide the public, the administration, and whatever school board is in place at the time CRT-based DEI rears its head again with as full a picture as possible of what happened during the period of time covered by our Right to Know request. It is difficult to chart a new course if we don't know how we got to where we currently find ourselves. If we are to tackle these issues in a productive way and find common ground, we must have shared definitions for words, we must understand what social justice and CRT is and is not, we must be able to tell the difference between training that is based on or driven by social justice and CRT concepts and training that is not. Our hope is that this Report will provide some much needed clarity on these issues.

This Report is accompanied by an Executive Summary detailing the key findings from our efforts to understand the scope and intent of the DEI project at SLSD. Our Report is necessarily dense at points (explaining statistical failures in the Allen Report, violations of law, rules on conflicts of interest, etc., requires some technical language and analysis, of course), with copious references to and screenshots from original records produced by the district, school board policies, and other relevant sources. Hopefully the Executive Summary will be sufficient for most readers to understand the scope of what happened in our district in the name of "DEI" and advancement of "Social Justice," allow those interesting in going deeper to find the information in which they are most interested.

It is not enough to point out what went wrong. We must look for a path forward and begin to heal the fissures opened between us in recent times and as such have included our thoughts on a possible path forward in the final section of this Report. We hope is that this document may help in that process.

Sincerely,

Two Deeply Concerned SLSD Parents

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2.0 Scope, Limitations, Named Individuals, and Citations

This Report describes efforts by a dedicated few to advance “social justice” ideology within the Southern Lehigh School District through the tools of “diversity, equity, and inclusion” (please see Sections 3.0 and 13.0 for definitions of these words and explanations of these concepts). The majority of the information is based on records we received directly from the district under Pennsylvania’s Right to Know law (RTKL).

We expected our record request to yield a few dozen documents at maximum. We were shocked to receive 1,682 individual documents. Some of these documents were a single page each (*e.g.*, a short e-mail or a calendar notice), but the majority were multi-page documents (*e.g.*, e-mail threads, PDFs themselves containing multiple documents, presentations, etc.). Many of the documents produced were heavily redacted by the district, meaning that various portions of text, sometimes including large blocks of text, were blacked out and therefore unreadable. The redactions themselves were frequently needless, inconsistent, or improper (some of those redactions were the basis of a successful appeal to the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records). The district withheld another 86 records entirely, primarily based on the “pre-decisional / internal discussions” exception under the RTKL. Suffice it to say getting records from the district was difficult, required multiple appeals to the Office of Open Records (which we won) to obtain compliance, and was quite costly.

Our primary request for district records covers only the period from January 1, 2017 through May 14, 2021. As a result and except as set forth in Section 12, we have no knowledge of e-mails, presentations, or other information or materials produced by the district preceding January 1, 2017 nor after May 14, 2021 as a result of our requests. However, in a few instances, the district has made additional relevant documents public, like the “Levin Report” described in Section 6.9 of this report, and we received some information from other community members or district employees. We also reference publicly available documents, like minutes of meetings of our school board, school board policies, district-level plan documents, and the like.

A number of individuals are named in this Report. We made the editorial decision to name as few names as possible, to give the benefit of the doubt everywhere we could reasonably justify doing so, and to assume good intentions rather than bad unless the evidence suggested otherwise. Our goal is not to embarrass any particular individual, but if you seek to introduce cynical and divisive approaches into our schools, you should not be surprised if people notice, express concerns, and advocate for alternatives. In reviewing the records we received from the district, it became helpful for us to think of people in three different groups based on their own words and actions.

The first group consists of people who were clearly trying to be “part of the solution” and to “meet the moment” presented by the racial turmoil of 2020 by reading and discussing relevant materials. Some of these efforts were in hindsight misguided, but in our view the intent should be lauded and the misguided actions forgiven. To this group we have extended the broadest benefit of the doubt, and while we do identify a number of troubling actions by some in this group, we have omitted their names.

The second group consists of people who were more engaged in “social justice” work at SLSD over time (including before 2020) but who for the most part seemed oblivious to the divisive theoretical underpinnings of “social justice.” Whether that lack of awareness stems from a failure to do their homework or from willful ignorance can be decided by the reader. This group includes certain administrators, teachers, and board members who took actions, or approved actions, that directly contributed to the advancement of critical theory-based approaches within our district, but we think they did so unknowingly or at least without ill intent. To this second group we have also extended the benefit of the doubt generally and have therefore largely omitted their names, other than in a few instances where using a name or title is unavoidable in discussing a key document or issue.

The final group consists of people who, based on their own words and actions, appeared to us to be dedicated ideologues with deep set biases about our district and our students and who were intent on transforming our district in the name of “social justice.” People in this group (i) appeared to understand exactly what they were promoting, (ii) were in positions of power with the authority to affect change and did so, or (iii) directly advocated or took actions that were unethical, corrupt, or violated or would have violated board policies or applicable state or federal law. To this group we extend only the cleansing sunlight of public scrutiny.

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3.0 A Word About Words

Anyone who attended or watched online school board meetings in our district over the past three years knows that they have at times been heated and emotional. Not only were people trying to understand what was happening with Dr. Allen’s “DEI proposal” and its associated “equity survey” and “three-year plan” (see [Section 6.0](#) of this Report) but we were also discussing (sometimes arguing about) school closures associated with COVID-19, messy and ultimately ineffective attempts at remote learning, social distancing rules, and extended masking requirements.

What struck us most about those meetings was that it was obvious that well intended people on both sides were talking past each other because they simply didn’t share the same definitions of important words. Why? Why were we not even speaking the same language on important concepts like “diversity”? We observed at the time that there really was no major misalignment on the core ideas, despite the rancor. People on “both sides” were in favor of more fairness, equality of opportunity, egalitarianism, and less discrimination, bigotry, and bullying. It’s impossible, however, to reach an understanding of another’s position, let alone agree on a mutually acceptable path forward, if we don’t even have a shared understanding of what core terms mean.

Some people, like us, were coming to understand, with great sadness frankly, that for some people “diversity” no longer means looking beyond skin color but instead meant forced “representation,” “equity” no longer means just returns based on effort and merit but instead meant forced equal outcomes, and “inclusion” no longer means tolerance of individual differences and lifestyle choices but instead means required celebration of “identities,” lest one be called a bigot or a “transphobe.” The very meanings of these important words had shifted under our feet, in large part due to academic theories and practices generally falling under the umbrella of “Social Justice” studies (which would include “critical race theory” or “CRT”). The terms “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” had in a very real way been hijacked and redefined to serve in the real-world application of social justice goals.

The folks that objected to this new idea of what constitute “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” were objecting because this is truly different from the traditional approach of striving to “see beyond color,” to be tolerant, to challenge your own biases, to ensure equal opportunity for all, etc. They were objecting because the new “DEI” approach was based at its core on an entirely different set of ideas. Because we don’t share the same definitions, we’re advocating for different types of “diversity” based on definitions. In our collective rush to further address “racism” in recent years, we’ve allowed some very bad ideas into the mix, ideas that are divisive at their core, ideas that threaten to undo the undeniable gains of the past more than 150 plus years on this front, causing more acrimony not less, increasing mistrust instead of building it, and making everyone miserable in the process.

When the uninitiated hear the phrase “social justice,” they are likely to think it is a good thing, *i.e.*, who can argue against a more “just society,” that’s a thing we all want. However, “Social Justice” has a particular meaning among those who use it. “Social Justice” is in fact an ideology that very aggressively pursues the social, cultural, institutional, and political installation and enforcement of very specific and radical measures derived from various “Critical Theories.” At

its very core, “Social Justice” requires “activism” to “disrupt and dismantle systems of oppression” to create a more “equitable” new world. That is something very different than calling out and remediating specific instances of racial or other types of discrimination on a case-by-case basis.

This Report includes a detailed glossary of terms frequently used in “Social Justice” studies, and which appear throughout this Report because of what we found in the records from the district (please see the Glossary in [Section 13.0](#) of this report). To give you a sense, however, of just how much the definitions of important words have changed based on “Social Justice” studies, we offer the following table.

Term	Old / Traditional Definition*	New / Social Justice Definition†
Race	A population distinguished as a more or less distinct group by genetically transmitted physical characteristics.	A “social construct” (<i>i.e.</i> , an idea made up by society, not based on objective criteria) created to advantage one “group” over other “groups.”
Racism	The belief that race accounts for differences in human character and ability and that a particular race is superior to others. Discrimination or prejudice based on race.	A structure that works to preserve the power of “white” people to the detriment of “people of color.” Only “white” people can be racist, because only “white” people have “power.” While individual “white” people can be against racism, they still benefit from the system that privileges “whites as a group” and are therefore forever “racist.” Under this new definition, “people of color” may have prejudice or discriminate, but that can’t constitute “racism” because “people of color” do not have the “social and institutional power” that would transform that prejudice or discrimination into racism.
Anti-Racist	Not in dictionary, but standard understanding of “anti-” is “against,” so “against racism”	“One who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or inactions or expressing an antiracist idea” (yes, that’s a circle definition, straight out of <i>How to be an Anti-Racist</i> by Ibram X. Kendi (2019)). Actively combatting systemic racism through equity measures, which Kendi describes as: “The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination.”
White Supremacy	The belief or theory that the white race is inherently superior to and therefore entitled to rule over all other races.	A descriptive term to capture the all-encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of people defined and perceived as white and the practices based on this assumption. White supremacy in the social

Term	Old / Traditional Definition*	New / Social Justice Definition†
		<p>justice context refers an overarching political, economic, and social system of domination that is intended to ensure the ongoing dominance of “whites” over “people of color.”</p> <p>In Social Justice circles, any disparate outcomes between “white” and “people of color” is evidence and confirmation of the existence of “white supremacy.”</p>
Disrupt	<p>To throw into confusion or disorder.</p> <p>To interrupt or impede the progress, movement, or procedure of.</p>	<p>Interrupt what the person perceives to be a situation in which oppression is occurring, for example by silencing or shaming someone in the moment by chanting slogans or shouting them down (also referred to as cancelling or deplatforming), engaging in sit-ins, blocking throughways, presenting administrators with lists of “demands” as part of a protest, etc.</p>
Diversity	<p>The fact or quality of being diverse.</p> <p>Diverse: Differing one from the other.</p>	<p>Representation of groups (typically but not always race or sex) in a given context proportional to their presence in society generally. “Diversity” in this context takes into account “privilege” and “marginalization” in evaluating who is “represented” and who is not and calls for corrective action to address a failure to achieve appropriate “representation.” Therefore “diversity” aims to privilege the marginalized and marginalize the privileged in order to correct under representation of a particular group.</p>
Equity	<p>The state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair.</p> <p>Something that is just, impartial, and fair.</p>	<p>Forced redistribution of access, rights, and resources to achieve <u>equal outcomes</u> to correct for the results of systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization.</p>
Inclusion	<p>The act of including or the state of being included.</p> <p>Include: To take as a part, an element, or a member.</p>	<p>Creation of a welcoming environment for groups considered marginalized from a Social Justice perspective. Feelings and perceptions of the “marginalized” take precedent. Creation of an “inclusion environment” may require the exclusion of those considered “oppressors” or “privileged” (resulting in a “safe space”), the de-prioritization of the “oppressors” or “privileged” by limiting the number in attendance, ask them to listen but not speak, asking them to sit toward the rear of the venue, charging them a higher fee, etc.</p>

Term	Old / Traditional Definition*	New / Social Justice Definition†
		Because the feelings of the “marginalized” are paramount, concepts such as words (of those who are not supportive of the “marginalized” or “oppressed”) causing “harm,” constituting “violence,” or making people feel “unsafe” are commonly associated with “inclusion” and “safe spaces.”
Systemic Racism	“Systemic Racism” <i>not in dictionary</i> See above for “Race” and “Racism.”	The idea that the systems of our country (broadly understood) are conceived and maintained in such a way as to oppress people of color in favor of whites. Any disparate outcome between white people and people of color is evidence of “systemic racism.”
Social Justice	“Social Justice” <i>not in dictionary</i> . Justice: The quality of being just; fairness; Just: Properly due or merited.	“Social Justice” refers to a specific theoretical perspective that asserts that society is stratified (<i>i.e.</i> , divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Social Justice asserts that inequality is deeply embedded in the fabric of society (<i>i.e.</i> , as structural), and actively seeks to change this (<i>i.e.</i> , “social justice” is activist in orientation).

* *The American Heritage College Dictionary, 3rd Edition (1997)*. This source was selected because its publication date precedes much of the spread of Critical Theory-based ideologies (like “Social Justice” studies and Critical Race Theory) into society generally.

† See Glossary in Section 13.0, definitions based on multiple original source social justice literature.

The shift in definitions caused by scholars and activists in “Social Justice” students underlies this entire Report. It was former Superintendent Evison’s unwillingness to even define “equity” in the first place that led to our request for records relating to “DEI” at SLSD, an investigation into wrongdoing in the district by an outside law firm (see Sections 6.6, 6.7, and 6.9 of this report), and also to this Report, which, among other things, shows that the “Social Justice” view of the world was well-entrenched at SLSD and reflected in numerous trainings and other actions.

So when community members, ourselves included, express concern that “DEI” at SLSD may be a concern, or that we need the schools to define the words and concepts to which they are pledging fealty in words and actions, and with our tax dollars, perhaps it would be reasonable to pause a moment or two and agree on definitions. If we were to do that, perhaps then a fruitful conversation may be had about whether those particular concepts and approaches are appropriate as a framework for how our teachers and counselors interact with and guide our children (not to mention whether our children are in fact taught those concepts and approaches as orthodoxy).

[End of Section]

4.0 Harassment and Racism at SLSD: A Case Study in Attribution Error

Racist comments occur at SLSD like at most other schools, but they are not routine or commonplace, let alone part of a “systemically racist” SLSD. The records we reviewed included reference to a number of incidents over a *five year* period. Each of the incidents appears to have received extensive attention from the administration and the teachers involved, as is entirely appropriate and right.

The following incidents are referenced in the documents we received, which cover a period from January 1, 2017 through May 14, 2021 (there are likely other incidents, but these were the ones described in the documents we reviewed):

- A reference to a “racially charged” incident at SLSD associated with the 2016 presidential election (this predates our date range, so we do not have any details).
- Allegations of exchanges between SLSD students on social media that included “unpleasant language,” including one student posting to another “KYS” (which stands for “kill yourself”) in connection with the 2016 election season.
- An allegation in an email dated December 2017 that someone said “get your monkeys in line” (the context is unclear from the email but the implication of the email is that that statement was intended to be racist).
- An allegation in a November 2018 email from Ms. Monica Brooks at the NAACP that a student at SLSD was called the “N-Word” by a classmate twice.
- An allegation in an August 2019 email from a parent that a student on a bus said “the N-word.”
- An allegation in a November 2019 email from a teacher that a student said, “You’re a racist Trump supporter.”
- References in a November 2019 e-mail thread to a video that is “extremely racist and vulgar.” The thread does not include any details about the specific content in the video, nor whether it was created during school hours or on school property.
- An allegation by a parent on June 2020 that “Out students of color are being bullied and intimidated by classmates when they post in support of Black Lives Matters” (the parent provided no evidence of either a student post or a student response that would constitute “bullying” or “intimidation”).
- An allegation in a June 2020 email from a parent that our “Students of color have been subject to death threats...” (the parent provided no evidence).
- An allegation in a June 2020 email from a parent of an incident in 2015 where a child was asked “why he wasn’t at a school for brown kids.”

- A reference to Instagram accounts held by unknown persons with profile names of “sl_trumpies” and “sl_racist_is_back.” The first page included a pinned post saying “Trump can DIEEE, Dm us babbbyy, UR gorgeous but if ur a trump support ur ugly as FUCK.”
- An allegation in a March 2021 email that a student told a “racially charged joke” in class and that that same student had made “several racist remarks” that school year.
- Reference in a 2021 email to students outside of school hours and not on school property engaging in a mock reenactment of Derek Chauvin kneeling on the back/neck of George Floyd.

The allegations above are ugly and should be condemned. Each one of the incidents described above, and assuming for the sake of argument that they are each one hundred percent true as described in the records we reviewed and interpreted in the worst possible light, ***still do not suggest that SLSD is “systemically racist.”*** They reflect political discord around the 2016 presidential election cycle, nationwide racial unrest following with the death of George Floyd and the Black Live Matter movement, and a number of children exercising horrendous judgment that obviously requires prompt adult intervention and guidance, including the teaching of tolerance and empathy.

Unlawful harassment, discrimination, and bullying, including harassment based on race, are expressly and clearly prohibited under existing SLSD policies. That type of conduct is unacceptable in our schools and in our community, and it is rightly prohibited by SLSD policies. When an incident of harassment based on race occurs during school hours and on school grounds, it is the duty of the administration to conduct promptly an appropriate inquiry and take appropriate remedial and disciplinary action consistent with board approved policies. If our administration was or is aware of racial harassment, and took no action, then that is an abject failure that should be investigated by the Board and remedial steps should be taken (assuming fault is found) to ensure that relevant staff are re-trained on our existing policies and how to implement them, and in fact, do implement them when the policies are violated. That is how we must address these issues, incident by incident, ensuring all are held to the same standards of behavior.

A group of administrators and board members, however, did not see such incidents as individual episodes of poor judgment, misbehavior, or even maliciousness; instead, they viewed such incidents as evidence that SLSD was “systemically racist” and that our students were “racist” (See Section 5.0). They were not shy in these opinions, as Section 5.0 will make clear, nor in stating what they intended to do to address that “systemic racism.” They decided that SLSD had to be remade in the name of “Social Justice” and began to take activist steps to achieve that goal. The bulk of this report details those many steps, in each case as evidenced by SLSD’s own records.

In seeing “systemic racism” instead of individual students making terrible decisions, they made a fundamental attribution error. They attributed individual acts to some amorphous but omnipresent “systemic racism,” for which they had no actual proof. Regardless, they pressed on,

in some cases literally fabricating evidence out of thin air (See Section 6.5 describes the Allen Report and its many flaws). SLSD deserved and deserves better.

Our teachers, in particular, deserve better. For these school board members and administrators to characterize SLSD as “systemically racist” is to directly impugn the good names and good work of SLSD’s teachers, literally characterizing each and every one of them as part of a system that is literally designed and operates to maintain the supremacy of “white” people over “people of color” (*i.e.*, upholding “white supremacy”). We reject that repugnant position.

In fact, we were so sure that the proposition that the entire “system” at SLSD was “systemically racist” was utter nonsense from the start that in our Right to Know request for district records, we specifically requested the following confirmatory records (May 14, 2021):

20. All Records (a) discussing, alleging, or demonstrating that any employee or agent of SLSD has created, maintained, or contributed to an environment of discrimination based on race through his or her actions or inactions and (b) any disciplinary Records relating thereto.
21. All Records discussing, alleging, or demonstrating that any employee or agent of SLSD created, maintained, contributed to, or expanded any structure, function, rule, policy, process, practice, or procedure within SLSD that discriminates or discriminated among students based on the color of their skin, as well as any disciplinary Records relating thereto.

In an email dated August 6, 2021, sent at 4:09 p.m., the *District’s Open Records Officers confirmed to us that there had been not a single termination or resignation because of allegations that an SLSD teacher or other employee had engaged in racial discrimination.* In nearly four and half years, not a single person was terminated or forced to resign in connection with a racist act, obviously because that type of conduct simply wasn’t occurring among our great teachers in the first place.

We have been in this district for more than a decade and a half and we have never seen, nor even heard of, a single episode of any of our teachers anywhere at any time conducting themselves in way that would suggest they harbor racial animus toward anyone. Frankly, our teachers and staff are owed an apology by the board members (current and former) and administrators that hold the ugly and unsupportable view that SLSD is “systemically racist.”

The notion that SLSD is “systemically racist” was a lie from the start, a sham basis to introduce a divisive ideology into our schools to satisfy the desires of a handful of Social Justice ideologues. Their beliefs and intentions are set forth in their own words in the next Section of this report.

[End of Section]

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5.0 Beliefs and Intentions of Key Players in Their Own Words

The bulk of this Report describes the extensive efforts made and supported by a handful of highly motivated ideologues to remake our school district in the name of Social Justice. It may be tempting to dismiss the previous statement as the hyperbole of biased authors with a particular goal, but we would counsel patience before doing so. The reality is that we don't have to use charged language or twist the facts to make our case. Instead, we can rely directly on the key players' own words and actions as evidenced by the district's own records to show what happened and why. Their intent was and is clear.

The efforts were clearly driven during the period covered by our records request by Kathleen Evison, former superintendent and non-voting member of our school board, supported by various staff members like Shane Cross, Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12 and Tara Cooke, Intermediate School Guidance Counselor, and a handful of school board members like Mary Ann Nord and Kathleen Parsons. That list is far from exhaustive. There were a number of other individuals involved in these efforts, including individuals that are non-SLSD employees (like DEI consultants and partners at academic/training institutions) and SLSD employees (a handful of principals/vice-principals, counselors, and teachers).

What should be clear from the evidence in this section, and from the remainder of this Report, is that a small group of individuals in positions of power can and did have extraordinary ability to affect change at all levels in our school district, almost all of which occurred outside of public view. That should concern all of us.

As you read what follows, please keep in mind that despite numerous requests, no one in the district, either directly through questioning at board meetings or through emails, nor in records produced by the district in response to our request for records, had ever been willing to define "diversity," "equity," or "inclusion," yet they are of utter importance and merit major changes in our district. We find that simple fact astounding.

5.1 What They Think About SLSD and SLSD Students and What They Think Should be Done About It

Former Superintendent Evison had a particularly negative view of SLSD students, believing that "*a significant percentage of our student body*...are either passively, or outright *directly marginalizing their peers*, using unacceptable language and generally *exhibiting racist and biased behaviors*" (email from Evison to Joseph Allen, June 19, 2020, emphasis added):

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 12:57 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

This looks really good. The only other area I feel we're really lacking is the aspect of providing education to our students in these areas. A piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year. **My concern is that we have a significant percentage of our student body that do not understand race, justice and equity and are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors.** I know that's a lot to tackle, and that our staff and admin need to come first, so maybe just a reference to how this work with staff will then lead to not only culturally affirming practices in pedagogy but also in direct teaching of these issues to students? It's just my thought and I'm certainly open to feedback, but just wondering how we capture the portion of **helping our students address their own bias and racism.**

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

We also know where Evison stands on American society generally, and therefore SLSD as part of that society. Evison based her entire “Capstone” Paper (the final project necessary to complete her SLSD-funded PhD in Education) on Critical Race Theory and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (*i.e.*, CRT applied to education), as the following excerpts demonstrates (*An Evaluation of the Impact of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Professional Development for Teachers*, Kathleen Evison, draft, 2020-2021, attached to this Report as Attachment 1) (emphasis added):

“This case study will focus on analysis of the program using three theoretical frameworks; **critical race theory**, transformational learning theory, and **culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogy**. Critical race theory focuses on the fact that **racism is engrained within society and culture and that institutional racism exists**. The power structures within society and institutions are based on **white privilege and white supremacy, which continues to marginalize people of color.**” (p.16)

“If our culture is one of **white supremacy and focused on the norms of white culture**, then the teachers will naturally bring to the professional development preconceived ideas. For any professional development to be effective in developing their capacity for culturally relevant pedagogy, it must not only **acknowledge the established narratives that place white experience at the center**, but also develop skills and abilities to reflect on their personal assumptions and **disrupt** those. Making new assumptions, and creating new frames and narratives will be critical in the success of the professional development. Paired with Ladson-Billings work, the focus of Mezirow on adult learning, and Bell on **critical race theory**, the professional development program can be reviewed in a comprehensive way, and data analyzed using this literature as the basis for determining success.” (p.13)

I attempted to obtain a final version of the former Superintendent Evison’s Capstone paper but, for whatever reasons, she opted not to submit her paper to the library like most other graduates do so that their papers become part of the literature and may be reviewed and cited by others in the field.

Evison was also very clear about what the intent of professional development / training in this area is help students “Develop Cultural competence and critical consciousness” (Presentation titled “*Improving Teach Cultural Competence through Professional Development*,” Kathleen Evison, undated, but presumed to be 2020-2021 as the content of the presentation matches to her “Capstone” paper and was provided from the same folder, attached to this Report as Attachment 2, emphasis added). Below is the title slide to the presentation and the slide in question:



For those who don’t spend their time studying arcane neo-/post-Marxist terminology, “critical consciousness” is the state of seeing society in terms of systems of oppression, power, privilege, dominance, and marginalization coupled with a dedication to become an activist against these perceived systems, *i.e.*, adopting a Marxist conflict-theory world view. Another word for

“critical consciousness” is “woke.” That’s where SLSD tax-payer dollars went, to pay for Evison to spend her time studying and espousing neo-Marxist views in our school district.

On February 16, 2017, Evison led a “Diversity Equity – Communication/Community Committing Meeting” and was able to identify a key reason that our students are “exhibiting racist biased behaviors” and “marginalizing their peers.” The minutes from that meeting state that the SLSD community is “conservative,” and that a “vision shift” is needed to affect “real change” (emphasis added).

Diversity Equity - Communication/Community Committee Meeting
February 16th, 2017

6:00pm - 7:05pm

- Introductions and backstory of all members. 15 members total.
- Everyone engaged at meeting, thanks to Kathy for presentation at present forum.
- Staff training went well, lots of engagement from teachers at meeting. Building admin should take a larger role in training and become more excited about updates and training.
- Staff training should continue and is still needed for improvement.
- **Community is conservative and a vision shift is needed for real change.**

In a June 5, 2020 email, Evison stated that she believes that the role of our school is to “fight against racial disparities” and that the district, its staff, and its students “continue to engage in this vital work” (below). This “activist mission” is not one approved by the school board or our community.

Message

From: [REDACTED]@slsd.org
on behalf of Kathleen Evison <evisonk@slsd.org> [evisonk@slsd.org]
Sent: 6/5/2020 2:56:19 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: [REDACTED]

Good afternoon [REDACTED]
Thank you for reaching out and sharing your thoughts at this time.

Fighting against racial disparities and discrimination of marginalized individuals is a responsibility that we take very seriously. While there is much to be done, both in the district and nationally, our staff, students, and community continue to engage in this vital work.

Just a few days later in email from Evison to a local news reporter dated June 10, 2020 (below), Evison makes her intent that SLSD play a “critical role” in “ensuring understanding of issues around identity, power, privilege, the historical context of oppression, and bias.” It seems that everything must be viewed through this divisive prism. In the email, she also makes clear that the English Language Arts and Social Studies curriculum are particularly important for emphasizing “equity and diversity.”

Message

From: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> [evisonk@sbsd.org]
Sent: 6/10/2020 12:06:47 PM
To: Christopher Haring [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Southern Lehigh Racism Petition - Saucon Source

Good morning Chris,

Thank you for reaching out.

We truly appreciate that our alumni are engaging in these critical discussions and are sharing their past experiences at Southern Lehigh School District.

A school district plays a critical role in providing experiences for all students that is culturally responsive and include instruction that includes direct anti-racist education, ensuring understanding of issues around identity, power, privilege, the historical context of oppression, and bias. There are many complex steps that need to be taken in order to adopt a new curriculum or add new courses. In order to manage this complex process and ensure consistent and sustained focus, the district implemented a Curricular Cycle for Excellence in 2017. This cycle is designed to fully evaluate all aspects of curriculum and instruction in the district to ensure the needs of students are being met academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally. Once evaluation is complete, the curriculum for that subject is revised or new content created with a focus on state and national standards, best practices, progression of learning, and culturally responsive practices. This cycle works systematically through every curricular area in the district, and each year different subjects are scheduled for this comprehensive process. This year, English Language Arts and Social Studies are entering the cycle. While all subjects are equally responsible for high quality inclusive curriculum that emphasize equity and diversity, these two subjects in particular are where a majority of opportunities lay to deepen and expand this work. Throughout this work, the district has and will continue to engage the support and direct input of external partners who are experts in the field of diversity, equity and inclusion.

As educators and as a community, we have much to do, and we look forward to continuing to engage our students, family, staff and stakeholders not only through feedback as issues arise, but also as participants in the challenging work ahead.

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When did our school board debate (with public comment) and decide that our district must provide “*instruction that includes direct anti-racist education*” and that our district must ensure that our students understand “*issues around identity, power, privilege, the historical context of oppression, and bias?*” We have reviewed more than five years of school board minutes and have found nothing that suggests that our school board has ever approved any such curriculum, or that such concepts be embedded within other courses of study. Our view is that Evison was stating **her** view for the district, without ever having aligned, let alone obtained the approval of, the school board and the public.

In an email exchange on May 2, 2021 between Mr. Shane Cross, our former Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12 who reported directly to Evison, and a community member, Cross confirms that the district “*remains committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, that there are ongoing “changes to literature used in course,”* and that a “library audit” has been completed (note that the results of that audit were never presented to the public; see Section 9.0 of this report for more on this topic).

From: Shane Cross <crosss@sbsd.org>
Sent: Sunday, May 2, 2021 8:07 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org>
Subject: Re: DEI Work

Good morning [REDACTED]

Thank you for your inquiry.

The District remains committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as part of our Comprehensive Plan. Over the last several years there have been communications, public forums, DEI committee work, changes to literature used in courses, professional development, student groups, and expansion of counseling services. Dr. Joseph Allen is in the process of collecting data for a needs assessment that will guide future DEI work and our next 3 year comprehensive plan. Literacy and Social Studies have now entered the Cycle for Curricular Excellence (CCE), where DEI is being considered as part of curricular revisions. Additionally, we have completed an audit of our Library collection and are in the process of expanding the collection to include more books that all students can identify with. In turn, those books can then be used as part of instruction.

I want to assure you that whenever issues arise, buildings work with students to discuss and process, where appropriate, in the classroom setting, small groups, or individually.

I have cc'd Dr. Evison so she can also respond.

Best Regards,
 Shane

Shane T. Cross
 Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12
 610.282.3121, Ext 5403
 Cell: [REDACTED]
crosss@sbsd.org
 #S1SDproud

Southern Lehigh School District
 5775 Main Street
 Center Valley, PA 18034

In Cross’ own words, we know that “*Literacy and Social Students*” were (and still are?) being used as an avenue to advance “DEI” in our schools. One would think that a Superintendent and a Director Curriculum and Instruction would perhaps instead focus on improving academic performance, but that wasn’t the priority in our district.

Evison went much further than merely expressing the thought that it was the district’s responsibility to be activist in the name of Social Justice. She in fact worked closely with other school districts and activist professors at Lehigh University (see Section 7.0 of this Report, which discusses this relationship in detail). A letter to all of the superintendents of the school districts in the Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence (GLVCEE), a final draft of which was included in an email thread dated July 7, 2020 provided by district, make clear where Evison and the consortium stand with respect to “equity,” “social justice,” “systemic racism,” and “anti-racism” and its activist role with respect to those issues. The letter, included in its entirety below, includes (emphasis added):

- Praising the superintendents for their “*commitment*” to “*social justice and anti-racism.*”
- “...*how to take stronger action to counter systemic racism in the districts we lead.*”
- Suggestion that our teaching of history is “*incomplete or inaccurate, biased*” because it “*portray[s] whiteness as normative...*”

- Intent to create “a just and anti-racist society.”
- Intent to “leverage the GLVCEE to coordinate a multidistrict working team...”
- Intent to “manage curricular change” in all of the covered school districts.”

It would be difficult to write a letter with more CRT-based social justice jargon if one tried. Below is the final draft of the letter in its entirety (highlighting added):

Colleague,

Your district’s membership in the Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence (GLVCEE) reflects a commitment in your leadership to social justice and anti-racism.

As superintendents, we’ve been reflecting on how to take stronger action to counter systemic racism in the districts we lead. We have heard from many of our recent alumni and even current students asking us directly, “why didn’t I learn this in school?” when referring to our nation’s history. Former and current students have raised with us the multiple ways that our curriculum is incomplete or inaccurate, biased to a point that often goes beyond obfuscation to portray whiteness as normative in our history.

As a result, we realize that in addition to dismantling the ways that systemic racism limits opportunities and reduces expectations in our district for our Black students and students of color, we need to rework the curriculum that too frequently perpetuates a perspective that accommodates and perpetuates white privilege. It is our obligation as educational leaders to continuously reflect and do better, and thus we plan to make necessary changes to the curricula that we utilize in our schools so that it is more accurate and complete.

In the past, attempts to change curricula to accommodate multiple perspectives have sometimes resulted in an additive approach, as though adding a month for Black history or a unit on the civil rights movement suffices and the rest of the curriculum can be left unexamined. What we seek now is something different; that our teaching of American history should be a more accurate and complete portrayal of historic events and figures so that our students have a fuller and better understanding of how we have gotten to this point, what makes our nation simultaneously exceptional and flawed, and how much further we need to go to create a just and anti-racist society.

As the governance board of the GLVCEE, we seek to leverage the GLVCEE to coordinate a multidistrict working team to inform member districts who wish to engage in this work. Our initial thinking is that this multi-district working group would serve as a clearinghouse of ideas and a mechanism for sharing across districts. The “charge” to the group would not be to come up with a new curriculum, since that is the work of each district, but rather to work together to identify resources, share work product, and engage in strategic discussion about managing curricular change.


Together, we now invite your thinking and request your input as the superintendents of the districts that belong to the GLVCEE. It is our hope that we would be able to issue an invitation in the name of all the GLVCEE district superintendents, that the superintendents would champion this work in their respective districts and that each district would contribute key personnel to occasional meetings and ongoing collaboration.

Please let us know what you think in whatever way works for you - we welcome your emails or calls. In addition, we plan on having a meeting with the GLVCEE superintendents and Brian on August ____ to discuss this further before anything is formalized or made public.

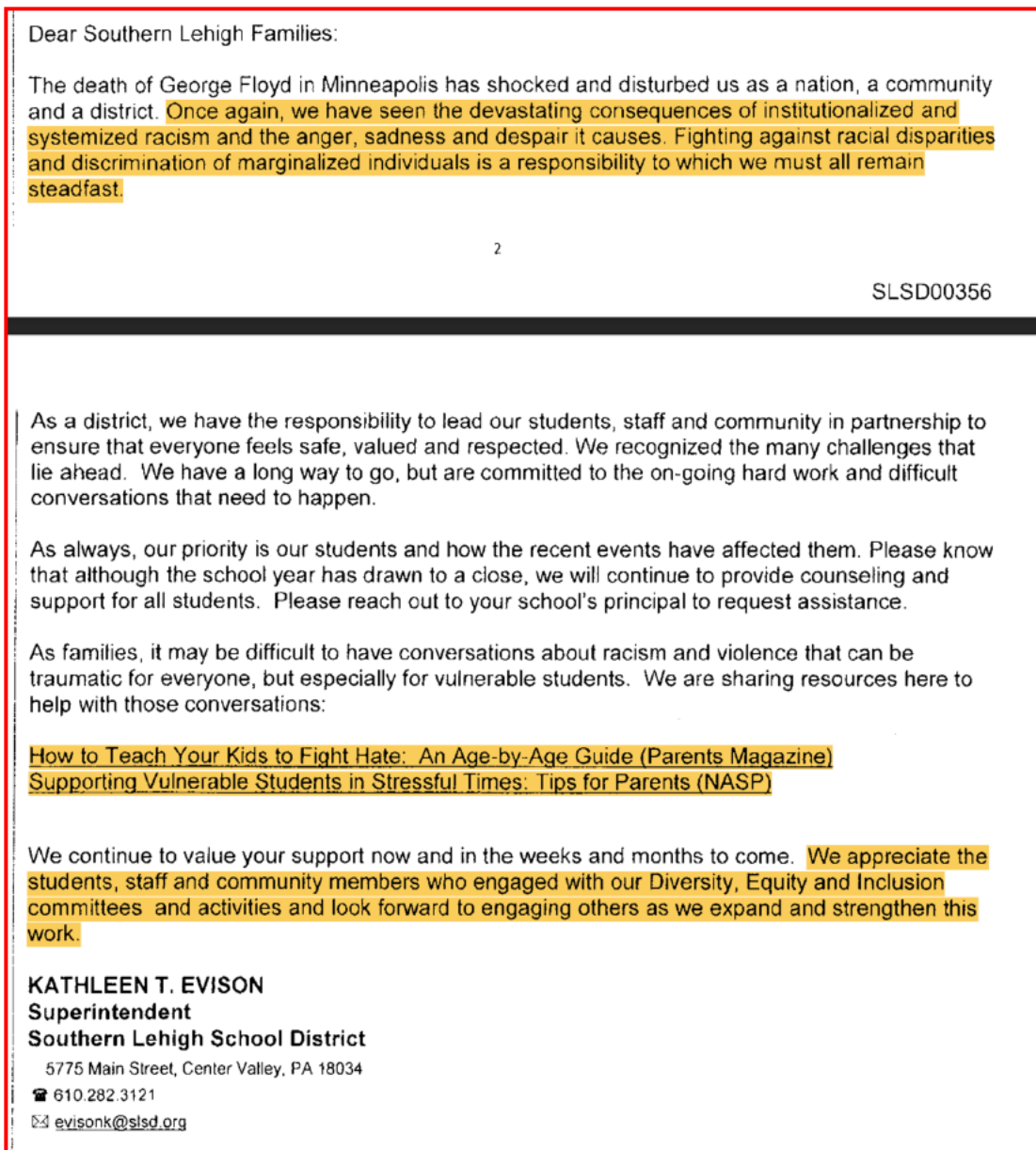
Thank you,

Dr. Joe Roy, Superintendent, Bethlehem Area School District
 Dr. Richard Sniscak, Superintendent, Parkland School District
 Dr. Kathleen Evison, Superintendent, Southern Lehigh School District
 Dr. Brian G. Osborne, Professor of Practice, Lehigh College of Education

Brian G. Osborne, Ed.D.
 Professor of Practice | Educational Leadership
 610-578-6838 | be/him/his



Evison even took the horrific death of George Floyd as an opportunity to push her Social Justice agenda at SLSD. In a draft email sent to the school board, and then subsequently distributed to the community, Evison attributes Mr. Floyd's death to "*institutionalized and systematized racism,*" and suggests that we must all "*remain steadfast*" in "*fighting against racial disparities and discrimination of marginalized individuals*" (again, an activist role is outside of the authority of our schools) (below, emphasis added). She closes the email with confirming we will "*expand and strengthen*" the district's work in "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion":



The links Evison provided include numerous CRT-based materials.

In an email with a former SLSD student dated June 11, 2020 regarding diversity issues at SLSD, Evison confirmed that:

- SLSD was in the process of revisiting all curricula to weave in DEI content, including in Math, Science, and other STEM courses;
- Curriculum reviews and updates would next target the district’s English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies courses because those courses lend themselves to teaching about “*power, privilege, false narratives, historical oppression and the experiences of marginalized groups*” is key; and
- “...*There will be significant changes in curriculum coming as we work through these areas over the rest of the year*” (i.e., 2020).

Message

From: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@slsd.org]
on behalf of Kathleen Evison <evisonk@slsd.org> [evisonk@slsd.org]
Sent: 6/11/2020 1:12:43 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Promoting Diversity at Southern Lehigh

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

Thank you so much for reaching out and sharing your thoughts. I really appreciate your focus on education to focus on these issues.

Since you left, we have been working on many trainings, events, and groups to improve culture and climate, **but we still have a long way to go.** It takes a long and consistent effort to truly **affect deep changes.** Specifically related to curriculum, we have created a Curricular Cycle for Excellence. The cycle was created a couple of years ago to address a range of curriculum issues that exist in SL, including the ones you outline. This cycle takes each subject area K - 12 one by one and does a comprehensive evaluation of the areas taught, strategies used, resources and materials and outcomes. We then redesign or add new courses based on that evaluation. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of courses, materials, access to courses, assessment practices, instructional practices and focus or narratives used are all fully integrated in this evaluation. Math, Science, and STEM have gone through this process so far, and this year we are launching ELA and Social Studies.** This work was designed and in process until the pandemic closed our buildings, and is continuing remotely. It will pick up more fully in the fall. **All curricular areas are important in the fight against bias, but in particular those two subjects lend themselves to significant ability to teach directly and explicitly about power, privilege, false narratives, historical oppression and the experiences of marginalized groups.** As we had already planned prior to recent events, **there will be significant changes in curriculum coming as we work through these areas over the rest of this year.**

It sounds like you had a great experience in your college class, and my hope is that as we complete this curricular review and design new courses and update existing ones that our future graduates will be able to share that they too have a much better foundation of anti-racist, anti-bias education from their time at Southern Lehigh.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
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✉ evisonk@slsd.org

One of the ways in which Evison planned to bring Social Justice training into our schools and curriculum was through the services of Dr. Joseph Allen, the now infamous “DEI consultant.” In an email thread dated June 19, 2020, Evison confirmed to Allen that a part of the DEI agenda

had already “*through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year*” (see below, emphasis added). The thread primarily discussed training for staff and administrative employees, but makes clear that these concepts will also take in “*direct teaching of these issues to students.*” Allen responds that he updated the DEI proposal in two places to make clear that students would be take “*across all grade levels*” as part of the “action plan” that would result from his services.

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 7:24 PM Joseph Allen <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Greetings,

Here is the latest version. I've actually incorporated the student component in two places: a) Module 5 of the PD outline (where we can help teachers learn to engage students in D&I related conversations), and b) in the action plan (where I discussed including recommendations for the development of D&I initiatives for students across all grade levels). Let me know what you think.

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 12:57 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

This looks really good. The only other area I feel we're really lacking is the aspect of providing education to our students in these areas. A piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year. My concern is that we have a significant percentage of our student body that do not understand race, justice and equity and are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors. I know that's a lot to tackle, and that our staff and admin need to come first, so maybe just a reference to how this work with staff will then lead to not only culturally affirming practices in pedagogy but also in direct teaching of these issues to students? It's just my thought and I'm certainly open to feedback, but just wondering how we capture the portion of helping our students address their own bias and racism.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

Evison’s intent was clear, to train all employees on DEI and to remake the entire curricula at SLSD in the name of Social Justice.

Former Principal Gueriello confirmed some of these efforts in an email dated September 9, 2020. She states that “*We have also met with our Director of Curriculum and Instruction [presumably Shane Cross] and we are rewriting our Social Studies and English curricula to include work with more diverse themes and written by more diverse authors*” and that “*the district also hired a Diversity Officer to review all of our practices Kindergarten to 12th grade and provide suggestions for improvement.*”

You will be glad to hear that we have established a Diversity Council (this grew out of the SPIRIT and Aevium groups) with about 30 students who have been meeting regularly. We have 3 teacher advisors, 3 administrators and Office Mc Laughlin all serving on the committee along with the students. We have met with alumni and gathered their perspective after leaving Solehi and have incorporated their suggestions into our work. **We also have met with our Director of Curriculum and Instruction and we are rewriting our Social Studies and English curricula to include more work with diverse themes and written by more diverse authors.** We also are looking at adding a possible anthropology course to our social studies department to provide the opportunities to learn from various perspectives and cultures. We also have grown our Gay Straight Alliance Clubs and have brought extensive workshops and guest speakers to the school to advocate for understanding and acceptance of all types of diversity. **The district has also hired a Diversity Officer to review all of our practices Kindergarten to 12th grade and provide suggestions for improvement.** This has all been done in the last 2 1/2 years so we are definitely trying to address this very important issue.

Cross echoed these concepts in an email dated May 2, 2021. In that email, Cross confirms to the parent that (emphasis added):

- The district remains **committed to DEI** as part of our Comprehensive Plan
- **Changes to literature used in courses** have been made in the name of DEI
- **Professional development has been held** in the name of DEI
- SLSD has **expanded counseling services as part of DEI**
- Literacy and Social Studies were in review for DEI-related updates
- SLSD had completed a “**library audit**” and was in the process of “expanding the collection” to include “more books that all students can identify with” and that, importantly, “**those books can then be used as part of instruction.**”

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

From: Shane Cross <crosss@sbsd.org>
Sent: Sunday, May 2, 2021 8:07 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org>
Subject: Re: DEI Work

Good morning [REDACTED]

Thank you for your inquiry.

The District remains committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as part of our Comprehensive Plan. Over the last several years there have been communications, public forums, DEI committee work, changes to literature used in courses, professional development, student groups, and expansion of counseling services. Dr. Joseph Allen is in the process of collecting data for a needs assessment that will guide future DEI work and our next 3 year comprehensive plan. Literacy and Social Studies have now entered the *Cycle for Curricular Excellence (CCE)*, where DEI is being considered as part of curricular revisions. Additionally, we have completed an audit of our Library collection and are in the process of expanding the collection to include more books that all students can identify with. In turn, those books can then be used as part of instruction.

I want to assure you that whenever issues arise, buildings work with students to discuss and process, where appropriate, in the classroom setting, small groups, or individually.

I have cc'd Dr. Evison so she can also respond.

Best Regards,
Shane

Shane T. Cross
Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12
610.282.3121, Ext 5403
Cell: [REDACTED]
crosss@sbsd.org
#SLSDProud

Ms. Mary Ann Nord, former member of the school board, was another person in a position of authority that drove the Social Justice efforts at SLSD. Based on her own words, it's clear that Ms. Nord had spent time educating herself on Social Justice issues and was a true believer. In an email dated June 16, 2020 written in response to an inquiry from a parent, Nord stated (emphasis added):

- She had educated herself on her *“own privilege as well as the deep and broad impacts of structural, systemic racism.”*
- That her eyes were now open to *“the intersectionality of structural racism”*
- That there is *“a vast amount of work ahead as we examine the ways that systemic and institutionalized racism is promulgated in our curriculum, our culture, and our school community, and we implement concrete plans to address it.”*

[Continued on Next Page]

From: Mary Ann Nord [nordm@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Mary Ann Nord <nordm@sbsd.org> [nordm@sbsd.org]
Sent: 6/16/2020 12:18:41 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: [REDACTED]

Hi [REDACTED] -

I'm sorry I was not able to respond sooner, but I wanted to thank you for taking the time to write and for sharing with us what your family has experienced. I couldn't agree more about the power of personal stories and the importance of engaging in meaningful conversations on this issue with students, staff, educators, board members, and administrators, so I am incredibly grateful that you wrote. I know that Mrs. Evison reached out and is hoping to meet with you, and I'm sure she will be able to speak with you about some of the work that is being done in the district. While many steps have been taken in the right direction, as we all recognize, there is still an extraordinary amount of work ahead of us. Because of that, I just wanted to respond directly and share some of my personal experiences and perspectives on this issue, so that you know the lens through which I view this issue (of course I can only speak for myself, not the other board members). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I made a decision to run for the school board in 2017, in part due to the **racially charged incidents that were occurring at our school, especially after the 2016 election**. These and other incidents made it clear to me that we needed to make changes. I was part of the **Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Committee** that was formed in response to those incidents, and I am committed to creating a Southern Lehigh culture that is rooted in diversity and inclusion, and stands firmly against racism in all its forms. **I have spent time trying to educate myself in recent years about my own privilege as well as the deep and broad impacts of structural, systemic racism**. I have been an activist in gun violence prevention for many years, and **that work was what really opened my eyes to the intersectionality of structural racism with so many other issues**. I am continuing to learn every day. While we have taken steps in the right direction in Southern Lehigh, **there is a vast amount of work ahead as we examine the ways that systemic and institutionalized racism is promulgated in our curriculum, our culture, and our school community, and we implement concrete plans to address it**. I assure you, I am committed to that work, and I know that many others are too. It takes a long time to change a culture, but I do have faith that we currently have the will and determination to make meaningful changes in Southern Lehigh. I believe there will be ongoing discussions and updates at upcoming board meetings, and welcome you to join as they are currently being conducted via Zoom.

Again, thank you so much for writing. I am always happy to talk with you in person or by phone if you'd like to discuss further.

Thank you again.
Mary Ann Nord

The notion that we need to teach our students about “systemic racism” was supported by Ms. Kathleen Parsons, former member of the school board, in an email to other board members dated June 6, 2020, which was written in response to an email from a former SLSD student that called for extension social justice training for all grades in SLSD (emphasis added):

To: Kathleen Evison[evisonk@sbsd.org]
Cc: smithj[smithj@sbsd.org]; Emily Gehman[gehmane@sbsd.org]; Mary Ann Nord[nordm@sbsd.org]; Anita Desai[desaia@sbsd.org]; William Lycett[lycettw@sbsd.org]; Jeffrey Dimming[dimmigjeffrey@sbsd.org]; Kyle Gangewere[gangewerek@sbsd.org]; Priya Sareen[sareenp@sbsd.org]
From: Kathleen Parsons[parsonsk@sbsd.org]
Sent: Sat 6/6/2020 8:30:02 AM (UTC-04:00)
Subject: Re: Message to the community

Thank you Kathy for your expanded explanation of what you are doing. I thought your letter to the parents was thoughtful and well written.

Not to make this an ALL lives matter statement, because trying to hire AA staff should be a priority, but we really need to diversify staff for other nationalities as well. I'd like to mention that the second largest race, after Caucasians in our demographics, is Hispanic, than Asian and biracial and then african american.

<https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/4222350>. Our challenge is that we only have one or two people that retire each year so it will take years to legitimately diversify our staff. **I agree with what the recent SL graduate just wrote about educating our students about systemic racism and bias in general. There's more needed than just an assembly here and there and a club for kids that are probably already aware of the problem.**

The introduction of Social Justice approaches into SLSD caused significant rancor in the community, particularly late 2020 and into 2021 (see [Section 6.0](#) of this report). The dismissiveness and disrespect of some members of our school board toward public concerns on these topic is reflected in the email thread below dated September 30, 2020. In the thread, a member of the public requested to attend the training session to be provided by Dr. Allen. Ms. Emily Gehman forwarded the request to Ms. Nord stating “*No Words,*” to which Nord responded “*We are living in the Upside Down.*” Given what we now know about Evison’s plans with Dr. Allen, the nature of Dr. Allen’s approach and framework for addressing “DEI” issues, the corrupt relationship between Evison and Allen, and the ultimate termination of the district’s relationship with Allen, the request from the community member seems more than reasonable (emphasis added):

To: Emily Gehman[gehmane@slsd.org]
Cc: Anita Desai[desaia@slsd.org]; Evie[Evisonk@slsd.org]
From: Mary Ann Nord[nordm@slsd.org]
Sent: Wed 9/30/2020 2:51:59 PM (UTC-04:00)
Subject: Re: Diversity Inclusion Equity Services Training

We are living in the Upside Down.

On Wed, Sep 30, 2020 at 2:41 PM Emily Gehman <gehmane@slsd.org> wrote:

No words.

Begin forwarded message:

From: [REDACTED]
Date: September 30, 2020 at 2:28:36 PM EDT
To: Emily Gehman <gehmane@slsd.org>
Subject: Diversity Inclusion Equity Services Training

Dear Ms. Gehman,

In regard to the Diversity Inclusion Equity Services Training , I am requesting to be one of the 40 participants who will attend this training.

Since this training will be funded with Federal tax money, and as a taxpayer, I should be entitled to attend this training.

Please respond with the dates of this training, and how I can obtain a link to it.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

5.2 Racism Here, Racism There, Racism Everywhere!

When you believe that our entire country is systemically racist, literally designed to oppress people of color to maintain “white supremacy,” you naturally tend to see racism everywhere and in everything (which is entirely consistent with critical race theory, which holds, among other things, that racism is “ordinary and not aberrational”). This is “confirmation bias” at work (*i.e.*, the human propensity to view new information in a way to supports their existing beliefs on a given subject), of course. There was definitely some racial harassment and deeply offensive and inappropriate actions and statements made at SLSD over the years, which no one denies (see [Section 4.0](#) for a description of the incidents reflected in the records we received). However, the

demand for racist acts at SLSD among the Social Justice-minded far exceeds the supply. Two examples follow.

“White Savior” or Just a Good Person?

On June 30, 2020, an emergency occurred at SLSD, an emergency that required our superintendent acting from out of state while on trip made in connection with her SLSD-funded PhD program. The basis of the emergency was that the SLSD website either provided or linked to an article about a white person who spent time in the Kensington section of Philadelphia, with the intent of being of service to the residents there and a “beacon of hope” (we don’t have the original post/article, but we have a description of it from SLSD records).

For those unaware, the Kensington section of Philadelphia is known for high levels of crime and the availability and use of narcotics. Kensington has an “open air drug market,” with users smoking and injecting drugs in the open, passing out in the streets, and overdosing and dying. Kensington is ~60% hispanic/latino, ~15% black, with the remainder split among asian, white, and those identifying as two or more races.

One would think that any individual willing to go into a high crime urban area with routine deaths of despair would be praised for willingness to at least try, in person and at significant personal risk, to help her fellow citizens, would be praised as an example to her fellow citizens. Not so with Evison and Nord.

This is Nord’s first email to Evison, which asserts that the article is “*well meaning but riddled with institutional racism*” and advocating for the article to be removed (emphasis added):

On Thu, Jan 30, 2020 at 3:15 PM Mary Ann Nord <nordm@sbsd.org> wrote:
Hi! In the midst of all the other fun we’re having, I just saw this. Can we talk when you have a minute? This is a classic example of something that is well meaning but riddled with institutionalized racism. References to “broken people,” “war zones” and a white teacher going to Kensington to be a “beacon of hope.” We are never going to attract diverse candidates with stuff like this on our website. I know it was well intended, and no one meant it that way - Ricci and Mrs Runni are both great. But its a classic example of the kind of professional development we need. Everyone understands things like “racism is bad” and “everyone has unconscious bias” but we need to learn to deconstruct our language and our behaviors, and teach structural racism.

Would love to discuss. But in the meantime, my two cents is that I think we should remove this post.

<https://www.sbsd.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=19506&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=36304&PageID=13083>

Evison responds that she completely agrees that the article is “saturated” with “bias and privilege.” Evison confirms that she’s “working on it now” (emphasis added):

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

On Thu, Jan 30, 2020 at 5:48 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Hi MA,

Thanks for reaching out - I just got off a plane in Nashville (three days of doctoral classes ahead) and read it. I'm working on it now. I completely agree that bias and privilege is saturating this article and is unacceptable as a representation of Southern Lehigh. This is everything we're fighting against and everything we're trying to educate staff on. Clearly we have much work to do.

And thanks for your second email, I truly appreciate your thoughtfulness, but I totally agree with all you have to say here and didn't think it harsh at all. In fact, I'm being much harsher!

I'm on it!

Kathy

Nord responded that the article was a “glaring example” of institutional racism and reeked of “white savior” narrative that makes the whole article “sound awful.” Nord was “mortified” that the post was on district’s website at all. Her email (emphasis added):

On Thu, Jan 30, 2020 at 6:41 PM Mary Ann Nord <nordm@sbsd.org> wrote:

Thank you. I am so glad we are on the same page. It was just such a glaring example and I was mortified that we would have that on our website. My hope is that it can be a teachable moment without them becoming defensive, because I want them to be open to recognizing and mitigating these kinds of biases that people are so often oblivious to. I mean, someone could teach a master class using that article as an example. Those people are not broken. The system is broken, and those "war zones" are peoples' homes and communities. Communities that have been devastated by structural racism through things like redlining. And while there is truth that Kensington and many other areas of Philly are plagued with horrible violence and poverty, the tone deafness of the "white savior" narrative that permeates the article just makes the whole thing sound awful. There are so many nuances to life in communities with daily violence and all of that is just dismissed when it's called a "war zone." Anyway, I want her to speak her truth - I'm sure she is a good person and her work in those communities is part of her story. I just hope we can all learn to tell our stories and communicate in ways that don't diminish others.

So thank you for acting on it so quickly and decisively - it's much appreciated.

Hope you get time to enjoy Nashville while you are there - it's such a fun town!

MA

Evison then confirmed that the article had been removed from the SLSD website (emphasis added):

On Thu, Jan 30, 2020 at 8:00 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:

Agreed! Article is now down. We are going to work to rewrite to celebrate Maria's work and the great things she does now.

Interestingly, my father was from Kensington. His brother was the last to move out around 10 years ago, so I know the area pretty well.

We have a lot of work to do, and examples like this are teachable moments for all.

Thanks!

Kathy

In less than four hours, the offending post of a woman going to Kensington to help her fellow humans had been removed. Racist emergency solved. Imagine being so cynical that you view a story of a white person helping people that don't look like her as reflecting “institutional racism,” “bias,” and “privilege.”

A reasonable person would more likely think, “that’s great, she’s helping others, good for her” rather than seeing everything first and foremost in terms of race.

OK, What’s Racist Now???

On November 1, 2019, Evison received an email from a parent about some actually disturbing interactions her child had with another child at a school in our district. Evison committed to look into the matter immediately, and that was completely the correct reaction. We have policies against unlawful harassment, including harassment based on race. Based on the email, it appears that Evison intended to investigate the matter and handled it in accordance with school board approved policies.

In a postscript to the email, however, the parent mentioned that as she was looking for email addresses on the SLSD website, she came across a picture that included one of our students making an “OK” hand symbol, which she notes has become associated with “white supremacists.” She even states that she was “positive it was ***not meant*** as more than a playful gesture” (her emphasis). It appears that she may have included a screenshot as there was a “<Screenshot (48).png>” at the bottom of the email, but the district did not include the attachment, as it was required to have done under the Right to Know law. The photo was promptly removed from the SLSD website. One board member noted “*When I saw it, the image honestly looked to me like a haphazard & anatomically incongruous combination of two different kids arms/hands.*” That same board member, however, agreed with removing the “offensive photo” because “*if anything makes students or parents feel unwelcome - or that their perspective is not being heard & respected - removing it was absolutely necessary.*” In the land of Social Justice, it’s guilty until..., well, just guilty.

One wonders how these same administrators and board members would feel about the following uses of the “OK” symbol...





[End of Section]

6.0 The DEI Debacle: An Overview

This section tells the story of the “DEI proposal” (also referred to herein as the “Allen Proposal”) approved by our school board in 2020 that would cause significant and ongoing heated discussion in our community. The proposal as approved included:

- (i) professional development training for SLSD employees covering such things as “systemic racism” and “race as a social construct”;
- (ii) “equity surveys” for students, parents, and teachers;
- (iii) an analysis of five years of academic performance and discipline data for the purposes of determining whether there is any disparity in performance among racial groups; and
- (iv) creation of a “3-Year Action Plan” for diversity, equity, and inclusion based changes for our district.

What caused alarm in the community is that terms like “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” had very much become a part of the national conversation, and this time they had meanings that were quite different than what one would have understood those terms to mean a generation ago, or even 10 years ago for that matter. These words had been hijacked for political purposes (see [Sections 4.0](#) and [14.0](#) of this Report).

People started asking pointed questions of our administrators and board members and sadly many of those questions went unanswered. When some answers were given, they were obvious dodges or easily falsifiable. Our superintendent, for example, repeatedly said that the proposal had nothing to do with Critical Race Theory, also a hot topic in the national discussion that followed the events of 2020. She took this position despite the fact that she was in the process of completing a district-funded PhD program where she studied and wrote about CRT and its application in education extensively and the proposal itself included numerous citations to seminal writers in CRT and its application in education through “Culturally Relevant / Sustaining Pedagogy.” As this [Section 7.3](#) in particular will explain, the entire proposal was based on and driven by CRT, and that was quite obvious to anyone with the bare minimum of investigation.

Community members of all views spoke passionately at school board meetings, sent strongly worded emotional emails to school board members and administrators, and filed requests records under the Pennsylvania Right to Know law (the state-level equivalent of the federal Freedom of Information Act). Allegations of corruption, the award of a no-bid contract as a quid pro quo, undisclosed conflicts of interest, breaches of federal law based on the improper disclose of confidential student-level information, and breaches of district policies were made. The school board hired outside legal counsel to conduct an investigation into these and other matters, an investigation which confirmed that those allegations were in fact true. The district would lose three separate appeals relating to requests for records at the PA Office of Open Records, demonstrating an ongoing inability to comply with its transparency obligations under Pennsylvania law. The DEI consultant would be fired and the DEI initiative would be put on ice. The issue would play a meaningful role in a school board election.

As you read this section, and this Report generally, one thing you should note is that it does not appear that any administrator or any school board member asked the simple question of whether the DEI initiative would in any measurable way improve the academic performance or well-being of our students. Not once, not a single time.

We apologize in advance if portions of this section are inherently dense and arcane. This is unfortunately unavoidable when parsing the language of school board policies and the ways in which they were violated, for example. We have included many district documents directly in the body of the analysis to make things as concrete as possible, and have added emphasis to key phrases and thoughts. Public corruption is a serious matter, so we hope you will take the time to understand just what happened in our district in this area.

6.1 School Board Approves Divisive DEI Proposal, but No One Can Define “Equity”

At the June 22, 2020 meeting of the SLSD school board, the board approved an “Independent Contractor Agreement” with Dr. Joseph Allen for the provision of “diversity, inclusion, and equity” related services. While the approval went little noticed by the community at that point, within a year that approval and the services it authorized would become an issue of significant concern in the community, leading to numerous acrimonious board meetings, an investigation into district corruption, the termination of Allen as a consultant to the district, and, ultimately, this Report.

The minutes from the June 22, 2020 meeting record the approval as follows (available on SLSD website):

E. Independent Contractor Agreement

Motion to approve the Independent Contractor Agreement with Dr. Joseph Allen to provide diversity, inclusion and equity needs assessment, action planning and professional development. Funds from Federal Programs, Title II will cover these expenses.

Motion by Kathleen Parsons, second by Jennifer Smith.

Dr. Allen described his plan to include 40 individuals in the training as a starting point which begins with a needs assessment to assist in targeting the correct components of the training. Dr. Allen's 3-year action plan allows it to be part of the curriculum and staff becomes the informed liaisons to the community and district as awareness is built and then developed. Mr. Dimmig questioned the modules of this training that are being approved by the Board this evening. Information on modules for equity work will be shared with the Board regarding which modules will be implemented.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Anita Desai, Kyle Gangewere, Emily Gehman, William Lycett, Mary Ann Nord, Kathleen Parsons, Priya Sareen, Jennifer Smith

Nay: Jeffrey Dimmig

The motion was approved on an eight to one vote, with only Mr. Dimmig sensing something was amiss and voting against the resolution. Beyond the description in the minutes, there is no other record of the discussion of this resolution at that meeting because the board had decided at various points in the past not to record and archive school board meetings for later viewing by the public, an obvious rejection of transparency.

Understanding what was approved that night is important, as numerous lies were told by board members and the administration subsequently about this very issue. The reader should note and remember the following:

- There was never any “Independent Contractor Agreement,” only a “proposal” from Allen (see Section 7.2 of this report). The “proposal” was not in the form of a contract and was never signed by the parties regardless. As such, Allen was never bound by even the most basic contract terms, such as confidentiality, which in this case would have governed, at a minimum, the handling of highly sensitive student-specific data.
- The description in the minutes makes clear that the Board approved, all in one fell swoop, (i) a “needs assessment,” (ii) “action planning,” and (iii) “professional development” (*i.e.*, training for SLSD employees). One would expect that the normal course of events would be to do a “needs assessment” to determine whether services are needed, and if they are, what services are needed. Instead, it was clearly a forgone conclusion that in fact “action planning” and “professional development” for at least 40 staff were needed even before the results of any “needs assessment” were available to the Board for review.
- Per the board minutes, Allen's “3-year action plan allows it [*i.e.*, “diversity, inclusion, and equity”] to be **part of the curriculum**” (emphasis added). This language makes clear that it was the Board’s intent, from the start, to bring “diversity, inclusion and equity” into our district’s curricula for students.

The most ludicrous part of all of it is that no one at SLSD appears to be able to define “equity,” at least, they’re not willing to admit to being able to do so. As we described in the Preface to this Report, we contacted Evison by email shortly after the announcement of the “equity” surveys was released. Our key question of her was how the district defines “equity.” She dodged the question, simply decided not to answer it. To this day I still don’t have an answer from the district to that most basic of questions.

In an email dated April 26, 2021, we asked Evison a very direct question:

“How does SLSD define “equity”?”

We received the following response on April 30, 2021 in which she failed to respond to even a single question we posed:

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

On Apr 30, 2021, at 5:19 PM, Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:

I appreciate you reaching out with your questions

The district engaged in a contract with a consultant to conduct a needs assessment related to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion within the district in June 2020. The goal of this project is to review the current needs around diversity, equity and inclusion and determine where the district focuses attention in the future. The district is focused in its equity work on ensuring that all students receive the opportunities and supports they need to be successful and that those supports are based on individual need. These things may not be the same as their peers because their individual need is different, but all students will have equal access to opportunities without barriers.

One aspect of the needs assessment is the survey being conducted by the consultant. The survey is one piece of the process and provides important information about perceptions of families, students, and staff related to the climate within the building. The data collected is perceptual in nature, and as such is designed to establish how individuals within the Southern Lehigh School District feel about their district. As a voluntary survey, issues of response rates and the nature of the sample will of course need to be considered and accounted for in analysis. All administration, methods, data analysis, findings, and reporting of survey results are part of the responsibility of the consultant, and the data and analytics will be shared publicly as part of the final report process. The goal of this survey is not to establish a complete and definite answer, but rather to gather one piece of information in a larger project. The survey alone will not be used for any decision making or policy, but rather, contributes to the large needs assessment which as a whole will lead to the creation of a three year action plan.

Thank you,

Dr. Kathleen T. Evison
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

In her above response, she simply presented as though we didn't ask the question. She notes that the district is "*focused on equity work,*" but won't define "equity." We tried one more time on May 2, 2021:

Subject: Re: SLSD Equity Survey / Questions
Date: May 2, 2021 at 3:09 PM
To: evisonk@sbsd.org

Superintendent Evison,

Thank you for your response, which is much appreciated.

Respectfully, though, we don't believe you answered any of our questions, which we tried to make as straight forward as possible without losing important context. For example, you didn't answer the key question, which is how does SLSD define "equity." That is the heart of the matter, and would drive any teacher training, as well as the perception of that training by parents, and of course any changes or additions that may be made to curriculum. "Equity" is frequently defined these days, under Critical Race Theory and all its variants, within the context of oppressor and oppressed, ascribing to individual children collective guilt they do not and should not bear. One can be fully and wholehearted against racism and discrimination of all types, as we are, but not supportive of teaching SLSD children that they are "oppressors" because of an immutable characteristic such as the color of their skin.

Therefore, we would very much like an answer to that key question, as well as the other questions we posed. We restate them here for ease of responding:

1. How does SLSD define "equity"?

We received no further response from Evison whatsoever and to this day the district has not provided a single definition of what they mean when they use the term “Equity.”

Evison wasn’t the only one that refused to answer very direct and very simple questions on how the district defines “equity” (and “diversity” and “inclusion). In an email dated August 25, 2020, a concerned community member emailed Ms. Emily Gehman, a member of our school board, a number of questions regarding the DEI proposal (emphasis added):

Tue, Aug 25, 2020 at 9:50 AM

To: Emily Gehman <gehmane@sbsd.org>
Cc: Jeffrey Dimming <dimmigjeffrey@sbsd.org>

Dear Ms. Gehman,

I have a few questions if you would be so kind to answer:

- 1) What is the current status of the Proposal: Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Services?
- 2) Will a meeting be held to vote on this proposal? What is the typical process to institute and pay for such a program with taxpayer dollars?
- 3) **What does Diversity mean? What does Inclusion mean? What does Equity Services mean?**

Gehman, after consulting with Evison in a separate email, responded to the community member in an email dated August 28, 2020. Instead of answering the actual question, she instead said, “*We will not know what specific areas of ‘Diversity, Inclusion, Equity,’ will be identified as areas of focus for our district, until the needs assessment is complete*” (she inserted her answers into the community member’s original email, included below, emphasis added):

Hello [REDACTED]

At the SLSD School Board's June 22, 2020 meeting, the board voted on an independent contractor agreement with Dr. Joseph Allen to provide diversity, inclusion, and equity needs assessment, action planning and professional development. Based on the presentation made during that meeting, and the update given by Superintendent Evison during the SLSD School Board's Aug 24th meeting, I have answered your questions to the best of my ability in **bold type** below.

Thank you for your inquiry. I hope the following helps.

Sincerely,
Emily Gehman

On Aug 25, 2020, at 9:50 AM, [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Ms. Gehman,

I have a few questions if you would be so kind to answer:

- 1) What is the current status of the Proposal: Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Services?

Proposal was approved by the school board at its 6/22/2020 meeting.

- 2) Will a meeting be held to vote on this proposal? What is the typical process to institute and pay for such a program with taxpayer dollars?

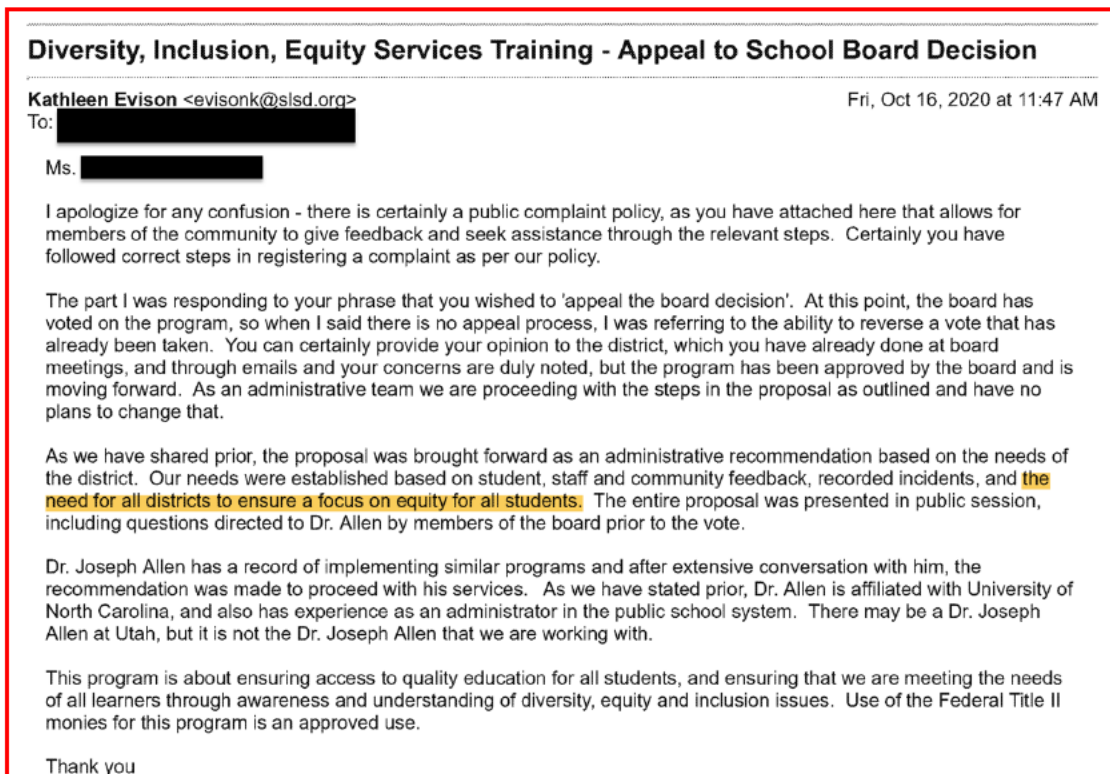
The proposal was presented & voted on at the SLSD School Board's 6/22/2020 meeting. This follows the typical process. The proposal was approved by the board on 6/22/2020. As stated on the agenda, and in the minutes, no tax dollars assessed by SLSD will be used to pay for this proposal. Funds from Federal Programs, Title II will cover these expenses.

- 3) **What does Diversity mean? What does Inclusion mean? What does Equity Services mean?**

We will not know what specific areas of “Diversity, Inclusion, Equity,” will be identified as areas of focus for our district, until the needs assessment is complete.

While Gehman provided some good information in her response, it did not answer the community member’s question, not even a little. If the community member had asked, “How will we know what our areas of focus should be,” perhaps Gehman would have been on target.

In a separate email exchanged between the same community member and Evison, Evison stated that asserts the “*need for all districts to ensure a focus on equity for all students*” (emphasis added):



How do we know if a “*focus on equity for all students*” is important if we don’t even know what “equity” means when used by our superintendent and school board members? Why is it so hard to answer the simple question of “How do you define ‘Equity’”?

These are highly educated, sophisticated professionals in positions of significant power over our children. One was a PhD-level superintendent of our schools and the other an elected and long serving member of our school board, with a degree in accounting and an elementary teaching certificate. Are we truly to believe that neither of them knew how to define “equity,” even though our district operated an “equity” committee for at least five years, approved handbooks that state how important “equity” is to our district, hired an “equity” consultant (Allen), discussed at a public board meeting an “equity” proposal and proceeded to in fact approve that proposal (the Allen Proposal), sent out “equity surveys” to students, parents, and teachers, and anticipated the delivery from Allen of a 3-Year Equity Action Plan? Are we to believe that no one in the administration or on the board bothered to ask, “By the way, if we’re going to make ‘equity’ a focus in our district, what does it mean?”

In the 1,682 individual documents the district provided in response to our Right to Know requests, the district does not define “equity” (or “diversity” or “inclusion” for that matter) even a single time. As the bulk of this Report should make clear, they refused to define “equity” (and “diversity” and “inclusion”) not because they didn’t know exactly what it means, but simply because they had an agenda to hide, and dodging uncomfortable questions from the public was the best way to advance their cause for as long as they could.

6.2 The DEI Proposal: A Section-by-Section Breakdown

Structure of DEI Proposal

The proposal from Allen approved by our school board on June 22, 2020 was a total of seven pages in length, including a cover page and a page of references. The full proposal is attached to this Report as Attachment 3. The proposal is structured as follows:

- Cover Page (p.1) (pictured to the right)
- Professional Development Services (pp. 2-4)
 - Objective (p.2)
 - Goals (p.2)
 - Training Outline (pp. 2-3) (includes detailed outline of contents of each “module”)
 - PD Services – Cost (p.4) (\$6,000 for training for 40 participants, not including expenses associated with travel and accommodation)
- Consultation Services (pp.5-6)
 - Needs Assessment (p.5)
 - Action Plan (p.5)
 - Needs Assessment/Action Plan Cost (p.6) (\$2,500 for the Needs Assessment, \$1,500 for the development of the Action Plan, total of \$4,000)
- References (p.7)



The structure of the proposal itself makes clear that the “Professional Development Services” (i.e., training for SLSD employees) ***was always separate from and not contingent*** upon the “Needs Assessment” and its associated “Action Plan,” which fall under “Consulting Services” in the proposal. The proposal, as approved by the school board, contemplates that the Professional

Development Services would be provided regardless of what the “Needs Assessment” found or what was included in the “Action Plan” that Allen would prepare.

DEI Professional Development Services / Training

This section provides an overview of the “Professional Development Services” (*i.e.*, training for SLSD employees) approved by our school board. The Professional Development Services approved by the Board were intended train SLSD employees on “*racial equity, social justice, and equitable education policies and practices*” so that they could “*practice culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogical practices*” (Allen Proposal, p.2, emphasis added):

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Objective

To provide professional development to Southern Lehigh School District (SLSD) staff and administration regarding concepts related to human diversity, racial equity, social justice, and equitable education policies and practices. To assist SLSD staff and administration in understanding the historical context of race and racism in education and how it connects to current events. To assist staff in developing culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogical practices.

Goals

In education, gaps and disparities in discipline data and academic outcomes continue to persist between students of color and their white counterparts. Education, as a social system, is fraught with a history of systematically underserving, or, in some cases overtly oppressing, students of color and other marginalized identities (bell, 1995). Current research suggests that, in order to eliminate these disparities, students of color and other marginalized identities must have their unique socio-cultural needs met (Ladson-Billings, 1995). One manner of meeting these needs is for educators to develop culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogical practices (Paris, 2012). The primary goal of this training program is to assist SLSD staff and administration in developing these culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogical practices. Upon completion, participants in this training program should be able to:

- Define and understand terminology such as race, racism, systematic oppression, marginalization, implicit bias, prejudice, discrimination, etc.
- Understand the role of socialization in the development of implicit bias
- Understand racial identity development
- Understand the history of racism and social injustice within the system of education and how it relates to contemporary classrooms
- Understand the unique socio-cultural needs of various student ethnic and racial groups
- Understand, develop, and practice culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogical practices

The use of the language highlighted above, as well as in the graphic on the next page, provides the first evidence that the viewpoint for the training is based in and driven by Critical Race Theory and Social Justice ideology (please see Sections 4.0 and 14 for an explanation of these terms).

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

The professional development / training was to be provided through five “modules,” as outlined below (Allen Proposal, p. 3, emphasis added):

- Module 1 - What is Race?**
 - Race as a social construct
 - Systematic racism
 - Socialization and implicit bias
 - Racial identity development (Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1979; Helms, 1990)
- Module 2 - Data Dive**
 - An examination of national and local data related to academic outcomes, discipline rates, drop-out rates, and educational opportunity
 - An examination of the gaps and disparities in discipline and academic outcomes for students of color and other marginalized identities
 - An examination of how inequitable education policies and practices contribute to gaps and disparities in discipline and academic data
- Module 3 - The Unique Needs of Marginalized Groups Pt. 1**
 - An examination of the historical oppression of the following racial/ethnic groups within the education system:
 - Native Americans
 - Latin(x) Americans
 - Asian Americans
- Module 4 - The Unique Needs of Marginalized Groups Pt. 2**
 - An examination of the historical oppression of the following racial/ethnic groups within the education system:
 - African Americans
 - Caucasian Americans
- Module 5 - Culturally Relevant/Sustaining Pedagogy**
 - An examination of two major theories regarding cultural relevance in education
 - Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995)
 - Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012)
 - An examination of examples of culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogical practices across grade levels and content areas
 - An examination of how to engage students in conversations regarding racial/cultural equity
 - Training summary/wrap-up and next steps

None of these modules were new for Allen, but instead were part of training materials he had previously prepared and used elsewhere (see [Section 7.8](#) below). The point is that these modules already existed and were basically ready to go for use at SLSD, and in fact were apparently used to train at least some SLSD employees (see [Section 7.8](#) below).

To be clear, at a minimum, portions of the professional development training were intended to enable teachers to “engage students in D&I related conversations,” which Allen confirmed in writing in response to a request for exactly that from Evison (emphasis added):

From: Kathleen Evison <evisionk@sbsd.org>
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2020 2:55 PM
To: Joseph Allen
Subject: Re: Joseph Allen - Proposal for Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Services for Southern Lehigh School District

Looks great! Thank you

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 7:24 PM Joseph Allen <allen.joe05@gmail.com> wrote:
 Greetings,

Here is the latest version. I've actually incorporated the student component in two places: a) Module 5 of the PD outline (where we can help teachers learn to engage students in D&I related conversations), and b) in the action plan (where I discussed including recommendations for the development of D&I initiatives for students across all grade levels). Let me know what you think.

So when Evison told the public, and school board members repeatedly, that nothing in the professional development training that the district approved in the Allen Proposal was directed at our students, that was just a bold faced lie.

The proposal, as approved by the school board, provided for training for 40 SLSD employees at the rate of \$150 per participant for a total cost of \$6,000 (Allen Proposal, p.4, emphasis added):

PD SERVICES - COST

The following represents the per person cost* associated with participating in the Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Training Program (5 modules). The price can be adjusted based on the number of participants, and based on the length of the program.

Description	# of Participants	Per Person Cost	Total Cost
Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Training Program (5 modules)	40	\$150	\$6,000
Total			\$6,000

*Please note, the quoted price does not include travel and accommodation expenses in the case of a face-to-face training model. In these cases, the cost of the training series would increase to reflect travel expenses.

DEI Consulting Services (Data Collection, Analysis, and Three-Year Action Plan)

This section provides a brief overview of the “Consulting Services” approved by the school board. The “Consultation Services” consists of two activities. The first is the performance of a “Needs Assessment,” which included an analysis of discipline and academic performance data, as well as the conduct of multiple surveys. The results of those analyses and the results of those surveys would be used to “generate recommendations that will be presented to SLSD administration in the form of a 3-year action plan.” Below is the full description of the “Needs Assessment” portions of the “Consultation Services” (Allen Proposal, p.5, emphasis added):

CONSULTATION SERVICES

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment can be conducted on behalf of SLSD to analyze and inform a 3-year, district-wide action plan that specifically address issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity. The needs assessment will consist of three components:

- An analysis of discipline data from the last five years
- An analysis of academic data from the last five years
- One of two district wide survey options: either a) a climate survey for all staff and students regarding their perceptions, dispositions, and concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, or b) a survey for all teaching staff to determine their self-reported self efficacy regarding culturally responsive teaching

Regarding discipline and academic data, a statistical analysis can be conducted to determine which of five primary factors (race, gender, time, grade level, and school) is the most significant predictor of outcomes in both categories (discipline rates and academic performance). Regarding the district wide survey, data analysis will be determined by which survey option is chosen.

Data collected from the needs assessment will be used to generate recommendations that will be presented to SLSD administration in the form of a 3-year action plan (see below).

Note what is missing from the description of the “Needs Assessment,” *i.e.*, any description of a statistic plan of analysis. [Section 7.5](#) below for why this is ultimately among the fundamental flaws of Allen’s approach.

The second portion of the “Consultation Services” is the creation and delivery of a “3-year diversity, inclusion, and equity action plan.” Note in the graphic below the focus on “discrepancies... particularly as it relates to race”; Allen’s description gives away the game, this was always about categorizing out students into groups by race and comparing them. The “Action Plan” is described as follows (Allen Proposal, p.5, emphasis added):

Action Plan

A 3-year diversity, inclusion, and equity action plan will be generated for SLSD administration based on the data generated in the needs assessment. This action plan can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Identification of targeted areas of improvement (schools, grade levels, content areas)
- Recommendations regarding how to narrow gaps and minimize discrepancies in discipline data and academic outcomes, particularly as it relates to race
- Recommendations regarding district-wide professional development related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Recommendations regarding the development of student initiatives associated with diversity, inclusion, and equity across all grade levels
- Recommendations regarding community partnerships and engagement opportunities as it relates to SLSD diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives

An important question is why would the district contract for preparation of an “Action Plan” without knowing whether an “Action Plan” is needed at all? After all, without the results of a “Needs Assessment” how is one to know whether any “Action” is actually needed? The answer of course is simple, it’s because Evison was dedicated to transforming our district in the name of social justice regardless. In fact, it was Evison herself who requested that the “Action Plan”

section be included in the Allen Proposal. Below is an email from Allen to Evison confirming that his is “comfortable changing the proposal to reflect that the needs assessment will result in a 3-year action plan” (emphasis added):

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 12:26 PM Joseph Allen <allen.joe05@gmail.com> wrote:
Good afternoon,

Please see attached for an updated version. Let me know if you see anything else that should be addressed. Have a great day!

On Thu, Jun 18, 2020 at 9:54 PM Joseph Allen <allen.joe05@gmail.com> wrote:

1

Good. I'm glad it helps. I'm comfortable changing the proposal to reflect that the needs assessment will result in a 3-year action plan. I'll make the update and send you a new copy tomorrow. Let me know if you see anything else that needs to be addressed. I'm available for chats by phone all day tomorrow if you need to reach me quickly.

Evison further took pains to ensure that the Allen Proposal included training specifically directed at our students. Here she requests confirmation that this angle is addressed (emphasis added):

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 12:57 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

This looks really good. The only other area I feel we're really lacking is the aspect of providing education to our students in these areas. A piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year. My concern is that we have a significant percentage of our student body that do not understand race, justice and equity and are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors. I know that's a lot to tackle, and that our staff and admin need to come first, so maybe just a reference to how this work with staff will then lead to not only culturally affirming practices in pedagogy but also in direct teaching of these issues to students? It's just my thought and I'm certainly open to feedback, but just wondering how we capture the portion of helping our students address their own bias and racism.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

And here is Allen confirming that student directed efforts are addressed in the “Action Plan,” noting that the proposal now includes “*recommendations for the development of D&I initiatives for students across all grade levels*” (emphasis added):

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

From: Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org>
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2020 2:55 PM
To: Joseph Allen
Subject: Re: Joseph Allen - Proposal for Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Services for Southern Lehigh School District

Looks great! Thank you

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 7:24 PM Joseph Allen <allen.joe05@gmail.com> wrote:
 Greetings,

Here is the latest version. I've actually incorporated the student component in two places: a) Module 5 of the PD outline (where we can help teachers learn to engage students in D&I related conversations), and b) in the action plan (where I discussed including recommendations for the development of D&I initiatives for students across all grade levels). Let me know what you think.

The proposal, as approved by the school board, provides the conduct of the “Needs Assessment” for \$2,500 and the preparation and delivery of the “3-year Action Plan” for \$1,500, for a total cost of \$4,000 (Allen Proposal, p.6):

NEEDS ASSESSMENT/ACTION PLAN - COST

The following represents the cost associated with conducting a district-wide needs assessment and for developing a 3-year diversity, inclusion, and equity action plan for Southern Lehigh School District.

Description	Total Cost
Needs Assessment (analysis of the last five years of discipline and academic data + one of two district-wide surveys)	\$2,500
Development of 3-year Action Plan	\$1,500
Total	\$4,000

6.3 Critical Race Theory: The Driving Force Behind the DEI Proposal

There is a lot of confusion about what Critical Race Theory (CRT) is and isn't and whether “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” (DEI), including as described in the proposal from Allen approved by the Board in 2020, was based on and driven by CRT or whether it is something else. That confusion drove many of the contentious interactions between our school board and members of the community, as well as among members of the community themselves on social media and in other fora. Our hope is that by explaining what CRT is in the words of seminal CRT authors, some of the confusion may be reduced.

When concerned parents object to “Critical Race Theory” (CRT) or “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” (DEI) being introduced into SLSD, the reader should understand and remember first and foremost that that does ***not*** mean those parents (or anyone else speaking out on this issue, however articulately or clumsily we may each make our points) are against diversity in our schools. ***Two things can be true at once – you can be for diversity in our schools, for tolerance, for patience and compassion, for understanding, for lifting people up, but yet***

against training based on or driven by CRT and actions based on CRT-based DEI measures.

We suspect that everybody wants the same thing, a tolerant society. We remain steadfast in our belief that no one should ever be judged or treated differently based on an immutable characteristic such as the color of their skin or where their ancestors came from. Racism is always wrong and should not be tolerated, ever, but how you define “racism” matters very much. We should all stand shoulder to shoulder against any act of racism in our community, every time one occurs, but defining the entire system as irrevocably inherently racist helps precisely no one.

Our district already has very clear policies that prohibit discrimination, harassment, and bullying based on race. We teach and encourage tolerance. Our children have received repeated trainings over their years at SLSD on these issues, particularly through SLSD’s anti-bullying efforts. When did we as a district determine that our existing policies and all those trainings have failed? We don’t believe they have, nor do I think that our school board has reached that conclusion at any point. Why, then, did we decide that we need to bring Allen to provide “*professional development*” and a “*3-year plan*” clearly based on and driven by CRT, a training that itself may contradict our own existing policies?

As discussed in the previous section, the Allen “Proposal” was not just for an “*assessment*,” the need for which remains to this day unclear at best. Instead, we signed up for professional training for our staff and the development of a “3-year plan” in a single document that *also* includes an “assessment.” Perhaps the results of the “assessment” would have been used to focus training, but the training and 3-year plan were already contracted for, even though no need had been demonstrated to the board, let alone to the community. This was never an if X then Y contract, this is an X and Y contract from the outset. We contracted for the cure before we diagnosed the disease.

What is CRT? What are its Central Tenets and Purpose?

The approach in Allen’s proposal to these thorny, painful, and difficult issues, though, is troubling and more likely to cause division than it is unity and understanding. CRT is the driving force and theoretical framework behind Allen’s proposal. Literally all of the references Allen relies upon are from writers in CRT literature (including seminal thinkers like Derrick Bell), and all build out various aspects of CRT (like Ladson-Billings and Paris who write on applications of CRT in education). Below are the references included by Allen in the Proposal (Allen Proposal, p. 7):

REFERENCES

- Atkinson, D. R., Morten, G., & Sue, D. W. (1979). A minority identity development model. In D. R. Atkinson, G. Morten, & D. W. Sue (Eds.), *Counseling American minorities: A cross-cultural perspective*. Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.
- Bell, D. A. (1995). Brown v. Board of Education and the interest convergence dilemma. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement* (pp. 20-28). New York, NY: The New York Press.
- Helms, J. (1990). *Black and white racial identity: Theory, research, and practice*. Westport, CN: Praeger.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American educational research journal*, 32(3), pp. 465-491.
- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), pp. 99-97.

To ensure we had a full understanding of the theoretical framework driving Allen's work, we purchased every single one of the references listed above and did the necessary reading. We are working from the primary sources, not from some partisan summary of what CRT is or is not. Most were available on Amazon, but we had to get the paper by Gloria Ladson-Billings and Django Paris through Sage Journals. For better or worse, we now have a mini-CRT library in our home. We added to those references another seminal paper from Ladson-Billings and Tate (*Toward a Critical Race Theory of Education*, 1995), as well as books from more recent but deeply influential writers in this area, including Ibram X. Kendi and Robin DiAngelo.

So, then, what is CRT? To quote from one of the same works Allen referenced (*Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, p. xiii):

“there is no canonical set of doctrines or methodologies to which we all subscribe... [CRT] is nonetheless unified by two common interests: ... The first is to understand how a regime of white supremacy and its subordination of people of color have been created and maintained in America, and in particular, to examine the relationship between that social structure and professed ideals such as ‘the rule of law’ and ‘equal protection.’ The second is a desire not merely to understand the vexed bond between law and racial power but to change it.”

Delgado and Stefancic, in their work “Critical Race Theory, an Introduction” provide further clarity (p.8), setting out three core tenets of CRT:

“First, racism is ordinary, not aberrational... Second, most would agree that our system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes, both psychic and material, for the dominant group... a third theme of critical race theory, the ‘social construction’ thesis, holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations.”

And what is the intent of CRT?

“Unlike traditional civil rights discourse, which stresses incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law.” (id, p.3)

So, to be clear, CRT asserts that there remains in America to this day a full blown “regime of white supremacy” with racism in all aspects of society and in all interactions (“ordinary and not aberrational”) holding down all “peoples of color” (this is what’s referred to as “systemic racism” in the literature). Each of those “peoples of color” are then subdivided and force ranked based on their degree of oppression, and then further subdivided on additional attributes like male or female, straight or LGBTQ, able-bodied or disabled, etc. (see *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color*, Kimberle’ W. Crenshaw in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, p. 357); this is referred to as “intersectionality,” *i.e.*, that you can be “oppressed” across multiple dimensions. This framework literally divides us into separate subpopulations and labels us as oppressed/exploited or oppressor/exploiter, assigning collective guilt based on our skin color as dictated by our DNA.

Was Allen’s Proposal Based on or Driven by CRT?

A number of people have said that the Allen Proposal is not based on CRT, including our former superintendent and multiple board members, and that therefore SLSD is not endorsing and will not teach CRT either to staff or students. For example:

“Nothing in that proposal is related to student curriculum, delivering instruction to students, nor is it a critical race theory program.” (Superintendent, May 10, 2021 School Board Meeting, < <https://youtu.be/MDSLspTbz2s>>, ~19m)

“There are many, many references used to build the programs and it is not designed to deliver or teach or instruct on critical race theory.” (id.)

“...we are not discussing critical race theory.” (Board Member, id., ~22m)

“At no point, and I will reiterate this again because there are people who still continue to feel that somehow there’s a critical race theory plan, at no point in any discussion anywhere have we talked about delivering critical race theory instruction to students.” (Evison, May 24, 2021 School Board Meeting, <<https://youtu.be/TO-gfyS98XM>>, ~32m)

However, the very first topic in Module 1 of Allen’s training is “*Race as a social construct*” – this is identified by seminal CRT authors as one of the central tenets of CRT (as quoted above). Likewise, the second topic of “*systemic racism*” is the very core of CRT, *i.e.*, that the entire system is designed and maintained to be racist in order to benefit the dominant white population. Modules 3 and 4 are straight out the writings of Kimberle’ Crenshaw on “intersectionality.” Module 5 is expressly based on the writings of Gloria Ladson-Billings, identified by Delgado and Stefancic (p.7) as a seminal author “*in the application of CRT to the realm of education.*” When we look at Allen’s proposal, then, it is clear that he approaches, and intended to teach, issues of race through the CRT paradigm. We’re not sure how a reasonable reviewer could come to different conclusion. Reaching a different conclusion would require one to ignore the plain language of Allen’s proposal almost entirely. Allen wasn’t even trying to hide the ball.

Is CRT and Training Based on or Driven CRT Right for SLSD?

The question, ultimately, is do we want any DEI training, whether for staff or students, at SLSD that is based on or driven by CRT. Our firm answer was and remains absolutely not. It is divisive, not unifying. It focuses on our racial differences rather than our shared humanity and shared values. This is the tribalism that many of us have decried over the past years. This approach is not right for our teachers, our students, or our community. Is this what we want to train our teachers in, to do away with Enlightenment rationalism (which includes, to be clear, the scientific method!) and the race-neutral principals of both our Constitution? The CRT framework is a rejection of the Civil Rights Movement and a rejection of the timeless principles espoused in our Declaration of Independence and enshrined in our Constitution, particularly in our Bill of Rights; this is not hyperbole, it is literally the stated goal of CRT (see quotes above).

The teaching of CRT and CRT-based DEI concepts should be limited to training sessions or classes (such as a senior seminar or a class in high school on social movements) where it is

taught and evaluated as one of a number of views. It should be presented alongside other theories and ways of looking at the history of our country and race relations over time, with world history as further context. It should be presented with fair balance by including writings from critics of CRT and DEI including scholars like Thomas Sowell, Glenn Loury, John McWhorter, Wilfred Reilly, and Jason Hill, and social commentators like Robert Woodson and Coleman Hughes. It should *not* be taught as orthodoxy or as though it is true and accepted. It should be taught for what it is, one of the most divisive issue in education today. The same fair balance should hold true for any “professional training” for our teachers and other staff.

CRT and CRT-based DEI training is so contentious that it has been in the news regularly over the past several years, and remains so today. Major companies like Disney have had whistleblowers disclose their internal CRT-based DEI trainings, only to then retract those trainings when they become public. Bills have been introduced in at numerous state legislatures (some already signed into law), with a focus on ensuring that K-12 schools are not teaching that one’s moral character is determined by their race or advocating racially divisive concepts. A number of lawsuits have been filed and are proceeding, like the one in Loudon County, VA, where the school board plans to eliminate the use of a standardized test for evaluating applicants for admission to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in the name of “diversity” and “equity.” The change would reduce the number of students of South Asian or East Asian descent, which account for approximately 80% of the student population, because not enough students of other races were “represented.” Whistleblowers are speaking up at schools across the country, including, for example, Paul Rossi of Grace Church High School in Manhattan, which was literally segregating students by race for CRT-based DEI training sessions; the principal was caught on an audio recording admitting that “We’re demonizing kids, we’re demonizing white people for being born.” All of these events must now be evaluated anew in light of the two recent Supreme Court rulings banning the use of race in college admissions, with the court finding, among other things, that diversity based on race is not a compelling state interest.

For the record, former Superintendent Evison understood well that Allen’s Proposal was based on and driven by CRT and would use endorse and advocate CRT-based DEI measures. How do we know? Evison’s final “capstone project” (a lengthy academic paper) of her SLSD-funded PhD program used CRT as it’s core framework of analysis. As previously quoted in Section 6.1 of this Report, Evison wrote in her Capstone paper:

“This case study will focus on analysis of the program using three theoretical frameworks; *critical race theory*, transformational learning theory, and *culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogy*. Critical race theory focuses on the fact that *racism is engrained within society and culture and that institutional racism exists*. The power structures within society and institutions are based on *white privilege and white supremacy, which continues to marginalize people of color.*” (p.16)

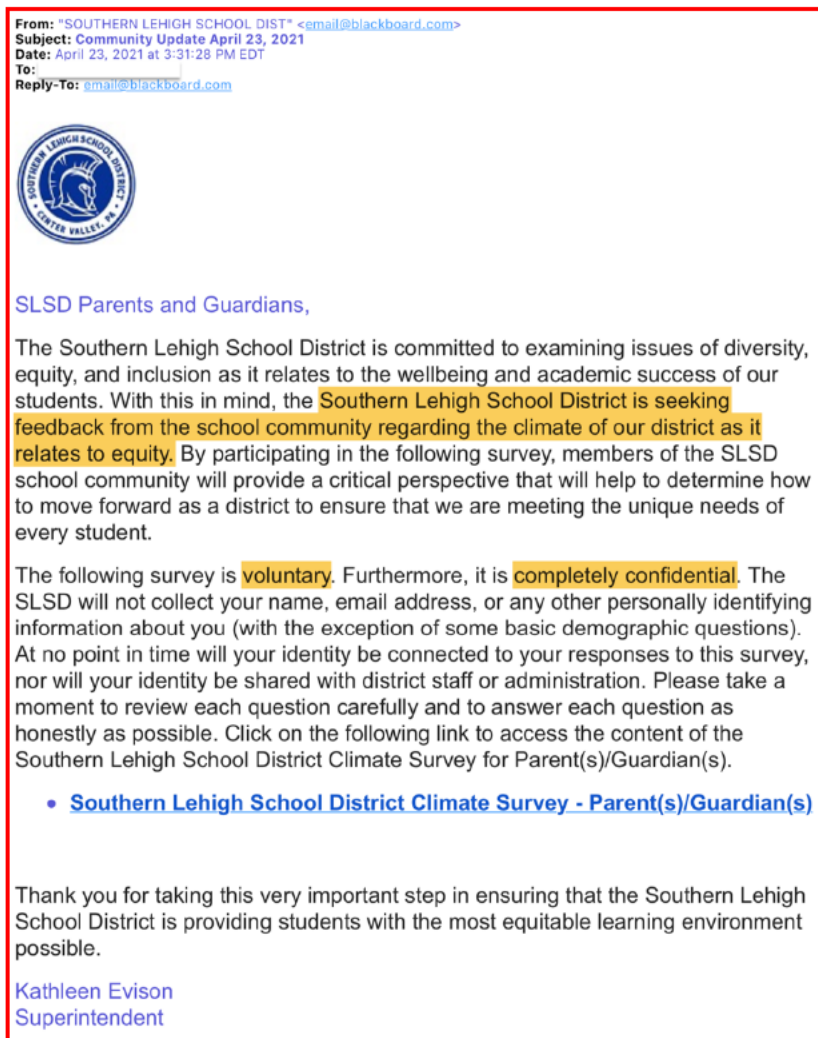
“If our culture is one of *white supremacy and focused on the norms of white culture*, then the teachers will naturally bring to the professional development preconceived ideas. For any professional development to be effective in developing their capacity for culturally relevant pedagogy, it must not only *acknowledge the established narratives that place white experience at the*

center, but also develop skills and abilities to reflect on their personal assumptions and disrupt those. Making new assumptions, and creating new frames and narratives will be critical in the success of the professional development. Paired with Ladson-Billings work, the focus of Mezirow on adult learning, and Bell on critical race theory, the professional development program can be reviewed in a comprehensive way, and data analyzed using this literature as the basis for determining success.” (p.13)

She was a person well versed in critical race theory, knew exactly what it was, and based on the bibliography in her “Capstone” paper (see Attachment 1 to this Report), the seminal writers in CRT.

6.4 The “Equity Surveys”

On April 23, 2021, former Superintendent Evison sent an email that would trigger an ongoing discussion in our district about CRT and CRT-based DEI measures (below, emphasis added). Her subsequent unwillingness to answer even the most basic questions about the surveys and the work they were intended to support were obvious red flags that something was very much amiss.



Note that Evison makes clear that the purpose of the survey (there were actually multiple surveys for different audiences) is to seek “feedback from the school community regarding the climate of our district as it related to equity.” Note that the survey is “voluntary” and “completely confidential.” These elements will be discussed below as among the numerous fatal flaws of the survey process.

In an email dated April 26, 2021, we posed a number of questions to former Superintendent Evison regarding the “Equity Survey,” including such fundamental questions as:

- (i) how does SLSD define “equity”;
- (ii) whether there was a statistical plan established in advance for analyzing data from the “assessments” and the “surveys” (which would address, *e.g.*, minimal sample size);
- (iii) how the equity survey results can be reliable if they are anonymous (because of possible duplicates, among other reasons);
- (iv) how the district could ensure a balanced response from the community to guard against an overrepresentation of those most familiar with and interested in pursuing “equity.”

We received the following response on April 30, 2021 in which she failed to respond to even a single question we posed:

On Apr 30, 2021, at 5:19 PM, Kathleen Evison <evisionk@slsd.org> wrote:

I appreciate you reaching out with your questions

The district engaged in a contract with a consultant to conduct a needs assessment related to issues of diversity, equity and inclusion within the district in June 2020. The goal of this project is to review the current needs around diversity, equity and inclusion and determine where the district focuses attention in the future. The district is focused in its equity work on ensuring that all students receive the opportunities and supports they need to be successful and that those supports are based on individual need. These things may not be the same as their peers because their individual need is different, but all students will have equal access to opportunities without barriers.

One aspect of the needs assessment is the survey being conducted by the consultant. The survey is one piece of the process and provides important information about perceptions of families, students, and staff related to the climate within the building. The data collected is perceptual in nature, and as such is designed to establish how individuals within the Southern Lehigh School District feel about their district. As a voluntary survey, issues of response rates and the nature of the sample will of course need to be considered and accounted for in analysis. All administration, methods, data analysis, findings, and reporting of survey results are part of the responsibility of the consultant, and the data and analytics will be shared publicly as part of the final report process. The goal of this survey is not to establish a complete and definite answer, but rather to gather one piece of information in a larger project. The survey alone will not be used for any decision making or policy, but rather, contributes to the large needs assessment which as a whole will lead to the creation of a three year action plan.

Thank you,

Dr. Kathleen T. Evison
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisionk@slsd.org

We tried again in another email dated May 2, 2021 (below):

Subject: Re: SLSD Equity Survey / Questions
Date: May 2, 2021 at 3:09 PM
To: evisonk@sbsd.org

Superintendent Evison,

Thank you for your response, which is much appreciated.

Respectfully, though, we don't believe you answered any of our questions, which we tried to make as straight forward as possible without losing important context. For example, you didn't answer the key question, which is how does SLSD define "equity." That is the heart of the matter, and would drive any teacher training, as well as the perception of that training by parents, and of course any changes or additions that may be made to curriculum. "Equity" is frequently defined these days, under Critical Race Theory and all its variants, within the context of oppressor and oppressed, ascribing to individual children collective guilt they do not and should not bear. One can be fully and wholehearted against racism and discrimination of all types, as we are, but not supportive of teaching SLSD children that they are "oppressors" because of an immutable characteristic such as the color of their skin.

Therefore, we would very much like an answer to that key question, as well as the other questions we posed. We restate them here for ease of responding:

1. How does SLSD define "equity"?
2. Did SLSD adopt a plan or metrics of any type **in advance** of sending the survey that will be used to evaluate the survey responses?
3. If the survey is anonymous, how will SLSD evaluate the reliability of the results?
4. If the survey is voluntary, aren't you likely to get responses from individuals who feel most strongly about "equity" (as its being used in today's academic and political conversations), thereby limiting the population of respondents by potentially over-representing a portion of our population?
5. Will the **raw data** results be available for review by interested parents?
6. When is the deadline for responding?
7. On what basis does SLSD believe it is reasonable and appropriate to base policy decision making and subsequent implementation **[even in part]** on an anonymous survey with no apparent controls on who responds or how many times they respond and for which there does not appear to be any pre-established rubric against which the results will be objectively evaluated?

We hope that you will be willing to provide more fulsome response that answers these questions.

We received no further response from Evison whatsoever. One would think that if "equity" was a topic the school board and the administration believes was necessary to focus on, and spend tax-payer dollars to pursue, that, at a bare minimum, they would be able to define it. Despite approving an "equity"-related proposal from Allen, hiring a consultant to help us on "equity" issues, sending out "equity" surveys, using the word "equity" in all of our student handbooks, and operating an "equity committee" for at least five years, it turned out that no one on our school board at the time, or in our district's administration, could even define the word!

It was this stonewalling on basic questions that compelled us to file our initial request for records under Pennsylvania's Right to Know law. The records we received are quoted throughout this

Report and evidence that SLSD was engaged in a lengthy effort to remake our school district in the name of “Social Justice.”

Below is the start screen for the “equity” survey presented to students, which generally tracks Evison’s district-wide email:

Southern Lehigh Climate Survey - Students

Southern Lehigh is committed to examining issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to the wellbeing and academic success of our students. With this in mind, we are seeking feedback from our community regarding the climate of our district as it relates to equity. By participating in this survey, you will provide a critical perspective that will help us determine how to move forward as a district to ensure that we are meeting the unique needs of every student.

The following survey is completely voluntary. Furthermore, it is completely confidential. We will not collect your name, email address, or any other personally identifying information about you (with the exception of some basic demographic questions). At no point in time will your identity be connected to your responses to this survey, nor will your identity be shared with district staff or administration.

Please take a moment to review each question carefully and to answer as honestly as possible.

By continuing with this survey, you are acknowledging your consent for Southern Lehigh School District to analyze the collective data generated by the results of this survey, and to use that data to inform future policy and practice.

Thank you for taking this very important step in ensuring that we are providing students with the most equitable learning environment possible.

* Required

Sample questions from the student survey include (see Appendices C, D, and E to [Attachment 4](#) to this Report for a complete list of all survey questions)¹:

- Please indicate which of the following you most identify with: Male, Female, Non-Binary, Prefer to Self-Describe, Prefer Not to Respond
- Please indicate which of the following you identify with: White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Native American or Alaskan American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- All students are treated the same, regardless of whether their parents are rich or poor.
- Students of every gender identification are treated equally well.

¹ Unless indicated otherwise, the possible answers were: *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.*

- The school provides instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, handouts) that reflect my cultural background, ethnicity, and identity.
- People of difference cultural backgrounds, races, and ethnicities get along well at my school.
- My teachers make me feel good about myself.
- Students at my school are teased or picked on about their race or ethnicity.
- My teachers praise me when I work hard in school.
- School rules are applied equally to all students.
- Discipline at my school is fair.

Similar surveys were sent to parents and other to teachers. Whatever problems one may point to with the survey questions themselves (e.g., that Allen thought it was necessary or appropriate to collect information on whether our students “identify” as “non-binary,” the assumption in multiple questions that “identity with” trumps objective reality, the implicit assumption that student self-esteem comes from being praised by teachers rather than individual achievement through effort, etc.), it was clear to us what Allen would find based on the survey results, together with his analysis of “five years of discipline and academic data,” without ever needing to see the survey results on any individual question. It’s commonly said that when the only tool in your toolbox is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail. Allen had only one tool in his toolbox, Critical Race Theory, so to him every “problem” would be based on “systemic racism,” as evidenced by any “disparity” between race-based “groups,” and the only recommendation could be CRT-based DEI measures. As the following sections will demonstrate, that’s exactly how things played out.

6.5 A Fatally Flawed and Misleading DEI Report

On June 29, 2021, the day before Allen was due to submit his report to our school board, we sent the board an email calling on the board members to reject any approach that attempts to explain a complicated situation by pointing to a single cause. Complicated problems almost always have numerous causes, the importance of which is likely to vary on a student-by-student basis. We begged the board to “*to reject the sort of monocausal analysis that Allen is almost certain to apply.*” The core argument in our communication was as follows:

“A fundamental tenet of critical race theory is that all disparities are based on systemic racism, which in critical race theory means that racism is ‘ordinary and not aberrational,’ is present in literally all interactions and structures in our society, and that the interactions and structures of our society preserve, and are designed to preserve, white supremacy to the detriment of other races (see quotations and references in [our] previous letter). Accordingly, under a critical race theory-driven analytical framework, **any disparity that may be shown in the SLSD data will, by definition, be evidence of racism.** These are

complicated, multicausal problems with numerous confounding factors, and should be treated as such; reducing the universe of causes to a single, cynical, divisive factor does not do the issue the justice it deserves and is ultimately not helpful to anyone.

Moreover, because of the analytical frame, Allen’s analysis will be self-serving in that any finding of any disparity in the data justifies the other work that has already been approved by this Board under the proposal approved on June 22, 2020. Consultants are in the business of selling consulting hours; does anyone really expect Allen to come back and say, ‘we’re all good here, no need to finish out the contract and you don’t need to pay me anything else?’”

Sadly, when the Allen Report was released, it used exactly the simplistic framework we were worried it would use and was riddled so many other methodological and analytical problems that ultimately rendered the entire report useless and an utter waste of district time and money. The report is titled “2020 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Needs Assessment and Action Plan,” dated July 1, 2021, and is attached to this Report in full as Attachment 4.

On July 28, 2021, in an effort to encourage the Board to reject the Allen Report in its entirety as a basis for future decision making in the district, we offered a detailed critique of the methodologies and findings of the report, arguing that the report was misleading and fatally flawed and should be rejected in its entirety. The core of that analysis is set forth below.

The Allen Report had a Pre-Determined Outcome

Former Superintendent Evison reached the conclusion prior to the Board’s approval of the Allen proposal on June 22, 2020 that, in her own words from her e-mail to Allen dated June 19, 2020 (included below):

- (i) “a **significant percentage** of [the SLSD student body]... are either passively, or outright directly **marginalizing their peers**”;
- (ii) are “**generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors**”;
- (iii) and that we have to help our students “**address their own bias and racism.**”

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 12:57 PM Kathleen Evison <evisionk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

This looks really good. The only other area I feel we're really lacking is the aspect of providing education to our students in these areas. A piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year. **My concern is that we have a significant percentage of our student body that do not understand race, justice and equity and are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors.** I know that's a lot to tackle, and that our staff and admin need to come first, so maybe just a reference to how this work with staff will then lead to not only culturally affirming practices in pedagogy but also in direct teaching of these issues to students? It's just my thought and I'm certainly open to feedback, but just wondering how we capture the portion of **helping our students address their own bias and racism.**

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
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Despite Evison's many public statements at Board meetings that the purpose of retaining Allen was to determine **whether** we have a problem at SLSD regarding "diversity, equity, and inclusion" that needed to be addressed by the Board and the administration, the reality (based on the district's own documents) is that **she had already reached the conclusion that our students are racists**, and that therefore staff training and an action plan that would lead to curriculum changes was needed. The whole process was fixed, which explains the lack of transparency, avoidance, and outright lies seen from Evison and others through the process.

The Allen Report Used a Fatally Flawed Monocausal Framework of Analysis

In our June 29, 2021 communication to the Board, we warned the Board that because Allen would view SLSD data using critical race theory as his framework, he would apply a monocausal analysis which can only result in one outcome. We urged the Board to reject this sort of narrow, dishonest approach. On reviewing the Allen Report, we were disappointed, but not surprised, to see that that is exactly what occurred.

As described above, a fundamental tenet of critical race theory is that all disparities are based on systemic racism, which in critical race theory means that racism is "ordinary and not aberrational," is present in literally all interactions and structures in our society, and that the interactions and structures of our society preserve (and are in fact designed to preserve) white supremacy to the detriment of other races. Accordingly, under a critical race theory-driven analytical framework, **any disparity that may be present in SLSD data (whether with respect to academic performance or discipline rates) will, by definition, be evidence of racism**, thus requiring "professional training" for staff and an "action plan" with eventual curriculum changes to remediate.

This is like observing that of people incarcerated in the United States 6.8% are female and 93.2% are male and concluding that our criminal justice system is simply prejudiced against men because males and females are not "represented" in equal proportions in prisons

(https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_inmate_gender.jsp), last visited July 30, 2023). Obviously, this sort of simplistic analysis does not take into account the simple fact that men and women commit crimes at different rates for a number of reasons. **The mere existence of disparities means nothing unless an actual causal relationship can be proved** – that has not happened here.

Differences in academic performance or discipline rates among students is a complicated topic and may be caused by any number of variables. As we will discuss in more detail below, Allen’s analysis doesn’t allow for the possibility of any confounding factors whatsoever, let alone suss out to what extent each confounding factor may be responsible for differences. For example, Allen doesn’t consider, even for a moment, factors such as, but not limited to, the following:

- individual effort and achievement;
- scholastic aptitude;
- the type of learner the student is and whether that student’s classes and curriculum match that type learning style;
- individual student interest;
- whether the student benefits from an intact family structure;
- average time spent doing homework;
- the rigor of the school the student last attended;
- whether the student gets adequate physical exercise;
- how much personal attention teachers are able to give each student based on teacher to student ratios and whether teachers have instructional assistants;
- how frequently and for how long a caregiver read to the child in formative years;
- how frequently the student was engaged in conversation as a young child;
- whether the student has a consistent and quiet place to do homework when at home;
- whether the student has availed him or herself of support services offered by SLSD;
- whether the student participates in tutoring sessions provided by SLSD or his or her fellow students;
- whether the student has had access to private tutors;
- whether the student has siblings or friends who have done well in school and therefore may serve as academic role models;

- whether the student has parents or other caregivers who stress the importance of doing well in school and provide encouragement accordingly;
- the presence of ADHD, chronic health conditions, or other conditions that may affect the student’s mental or physical wellness;
- whether the child has a consistent place to sleep at night (e.g., moves between homes or is homeless) and is fed in the morning;
- household income level;
- whether the student is from a home where a caregiver or other person present in the household has problems with drugs or alcohol, is mentally ill, or is abusive; and
- whether the student or anyone in his or her family is involved with the criminal justice system.

Despite the multitude of factors that may affect a student’s academic performance or the frequency or severity of disciplinary measures, Allen points to discrimination based on the color of one’s skin as the cause of all disparities in outcome.

The Recommendations of the Allen Report Do Not Follow its Findings

The fundamental flaw of the Allen Report is that its recommendations do not logically follow from the data presented. The first paragraph of the “Discussion” section of the Allen Report inadvertently shines a spotlight on the flawed thinking. The first two sentences note Allen has found that disparities exist. The third sentence jumps to “solutions.” **There is no convincing argument (or any argument at all in the report, in fact) that the disparities are caused by racist conduct or systems at SLSD.**

The solutions proposed are straight out of critical race theory literature, including “culturally responsive education practices” (see p.24 of the Allen Report). Gloria Ladson-Billings, who is literally the key critical race theorist to apply CRT to education, coined the term “culturally responsive pedagogy” (and whose seminal article on that topic is included in the references to the Allen Report on p. 27). “Culturally responsive pedagogy” is also frequently called “culturally responsive education,” “culturally responsive teaching,” “culturally relevant teaching,” and “culturally congruent teaching” (and various other permutations), which is exactly what Allen recommends.

Allen used an analytical framework based on CRT, which holds that where disparities exist they are the result of systemic racism, and those disparities must be addressed by adopting training based on CRT! Do you see the game being played here?

“Climate Survey” Methodology was Deeply Flawed

The questions we posed to Evison regarding the “equity surveys” went to the heart of the reliability and usefulness of the survey results. The surveys and the manner in which they were administered were deeply flawed, as set forth below.

a. No Survey Plan was Adopted. There is no evidence that a plan was adopted by the district or Allen in advance of sending out the surveys. Such a plan provides essential controls on the survey process and would typically have addressed, among other things, what the minimum sample size is for the results to be considered representative of the SLSD and therefore informative. No metrics were identified in advance for when something would be considered statistically significant, for how data errors would be identified and resolved, etc. No comparator or peer group data were identified in advance. This type of advance planning is essential in ensuring that surveys are conducted in accordance with pre-agreed standards, with the intent, of course, of limiting the likelihood of post-hoc data manipulation to support preferred views.

b. No Controls on Responses. There were no controls on who could respond to the survey nor how many times one could respond. In fact, there were no instructions as to whether a family with two children in the district should respond once or twice. One parent responding for the whole family? One response for each child? One response per parent? Each parent responding with respect to each of their children? There wasn't even a clear deadline for parent responses.

c. Survey was Entirely Anonymous. We were told that the survey results were anonymous. If that was the case, then how are we to judge the reliability of the results? If some level of personally identifying information wasn't collected, how were duplicates to be weeded out? We are aware of multiple parents who responded multiple times just to see if they could do so (they could and did).

d. Survey was Voluntary. A voluntary survey is likely to elicit responses from those who understand what "equity" means today (as it is being used in today's academic and political conversations, see Sections 4.0 and 14.0 of this Report) and feel most strongly about that topic, thereby limiting the population of respondents and over-representing particular subsections of our population. We are aware of a number of parents who decided ***not*** to respond at all because they were troubled by the implications of the questions.

e. Inappropriate Data to Include in Policy Making Decisions. Based Evison's comments both in e-mails and at school board meetings, the survey results would be included in the information used to consider action on "equity" issues in the district. However, the district failed to explain why it believed it is reasonable and appropriate to base policy decision making and subsequent implementation (to any extent) on an anonymous survey with no apparent controls on who responds or how many times they respond and for which there does not appear to be any pre-established rubric against which the results will be objectively evaluated.

Design, Collection, and Analysis Problems

The Allen Report is riddled with major problems with respect to its statistical approach. To ensure that our critique was unassailable, we in fact hired a professional statistician to review the data the district provided to Allen, the description of the report he would prepare as reflected in the original Proposal, and the Allen report itself. Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples:

- On study design and data collection, there is no information on the actual size of the student population for any of the five academic years.

- The survey conduct is not described at any meaningful level.
- There is no information on the number of surveys sent and responded to, nor any mention of follow-up on non-respondents, which certainly would have lent at least some minimal credibility to the survey portion of the data.
- The “discipline” and “academic performance” data are mentioned briefly without any information as to the specific information collected and analyzed.
- The “discipline” data is not described at all. What disciplinary actions are involved (*e.g.*, expulsion, a detention period, a note to file, a call to a parent)? Even if we knew the answer, would it have been reasonable to Allen (let alone an outside reviewer) to treat all of categories the same?
- For “academic” data, what was actually collected and analyzed? The report doesn’t make this clear and references only PSSA scores. Was that it? Allen spent five and half pages discussing discipline data and yet spends barely two pages on academic data.
- The description of statistical terminology is weak at best. For example, on p.3 of the Allen Report, Allen states: “Statistical significance of a variable (*e.g.* school year, race, gender) indicates the likelihood that the outcome being measured is, in some way, due to the presence of the variable and not just chance.” This is stating in a round-about way that the association of the variable with the outcome being measured/observed. Allen goes on to state that “the greater the statistical significance, the more likely that the variable is responsible...”; this grossly misstates the testing premise. Conventional analysis assumes a-priori, that we accept no more than a 5% error rate of claiming statistical significance, when in truth the results are no different. This is a “Type I” error rate, and because of this for testing, results are considered statistically significant if $p < 0.05$. It is impossible to understand what Allen was stating on proportionality at all. This concept is evident in the bar graphs (*e.g.* on disproportionality, Allen Report, p. 33, Fig. B1). How disproportionate is the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander because there are 0 cases, or whites who comprise the majority of the study population? Seeing observed differences in subgroup proportions is not evidence of a difference in outcomes.
- P-values for variables sex, race, and year are presented in Table 1 of the report (Allen Report, p.4). There is no mention of the statistical tests performed (see next comment), the inclusion of any other explanatory variables (age, socio-economic status, income, residence years, etc.). Were analyses with more than one variable used, and was, for example, school year as a repeated measure for analysis considered?
- Allen fails to mention, or failed to perform, relevant statistical tests. For proportions, groups would commonly be compared by a Chi-square test, or Fisher’s exact test for small 2x2 tables. Combining proportions across subgroups would utilize a stratified test like the Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel test. For proportions, a binomial confidence interval would often be reported. For means, a T-test and analysis of variance are typically used. For data collected over time (*e.g.* student academic performance from year to year), a repeated measures analysis of variance would typically be conducted. Means and a

measure of variable for continuous measures is typically reported. For example, summary statistics would include the number of observations, the mean score, standard deviation, median, and minimum and maximum values. Did Allen do any of these? Almost certainly not, at least there is no evidence whatsoever that he did in the Allen Report. He didn't need to, though, because under his CRT-based framework, the mere appearance of any disparity met former Evison needs.

- This singular p-value becomes the motivation for observing differences and trends in the collected data as evidence of bias. The argument is unconvincing for a proposed three-year action plan. Recommended in Year 1 of the plan is essentially to more thoroughly evaluate the data presented in the report that is the basis for diversity action in the first place. For Year 2 there is discussion of “restorative practices as an alternative to punitive discipline,” yet no specific disciplinary data is provided in the current report. The plan would be informed by what specific results were obtained in the 5-years on which data has been collected for “academic” and “discipline” data, without saying what they were.
- **Allen looks at “trends” in the observed data as evidence of disparity on which to base policy decisions. No actual data is presented.** There is no supportive statistical measure, e.g., a 95% confidence interval around a mean or proportion. There is not even a standard error bar!
- There is also no mention of the sample size involved in the apparent racial discrepancies seen. In the statement “*students who identified as non-binary scored lower than males and females*” (Allen Report, p. 19); how many students are there that fall into this “*non-binary*” subpopulation? Just one? Ten? A hundred? Also, the report obviously takes a political position on the existence of “non-binary” as a person who is neither male nor female, as opposed to just being a gender or personality trait expression. Is that a valid basis for treating that person/those people as a sub-population for purposes of these analyses?
- How is subgroup size considered in decision making? Presenting results with the number of observations, means and proportions, confidence intervals, and measures of spread would have been helpful, and certainly would have been included in a report reflecting well-controlled survey conduct and competent analysis both of survey results and of the analysis of both academic and disciplinary data.

The manner of Allen's presentation of data and his analysis, and his selectivity in what he chooses to present, are deeply misleading. For example, Figure 4 on p.10 of the Allen Report hides the much higher performance of students of Asian descent (“Asian” being used as an aggregate term to refer to individuals of both South Asian and East Asian descent, for better or worse). Taking 2016 as an example, because the PSSA data is readily available on the internet for that year, 88% of Asian students in SLSD were proficient in ELA while only 81% of white students were proficient (<<https://www.greatschools.org/pennsylvania/center-valley/southern-lehigh-school-district/>>, last visited July 28, 2021). Likewise, 85% of Asian students in SLSD were proficient in math while only 66% of white students were proficient.

If we accept Allen’s framework, the disparity between academic performance of “Asian” students and that of “white students” can only be due to systemic racism (and, in this case, the “internalized whiteness” of the Asian sub-population). As author Kenny Xu points out, “Asians” are an “inconvenient minority” when it comes to these sorts of analyses! The most plausible explanation, of course, is not that our teachers and systems have selectively and in a discriminatory fashion favored Asian students to the detriment of white, latino, and black students, but rather that Asian students are more likely, *on average*, to come from intact families who place a relatively higher emphasis on academic performance, thus resulting in the higher performance of that subpopulation on average.

Ultimately, the Allen Report is incomplete and unreliable, and does not present actual results of the data collected. It would not pass muster in a Statistics 101 course. The proposals made by Allen are, therefore, simply not supported by the data, and should be rejected as unfounded (and frankly, contrary to common sense).

The Implications in the Report about our Teachers and Staff are Deeply Offensive

The most important reason that Allen Report should have been rejected on its merits (remember that it wasn’t rejected on its merits, but instead was shelved by the board due to the conflict of interest and corrupt quid-pro-quo transaction between Evison and Allen, see Section 6.6 of this Report), is that the report implies that SLSD teachers and staff have acted to establish and maintain “systemic racism” in our schools that has resulted in these disparities. This is absurd on its face. Our teachers would have had to treat our students differently by the color of their skin, to give extra help based on melanin level, to manipulate grades, and to discipline where no discipline was necessary. Does anyone really believe anything like that has occurred?

Our children have been in this district their entire academic lives. We have seen nothing but engaged, kind, patient, highly qualified, and professional teachers and staff. We have seen teachers go far above and beyond the call of duty to help students succeed, offering of themselves freely, without favor to anyone. Help is always there for the asking.

To now turn on them and accuse them, implicitly or otherwise, by accepting and being guided by the Allen Report of being biased against some students and favoring others based on the color of the student’s skin is outrageous. The notion that our district may have approved or condoned professional development for our teachers and staff as a corrective action to their “discrimination” against students of different races is reprehensible.

The Allen Report was Tainted by an Undisclosed Material Conflict of Interest

Finally, it should be remembered that Evison failed to disclose a serious conflict of interest based on a preexisting relationship with Allen, and by doing so violated existing school board policies and possibly several applicable laws (see Section 7.6 of this Report). Because of the conflict of interest, the district’s entire relationship with Allen was tainted and corrupt, not to mention the Allen report itself as the fruit of that relationship. That conflict of interest goes a long way to explaining why Evison appears not to have identified or considered retaining any other vendors to provide the category of services which Allen provides, and instead opted to move forward with a “no bid” contract with a friend from whom she received meaningful personal benefits.

She presumably knew she could rely on Allen to produce results that would support her cynical preconceived notions about our staff and students.

Summary

We objected to Allen’s work for the district not because it relates to diversity (at least as that term used to be understood, see Section 4.0 of this Report), but because it is directly and expressly based on a framework that takes as undisputed orthodoxy that racism in favor of “whiteness” permeates every aspect of and interaction within our society and ascribes every difference in outcome to that systemic racism. We reject that insidious framework outright and wholeheartedly. ***Our objection was never general, it was always specific.***

Training on diversity, tolerance, and understanding can be done and done well without resorting to divisive frameworks like CRT or DEI training based on or driven by CRT. We can embrace diversity without demonizing people with different melanin levels than our own. We can learn one another’s histories and appreciate one another’s cultures without dividing ourselves into tribes and ascribing moral guilt. We can study and learn from the evils of the past, no matter how or where they were practiced, but within the context of human advancement and progress in fighting those evils.

6.6 Superintendent’s Conflict of Interest & Quid Pro Quo Corruption

Failure to Disclose a Serious Conflict of Interest

The records we received from the district suggested that former Superintendent Evison failed to disclose to the school board an extensive preexisting relationship with Joseph Allen. Based on the nature of that relationship, Evison had a conflict of interested that disqualified her from involvement in the selection and retention of Allen as a consultant to SLSD.

Direct Support for Evison’s PhD Capstone Project

As part of that preexisting relationship, former Superintendent Evison received, and likely continues to receive, direct support from Allen on her “capstone” project for her district-funded Ph.D. This support included:

- (i) provision by Allen of data sets, training materials, and other information and materials former Superintendent Evison needed to advance her “capstone project,” a non-SLSD activity relating to her Ph.D. studies apparently (full e-mails are included in Attachment 5).
- In an email from Allen to Evison dated July 14, 2020, Allen wrote: *“I will drop resources in here [referring to a Google Shared Drive] as I come across them. The first file should be the bibliography, which I can add to if I come across some more readings. I will also draw up a brief description of our districts data, PD programming, and outcomes. I should be able to drop that into this drive by tomorrow.”*

- In an email from Evison to Allen dated December 14, 2020, Evison requested: “I have a meeting with my Capstone adviser this Thursday, so if you would be able to share the data files with me before then I would really appreciate it!”
- Allen responded to Evison on December 15, 2020: “Yes, I am dropping materials and data as we speak. You will find all of the PD [Professional Development] materials including PowerPoints, readings, etc. as well as the raw, de-identified data from the pre-post assessment. I am also dropping some literature that informed the PD.”

(ii) provision by Allen of guidance and advice regarding her “capstone” project, including, e.g., a review and recommendations to her study protocol for review by an institutional review board (full e-mails are included in [Attachment 6](#)); and

- In an email from Evison to Allen on July 18, 2020, Evison informs Allen that her PhD advisor at Vanderbilt “feels the proposal you and I discussed is a good one and feels it will meet the criteria for the project” and goes on to request of Allen, “could you provide me a list of all the data sources available so that I can include in my proposal?”
- In an email from Allen to Evison on July 19, 2020, Allen responds “I’m glad to hear she approved of the direction of your project. That being said, here are a few data sources that come to mind” and then goes on to list a number of sources for data.
- In an email from Evison to Allen on December 9, 2020, Evison provides to Allen an approved copy of the proposal she made to the Institutional Review Board (“IRB”) at Vanderbilt (i.e., the approval by Vanderbilt of our research proposal). The proposal (a complete copy of which is included in [Attachment 7](#)) describes the research. Despite the obvious conflicts of interest with Allen (including, without limitation, the award at Evison’s request of a no-bid contract by SLSD), when Evison is asked in the IRB document whether there are any conflicts of interests to disclose, she responded with an unequivocal (and deeply dishonest and unethical) “No.”

EVISONK07192020104527	IRB #202118
PI: Evison, Kathleen	Last updated: 10/23/2020
An Impact Evaluation of a Professional Development Program for Teachers on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	
Conflict of Interest Disclosure	
<p>Is there a potential conflict of interest for the Principal Investigator or key personnel? • The PI is responsible for assuring that no arrangement has been entered into where the value of the ownership interests will be affected by the outcome of the research and no arrangement has been entered into where the amount of compensation will be affected by the outcome of the research. • Assessment should include anyone listed as Principal Investigator, or other research personnel on page 1 of this application. Please note that ownership described below apply to the aggregate ownership of an individual investigator, his/her spouse, domestic partner and dependent children). Do not consider the combined ownership of all investigators.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

- (iii) at least one letter of support and commitment submitted by Allen to Vanderbilt University relating to her “capstone” project (full documents are included see Attachment 8).
- In an email from Evison to Allen on August 5, 2020, Evison informs Allen: “*I am in the final stage of getting my proposal approved and need a letter of commitment from you that you are supporting this project.*”
 - Allen then prepared the letter and provided it to Evison as an attachment to an e-mail dated August 6, 2020: “*Please see attached for the letter of commitment... if anything needs to be changed or added, let me know.*”
 - Allen provided the “Letter of Commitment,” dated August 6, 2020, on Mooreville Graded School District letterhead. The central paragraph reads: “*This letter is to acknowledge that Vanderbilt student Kathleen T. Evison is working in collaboration with Mooresville Graded School District in Mooresville, NC regarding her final capstone project. We have authorized her use of de-identified district data related to her project. We look forward to working with Kathleen, and are committed to assisting her in the completion of her capstone in any way we can.*”

Despite this pre-existing personal relationship, from which former Superintendent Evison obviously benefited and likely continues to benefit, she nonetheless selected and recommended Allen as a vendor to the district, worked with Allen to prepare a proposal for services, arranged for the approval of that proposal by the Board (and the payment of monies specified therein), and ultimately received services on behalf of the district from Allen, and yet failed to notify to the school board of any of these facts.

Violation of Board Policy No. 827

At a minimum, this series of events reflects an actual or potential conflict of interest, or, at the very least, creates the perception of a conflict of interest, which in either case would be contrary to the stated purpose of the Board’s Conflict of Interest policy (No. 827), as adopted on July 11, 2016 and revised on April 24, 2017 (see p.1 of the policy, Sec. 1, “Purpose”). One could readily argue that recommending and obtaining Board approval for a “no-bid” contract with a person with whom she had a pre-existing relationship and from whom she received and likely continues to receive ongoing material support for her Ph.D. studies constitutes an actual or potential conflict of interest under and in violation of this policy. Several other sections of the Board’s Conflict of Interest policy are implicated as well.

Section 3 of the policy (“Delegation of Responsibility”) states that (emphasis added):

“Each employee and Board member shall be responsible to **maintain standards of conduct that avoid conflicts of interest**. The Board **prohibits** members of the Board and district employees **from engaging in conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest** as outlined in this policy.”

On the facts presented above, as documented by the district’s own records, it appears that Evison failed to “maintain standards of conduct that avoid conflicts of interest” and that she did in fact “engage in conduct that constitutes of conflict of interest.”

More importantly, Section 4 of the Policy (“Guidelines”) requires that (emphasis added):

“No employee or Board member may **participate in the selection, award or administration** of a contract **supported by a federal award** if s/he has a **real or apparent conflict of interest** as defined above, as well as any other circumstance in which the employee, Board member, ... has a financial or other interest in or a **tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for a contract.**” (see p.2 of the policy, 2nd paragraph under “Standards of Conduct”).

In this case, former Superintendent Allen obviously “participated” in the “selection, award, or administration” of the contract with Allen. In fact, she exchanged a number of e-mails with Allen that evidence that she directly “participated” by reviewing and requesting changes to the draft proposal from Allen (see multiple emails in Attachment 9).

- On June 18, 2020, Allen sent Evison the draft proposal noting that he “*managed to get both PD [Professional Development] services and consultation services onto one document,*” going on to request “*please review it and let me if you find any errors I may have missed, or **if you have any recommendations for edits.***” (emphasis added).
- In an email of the same date, presumably after a phone call between Evison and Allen, Allen comments: “*I’m comfortable changing the proposal to reflect that the needs assessment will result in a 3-year action plan. I’ll make the update and send you a new copy tomorrow. Let me know if you see anything else that needs to be addressed.*” He then provided that updated version the next day.
- After reviewing the further revised proposal, Evison, in an email dated June 19, 2020, told Allen (emphasis added):

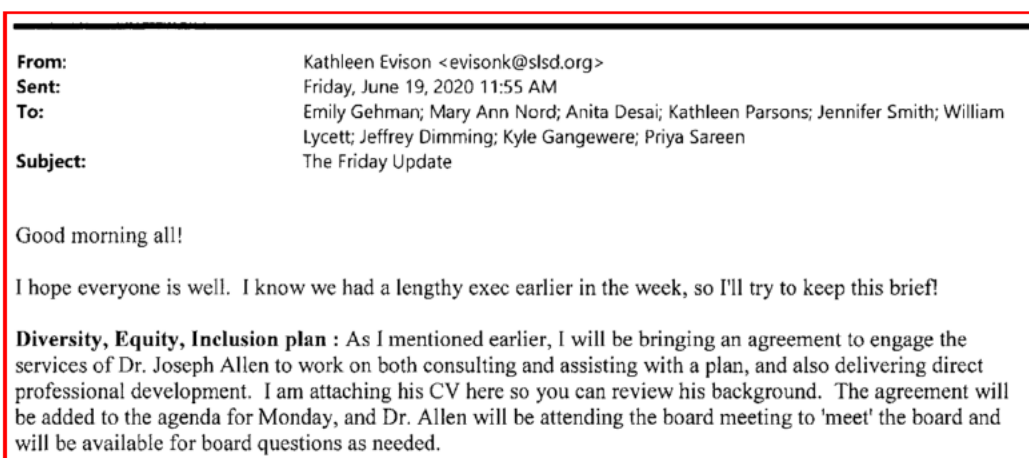
“*This looks really good. **The only other area I feel we’re really lacking is the aspect of providing education to our students in these areas.** A piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year. My concern is that we have a significant percentage of our student body that do not understand race, justice and equity and are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors. I know that’s a lot to tackle, and that our staff and admin need to come first, **so maybe just a reference to how this work with staff will then lead to not only culturally affirming practices in pedagogy but also in direct teaching of these issues to students?** It’s just my thought and I’m certainly open to feedback, but just wondering how we capture the portion of helping our students address their own bias and racism.”*

- Allen then further revised the proposal, emailing Evison again on June 19, 2020 (emphasis added): “*Here is the latest version. **I’ve actually incorporated the student***

component in two places: a) *Module 5 of the PD outline (where we can help teachers learn to engage students in D&I related conversations), and b) in the action plan (where I discussed including recommendations for the development of D&I initiatives for students across all grade levels). Let me know what you think.”*

- Evison then confirmed in an email on June 21, 2020 that the proposal “*Looks great!*”

Evison then summarized the proposal to the Board in an e-mail and recommended approval of the proposal at the meeting the Board on June 22, 2020, the meeting at which the Board did in fact approve the proposal (a full copy of this email is attached to this Report as Attachment 10).



Further, Evison directly “participated” in the “administration” of the contract by arranging for the provision of SLSD data to Allen, corresponding with him on a number of occasions as to the status of the services to be provided by Allen, and ensuring payments were made to Allen (see full emails in Attachment 11).

- In an email dated January 22, 2021, Evison asks Allen: “...we discussed distributing them to the community between February and March, with a plan to analyze the data in April. Is there anything I can do to assist with or support the preparation and distribution of the surveys?”
- Various e-mails throughout 2020 and 2021 evidence Evison and Allen arranging and holding meetings.
- In an email dated August 19, 2020, Allen notes that he has begun receiving data from SLSD (as requested by Evison) “I have begun to receive data from Mr. Jordan for the DI&E needs assessment.” He then states “In the meantime, I also wanted to follow up with you regarding the climate surveys. I'm looking forward to discussing how those may be disseminated and analyzed once we receive responses” and asks, “Let me know if you have time to connect and discuss moving forward”; Evison then responds on the August 25, 2020 with various proposed days for a meeting.

- Allen submitted an invoice for services dated August 3, 2020 even though those services had not yet, and would not be provided until the middle of the following year (full invoice is included in Attachment 11).

Finally, as summarized above, Evison received “tangible personal benefit” from Allen in the form of various types of assistance on her “Capstone” project for her district-funded Ph.D.

There is no evidence that Evison’s conflict of interest was disclosed by her or anyone else to the Board, let alone that it was discussed by the Board. We have reviewed all of the board minutes from the relevant period and cannot find any mention of the conflict until the August 9, 2021 where the Board approved an investigation into the misconduct.

The Board’s “Conflicts of Interest Policy” does not permit the Board to waive such a “real or apparent” conflict of interest even if it had been presented, i.e., the Board could not have waived (permitted) the conflict even if it had wanted to do so. The policy provides a bright-line rule for the Board to enforce in this area.

The information we provided caused that the Board conduct an investigation of the conduct of Evison and the ongoing benefit that both she and Allen appeared had received and were continuing to receive at the time as a result of the violative conduct. The Board’s Conflict of Interest policy requires (see “Guidelines,” Sec. 4, p.5) (emphasis added):

*“If an investigation results in a finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, the district **shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases** and will not recur.”*

On a related note, the apparent conflict of interest that we described to the Board goes a long way to explaining why Evison appears not to have identified or considered retaining any other vendors to provide the category of services which Allen provided, and instead opted to move forward with a “no bid” contract with a friend from whom she received meaningful personal benefits.

We notified the school board of these issues by letter on July 12, 2021. This was never about just pointing at something the district did and saying “bad, bad, bad.” We want constructive conversations, better processes, and more clearly stated intent. We want insight into what the district is doing in controversial areas. Transparency builds trust. Accordingly, toward the end of our letter, offered some suggestions on next steps (emphasis added):

“This Board has a **duty to remedy these issues**, which would certainly include, at a minimum, immediately **retrieving all SLSD data** that has been provided to Allen and **obtaining his written certification** that (i) he **no longer possesses any SLSD data** or other information or materials, and (ii) **did not**, while the SLSD data was improperly in his possession, **misuse the data or re-disclose the data** to any third party.

Finally, given the unbelievably cavalier manner in which SLSD data was handled in this case, the **Board should determine whether there have been any other**

potentially violative disclosures of sensitive SLSD student data by the administration during former Superintendent Evison’s tenure.”

A week passed and we received no response from anyone on the school board whatsoever. Believing that perhaps the Board and interim superintendent (at the time, Dr. Mussoline) were unable to coalesce around an approach to address the issues we raised, we then sent on July 19, 2021 more specific recommendations on how to remedy the FERPA violations:

In our letter, we also provided more specific recommendations on how to address the conflicts of interest:

“Conflict of Interest

- Immediately terminate all contracts and all activities thereunder with Allen (including, without limitation, the proposal approved by the Board on June 22, 2020), as they arise out of clear and unremediated violations of the Board’s Conflict of Interest policy (No. 827);
- Demand in writing the return of all monies paid to Allen in connection with the proposal approved by the Board on June 22, 2020 or otherwise (including, without limitation, all “Title II” federal funds paid to Allen);
- Immediately remove the “2020 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Needs Assessment and Action Plan” dated July 1, 2021 from the district’s website – this report cannot be relied upon for many reasons, not the least of which is that its credibility is beyond tainted because it arises out of clear and unremediated violation of the Board’s Conflict of Interest policy (No. 827);
- Prohibit the administration from contracting with Allen in the future, given his failure to disclose the obvious conflict of interest;
- Take appropriate disciplinary actions against any SLSD employee involved in this conflict of interest; and
- Evaluate all contracts approved by the Board over the past three (or more) years to determine whether any other contracts were approved by the Board with an undisclosed conflict of interest, particularly any and all contracts recommended to the Board by former Superintendent Evison, and take corrective action where needed.”

We even offered recommendations on how to avoid situations like this in the future, including by improving the district’s procurement practices:

“Procurement Policy

- Prepare and adopt a procurement policy that ensures that contracts that violate our Conflicts of Interest Policy (No. 827) are not approved by the Board;

- Require in such a policy that every SLSD employee or agent involved in the referral, recommendation, preparation, evaluation, finalization, etc., of any contract recommended for approval by the Board certify in writing that he or she is not aware of or subject to any conflicts of interest (as defined in the Board’s Conflict of Interest policy, No. 827) with respect to that contract or aware of or subject to any other facts or circumstances that would suggest impropriety or misconduct with respect to such contract;
- Require in such a policy that in every case the Superintendent (or Interim Superintendent, as the case may be) certify that he or she is not aware of or subject to any conflict of interest (as defined in the Board’s Conflict of Interest policy, No. 827) with respect to the contract in question or aware of or subject to any other facts or circumstances that would suggest impropriety or misconduct with respect to such contract; and
- Training should be provided to all SLSD personnel in any way connected with the procurement function.”

The Board did ultimately take some actions by authorizing an investigation by outside counsel and terminating the relationship with Allen. A summary of those actions, and the resulting investigation and report, are addressed in Section 7.9.

6.7 Illegal Disclosure of Confidential Student Data

Data for “Needs Assessment”

The DEI proposal from Allen, as approved by our school board, included a “Needs Assessment” in which Allen would collect and analyze data in falling in three categories: (i) discipline data, (ii) academic data, and (iii) “equity survey” results. The results of the data analysis would be presented to SLSD administration in a “3-year action plan.”

CONSULTATION SERVICES

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment can be conducted on behalf of SLSD to analyze and inform a 3-year, district-wide action plan that specifically address issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity. The needs assessment will consist of three components:

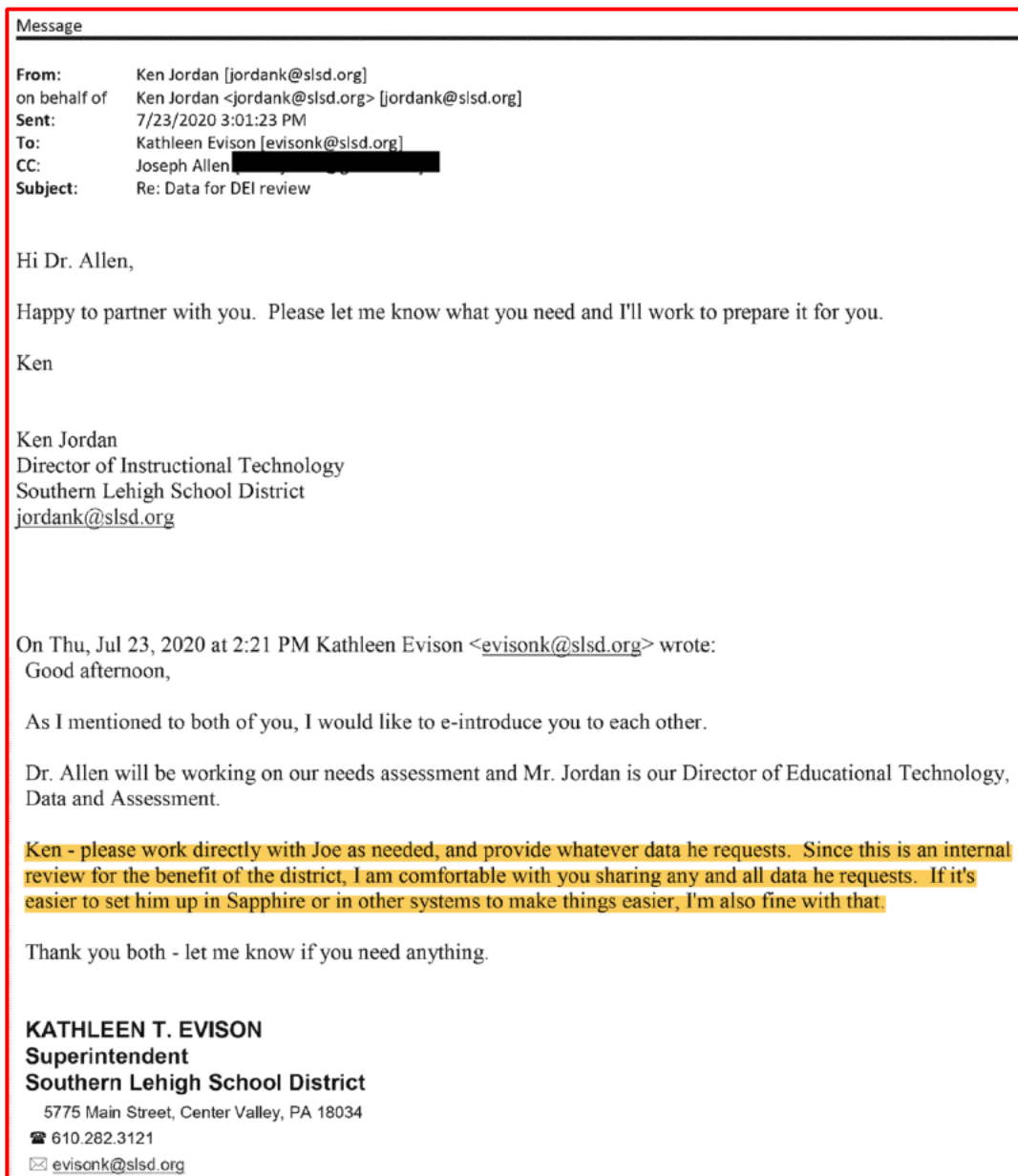
- An analysis of discipline data from the last five years
- An analysis of academic data from the last five years
- One of two district wide survey options: either a) a climate survey for all staff and students regarding their perceptions, dispositions, and concerns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, or b) a survey for all teaching staff to determine their self-reported self efficacy regarding culturally responsive teaching

Regarding discipline and academic data, a statistical analysis can be conducted to determine which of five primary factors (race, gender, time, grade level, and school) is the most significant predictor of outcomes in both categories (discipline rates and academic performance). Regarding the district wide survey, data analysis will be determined by which survey option is chosen.

Data collected from the needs assessment will be used to generate recommendations that will be presented to SLSD administration in the form of a 3-year action plan (see below).

(Allen Proposal, p.5)

We address the “equity survey” portion of the data collection in Section 7.4 of this report. With respect to the discipline and academic data, former superintendent Evison directed Ken Jordan, then head of SLSD information technology services, to provide Allen with “*any and all data he requests*” (see email below).



Superintendent’s Utter Disregard for the Rules

Former superintendent Evison’s e-mail to Allen above is problematic on multiple levels:

First, former superintendent Evison exhibits reckless disregard in the handling of sensitive, student-level data. Our school board did not approve providing Allen with “*whatever data he requests*” or “*any and all data he requests.*”

Second, this was not an “internal review,” it was exactly the opposite. Allen was not and never was an employee of the district; he was at all times an unrelated third party consultant retained to provide a specific set of services. These were external services provided by an independent contract that were intended to produce a report that would be shared with the community. Our relationship with Allen was so poorly managed that he did not even have a signed consulting agreement with SLSD, nor even a basic non-disclosure/confidentiality agreement. We know this for certain because we asked for all contracts with Allen and the only record provided was the Allen Proposal approved by the school board.

Third, despite the absence of so much as a non-disclosure/confidentiality agreement with Allen, former superintendent Evison authorized Mr. Jordan to provide Allen with direct, unfettered access to the district’s internal IT systems, including our “Sapphire” student information system.

The level of administrative incompetence exhibit by both former superintendent Evison and Mr. Jordan is astounding.

Unfettered Access to Highly Sensitive Student Data

The data Allen requested consisted for the following, as set out in an email from Allen to former superintendent Evison on September 19, 2020:

Also, I just sent a follow-up email to Ken Jordan regarding district data. I reminded him of the request for the following, which I have every confidence he will provide soon:

- Testing data (proficiency %s from standardized test scores, or any academic outcomes similar to PSSA) from the last 5 years ('15-'16 through '19-'20) for grades 9-12
- Discipline data - total number of discipline referrals/incidents that resulted in administrative action (in-school/out of school suspension, expulsion, etc.) from the last 5 years ('15-'16 through '19-'20) in grades 3-12
- Current ('20-'21) student demographic data (if possible, by school, self reported racial/ethnic identity, and self reported gender identity)
- Current ('20-'21) teacher demographic data (if possible, by school, self reported racial/ethnic identity, and self reported gender identity)

Once I receive this data, and the data from the survey responses, I will be able to complete a comprehensive Equity profile for SLSD and, in turn, the Equity Strategic Plan.

Thank you so very much! I look forward to the next step in the process:)

--
Dr. Joseph Allen

The earlier e-mail Allen referred to included more detail on his requests, and makes clear he was asking for basically every piece of information that the school keeps on students in the categories of academic performance and discipline data. In addition, and for reason that remain unclear, he also requested demographic data on all of our teachers.

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

On Fri, Jul 24, 2020 at 12:42 PM Joseph Allen <allen.joe05@gmail.com> wrote:
Greetings Ken,

It's a pleasure to (virtually) meet you. I'm excited to be working with you on this project. As I'm sure Mrs. Evison mentioned, we are looking to do a needs assessment for the district as it relates to equity. As such, I've offered to run some analysis on data to see if we can ascertain how students of various demographics fare in the district, in terms of discipline and academics. I've offered to go back as far as 5 years (if available). I'm not sure which will be the easiest way to go about it, but I can give you a heads up on what I would be looking for:

Academic data - any metrics you use to track student academic performance (typically proficiency %s from standardized test scores grades 3-12 - we don't have to worry about assessments from K-2). Is it possible to get the data from the last 5 years (2014-15 through 2018-19) so that I could break it down by year, grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, school, **and any other data/variables the district collects?**

Discipline data - this one might be tricky because different districts have different discipline monitoring systems. Basically what I would like to do is run an analysis on the total number of discipline referrals/incidents that resulted in administrative action. It could range from a simple call home to a full suspension. If possible, I would like to analyze this data from the last 5 years as well (2014-15 through 2018-19) and be able to break these total numbers down by year, grade level, gender, race/ethnicity, school, type of administrative action, **and any other data/variables you all collect.**

SLSD056

General district data - I can typically find this via government websites, but they tend to be outdated. Could you let me know the current general breakdown of the district (total # of students - district wide and by school, self reported % racial/ethnic identity of students - district wide and by school, total # of teachers, **and any teacher demographic data you can share**).

The requested data was simply dumped onto a shared google drive set up by Mr. Jordan.

On Fri, Oct 2, 2020 at 1:11 PM Ken Jordan <jordank@slsd.org> wrote:
Hi Joe,

I have placed the demographic files in the shared google drive folder. As for Standardized tests, the PSSA and Keystone are our only true standardized tests we administer. I am working on trying gather the discipline information and get that uploaded as soon as possible.

Ken

Director of Instructional Technology
Southern Lehigh School District

District Stonewalls Attempt to See Datasets to Verify Allen's Conclusions

In order to understand Allen's analysis, we asked to see the source data on which the analysis was based. Bear in mind that a "3-Year Action Plan," which would include recommendations

You had also posed a question in your email regarding why certain fields would be redacted. Our attorney has indicated that because Dr. Allen was employed by the district to provide a service he was bound to follow the guidelines of FERPA responsibility. Therefore information that would

Southern Lehigh School District
5775 MAIN STREET
CENTER VALLEY, PENNSYLVANIA 18034

Office of Director of Business Services

Open Record Office

be personally identifiable did not have to be redacted, but in your case it would. If you should have any further questions or clarifications I have copied our solicitor Mr. Audi on this email.

Sincerely,



Henna Shah
Director of Business Services/Open Records Officer

Ms. Shah's e-mail was of course confirmation that individually identifiable student information was in fact provided to Allen. If Allen had in fact been an employee of SLSD, perhaps the district's position would have been correct. Allen, however, was not an employee or "employed" by the district. Allen was a third party contractor retained on a limited basis to deliver on a limited scope of work. For the reasons discussed at length below, SLSD was not permitted to deliver unredacted student data to Allen without first having taken a number of crucial actions, none of which were actually taken. As a result, SLSD violated federal law protecting student data as well as existing Board policies.

FERPA? What's FERPA?

In evaluating whether and how to provide the requested data to Allen, SLSD does not appear to even once have considered how to do so in a manner that complied with the FERPA, existing Board policies, or even basic, common sense protections that confidential information should be afforded. Perhaps this is not a surprise because in the period from January 1, 2017 through May 14, 2021, SLSD had trained its employees on the protection of student data only a single time. That training was held approximately two years and four months prior to the provision of data to Allen (we don't have information to confirm when individual employees complete the assigned trainings). Below is the training record provided to us by Ms. Shah confirming when that

training was done. In an associated letter, Ms. Shah confirmed that the listed training was “provided to the entire district.”

Course History	
SLSD Annual Notification of Policy & Procedure	
Version: Custom	
Completion Date: 2018-08-28 07:48:03	
Title	Date Started
SLSD Policy 316, 416, 516 Notification of Arrest or Conviction	08/28/2018 07:45:07 AM
SLSD Policy 348, 448, 548 Unlawful Harassment	08/28/2018 07:45:49 AM
SLSD Policy 352, 452, 552 Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information (HIPAA)	08/28/2018 07:46:04 AM
SLSD Policy 216 Education Records (FERPA)	08/28/2018 07:46:24 AM
SLSD Policy 323, 423, 523 Tobacco	08/28/2018 07:46:41 AM
SLSD Policy 351, 451, 651 Drug & Substance Abuse	08/28/2018 07:46:55 AM
SLSD Policy 319.1, 419.1, 519.1 Outside Activities & Intellectual Property	08/28/2018 07:47:08 AM
SLSD Policy 827 Conflict of Interest	08/28/2018 07:47:23 AM
SLSD Policy 815 Acceptable Use of Electronic Devices	08/28/2018 07:47:38 AM
SLSD Absence and Leave Procedural Guidance	08/28/2018 07:47:53 AM

With the above as background, we can now address multiple violations of law and board policies that occurred in connection with the handling of student-level data by SLSD with Allen.

Failure to Obtain Necessary Consents to Disclose Student-Level Information

SLSD failed to obtain the prior written consent of parents and students necessary to have provided to Allen the data and other information that was provided to him, and on which his July 1, 2021 report to the Board was based.

Board Policy No. 216 titled “Education Records” requires, among other things, that (see p.14 of the policy, Sec. 7) (emphasis added):

“Any disclosure of personally identifiable information concerning a student to any person other than the parent, the eligible student, or school officials with a legitimate educational interest **shall require the prior written consent of the parent or the eligible student.** Any document providing such consent shall—

- (a) **identify the particular portions** of the education record or the particular information or types of information concerning the student **that shall be disclosed;**
- (b) **identify the person** or agency **to whom** or to which **disclosure will be made;** and
- (c) **contain the signature of at least one parent** or the eligible student, and the date of such signature.”

In this case, there is no evidence that we have seen in any document SLSD provided that suggests any such consent was obtained.

As parents with students in the district, we can say without reservation that we did not provide any written consent permitting the disclosure of our children’s discipline or academic data, let alone a consent identifying Allen as the recipient of that data and identifying the discipline and

academic performance data that was provided. It goes without saying that we did not authorize any information to be disclosed regarding “self-reported gender identity” as Allen requested.

The Education Records policy does include a potentially relevant exception to the consent and identification requirement of Section 4.8 of the policy in subsection (1) thereof. That exception states that “prior written consent of the parent or eligible student is *not* required when the disclosure of education records or information is...” (emphasis added):

- (1) To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the District to **develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction**, when—
- (1) The organization conducting the study does not permit access to personally-identifiable information to any party other than representatives of the organization who have a legitimate educational interest in that information;
 - (2) The information is destroyed when no longer needed for the purposes for which the study was conducted; **and**
 - (3) **The organization enters into a binding agreement with the District under which the organization is obligated to adhere to the requirements of this policy; that defines the purposes, scope, and duration of the study and the information to be disclosed to the organization; and that limits the use of the disclosed information to the purposes expressly identified in the agreement;**

Applying the known facts to this potential exception, the purposes of Allen’s proposal, as understood both from the plain language of the proposal itself and from the Board’s approval of that proposal as reflected in the Board minutes from the June 22, 2020 meeting of the School Board, is not for developing, validating or administering “predictive tests,” nor is it to “administer student aid programs.” Whether any portion of Allen’s services might meet the “improve instruction” element is questionable at best, but it is also a moot question for the reasons set out below.

Failure to Implement Binding Controls on Use of Data

SLSD failed to implement required binding controls on the use of the data and other information that was provided by SLSD to Allen.

For any disclosure of student information to fall under exception (1), the district and the organization to which the data is disclosed (in this case, Allen) must have entered into a “**binding agreement**” ***before*** disclosure requiring (breaking down subsection (1)(3) as quotes in full above) (emphasis added):

- (i) “**obligated to adhere to the requirements of this policy;**
- (ii) that defines the purposes, scope, and duration of the study and the information to be disclosed to the organization; **and**

- (iii) that **limits the use of the disclosed information to the purposes expressly identified in the agreement.**”

No such binding agreement exists at all, let alone one that expressly requires compliance with the Board’s Education Records policy (No. 216) and that expressly limits the use of the disclosed student-level information. The only document that the district has made available, including after Right to Know requests, is Allen’s proposal dated June 17, 2020, as approved by the Board on June 22, 2020. That proposal document does not even include a signature block where both parties would sign and date, evidencing commencement of the contract term, nor does it include any of the legal terms and conditions that would typically be found in a services agreement.

Furthermore, the proposal does not include any confidentiality provisions whatsoever. The proposal does not include any language that would limit the use by Allen of SLSD’s data to use necessary only to perform the services described in the proposal (for example, he could have used our student’s data to write papers or conduct other research). The proposal does not include any prohibition on his re-disclosure of this sensitive data to other parties (as is required under Section 4.9 of the policy).

Unless the district has withheld additional written binding agreements with Allen in violation of the PA Right to Know law, all available evidence suggests that multiple sections of the Education Records policy have been violated in an egregious manner (given the quantity, coverage, type, and sensitivity of the data disclosed), and as a result student-level data has been disclosed without **any** of the necessary controls or binding obligations, and without **any** of the required consents from parents and students. These actions also, therefore, violate FERPA, on which our policy is based.

Notification, Recommendations, and More Lies

We notified the school board of these issues by letter on July 12, 2021. Our efforts have never been about just point out failings. Accordingly, toward the end of our letter, we offered some suggestions on next steps (emphasis added):

“This Board has a **duty to remedy these issues**, which would certainly include, at a minimum, immediately **retrieving all SLSD data** that has been provided to Allen and **obtaining his written certification** that (i) he **no longer possesses any SLSD data** or other information or materials, and (ii) **did not**, while the SLSD data was improperly in his possession, **misuse the data or re-disclose the data** to any third party.

Finally, given the unbelievably cavalier manner in which SLSD data was handled in this case, the **Board should determine whether there have been any other potentially violative disclosures of sensitive SLSD student data by the administration during former Superintendent Evison’s tenure.**”

A week passed and we received no response from anyone on the school board whatsoever. Believing that perhaps the Board and interim superintendent (at the time, Dr. Mussoline) were unable to coalesce around an approach to address the issues we raised, we then sent on July 19, 2021 more specific recommendations on how to remedy the FERPA violations:

“FERPA Violations

- Immediately retrieve from Allen all SLSD data that has been provided to Allen in connection with the June 22, 2020 proposal or otherwise;
- Demand and obtain a sworn affidavit from Allen confirming that he no longer possesses any SLSD data after such retrieval;
- Demand and obtain a sworn affidavit from Allen confirming that while the SLSD data was improperly in his possession he did not misuse the data (*i.e.*, use it for any other purpose than those specific purposes listed in the proposal approved by the Board on June 22, 2020) or re-disclose the data to any third party (including, without limitation, on an anonymized basis);
- Take appropriate disciplinary actions against any SLSD employee involved in the mishandling of SLSD data;
- Promptly conduct retraining on the requirements of Board Policy No. 216 titled “Education Records” for all SLSD employees that in any way come into contact with SLSD student data covered by FERPA, with special emphasis on those employees that may be asked to provide SLSD data to a third party;
- Evaluate to what extent the district is at risk of losing access to federal funds as a result of the FERPA violations that I have described to you (based on the district’s own records);
- Evaluate whether any other mishandlings of SLSD student data have occurred (*i.e.*, other than in connection with the Allen proposal) and take immediate action to remedy them if any exist; and
- Evaluate whether sharing sensitive student data covered by FERPA through Google Drive, as was the case here, is appropriate, or whether a more secure, fully encrypted file sharing service would be more appropriate and compliant with the district’s obligations under FERPA.”

Ultimately it was almost a month before we would receive any meaningful update from the school board, and that update occurred at a public Board meeting. Limited immediate steps were announced, including terminating the relationship with Allen and putting the DEI initiative “on hold.” The school board also voted to initiate an investigation, the scope and results of which are discussed in Section 7.9 of this report.

While no concrete, document-based evidence of remediation has ever been made public (*e.g.*, new board policies, evidence of training on how to handling of student data, etc.), SLSD did put out an e-mail notifying the public of the mishandling of student data and that certain steps had been taken. Even here, though, multiple incorrect or misleading statements were made. The notice read as follows:



Dr. Larry Mussoline
Interim Superintendent
5775 Main Street
Center Valley, PA 18034
Phone: 610-282-3121
Fax: 610-282-2462
www.slstd.org

September 15, 2021

Re: Notice of Inadvertent Disclosure of Student Information

Dear Parents and Guardians;

The School District tries hard to do what is necessary to preserve the confidentiality and privacy of student records in accordance with applicable law. Unfortunately, we wish to advise you of a mistaken disclosure of some data points of student information that should not have been disclosed. Specifically, a student demographic report on an Excel spreadsheet was provided to Dr. Joseph Allen in connection with work that Dr. Allen was retained to perform. Although the School Board approved the work, the School Board did not approve the improper disclosure. The report included student ID number, student name, student gender, student birth date, student ethnicity, grade level and school assignment. All information is "directory" information under the law, except ethnicity. Directory information may generally be disclosed, but because ethnicity is not part of directory information, the disclosure was in violation of applicable law and School Board policy.

Because of our concerns about this matter, we retained legal counsel to investigate this matter, to advise the School Board, to recommend appropriate curative action. The School District has taken the following actions. First, access to the file by Dr. Allen has been terminated. Second, the School District requested and received an affidavit from Dr. Allen that he no longer has access to the data, that he did not make or keep copies of the information, and that he has not disclosed the information to anyone else. Third, the School District has provided training regarding FERPA to ensure that this kind of error does not occur in the future.

We regret that this occurred to your son/daughter's record and we apologize for any inconvenience this may cause to you. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at FERPA@SLSD.org.

Sincerely,

Larry Mussoline, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent

First, the disclosure of protected student information was not "*inadvertent*," **it was intentional and at the specific direction of former superintendent Evison**. Never once in any communication between Evison, Allen, and Ken Jordan did any of them raise any concerns about ensuring that appropriate protections were in place (*e.g.*, a binding contract with confidentiality provisions and binding data control provisions). A more fitting characterization of what happened would be somewhere between "intentional" and "reckless disregard."

Second, the notice from SLSD above misleadingly suggests that it was a single excel file that was disclosed when Dr. Mussoline stated "*a student demographic report on an Excel spreadsheet*" that was disclosed. In fact, at least eleven different excel files were provided to Allen, with at least **nine** of them almost certainly containing student data protected under

FERPA. Redacted versions of the following files were provided to us by SLSD in response to request for records under the PA Right to Know law:

Discipline Data

2014-15 SY DD.xlsx

2015-16 SY DD.xlsx

2016-17 SY DD.xlsx

2017-18 SY DD.xlsx

2018-19 SY DD.xlsx

2019-20 SY DD.xlsx

Academic Data

PPSA Data.xlsx

Student Demographics Data.xlsx

[unknown file name, file containing the equivalent of at least 12 printed pages of “student count” data]

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the statement that “Director information may generally be disclosed, but because ethnicity is not part of directly information, the disclosure was in violation of applicable law and school Board policy” is much too narrow and also misleading. As mentioned above, the absence of a contract a binding contract with confidentiality provisions and binding data control provisions is violative of policies and applicable law.

Interim Superintendent Mussoline sought to recast what happened as “inadvertent” and ultimately nothing to worry about. Our view is that disclosure reflects an appalling level of administration incompetence and a lack of effective leadership in the district at the time. We acknowledge, and are thankful, that the individuals at the center of this misconduct are no longer employed by the district.

6.8 The Training Materials that “Didn’t Exist” and the Training that “Never Happened”

The Training Outline Approved by the School Board

In Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of this Report, we explained how and when the Allen Proposal was approved by the SLSD school board as well as what it contained. Here we focus on a crucial like told that night and the subsequent lies that were piled on.

The Allen Proposal as approved on June 22, 2020 by the school board meeting included a description of the “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training Program” that would be held by Allen as professional development for SLSD employees. The relevant portion of the Allen Proposal included an outline of the modules that would be included in the training. A single board member, Mr. Dimmig, requested additional information about the “modules.” Mr. Dimmig’s request was recorded in the minutes from that meeting (available on SLSD website, emphasis added):

E. Independent Contractor Agreement

Motion to approve the Independent Contractor Agreement with Dr. Joseph Allen to provide diversity, inclusion and equity needs assessment, action planning and professional development. Funds from Federal Programs, Title II will cover these expenses.

Motion by Kathleen Parsons, second by Jennifer Smith.

Dr. Allen described his plan to include 40 individuals in the training as a starting point which begins with a needs assessment to assist in targeting the correct components of the training. Dr. Allen's 3-year action plan allows it to be part of the curriculum and staff becomes the informed liaisons to the community and district as awareness is built and then developed. Mr. Dimmig questioned the modules of this training that are being approved by the Board this evening. Information on modules for equity work will be shared with the Board regarding which modules will be implemented.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Anita Desai, Kyle Gangewere, Emily Gehman, William Lycett, Mary Ann Nord, Kathleen Parsons, Priya Sareen, Jennifer Smith

Nay: Jeffrey Dimmig

The minutes reflect not just Mr. Dimmig's request for further information, but also his vote against approving the Allen Proposal, which obviously reflects his concern about the content of the proposal. However, the minutes also include a statement that was simply false. The minutes state that:

"Information on modules for equity work will be shared with the board regarding which modules will be implemented."

As shown below, the Allen Proposal as approved by the school board expressly stated that the training "***will be comprised of 5 modules***" (*i.e.*, not there "may be" five modules, but ***will be*** five modules; words matter and have meaning...) and went on to outline exactly what those modules were, each with a main topic and multiple subtopics (Allen Proposal, bottom of p. 2 and top of p. 3). The Allen Proposal also includes a statement that the "*modules are completely customizable and can include a wide range of topics not listed here*" (*id.*) So, the modules ***could be expanded***, but the core content was already listed and approved by the board (*i.e.*, the board already approved the content of the five modules listed in the proposal). If it were the case that which modules would be selected based upon a subsequent assessment or even a subsequent discussion process before finalizing, why didn't it say that, anywhere, at all? Obviously because that simply wasn't the case. Below is the entirety of the relevant language relating to the content of the training modules. As you will see, ***nowhere in the Allen Proposal does it say that the content of the professional development / training modules are contingent upon or will be otherwise drive by the results of the "assessment."***

Training Outline

The proposed Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Training Program **will be comprised of 5 modules**. Modules can be delivered asynchronously (as an online course via Canvas or any other online student management program), synchronously (live, on-line sessions), face-to-face (in-person sessions), or as a hybrid model. Modules may require participants to read various text (academic articles, national data reports, selected readings from books), view publicly accessible documentaries or films, and complete assignments to demonstrate mastery of the

content. Below is a brief outline of the topics covered in each module. Please note that, while these are the proposed topics, modules are completely customizable and can include a wide range of topics not listed here.

Module 1 - What is Race?

- Race as a social construct
- Systematic racism
- Socialization and implicit bias
- Racial identity development (Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1979; Helms, 1990)

Module 2 - Data Dive

- An examination of national and local data related to academic outcomes, discipline rates, drop-out rates, and educational opportunity
- An examination of the gaps and disparities in discipline and academic outcomes for students of color and other marginalized identities
- An examination of how inequitable education policies and practices contribute to gaps and disparities in discipline and academic data

Module 3 - The Unique Needs of Marginalized Groups Pt. 1

- An examination of the historical oppression of the following racial/ethnic groups within the education system:
 - Native Americans
 - Latin(x) Americans
 - Asian Americans

Module 4 - The Unique Needs of Marginalized Groups Pt. 2

- An examination of the historical oppression of the following racial/ethnic groups within the education system:
 - African Americans
 - Caucasian Americans

Module 5 - Culturally Relevant/Sustaining Pedagogy

- An examination of two major theories regarding cultural relevance in education
 - Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995)
 - Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (Paris, 2012)
- An examination of examples of culturally relevant/sustaining pedagogical practices across grade levels and content areas
- An examination of how to engage students in conversations regarding racial/cultural equity
- Training summary/wrap-up and next steps

One board member was so bold to claim at the June that, in fact, the board had not even approved the modules that were clearly approved by the school board when it approved the Allen Proposal at the June 14, 2021 board meeting (<<https://youtu.be/3nl6VQlqFmE>>, at 10m 19s, last visited August 1, 2023, emphasis added):

“The professional development plan that we approved is his general framework. *We have not approved any professional development plan. The modules that are listed are his framework, they are not approved for use in Southern Lehigh.*”

That was a lie, obviously. In fact, Evison knew exactly what she wanted included in the proposal and specifically guided Allen’s preparation of the document in a series of emails

and conversations. This wasn't a sample outline to be refined later, it was exactly what Evison wanted, asked for, and received from Allen.

Remember, Evison believed that “a significant percentage of our student body...are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors” (email from Evison to Joseph Allen, June 19, 2020, emphasis added):

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 12:57 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

This looks really good. The only other area I feel we're really lacking is the aspect of providing education to our students in these areas. A piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year. My concern is that we have a significant percentage of our student body that do not understand race, justice and equity and are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors. I know that's a lot to tackle, and that our staff and admin need to come first, so maybe just a reference to how this work with staff will then lead to not only culturally affirming practices in pedagogy but also in direct teaching of these issues to students? It's just my thought and I'm certainly open to feedback, but just wondering how we capture the portion of helping our students address their own bias and racism.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

It was this belief, as expressed by Evison to Allen in writing in a number of emails and in a number of ways (see Section 6.1) that in fact drove the inclusion and content of the professional development / training portion of the proposal. Remember from Section 6.1 that it was Evison that asked Allen to include the professional development / training in the proposal in the first place (see also Attachment 9 to this Report for the full original emails). In that same email, quoted again below with a different portion emphasized, Evison expresses a specific concern, to which Allen later provides a specific response:

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 12:57 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sisd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

This looks really good. The only other area I feel we're really lacking is the aspect of providing education to our students in these areas. A piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year. My concern is that we have a significant percentage of our student body that do not understand race, justice and equity and are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors. I know that's a lot to tackle, and that our staff and admin need to come first, so maybe just a reference to how this work with staff will then lead to not only culturally affirming practices in pedagogy but also in direct teaching of these issues to students? It's just my thought and I'm certainly open to feedback, but just wondering how we capture the portion of helping our students address their own bias and racism.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
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Evison expresses specific concern that “*providing education to our students in these areas*” (i.e., DEI) is not sufficiently addresses. Allen responds by confirm to Evison that he has addressed student-directed efforts in two places: (i) Module 5 of the professional development training outline and (ii) the description of the “action plan” where he addresses DEI initiatives “*for students across all grade levels*” (emphasis added):

From: Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sisd.org>
Sent: Sunday, June 21, 2020 2:55 PM
To: Joseph Allen
Subject: Re: Joseph Allen - Proposal for Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Services for Southern Lehigh School District

Looks great! Thank you

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 7:24 PM Joseph Allen <allen.joe05@gmail.com> wrote:
Greetings,

Here is the latest version. I've actually incorporated the student component in two places: a) Module 5 of the PD outline (where we can help teachers learn to engage students in D&I related conversations), and b) in the action plan (where I discussed including recommendations for the development of D&I initiatives for students across all grade levels). Let me know what you think.

In that same email (immediately above) Evison confirms that the revised draft of the Allen Proposal “*Looks Great!*”

Despite having specifically asked for student-directed content, Evison would later go on to lie to board members on this front, including in writing to Dr. Priya Sareen in an email dated April 19, 2021. Dr. Sareen inquires about the DEI proposal (i.e., the Allen Proposal) previously approved by the school board because local social media is “*abuzz w [with] critical race theory.*” In response, Evison not only confirms in writing to Dr. Sareen that the Allen Proposal includes critical race theory, but denies that the professional development training has anything to do with students (emphasis added):

From: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> [evisonk@sbsd.org]
Sent: 4/19/2021 7:46:54 PM
To: Priya Sareen [sareenp@sbsd.org]
Subject: Re: Diversity curriculum

Hi Priya,

I had heard that - I have no idea why. The board approved a needs assessment and some professional development. **The references for the PD include a range of things including critical race theory, but this has nothing to do with students, nor are we proposing any curriculum at this point.** It's one of many lenses that **were considered** when designing teacher PD. **We're only focused on staff and are certainly not teaching critical race theory to students.** Any curriculum would undergo a full internal review and then be approved by the board, neither of which has happened, nor are we ready for that yet. **If the public read the proposal, they'd see that there is no student curriculum at all.**

Thanks

Kathy

On Mon, Apr 19, 2021 at 7:39 PM Priya Sareen <sareenp@sbsd.org> wrote:

Hi there,
Hope all is well. **I have a question regarding what was approved by the board with the diversity and inclusion planning. For some reason, social media is abuzz w critical race theory.**
Thanks!
Priya
Sent from my iPhone

—
KATHLEEN T. EVISON
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Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
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✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

As this report has made clear, Evison knew exactly what critical race theory is, having based on PhD “Capstone Project” on it, and therefore knew well that Allen Proposal was based on it as well. Evison likewise knew, in fact asked for, student-directed content in the Allen Proposal including, at a minimum, in Module 5, as confirmed by the emails on the previous pages.

The ease with which Evison lied to Dr. Sareen and to the public is shocking, and her willingness to do so repugnant.

The Training Materials that “Didn’t Exist”

Evison told yet another lie when she stated that the modules were not available for review as they wouldn’t be prepared until after the assessment. The professional development / training and the assessment work were not linked in the Allen Proposal. So this too was a bold faced lie. In fact, the administration was in possession of sample “modules” (slide decks / PowerPoint slides in PDF format) provided by Allen to Evison that generally match to the outline in the Allen Proposal. How do we know that? Because the district provided those slides to us in response to our Right to Know request. Had the administration wished to be transparent and forthright with the school board and the public, it could at any time have provided these sample slides for review.

Below are a number of examples of Allen’s sample slides and how they match up to the outline of the modules included in the Allen Proposal approved by our school board. The text surrounded by the red box are screen captures directly from the Allen Proposal. As you will see, they are exact matches in many cases. While the module numbers sometimes don’t line up, the content most certainly does. Note also that the information presented in Allen’s slides is not unique or tailored to any particular school district, but is general in nature about these subject areas, so the notion that the core content of the modules would be customized for SLSD strains credibility. Full copies of the sample slides provided by Allen to SLSD are included in Attachment 12 to this Report.

The first example shows Allen’s slides described in “Module 1” (“What is Race”). The slides assert, as one would expect from the module outline in the Allen Proposal, that “race is a social construct” and that “racism” is only exists when “one group having power” is able to “carry out systemic discrimination through major institutions of society” for the purposes of perpetuating “racial group inequity.” The slides also assert that having “White Racial Identity” means “assuming the existence of white superiority.”

The second example shows Allen’s slides described in “Module 5” (“Culturally Relevant/Responsive Pedagogy”). Among other things, the slides state expressly that Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy are directly based on Critical Race Theory, that one of the purposes is to create “Critical Consciousness,” *i.e.*, a state of seeing society in terms of systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization coupled with a dedication to become an activist against these perceived systems (based on Marxist conflict theory).

The third example shows Allen’s slides described in “Modules 3” (“The Unique Needs of Marginalized Groups Pt. 1”) and “Module 4” (“The Unique Needs of Marginalized Groups Pt. 2”). Among other things, the slides state that “*the system is designed to favor the dominant culture*” (this appears on the “Caucasian” slide) and that Asian Americans “suffer from the ‘*model minority*’ stereotype.” (emphasis added). In Allen’s world, “Asian Americans” is an aggregate term that lumps Americans whose ancestors come from the Indian Subcontinent, China, Japan, the Koreas, Southeast Asia, etc., into a single group as though they are all exactly alike (as though assuming people from disparate cultures, ethnic subpopulations, geographic region, genetic profiles, historical experiences, etc., are all just the same isn’t itself racist...).

[Examples Immediately Follow]

Example 1

Race v. Ethnicity v. Culture

Terminology

- Race is a social construct
 - Historically, race wasn't even really a part of social conversation before 1492
- Race pertains to an individual's physical traits (or geographic location), ethnicity pertains to shared customs
 - Neither does a good job of defining the complex socio-emotional, economic, and traditional factors that influence a person's identity
- Perhaps there is a more all-inclusive term: *culture*
- Of the three terms (race, ethnicity, and culture), which do you think is more frequently utilized to *define* an individual?

- Race - a sociological construction to classify people
- Racism - involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the major institutions of society
 - social and institutional power + racial prejudice = racism
 - advantage and disadvantage based on race
- Categories and Levels of Racism:
 - Systemic
 1. Institutional: social institutions work to perpetuate racial group inequity (e.g. schools, gov't, banks)
 2. Structural: public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work to perpetuate racial group inequity
 - Personal
 1. Interpersonal: occurs between individuals
 2. Internalized: racist attitudes towards members of their own ethnic group, including themselves

Module 1 - What is Race?

- Race as a social construct
- Systematic racism
- Socialization and implicit bias
- Racial identity development (Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1979; Helms, 1990)

(Allen Proposal, p.3)

Self Awareness and Bobbi Harro's Cycle of Socialization



Minority Identity Development

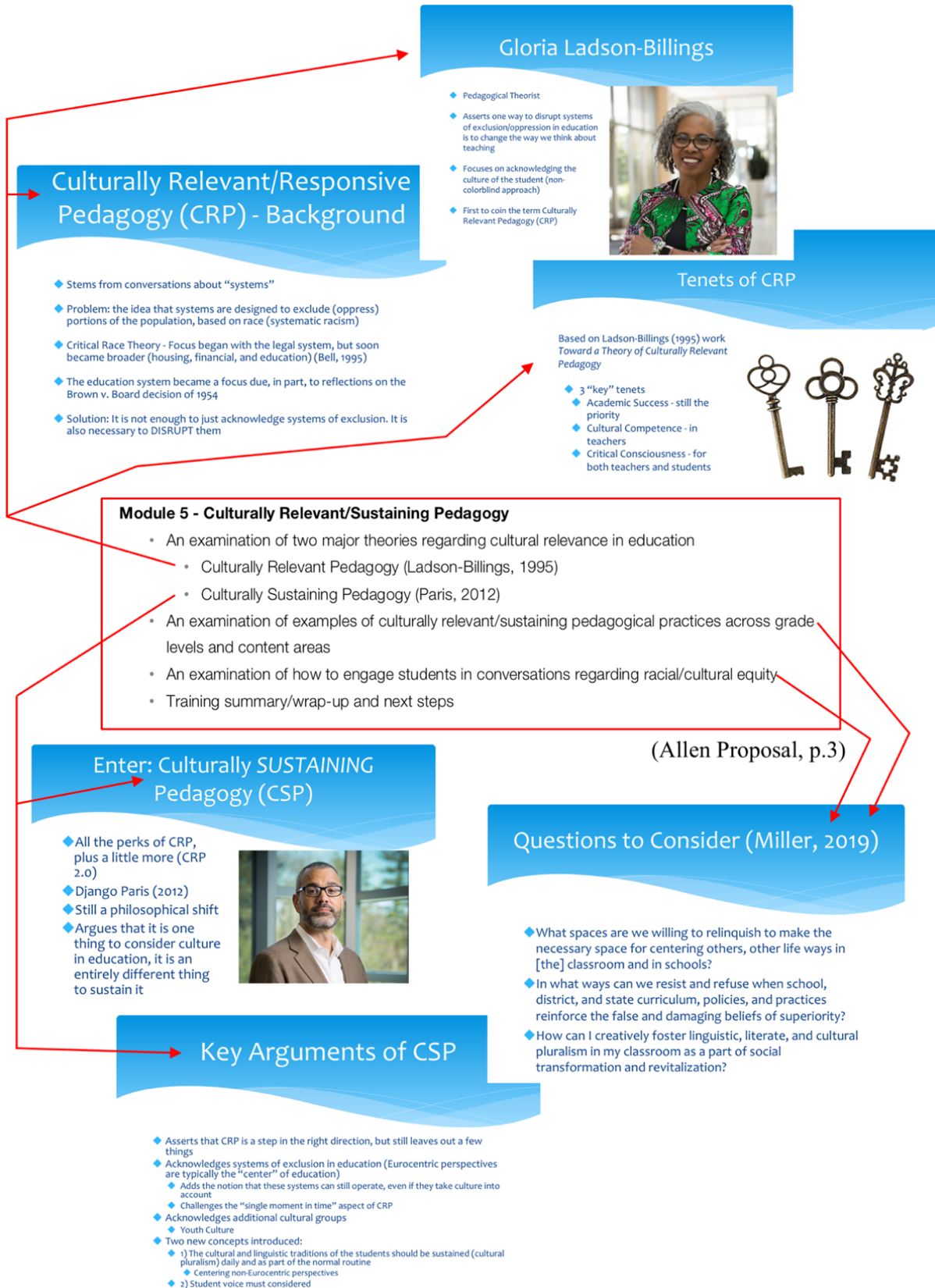
Model, Atkinson, Morten & Sue (1989, 1993)

- MID model anchored in belief that all minority groups experience the common force of oppression, and as a result, all will generate attitudes and behaviors consistent with a natural internal struggle to develop a strong sense of self- and group-identity in spite of oppressive conditions.
- Presented as stage model, but the model is best conceptualized by a continuous process.

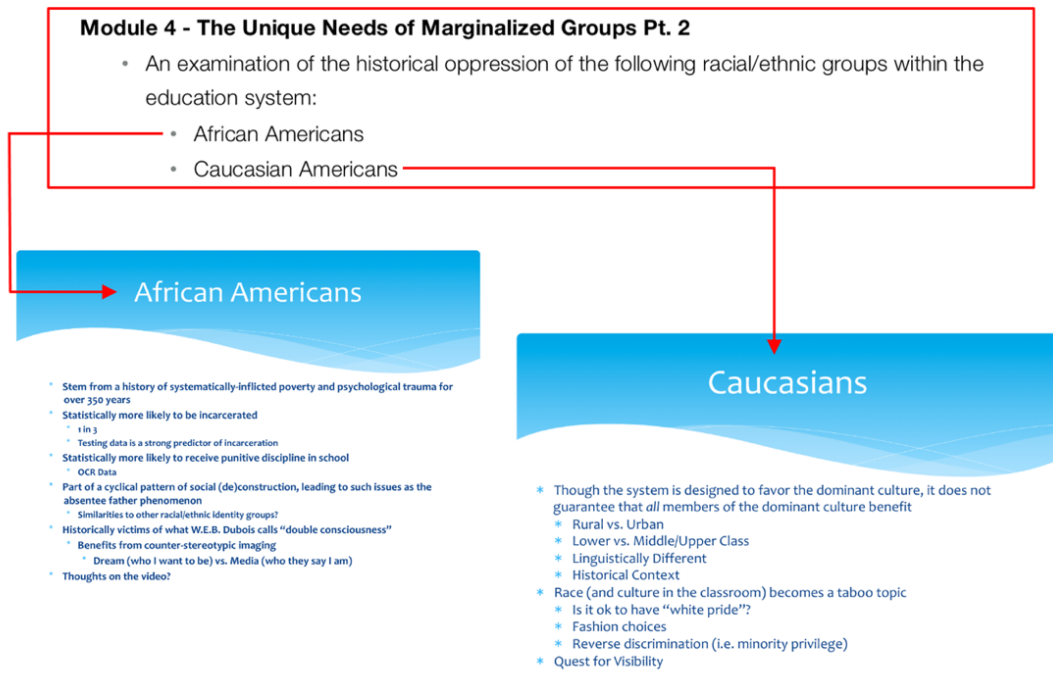
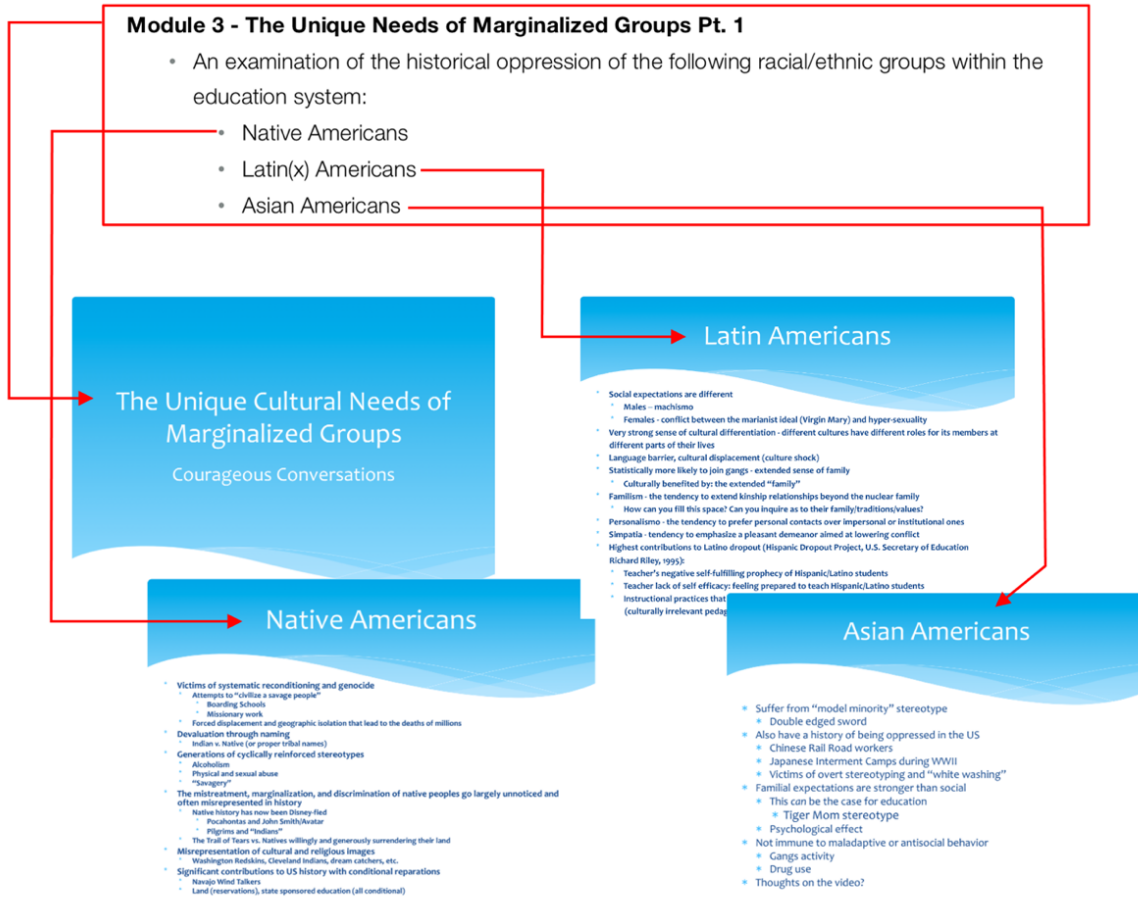
Janet Helms' White Racial Identity Model (1990, 1995)

- Assumes existence of white superiority and individual, cultural, and institutional racism.
- Sees white racial identity as an oppositional identity
- Assumes individuals start with a racist identity and must first move away from such an identity before they can develop a non-racist identity
- Assumes individuals can be in more than one "stage" at a time (i.e., have multiple statuses)
- Posits that different statuses are associated with different ways of processing racial data

Example 2



Example 3



Based on the foregoing, it is obvious and indisputable that our administration had in its possession sample slides from Allen that directly match to the module outlines in the Allen Proposal, and that Evison lied when she said nothing was available for review. So why didn't Evison provide these sample slides to the school board as requested by Mr. Dimmig or to the public as requested by various community members? The evidence certainly suggests that Evison chose to hide these slides from the Board and the public for the simple reason that doing so would have provided definitive proof that the training Allen was to provide to SLSD employees was in fact directly based on and driven by Critical Race Theory, the exact controversial and divisive framework about which many members in the public were concerned.

The Training that “Never Happened”

Among the many lies Evison told was that no professional development / training of SLSD employees had occurred under or in connection with the Allen Proposal. In fact, training of an unknown number of SLSD employees using materials prepared by Allen did occur.

On July 24, 2020, less than a month after our school board approved the Allen Proposal, Allen wrote to Evison to offer access to a virtual conference on “equity in education” that he helped create and which he asserted was a “great example of what PD [professional development training] could look like in the era of COVID-19 and virtual learning”:

On Fri, Jul 24, 2020 at 4:48 PM Joseph Allen <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Greetings,

Thank you so much for connecting me with Ken Jordan. I have sent him an email letting him know what data would be beneficial for the needs assessment. In the interim, I thought you might appreciate this. This summer, **I helped to create a virtual conference on equity in education** in my region of NC. This project was the product of a collaboration between my school district (Mooresville Graded School District), two others in NC (Rowan-Salisbury Schools System and Kannapolis City Schools), and the Cato College of Education at UNC - Charlotte. This is a strong example of the type of community partnership I usually promote, and is **a great example of what PD could look like in the era of COVID-19 and virtual learning**. Due to the pandemic, we were required to go virtual, so all of our workshops are pre-recorded. The positive side to this is that all attendees have 24/7 access to all workshops at once, and can view them at anytime and in any order. It's a lot like Netflix: we give you the whole season, and you can either binge it all in one sitting, or watch it in chunks:) There are approximately 17 hours worth of workshops provided through this project. The summit was only supposed to run from July 20th-24th, but the demand has been so high, and the feedback so overwhelmingly positive, that we have extended it through July 31st. **I thought of you and wanted to share it so you could take advantage of the extended time. All you have to do is follow the link below (the summit is housed on Sched), create a free Sched account, and then watch the workshops.** Hope you enjoy!

Link to Summit
<https://rmkequityineducation2020.sched.com/>

--
Dr. Joseph Allen

The “virtual conference on equity in education” Allen referred to is the “2020 RMK Equity in Education Summit.” The schedule for the summit (<<https://rmkequityineducation2020.sched.com/>>, last visited August 1, 2023) and Allen’s biography page posted in connection with the summit (<<https://rmkequityineducation2020.sched.com/jallen74>>, last visited August 1, 2023) are below:

2020 RMK Equity in Education Summit

Schedule ▾ Speakers Attendees

Sign up or log in to bookmark your favorites and sync them to your phone or calendar.

Monday, July 20

11:00am EDT

- Virtual Opening Session**
Dr. Damon Chip Buckwell • Dr. Teresa Petty • Lynn Moody • Dr. Stephen Mauney

12:00pm EDT

- Diverse Texts in the Classroom**
Toni Beam • Vanessa Avila
- Empowering Teachers to Stay in School: Re-engaging Stakeholders to Bridge Opportunity Gaps**
Kathryn Holthouser • Adriano L. Medina
- One School's Journey Toward More Equitable Practices**
Melissa Powers • Stacey White
- Creating Culturally Responsive Literacy in the Classroom**
Felicie Tappier • Kaylor Kaemba • Lindsey Bull • Annise Stagle
- Culturally Relevant Teaching: Putting RIGOR at the Center**
Okema Simpson
- Discussing Racist History Through Literature**
Alicia Bitt • Leslie Fitzpatrick • Kelly Beckham
- Empowering Students to Voice Views About Diversity & Inclusion**
Emily Buzio • Adria Abdulrah • Kraft Bradley • Melissa Ligh
- Equitable School Discipline in the Wake of COVID19**
John A. Williams III, Ph.D.
- From Push to Pull: Teachers Increased Efficacy through Sustained Anti-Racism Professional Development**
Dr. Tehia Starker-Glass • Kathryn Holthouser
- Looking Inside Ourselves to Build Equitable and Culturally Responsive Practices**
Sara Noveck
- Nurturing Potential: The Impact Developing Talent Rather than Focusing on Deficit**
Sara Noveck
- Teacher Leadership: Self Awareness in the Anti Biased Classroom**
Pamela DeGrafonzo
- Voices**
Melissa Ligh
- "Going Global 101"**
Vanessa Avila • Toni Beam
- Equity Beyond the Classroom - Educating the family as a whole.**
Dr. Mendi Campbell • Chris Goodnight
- Check-in/Check-out: Reaching Vulnerable Students Through Relationships**
Erin Messmer • Philip Adams
- Disproportionality in School Discipline**
Matt Krome • Christina Rary

Timezone: America/New York

Filter By Date: Jul 20 -31, 2020

Filter By Venue: North Carolina, USA

Filter By Type:

- Administration/Leadership/Policy
- Conflict Resolution
- Culturally Responsive/Sustaining Pedagogy
- Early Education
- Family/Community Engagement
- Mental Health
- Opening Keynote
- Restorative Practices
- Student Services (Social-Emotional Learning)
- Popular

Recently Active Attendees

2020 RMK Equity in Education Summit

Schedule ▾ Speakers Attendees

Back

Joseph
Mooreville Graded School District
Diversity and Inclusion Specialist
Mooreville, NC
jmoore@slsld.com

As you can see, the topics of the various sessions are almost entirely CRT-based. Evison responded a few hours later:

From: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@slsd.org]
on behalf of Kathleen Evison <evisonk@slsd.org> [evisonk@slsd.org]
Sent: 7/24/2020 8:15:59 PM
To: Joseph Allen [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Thought you might appreciate this: RMK Equity in Education Summit

This is fantastic! Thank you!

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
 5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
 ☎ 610.282.3121
 ✉ evisonk@slsd.org

Evison then proceeded to distribute the link to the training, at a minimum based on the records the district provided to us, to principals throughout our district, who in turn distributed it to their entire staffs. Here is the exchange between Evison and an elementary school principal, with

Evison noting that she has already “*had a couple a people express interest in this*” and that she was sharing it “*in the event you and any of your staff are able to use any of this,*” making clear that she intended to the link to be shared and used by SLSD employees throughout the district (emphasis added):

From: Samuel Hafner [hafners@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Samuel Hafner <hafners@sbsd.org> [hafners@sbsd.org]
Sent: 7/26/2020 11:45:30 AM
To: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@sbsd.org]
Subject: Re: Equity Training

Excellent! Thank you Kathy!

sam

On Sat, Jul 25, 2020 at 4:42 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

I've had a couple of people express interest in this, so here's the link:

Link to Summit
<https://rmkequityineducation2020.sched.com/>

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

On Fri, Jul 24, 2020 at 8:17 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good evening!

I know the timing is not good, but Joe Allen just sent me this resource. He had partnered to create an **Equity conference** that had to then be delivered remotely. **He has shared free access with us - it's only open till July 31st and I know the timing isn't good, but I did want to share in the event you or any of your staff are able to use any of this.**

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

Here is our former middle school principal in turn sharing the training link with all teachers and staff at our middle school, noting to all that Allen “**has the endorsement of the SLSD**” (emphasis added):

From: Edward Donahue [donahuee@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Edward Donahue <donahuee@sbsd.org> [donahuee@sbsd.org]
Sent: 7/25/2020 6:40:16 PM
To: msteachers@sbsd.org; MSStaff@sbsd.org
Subject: Equity conference

Ladies and gentlemen: Joe Allen, will be offering an equity training between today and July 31. He has the endorsement of the SLSD. If you are interested the link is : <https://rmkequityeducation2020.sched.com>

And here is the former principal of our high school acknowledging receipt:

From: Beth Guarriello [guarriello@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Beth Guarriello <guarriello@sbsd.org> [guarriello@sbsd.org]
Sent: 7/25/2020 6:16:42 PM
To: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@sbsd.org]
Subject: Re: Equity Training

Thank you for this. The presentation topics look very helpful. Thanks for sharing. -Beth

Beth Guarriello
Principal
Southern Lehigh High School
guarriello@sbsd.org
(610) 282-1421

On Sat, Jul 25, 2020 at 4:42 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

I've had a couple of people express interest in this, so here's the link:

Link to Summit
<https://rmkequityineducation2020.sched.com/>
KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

While we obviously do not have access to attendance records from the “equity summit,” the foregoing emails strongly suggest that at least some SLSD employees did receive training through the link recommended by Evison to SLSD employees in her capacity as Superintendent of the district. When Evison told the public that no training occurred in connection with the Allen Proposal, she was lying to your face.

6.9 The Levin Report

Board Appoints Outside Counsel to Conduct Investigation

Based on the information we provided to the school board on apparent conflicts of interest in the use of Allen as a “DEI consultant,” and the associated mishandling of sensitive student data, the board approved several actions at the August 9, 2021 meeting of the school board. The board approved the following actions:

- (i) hiring The Levin Legal Group, P.C. as outside counsel to conduct an investigation, provide a report on that investigation, make recommendations to the board to ensure compliance with applicable law, take various actions to remedy problems found (*e.g.*, retrieving improperly disclosed student data from Allen), and provide training to district personnel (discussed further below);
- (ii) determined to request no further work from DEI consultant Allen / to discontinue services from Allen; and
- (iii) terminate the DI&E [DEI] initiative “until further recommendations are made by the next Superintendent and that appropriate public input be obtained by the next Superintendent before any recommendations are made regarding DI&E [DEI]”

(*SLS D School Board Meeting Minutes*, August 9, 2021, Sections 4(a), 4(b)).

At that meeting, the board also adopted a set of resolutions setting out the specific allegations we made against Evison and Allen, as well addition items to be investigated and other actions requested by the board of the Levin Legal Group. These additional resolutions are included in this report as Attachment 13. The resolutions are just over six pages in length, but fundamentally cover the following:

- (i) misconduct/conflicts of interest/violations of law and policy by Evison and Allen (Part 2 of the resolutions);
- (ii) mishandling of student records (Part 3 of the resolutions); and
- (iii) failures of the district under PA’s Right to Know law (Part 4 of the resolutions);

The resolutions call for recommendations (*e.g.*, enhancements to policies, regulations, and practices) to be made by the Levin Law Group regarding each of those areas, curative/corrective actions to be taken in each of those areas, and training of employees as necessary (Part 5 of the resolutions).

We spoke with Attorney Levin a number of times during his work and exchanged with him a number of emails and documents to assist him in his investigation. He was polite, professional, and reasonable throughout.

School Board Hides Completed Report for Five Months

The report that resulted from the Levin Law Group’s work was initiated around the time the resolutions were adopted (early August 2021) and was complete by early October of 2021, just two months after the board authorized the investigation (this was told directly to us by Attorney Levin). The Levin Law Group was tasked with investigating serious misconduct by public officials, corruption in the award of a district contract, violations of state and federal law, the mishandling of sensitive student data, and violations of school board policies, among other things; these are all matters of serious public concern. Yet, despite the report having been completed in early October of 2021, the public would not get any substantive update about the

findings of the report until March 3, 2022! This was obviously not what one would hope for in terms of urgency given the subject matter and seriousness of the allegations.

The public was left in the dark on the status and findings of the investigation for approximately five months after the report was complete and provided the public with no meaningful update for approximately eight months after the we informed the board of the issues of concern, all of which were substantiated in the investigation.

On January 24, 2022, the board adopted a set of resolutions that approved a process that would lead to the release of a portion of the report (attached to this Report as Attachment 14). The process included allowing people named in the report (e.g., Evison and Allen, in particular) to review those portions of the report that discuss their actions, for those people to offer evidence and rebuttal statements, and for that additional evidence and/or rebuttals statements to be attached to the report. With that process complete, we had hoped that the report would be released in full. That was not to be.

An important question, that remains unanswered to this day, is why wasn't the "rebuttal process" commenced in early October when Attorney Levin and his firm completed the report? **The only reasonable answer from our perspective is that the school board in place at the time would have been embarrassed by the report's findings at the district headed into school board elections in November of 2021.** If that was their motivation for sitting on the report for so long, their concerns were justified, because the portion of report that was ultimately released does in fact show that Evison was conducting herself in an unethical and unprofessional manner on a number of fronts, and the board at the time failed to notice it, let alone assert any control to protect the school district and its taxpayers.

District Hides the Bulk of the Report, Releases Only a Portion

On March 3, 2022, the "Investigatory Report" to the district's website. A PDF of the report was downloadable by clicking on a link. We refer to what was released as the "Levin Report." **To be clear, the full report created by the Levin Legal Group was not released, only a portion of it was. The full report remains unreleased to this day.**

The Levin Report (*i.e.*, the portion released to the public) addresses only the "conflict of interest issue" that we raised. Even in this area, the Levin Report includes only the most cursory of legal analysis and makes no recommendations. I suspect there was a lot more in the full document. Also, it's clear what was released was cobbled together out a bigger report. There are missing section titles, make numbers are complete absent, exhibits don't have headers; this is not the sort of work a firm like the Levin Law Group would produce as a general matter, so we are obviously looking at a "sub-report."

The other areas (mishandling of student data, problems with the district's handling of Right to Know requests, remedial actions, training, etc.) are entirely unaddressed in what was released, literally not a word. When we raised this issue with our current superintendent, we were told that he does not expect that anything else will be released from the Levin Report. Rather than achieving transparency on important issues of misconduct by previous administration officials,

our school board has simply raised more questions, not least of which is what's being kept from public view and why.

We have continued to advocate to the school board that in the interests of transparency and rebuilding public trust, the entire report must be released (except for specific, individual pieces of information that are required by law to be withheld). Remember, the basis for the investigation was that we found multiple categories of misconduct that had been hidden from both the previous school board and the public. "Just trust us, we got this" will never be an acceptable answer. We maintain that the district should have waived attorney-client privilege on the remainder of the report and released the entire report to the public. The irony of not releasing the actual report to the fullest extent permitted by law from an investigation report that arose out of a lack of transparency in the first place is obvious and painful.

Levin's Findings, Evison's Corruption Confirmed

So, what did the Levin Report say in the limited pages that were released (see [Attachment 15](#) for the Levin Report as released to the public)? As a general observation, our allegations based on district records about Evison's misconduct were correct. Below are some key observations from the Levin Report (references are to the applicable page of the PDF of the Levin Report released by the district):

- *"Instead of simply asking Allen if he would assist her with her Capstone Project, she asked for assistance with her doctoral requirements and she offered to 'partner' with him and to 'contribute to [his] work.' She is arguably proposing a quid pro quo relationship from the start"* (p.3).
- *"These are great! Thank you! As you think about a framework, could you also add a potential board training to your thoughts - they are all keen to tackle issues, but are naive about the issues and what to do versus not do"* (quoting e-mail from Evison to Allen, p.5). This is significant because Evison repeatedly told the board and the public that nothing had been decided with respect to training, and that topic would be driven by the results of the "equity" survey process.
- Allen responded to Evison that *"There is evidence out there that suggests these types of programs are more sustainable when you take a top- down approach, and put your Board/Admin through them first"* (p.5), suggesting that this was always about transforming the district, not about addressing problems raised from the bottom.
- *"There is no evidence reviewed by Mr. Levin that Evison knew the details of Allen's professional background (or lack thereof) until June 18, 2020, when Allen sent a copy of this CV to Evison"* (p.8), suggesting that Allen was selected not because of any particular expertise, but because the relationship could benefit Evison.
- *"Although this motion documents that an 'Independent Contractor Agreement' was approved, there is no such document—only Allen's proposal"* (p.9). This confirms that the district never bothered to put in place a proper agreement with Allen, that would have

included basic provisions like confidentiality and restrictions on possession and use of student data.

- Regarding the “Letter of Commitment” Allen provided to Vanderbilt in support of Evison’s “Capstone” project, Attorney Levin contacted the superintendent of the Mooresville Graded School District (MGSD) (where Allen was employed at the time), Dr. Maunder. Dr. Maunder responded by email on August 27, 2021 that, despite the assertions of Allen in the “Letter of Commitment”:

“...(1) Mooresville was aware that Allen was contracting with the Southern Lehigh School District; (2) Mooresville did not believe that a conflict existed between Dr. Allen and Mooresville as a result of the contract; and (3) that the School Board at Mooresville would not have to approve the release of de-identified information by Allen to Evison.”

Counsel for MGSD in a separate communication confirmed that:

“MGSD did not consider itself working in collaboration with the Southern Lehigh District or its former Superintendent.”

- *“In addition, counsel for Mooresville advised that ‘MGSD did not receive anything from Evison regarding any of her research, the final Capstone Project or any other data from Southern Lehigh School District.’ In short, whatever Allen was doing to assist Evison with her Capstone Project, it did not inure to the benefit of Mooresville. **The representation by Allen on Mooresville letterhead that ‘Evison is working in collaboration with Mooresville Graded School District’ is troubling and not factual.** More accurately, an employee of Mooresville in his individual capacity was assisting Evison; Mooresville did nothing to put its imprimatur on the arrangement. Recognizing that he was assisting Evison in his individual capacity and not as an employee or representative of Mooresville, Allen was using his personal email address when he assisted Evison regarding her Capstone Project” (p.11, emphasis added).*
- *“It is Mr. Levin’s opinion that this \$4,000 was not an expenditure that could be charged to Title II” (p.12); it was so charged.*
- *“...it was discovered that Evison had a District credit card and that she had the School District pay for her cap and gown for her doctorate. The cost was \$869.60. The transaction date was March 25, 2021. Evison did not dispute that she had the District pay for it ... It is Mr. Levin’s opinion that this purchase was clearly wrong and improper and that Evison should be made to reimburse the District.” (p.13). I have no evidence to suggest the district sought reimbursement from Evison for this expenditure.*
- Referring to regulations under federal law regarding conflicts of interest in situations where federal funds (in this case Title II funds) are used: *“Evison, in in [sic] Mr. Levin’s opinion, violated the two elements that numbered in red font. First, she participated in the selection, award, and administration of the contract with Allen when she had a*

conflict. Second, she both solicited and accepted Allen's assistance with regard to her Capstone Project" (pp13-14).

- *"Rowe's [Evison's attorney] letter does not deny that Allen assisted her with her Capstone Project. Instead, she stated that Evison did not receive any tangible personal benefit from 'Allen's contract with the Southern Lehigh School District.' (Emphasis added) However, the federal regulations and Policy 827 do not require that the benefit be from 'the contract.' On the contrary, the policy and federal regulations require that the 'tangible personal benefit [be] from [the] firm considered for a contract.' **Simply stated, if Evison received any tangible personal benefit from Allen, the regulations and the Policy were violated. It is Mr. Levin's opinion that Allen's assistance with her Capstone Project is undeniably a 'tangible personal benefit.'**" (p.15, emphasis added to final sentence; earlier emphasis was in Levin Report).*

The Levin Report bizarrely cuts off at that point for the reasons discussed above, *i.e.*, that only a portion of the report was released to the public.

The irony of not releasing the actual report to the fullest extent permitted by law from an investigation report that arose out of a lack of transparency in the first place is obvious and ultimately self-defeating. The Levin Report was the result of an investigation into public corruption. The best remedy for public corruption is transparency. We got the opposite.

[End of Section]

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7.0 Divisive Ideologies From University Partners

SLSD administrators established deep and enduring ties with multiple outside institutions that resulted in a steady stream of CRT-driven information, trainings, and materials being fed into our district. The documents provided by the district in response to our RTK request evidence significant relationships from the Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence (GLVCEE), the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, Lehigh University that allowed for the flow of activist political approaches into our district. The Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit (CLIU), which serves as liaison between the Pennsylvania Department of Education and our school district, also provided a steady flow of such materials. The individuals at these institutions, based on the documents we reviewed, appear to be social justice activists with a particular aim, *i.e.*, to transform our district in the name of “equity” and “social justice.”

Please see our discussion of how the meanings of words have changed based on social justice imperatives in [Section 3.0](#) and the glossary in [Section 13.0](#) of this report for the definitions of the various social justice-related terms that appear in this section.

7.1 Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence (GLVCEE) / Lehigh University

The records the district provided show a deep entanglement with the GLVCEE. The GLVCEE is “*is an outgrowth of the Lehigh University School Study Council, which counts about 30 area school districts among its members.*” (<<https://www.mcall.com/2016/05/23/lehigh-valley-school-districts-join-forces-to-focus-on-student-equity/>>, last visited June 2, 2023). The consortium includes school districts covering Allentown, Bethlehem, Easton, Parkland, Salisbury, Souderton, Saucon, and Southern Lehigh; the Colonial Intermediate Unit and the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit are also represented in GLVCEE (*id.*). Attendance at consortium meetings “*consists of superintendents, central office administrators, building administrators, counselors, and teacher leaders*” and the board is “*made up of local superintendents and the program is supported through Lehigh University*” (email from Kathleen Evison dated April 29, 2020).

Through our district’s work with the GLVCEE, we know exactly what is intended. Former Superintendent Evison was a key player. A letter to all of the superintendents of the districts in the consortium, a final draft of which was included in an email thread dated July 7, 2020 provided by district, make clear where the consortium stands with respect to “equity,” “social justice,” “systemic racism,” and “anti-racism” and its activist role with respect to those issues. The letter, included in its entirety below, includes (emphasis added):

- Praising the superintendents for their “*commitment*” to “***social justice and anti-racism.***”
- “*...how to take stronger action to counter **systemic racism** in the districts we lead.*”
- Suggestion that our teaching of history is “*incomplete or inaccurate, biased*” because it “*portray[s] **whiteness as normative**...*”
- Intent to create “*a just and **anti-racist** society.*”

- Intent to “leverage the GLVCEE to coordinate a multidistrict working team...”
- Intent to “manage curricular change” in all of the covered school districts.”

It would be difficult to write a letter with more CRT-based social justice jargon if one tried. The letter is signed by the consortium players, including the superintendents of our district (SLSD), the Bethlehem Area School District, and the Parkland School District, as well as Dr. Brian Osborne, a professor in the education school at Lehigh University. Below is the final draft of the letter in its entirety (highlighting added):

Colleague,

Your district’s membership in the Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence (GLVCEE) reflects a **commitment in your leadership to social justice and anti-racism.**

As superintendents, we’ve been reflecting on how to **take stronger action to counter systemic racism in the districts we lead.** We have heard from many of our recent alumni and even current students asking us directly, “why didn’t I learn this in school?” when referring to our nation’s history. **Former and current students have raised with us the multiple ways that our curriculum is incomplete or inaccurate, biased to a point that often goes beyond obfuscation to portray whiteness as normative in our history.**

As a result, we realize that in addition to **dismantling the ways that systemic racism limits opportunities and reduces expectations in our district for our Black students and students of color, we need to rework the curriculum that too frequently perpetuates a perspective that accommodates and perpetuates white privilege.** It is our obligation as educational leaders to continuously reflect and do better, and thus **we plan to make necessary changes to the curricula that we utilize in our schools so that it is more accurate and complete.**

In the past, attempts to change curricula to accommodate multiple perspectives have sometimes resulted in an additive approach, as though adding a month for Black history or a unit on the civil rights movement suffices and the rest of the curriculum can be left unexamined. **What we seek now is something different: that our teaching of American history should be a more accurate and complete portrayal of historic events and figures so that our students have a fuller and better understanding of how we have gotten to this point, what makes our nation simultaneously exceptional and flawed, and how much further we need to go to create a just and anti-racist society.**

As the governance board of the GLVCEE, **we seek to leverage the GLVCEE to coordinate a multidistrict working team to inform member districts who wish to engage in this work.** Our initial thinking is that this multi-district working group would serve as a clearinghouse of ideas and a mechanism for sharing across districts. The “charge” to the group would not be to come up with a new curriculum, since that is the work of each district, but rather to work together to identify resources, share work product, and engage in strategic discussion about managing curricular change.

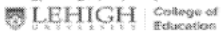
Together, we now invite your thinking and request your input as the superintendents of the districts that belong to the GLVCEE. It is our hope that we would be able to issue an invitation in the name of all the GLVCEE district superintendents, that the superintendents would champion this work in their respective districts and that each district would contribute key personnel to occasional meetings and ongoing collaboration.

Please let us know what you think in whatever way works for you - we welcome your emails or calls. In addition, we plan on having a meeting with the GLVCEE superintendents and Brian on August ___ to discuss this further before anything is formalized or made public.

Thank you,

Dr. Joe Roy, Superintendent, Bethlehem Area School District
 Dr. Richard Sniscak, Superintendent, Parkland School District
 Dr. Kathleen Evison, Superintendent, Southern Lehigh School District
 Dr. Brian G. Osborne, Professor of Practice, Lehigh College of Education

Brian G. Osborne, Ed.D.
 Professor of Practice | Educational Leadership
 610-578-6838 | he/him/his



In an email dated April 29, 2020 inviting sj Miller, Associate Professor of Teacher Education at Santa Fe Community College, to speak at an upcoming consortium event, Evison makes clear her intent (emphasis added):

*“In the past we have focused a great deal on race and poverty, and as a board member, **I'm driving hard this year to other areas of inequity and social justice, and immediately thought of you!**”*

With respect to content of the talk sj Miller was invited to give, Evison stated (*id.*, emphasis added):

*“We’ll take our cue from you in terms of specific content, but we’re looking at issues around **gender identity and beyond binary and what the means for district and school leaders creating equitable systems, environments, policies, and staff professional development.**”*

Wikipedia describes sj Miller as follows (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sj_Miller>, last visted June 2, 2023):

sj Miller (born March 20, 1970)^[1] is an American academic, public speaker, [social justice](#) activist,^[2] and Professor of Teacher Education at the Santa Fe Community College.^[3] Miller is [agender](#) and null-pronominal (does not use any [personal pronouns](#)).^{[4][5]}

That’s right good reader, the consortium invited someone to speak who is so woke, ~~he~~ the person invited doesn’t even have pronouns. For the keynote speech and related workshops, sj Miller negotiated a fee of \$5,000.

On Sun, Jun 7, 2020 at 6:04 PM Miller, sj <[REDACTED]> wrote:
Kathleen-

Great to hear from you. How are you and your lobed ones doing? Are you going back in the fall? We're all on-line.

Here are my thoughts: If we are talking one day, here is my fee:

1. Flight, hotel, travel, rental, per diem. [the usual suspects] Cost, TBA?
2. Keynote, workshop. \$2500

Now, if we do two days, it all depends on length of workshops, etc. If it is a full day, it would likely be \$2500.

So, I'm thinking close to \$5000 if they both work out.

Happy to talk it through. I know budgets can be tight.

With all the care in the world,
sj

If you wonder where the ideas behind secret gender identity policy in our intermediate school came from (see [Section 12](#) of this report), these sorts of training provided to members of our administration and staff by the consortium would be a good place to start looking.

How are professional development events like sj Miller’s keynote speech and associated workshops funded? By the dues paid by consortium members, *i.e.*, the member school districts. **In 2020, the fees paid by SLSD were \$5,000** (as SLSD has and has had over 2,500 students). SLSD tax payers directly contributed to paying for this sort of training through “membership fees” invoice below (emphasis added):

INVOICE **2020-2021 Membership Dues**

**Lehigh University School Study Council (LUSCC) and
Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Excellence and Equity (GLVCEE)**

For Professional Development Workshops

Please complete this Google Form to submit your information by August 15th, 2020.

Payments can be made online [here](#) or mailed to (Make checks payable to “Lehigh University”):

*Cindi Deutsch
A213, Iacocca Hall
College of Education
Lehigh University
Bethlehem, PA 18015*

Dues Structure	Membership Fees	Member Benefits
<p>GOLD LEVEL</p> <p>LUSCC & GLVCEE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5,000 for districts over 2500 students • \$4,750 for district under 2500 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two seats at each of the five LUSCC programs • Six seats at each of the five Greater Lehigh Valley Excellence and Equity programs

Note that the invoice expressly states “**For Professional Development Workshops.**” Evison directed administration personnel to pay the invoice in the following June 16, 2020 email:

Message

From: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@slsd.org]
on behalf of Kathleen Evison <evisonk@slsd.org> [evisonk@slsd.org]
Sent: 6/16/2020 1:32:20 PM
To: [REDACTED]@slsd.org
Subject: Fwd: Lehigh University School Study Council 2020-2021 Membership Information
Attachments: LUSCC Membership 2020-2021 Dues INVOICE.pdf; LUSCC_GLVCEE 2020-2021 Programs.pdf

[REDACTED],

Could you take care of signing us up for next year and getting the dues paid?

Thanks!

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@slsd.org

The fees paid to the consortium by SLSD (i.e., SLSD tax-payer dollars) in 2020 alone were enough to pay for this “gender identity and non-binary” professional development event. Why is this an acceptable use of tax-payer dollars? How does this contribute to the academic achievement of our students? It is clear to us that this was just another part of the district’s efforts to remake itself in the name of “social justice.”

While we did not receive payment records (e.g., copies of cancelled checks, accounts payable records, etc.) from the district in response to our RTK request, we believe fees were paid in at least the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 membership periods. An email dated September 26, 2018 from a representative of Lehigh University to an SLSD staff member had an invoice attached titled “Membership 2018-2019 Dues INVOICE for Prof Devl” and an email dated July 9, 2019 from a representative of Lehigh University to an SLSD staff member had an invoice attached titled: “Membership 2019-20 Dues INVOICE.” So, for three years, and assuming fees in previous periods were the approximately same as the fees for the 2020-2021 period, *we estimate that SLSD taxpayers paid at least \$15,000 to participate in the consortium and have SLSD employees attend professional development/training events.* It is possible that additional prior and subsequent payments were made, but we just don’t have the records to evidence those payments based on the records the district provided.

The example above is just one of many involving Lehigh University and the consortium (GLVCEE). Another key example would be an event on “Breaking Down Cultural Norms,” described in an email dated February 13, 2020 as follows (emphasis added):

Good afternoon, Kenneth Shelton returns for the morning and afternoon sessions titled **Breaking Down Cultural Norms and Developing a Cultural Intelligence** respectively. The attached flyer includes details. Please let me know by Friday, February 21, if you will be attending. I will take care of reservations and securing parking passes. Thank you.

██████████
Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent/
Board Secretary
██████████
██████████@slsd.org

The referenced “flyer” was not provided by the district for review. The training was attended by at least seven SLSD employees in significant positions of authority in our district, including individuals that were in the following roles at the time of this training:

- Superintendent
- Assistant Principal, Middle School
- Principal, Elementary School
- Principal, Elementary School
- K-3 Guidance Counselor
- Assistant Superintendent
- Assistant to the Superintendent

The following email confirms registration for the event for the individual above (names mostly redacted as a gesture of good faith):

----- Forwarded message -----

From: LUSCC GLVCEE <inluscc@lehigh.edu>

Date: Mon, Mar 9, 2020 at 10:24 AM

Subject: LUSCC/GLVCEE March 11th Important Registration and Parking Information

To: <[REDACTED]@slsd.org>, Kathleen Evison <evisonk@slsd.org>, <[REDACTED]@slsd.org>, <[REDACTED]@slsd.org>, <[REDACTED]@slsd.org>, <[REDACTED]@slsd.org>

Cc: <[REDACTED]@slsd.org>

Good morning!

Thank you for registering for Wednesday's LUSCC/GLVCEE program featuring Ken Shelton.

Please read below for important information regarding the program:

WHEN: Wednesday, March 11, 2020

TIME: Registration for the morning session begins at **8:30 AM**. The AM program will start at **9:00 AM** and will conclude at **11:30 AM**, with lunch included. The afternoon registration begins

1

SLS00312

at **12:15pm** and the program will start at **12:30 PM** and conclude at **4:00 PM**. Please note that attending the afternoon session does not include lunch, but there will be snacks available during the afternoon break.

WHERE: Wood Dining Room, 2nd floor of Iacocca Hall, 111 Research Drive, Bethlehem, PA

PARKING: Attached is the map for parking in the visitor lot as well as your district parking passes. Please note that if you forget your parking pass you will need to pay for parking at the kiosk when you arrive and LUSCC will not be responsible for this payment. Please print and display the pass assigned to you:

[REDACTED]	Southern Lehigh SD	[REDACTED]@slsd.org	IVZ00803
[REDACTED]	Southern Lehigh SD	evisonk@slsd.org	IVZ00804
[REDACTED]	Southern Lehigh SD	[REDACTED]@slsd.org	IVZ00805
[REDACTED]	Southern Lehigh SD	[REDACTED]@slsd.org	IVZ00806
[REDACTED]	Southern Lehigh SD	[REDACTED]@slsd.org	IVZ00807
[REDACTED]	Southern Lehigh SD	[REDACTED]@slsd.org	IVZ00808
[REDACTED]	Southern Lehigh SD	[REDACTED]@slsd.org	IVZ00809

The program description is attached to this email. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday!

--

Lehigh University School Study Council
Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Excellence and Equity
Executive Director, Dr. Brian Osborne
Graduate Assistant, Tracy Davis
Billing, Cindi Deutsch
<https://ed.lehigh.edu/luscc>

Why do we think it is appropriate to use tax payer dollars to training our most influential employees on “Breaking Down Cultural Norms?” We don’t recall “breaking down cultural norms” being part of the job description for our principals or counselors, but perhaps we’re being naïve. Needless to say, we believe that we should not spend tax payer dollars to turn our own employees into political activists charged with “breaking down cultural norms.”

An earlier training session offered to key leaders at SLSD in March of 2018 addressed how to conduct and analyze “*Equity Audits*,” how to assist in “*identity development and cultural competency*,” and how to “*review and align policies, programs, and procedures for equity*.” Further, the training addressed how to “*leverage funding*” for “*equitable*” distribution based on “*race/ethnicity*” and “*gender*.” See relevant portion of the program schedule below (emphasis added):

GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE		
March 28, 2018		
Time	Activity	Resources
8:30-9:00	Registration	
9:00-9:05	<p>Welcome - Mr. Rich Sniscak</p> <p>Agenda for the morning - Krista Leh</p>	
9:05-9:50	<p>Within-District Collaboration (District level or building level)</p> <p><i>Starting Points for Consideration:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of Equity Audits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ What does the data reveal? • Consider an ICS Four Cornerstone to focus within based on the data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Cornerstone 1 - Focus on Equity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Historical story of equity ■ Asset-based thinking/approach ■ Identity development & cultural competency ■ District philosophy and non-negotiables ◦ Cornerstone 2 - Align Staff and Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Professional development for awareness and action ◦ Cornerstone 3 - Transform Teaching and Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gaps (contributions of diverse people) or ● Misinformation/misrepresentation 	<p><u>RESOURCES HERE</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equity Audit from ICS ● Building, District, Individual Checklists ● Action Plan Template
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Instructional Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● John Hattie’s data-informed strategies for achievement, Differentiated instruction, Problem-based learning, Personalized learning ■ Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social emotional learning and Trauma-informed practices ● Books available in library and classrooms ● Posters/decorations on walls ◦ Cornerstone 4 - Leverage Policy and Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review and align policies, programs, and procedures for equity towards/for all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teaming, tracking, co-teaching, AP/IB enrollment ● Discipline practices ■ Leveraging funding for equitable distribution across demographics (race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, language, ability - IEP/Ch15/GIEP, etc.) 	

SLSD01645

The program was promoted to all of the principals, vice principals, and key administrators at SLSD, including our former director of curriculum development. See email below (most names redacted as a gesture of good faith):



LEHIGH
UNIVERSITY

School
Study Council

Leadership for Equity in a Time of Uncertainty

2020-2021 Program Dates and Information

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

Embrace the Complexity and Rewrite the Rules: How Leaders Can Operationalize Equity and Transform Their Systems

Dr. Joshua P. Starr, Phi Delta Kappan

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

9:00am - 1:00pm

This is Not a Test: A New Narrative on Race, Class, and Education

José Vilson, teacher, writer, speaker, activist

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

9:00am - 3:00pm

Annual Equity Symposium: Gender Identity Equity

Keynote: Dr. sj Miller, teacher, writer, activist, scholar

Featuring Aidan DeStefano, LGBTQ+ Advocate

The professional development provided to SLSD employees makes clear the endless obsession with race, gender ideology, and social justice issues generally that infects the consortium. SLSD should sever any remaining ties with the consortium and reject this oppression-based mindset.

7.2 University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education

Sadly, social justice activism and “woke” ideology were not flowing into SLSD solely from Lehigh University and the GLVCEE/consortium; they were also flowing into SLSD from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

On June 2, 2020, Professor Harris Sokoloff sent to our former Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning a document that advocating for the positions of the Black Lives Matter organization. What our former Assistant Superintendent did with the document is unclear, but we know for certain the source of the materials and how they entered our district.

To be clear, the proposition that “Black Lives Matters” is obviously true. Of course, the lives of people that are black matter, deserving of all the same protections before the law as any other American life. Equally true, though, is that South Asian lives matter, East Asian lives, Mexican Lives Matter, and yes, even the lives of people who historically had ancestors in Europe matter. We believe that all human life has inherent value, and therefore “matter.” But we believe that people should be treated as individuals and judged on our own actions and inactions, not simply lumped together with everyone else that has similar levels of melanin in their skin and judged as a group. Dr. Sokoloff, by promoting the document he sent to SLSD, does not appear to agree with those propositions. Below is a sample of the BLM propaganda that he provided (the full document is attached to this Report as Attachment 23):

Vote out the bigots.
Namely, Donald Trump.

Vote out the bigots,
the ones who call Black people
thugs,
who hide behind
Twitter and “Christianity.”
Who sits in their house
that was built by slaves,
moving this country
as many steps back
as he can.

Recognize that our country has
a history of racism,
was built on racism.
African-Americans
do not have the same rights
that others do in our country.
Use your privilege to help others
not just yourself.

Whatever you do, do not say all lives matter.
No lives matter until
Black Lives Matter
It’s so frustrating. I’m upset. But we will stand together.
And bring hope.

Professor Solokoff also endorses the use of the “Implicit Bias Test”:

from yourself. An interesting test that I encourage you to take and to share with your friends is the Harvard Implicit Bias Test, which shows that many people have an automatic preference for European Americans over African-Americans. Click the link and then click the Race Test. <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> Once you’ve found out your results, figure out how to make a change in your own life. Remember that no lives matter until...

BLACK LIVES MATTER

The “Implicit Bias Test” (also known as the “Implicit Association Test”) and the concept of “implicit bias” generally is very popular amount the social justice crowd. The test (there are actually a number of them, but obviously the “race” test us what’s being referred to above) purports to show that those who take the test have an implicit bias toward white or “Western,” and are therefore biases against “people of color” and “non-Western” as a group. It is a mainstay of “anti-bias” training.

The test was co-created by Harvard University psychology chair Mahzarin Banaji and University of Washington researcher Anthony Greenwald. The test purports to evidence one’s underlying bias against a particular thing (in this case, a bias against non-“white” people) and the increased

likelihood that one will act in a biased or racist way in actual interactions with non-“white” people. However, there is ample evidence that the implicit bias test utterly fails its essential purpose, and does not, in fact, predict anything, let alone whether someone is likely to be a racist or act in a racist manner. See “*Psychology’s Favorite Tool for Measuring Racism Isn’t Up to the Job: Almost two decades after its introduction, the implicit association test has failed to deliver on its lofty promise*” (Jesse Singal, January 2017, The Cut / New Yorker Magazine, <https://www.thecut.com/2017/01/psychologys-racism-measuring-tool-isnt-up-to-the-job.html#_ga=2.179555820.932133484.1685822655-1119502699.1685822654>, last visited June 3, 2023) for a summary of the many failings of the test. Signal summarize the state of the test as follows (emphasis added):

“A pile of scholarly work, some of it published in top psychology journals and most of it ignored by the media, suggests that the IAT falls far short of the quality-control standards normally expected of psychological instruments. The IAT, this research suggests, is a noisy, unreliable measure that correlates far too weakly with any real-world outcomes to be used to predict individuals’ behavior — **even the test’s creators have now admitted as such.**”

Professor Sokoloff shared and therefore endorsed a test to measure whether someone is likely to be a racist or act in a racist way, which even the creators of the test itself agree it cannot do.

Our former Superintendent, Kathleen Evison, was also actively working with, and receiving training from Professor Sokoloff and his colleagues. In an email dated August 8, 2020, she asked her assistant to add to her calendar a number of trainings to be held by the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania:

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]


Message

From: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@slsd.org]
on behalf of Kathleen Evison <evisonk@slsd.org> [evisonk@slsd.org]
Sent: 8/28/2020 10:30:30 AM
To: Elaine Lebo [leboe@slsd.org]
Subject: Fwd: SAVE THE DATES: Updated Penn Study Council planning and program
Attachments: Study Councils Sept Oct Nov memo.pdf

More dates for the calendar! Not sure I'll make all of them, but we can put them in and then decide week by week!

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@slsd.org

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Sokoloff, Harris <harris@upenn.edu>
Date: Thu, Aug 27, 2020 at 5:19 PM
Subject: SAVE THE DATES: Updated Penn Study Council planning and program
To: <GSE-CSSC-GROUPBM@lists.upenn.edu>



TO: Penn Study Councils
FROM: Harris Sokoloff
RE: Update on planning and program for 2020-21
DATE: August 27, 2020

The social justice trainings included (emphasis added):

- We will focus on two themes or tracks, common across the planning recommendations for each of the Study Councils:
 - **Leadership for evolving and innovative instruction/learning** (to take advantage of constantly shifting contexts to adapt, design, and accelerate richer learning experiences for students now and into the future)
 - **Leadership for equity** (to address systemic/structural inequities/anti-racism)

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

Leadership for equity

September, October and November will focus on *rethinking our equity frameworks to confront our systemic biases and racism*

- September 22
 - *Why We Can't Wait: Broadening Racial Justice and Addressing Systemic Inequities within School Districts*
 - Workshop leaders: Dr. George Guy, Educational Consultant and Principal in Cherry School District, and Judith Wilson
- October 28
 - *New Frameworks for Equity in Schools, Part I*
 - Workshop leaders: Claire Miller, Tredyffrin/Easttown Public Schools, and Judith Wilson
- November 19
 - *New Frameworks for Equity in Schools, Part 2*
 - Workshop leaders: Claire Miller, Tredyffrin/Easttown Public Schools, and Judith Wilson

It's not clear which training sessions Evison actually attended (we were not provided that level of records from the district in response to our RTK request) but one thing is clear: Evison must have deeply believed that SLSD was rife with "systemic racism" and corrective training and measures were desperately needed. Otherwise, why would she have spent so much time and effort ensuring that our administrators, teachers, and staff received the social justice information and training that they did (See also Section 8.0 of this report for other social justice training sessions).

Would someone kindly direct us to the board meeting where SLSD's school board voted to approve the type of social justice activism and remaking of our district in the name of "equity" that our involvement with these institutions entails? We aren't aware of that ever having happened, nor is the public generally. Imagine the progress we might have made had our superintendents, other administrators, and teachers focused on their core mission of education our children rather than taking endless trainings that lead to "social justice" activism in our schools.

[End of Section]

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8.0 Social Justice Training and Materials at SLSD

8.1 Introduction

SLSD suggested, offered, gave credit for, or paid for training for employees based on or driven by a world view that takes “oppression” as a given, assumes racism is omnipresent, and ascribes moral guilt to individuals and groups based on the color of a person skin. SLSD employees shared with one another materials from those trainings, materials from other sources, and ideas for bringing those concepts into the classroom, including for curriculum development. Please see also Section 9.0 of this report, which discusses curriculum, library audits, and book selections that reflect these concepts. The training and materials described in this section are in addition to the training materials and activities associated with Dr. Joseph Allen in Section 6.8.

The sheer quantity of critical race theory/social justice/activist materials the district provided in response to our RTK request is mind boggling. The representative examples below (there are many, many others) should give the reader an idea of just how prevalent this thinking is, and just how supported it was by people like former Superintendent Evison, former Director of Curriculum and Instruction Shane Cross, and a handful of activist teachers.

Many of these individual involved appear to be well intended people trying to learn and understand topics that are supposed to be helpful in their day-to-day job activities, but ultimately being led into adopting a frame of analysis that takes as a given that whites oppress everyone else, that any disparity whatsoever means system racism is present, and that to be “anti-racist” one must actively discriminate in the present to correct past wrongs.

We direct the reader to Sections 3.0 and 13.0 of this report for a discussion of how the race and gender ideologues have redefined words to mean things a well-intended lay reader would never imagine. For example, a normal person would expect a term like “cultural competency” to mean that one has an understanding of how cultures differ among peoples, how those difference in culture may affect a person’s approach to communication, learning, perspectives on history, etc. Instead, “cultural competency” now more frequently means evaluating cultural difference within an intersectional oppression hierarchy, with “whites” as the “oppressors” and everyone else falling at different levels of “oppressed.” A related term, “culturally responsive pedagogy,” is right out of seminal writing on CRT, as we’ve described in Section 13.0 of this report.

This section is based on materials we received in response to requests for records under the PA Right to Know (RTK) law covering the period from January 2017 through May 2021. We don’t know what happened before that, and we don’t know what happened after that in this area. Many of the records we received were incomplete, often missing crucial attachments. The attachments in most cases would have shed further light on the content of the training or materials offered. Obviously, if the email to missing files were attached was within the scope of the RTK request, so were the attachments, yet many were not provided. A cynical person might view the omissions as intentional, to keep some of the worst “DEI” materials from seeing the light of day. That’s possible. It’s also possible that the individuals collecting, reviewing, and providing the materials were incompetent. Either way, the omissions raise yet more questions about what was happening in SLSD and why.

We only have what we received from the district, so we are likely missing a substantial amount of information regarding training, curriculum, etc. Likewise, we wouldn't have, based on our RTK requests, any information about trainings that do not include a word like "equity," even if the content of that training did include CRT-driven materials. Finally, some documents were provided to us without any context, so unless we had a corresponding email with header information (To, From, CC, Date/Time), we don't know how or when a particular document was used. That said, the presence alone of some of these documents should be disturbing.

We must ask ourselves whether training in "social justice" topics is appropriate for SLSD teachers and other staff. Is this the framework of analysis that we want our teachers to apply when development lesson plans and interacting with students? Are these the sorts of trainings and materials tax-payer dollars should be funding? Another fair question would be how much better of a job might we have done on academics had we not spent endless time and money on "social justice" training?

In the following pages we highlight 10 of the most glaring examples of "social justice" training at SLSD for administrators, counselors, teachers, and students, all using district resources and, of course, tax-payer dollars (there were numerous others as well...):

1. White Fragility Book Club for 42 Employees for Professional Development/Academy Hours
2. CRT-based "21-Day Challenge" for Faculty and Students
3. Social Justice Training for School Counselors
4. Credit for Professional Development in "Systemic Racism" and "White Privilege" for High School Counselors
5. CRT-based Resources for Social Studies Teachers
6. Materials Distributed to Principals and K-3 Guidance Counselor regarding CASEL's Commitment to use "Social Emotional Learning as a Lever for Equity"
7. \$28,200 for Extensive Training in Social Emotional Learning for Staff and Students
8. District Funds Course on "Cultural Competence" to Support "Curriculum Development"
9. Distribution of "Resources for White Parents to Raise Anti-Racist Children"
10. Training Program on Social and Emotional Learning that includes "Elevating Educational Equity through Social Emotional Learning"

Please see also [Section 8.0](#) of this report that discusses numerous additional CRT-based social justice trainings that occurred in connection with SLSD's relationship with Lehigh University, the Greater Lehigh Valley Consortium for Equity and Excellence (GLVCEE), and the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education and [Section 6.8](#) of this report which discusses

CRT-based social justice training provided to SLSD by Dr. Joseph Allen, despite our former superintendent’s assurance that no such training was provided.

The next time you hear an administrator or board member tell you there is no CRT-based social justice training at SLSD, you will know that person is either willfully ignorant or just plain lying to your face.

**8.2 Social Justice Training Example 1
White Fragility Academy Book Club for 42 District Employees**

Among the most egregious examples of CRT-based indoctrination / social justice training in SLSD is the “White Fragility Book Club Academy” that was held in 2020 and 2021. Participant included teachers and other staff at our Hopewell Elementary School, Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School (JPLIS), and Southern Lehigh Middle School (SLMS). Hopewell Elementary School has grades one through three covering children from approximately six through eight years of age. JPLIS has grades four through six covering children from approximately nine through 12 years of age. SLMS has grades seven and eight covering children from roughly 12 through 14 years of age. Sessions were held at various time from July 2020 through April 2021.

The sessions were attended by a total of **42** SLSD employees (1 at Hopewell, 27 at JPLIS, and 14 at our Middle School), including people in significant positions of authority and influence like a K-4 instructional coach, Mr. Sean McGinty (principal at JPLIS), and Ms. Tara Cooke (guidance counselor at JPLIS) (please see Section 12 of this Report describing how Mr. McGinty and Ms. Cook are also at the heart of implementing secret gender identity policies at JPLIS). Confirmation of the names and numbers of attendees was made through direct review of multiple “Class Rosters” for the Academy Hour/Book Club sessions and other relevant documents. Except in limited cases, we do not name names here because we think the vast majority of the participants did not know in advance with what they were becoming involved. Below are two partial examples from the sign-in sheets that we reviewed confirming attendance:

CLASS ROSTER				
White Fragility-Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism				
Course Date : 6/30/2020 - 7/30/2020, 12:00:00 AM -				
Location : Home				
Instructor: Joe Deutsch				
Signature: _____				
Accepted Entries:				
Attendee Name	Attendee E-mail	LEA	Building	SR
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
COOKE, TARA R	cooker@slsd.org	Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Hopewell Elementary School	
McGinty, Sean	mcmgntys@slsd.org	Southern Lehigh School District	Joseph P. Liberati Intermediate School	

CLASS ROSTER				
Focus Group-2020 Newbery AND Anti-Racism PD Book Study				
Course Date : 8/1/2020 - 11/30/2020, 12:00:00 AM -				
Location : Online				
Instructor: Cory Robbins				
Signature: _____				
Accepted Entries:				
Attendee Name	Attendee E-mail	LEA	Building	SR
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	
		Southern Lehigh School District	Southern Lehigh Middle School	

The “White Fragility Book Club Academy” was submitted to district administrators for review and was approved by those district administrators for credit, *i.e.*, this was endorsed and supported

by the district. District facilities and assets were used to create, support, and execute the training (email and file storage systems, physical spaces, etc.).

The “White Fragility Book Club Academy” consisted of reading the book “White Fragility” and then discussing it with fellow participants. These discussions appear to have been guided by a selected facilitator and used a “reading guide” as a tool. The reading guide included questions and discussion topics for each chapter. Copies of the discussion guides that were used are attached as Attachment 16 to this report (*note: we had to obtain these discussion guides in a later Right to Know request because the district failed to provide them in response to the original request despite their obligation to do so*).

Participation in this “book club” allowed staff to satisfy “Academy Hours” requirements, *i.e.*, a certain number of hours spent each year by staff to satisfy district professional development requirements. In recent years, staff have had to complete as many as 12 “academy”/professional training hours per year. To be clear, “Academy Hours” is professional training, *i.e.*, ***training intended to expand and improve the quality of education within SLSD in the classroom.***

As you read the information below, please ask yourself why our district wants our teachers trained in these concepts and whether it is appropriate for teachers to bring these concepts, directly or indirectly, into classrooms for children in elementary school, intermediate school, and middle school.

“White Fragility” is Directly Based on Critical Race Theory

“White Fragility” (subtitled “Why it’s so hard for white people to talk about racism”) is a book by author Robin DiAngelo initially published in 2018 but which gained a large number of readers in 2020 at the height of the unrest following the death of George Floyd. It’s not hard to understand why people in 2020 would have turned to this book in order to engage with “racial” issues in 2020; unfortunately, the author is not a good faith participant in discussions about race.

White Fragility takes for granted that the central holdings of critical race theory are true, and is therefore based on and driven by CRT. Here’s few examples:

Core Intent / Holding of Critical Race Theory (citations in this column are to <i>Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement</i> , Kimberlé Crenshaw, et al., 1996)	White Fragility (citations in this column are to <i>White Fragility: Why it’s so hard for white people to talk about racism</i>) Robin DiAngelo, 2018)
Racism is ordinary and not aberrational (p.8)	“Racism is the norm rather than an aberration.” (p.125) “Racism is deeply embedded in the fabric of our society.” (p.22) “The default of the current system is the reproduction of racial inequality; our institutions were designed to reproduce racial inequality and they do so with efficiency.” (p.193) “Nor does [this book] attempt to prove that racism [as CRT/DiAngelo define it...] exists; I start from that premise.” (p.5)

Core Intent / Holding of Critical Race Theory (citations in this column are to <i>Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement</i> , Kimberlé Crenshaw, et al., 1996)	White Fragility (citations in this column are to <i>White Fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism</i>) Robin DiAngelo, 2018)
Our system of white-over-color ascendancy serves important purposes, both psychic and material (id.) (i.e., “white supremacy”)	“White people in North America live in a society that is deeply separate and unequal by race, and white people are the beneficiaries of that separation and inequality.” (p.1) “...white people raised in Western society are conditioned into a white supremacist worldview because it is the bedrock of our society and institutions.” (p129). “When I say that only whites can be racist, I mean that in the United States, only whites have the collective social and institutional power and privilege over people of color.” (p.22) “Only white people are in the position the oppress people of color collectively and throughout the whole of society.” (p.83)
Race and races are products of social thought and relations (the “social construct” thesis) (id.)	“While there is no biological race as we understand it... race as a social construct has profound significance and shapes every aspect of our lives.” (p.5)

DiAngelo’s Definition of Racism and Relentless Focus on Group Conflict

There are two key concepts to grasp if you wish to understand the essence of DiAngelo’s book.

First, DiAngelo uses the CRT definition of “racism.” “Racism,” in this view, no longer means that you hold or act on a view that a particular race is superior to another race, or said another way, discrimination or prejudice based on race. Under this traditional definition (the one on which the Civil Rights movement was based), individuals can be racists (as can specific laws, regulations, practices, etc.), but it doesn’t lay the guilt for that racism at the feet of all “white” people everywhere. The remedy for racism under this traditional definition is to call out, condemn, and stand against individual acts of racism and to fight and overturn racist laws, regulations, or practices.

Instead, DiAngelo’s “racism” now refers to a “*structure, not an event*” (p.20). DiAngelo explains:

“When a racial group’s collective prejudice is backed by the power of legal authority and institutional control, it is transformed into racism, a far-reaching system that functions independently from the intentions.” (p.20)

“Racism...occurs when a racial group’s prejudice is backed by legal authority and institutional control.” (p.21).

If you’re “white,” you are racist no matter where you stand on racism:

“Individual whites may be ‘against’ racism, but they still benefit from a system that privileges whites as a group ... these advantages are referred to as ‘white privilege,’ a sociological concept referring to advantages that are taken for granted by whites and that cannot be similarly enjoyed by people of color in the same context....” (p.24).

Thus, in DiAngelo’s world, only “white” people can never be racist:

“People of color may also hold prejudices and discriminate against white people, but they lack the social and institutional power that transforms their prejudice and discrimination into racism....” (p.22).

Second, DiAngelo only sees people fundamentally in terms of groups, never as individuals. Thus, her work is replete with “white” oppressing “black” or “people of color,” always oppressor versus oppressed; it’s never an individual actor, it’s always “systemic racism” or “structural racism” as work. “People of color” are forever and always “oppressed” by the group “white people.” If this all sounds familiar, it should, it’s just Marxist conflict theory applied to race. The seminal writers in CRT readily admit this.

What is “White Fragility”?

DiAngelo defines “**White Fragility**” as (pp.1-2):

The “*racial stress*” or “*racial discomfort*” that white people feel when confronted in “*conversations about race*” when it is suggested that being “white” connects us to a “*system of racism*” (i.e., systemic racism) that white people use to dominate society (i.e., to oppress people of color for the benefit of “whites”), because it challenges white people’s “*very identities as good, moral people*” and white perceive such challenges as “*an unsettling and unfair moral offense.*”

The “*racial stress*” or “*racial discomfort*” white people experience manifests in a “*range of defensive responses,*” such as “*feelings of discomfort and anxiety, anger, fear, guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and withdrawal from the stress-inducing situation.*”

The “*racial stress*” or “*racial discomfort*” is caused by a “*lack of racial stamina,*” (i.e., an inability to tolerate being accused of racism or being called a racist) that infects white people because white people are usually “*insulated from racial stress*” because white people “*white people in North America live in a society that is deeply separate and unequal by race, and white people are the beneficiaries of that separation and inequality.*”

A white person’s expression of white fragility is a “*means of racial control,*” a way to protect “*white advantage,*” and are intended to “*reinstate white equilibrium as they repel the challenge, return our racial comfort, and maintain our dominance within the racial hierarchy.*”

To summarize, “white fragility” is the feeling any white person of goodwill would have when someone calls them a racist solely and exclusively for being white!

DiAngelo tells us that “most white people have limited information about what racism is and how it works” (p.100). DiAngelo seems to be somehow miraculously unaware that we have been endlessly talking about and fighting about racism, debating it on the floors of state house and the US Congress, protesting about racism in the streets, litigating about race in our courts, and passing laws against racism and racist practices for as long as we have existed as these United States, not to mention literally breaking the country in half in a civil war fought primarily over the question of slavery that cost somewhere between 650,000 and 850,000 American lives. She just doesn’t like that we don’t all agree with her new definition of what “racism” constitutes.

“White” or “Western”: The Difference is Essential

A major flaw of White Fragility as a book is that it confuses “whiteness” with “Western.” DiAngelo has this to say about “whiteness,” “white culture,” and “white supremacy” (emphasis added):

*“...white supremacy is a descriptive and useful term to capture the all-encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of people defined and perceived as white and the practices based on this assumption. White supremacy in this context does not refer to individual white people and their individual intentions or actions but to an overarching political, economic, and **social system of domination.**”* (p.28)

*“[white supremacy is] **the unnamed political system** that has made the modern world what it is today...” and that “...white supremacy has shaped Western political thought for hundreds of years....”* (p.29, quoting Charles W. Mill).

*“White supremacy describes **the culture war we live in,** a culture that positions white people and all that is associated with them (whiteness) as ideal. White supremacy is more than the idea that whites are superior to people of color; it is the deeper premise that supports this idea—the definition of whites as the norm or standard for human; and people of color as a deviation from that norm.”* (p.33)

*“When **ideologies** such as colorblindness, meritocracy, and individualism are challenged, intense emotional reactions are common.”* (p.28)

*“Narratives of racial exceptionalism obscure the reality of ongoing institutional white control while reinforcing the **ideologies** of individualism and meritocracy.”* (p.27)

That “social system,” that “political system,” and those “ideologies” that DiAngelo references have nothing at all to do with race. What DiAngelo so ineptly describes is in fact Western Civilization itself and Western Civilization has nothing to do with race and everything to do with universal ideas that have enabled the flourishing of humankind over the past 500 years. Western Civilization is open to and welcoming of all. These attacks on Western Civilization, or “white culture” to use DiAngelo’s words is not uncommon when viewing the world through a CRT lens.

A poster on display in 2020 at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture captured this worldview. The poster (reproduced) identifies the following as “White Culture” or “Whiteness”:

- Hard Work is the Key to Success
- Self-Reliance
- The Nuclear Family
- Meritocracy (“you get what you deserve”)
- Objective, Rational Thinking
- The Scientific Method
- Work Before Play
- Respect for Authority
- Planning for the Future
- Time Schedules / Punctuality
- Protection for Property
- Decision Making
- Written Tradition Politeness

TALKING ABOUT RACE | NMAAHC

ASPECTS & ASSUMPTIONS OF WHITENESS & WHITE CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES

White dominant culture, or *whiteness*, refers to the ways white people and their traditions, attitudes and ways of life have been normalized over time and are now considered standard practices in the United States. And since white people still hold most of the institutional power in America, we have all internalized some aspects of white culture—including people of color.



Rugged Individualism

- The individual is the primary unit
- Self-reliance
- Independence & autonomy highly valued + rewarded
- Individuals assumed to be in control of their environment, “*You get what you deserve*”

Family Structure

- The nuclear family: father, mother, 2.3 children is the ideal social unit
- Husband is breadwinner and head of household
- Wife is homemaker and subordinate to the husband
- Children should have own rooms, be independent



Emphasis on Scientific Method

- Objective, rational linear thinking
- Cause and effect relationships
- Quantitative emphasis

History

- Based on Northern European immigrants’ experience in the United States
- Heavy focus on the British Empire
- The primacy of Western (Greek, Roman) and Judeo-Christian tradition



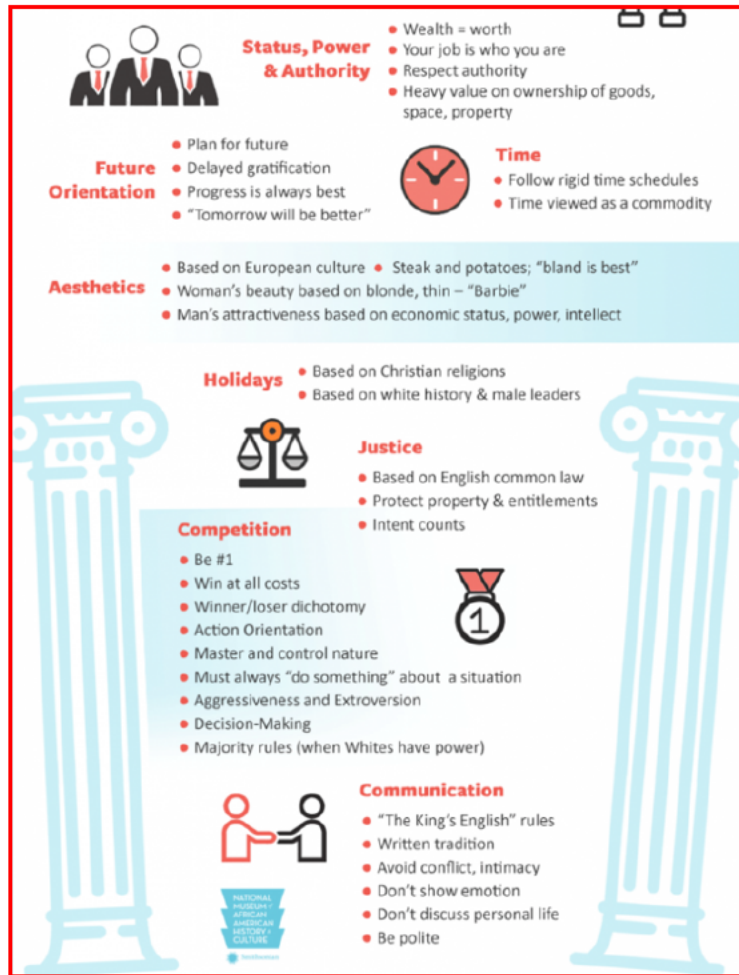
Protestant Work Ethic

- Hard work is the key to success
- Work before play
- “If you didn’t meet your goals, you didn’t work hard enough”

Religion

- Christianity is the norm
- Anything other than Judeo-Christian tradition is foreign
- No tolerance for deviation from single god concept





Attacking the core ideas of Western Civilization has been at the very core of CRT since its inception, and its seminal writers have never been shy about stating this position:

"Unlike traditional civil rights discourse, which stresses incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law." (Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement, p.3)

Western Civilization did not come to dominate the world over the past 500 years because of or in the name of race; it did so because it had and continues to have better principles around which it is organized. To name a few in addition to those aspects of "white cultural" already listed above:

- Individual Autonomy
- Rule of Law
- Equality before the Law
- Due Process
- Protection of private property

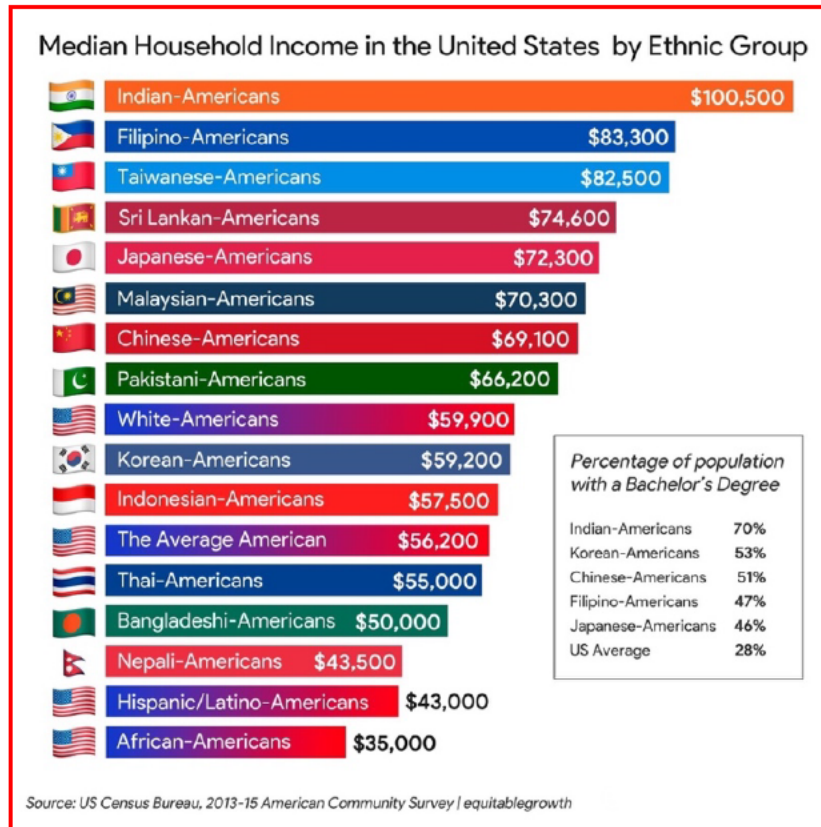
- Limited, representative government that protects individual rights
- Development and Application of the Scientific Method to both natural phenomena and ideas
- Economic freedom
- Political freedom
- Freedom of speech and thought
- Freedom of commerce/competition

None of those principles have anything to do with race; rather, they are eternal ideas available to all people whatever they look like and from wherever they come. Western Civilization is what DiAngelo attacks as “whiteness” or “white culture.” We live in a strange time when the very fundamentals of a fair society (e.g., individual rights, fealty to the rule of law, meritocracy) are now held in disdain as impediments to “social justice.”

As a single example among hundreds, consider what Western Civilization has given us through the application of the scientific method to human disease and injury. This process led to one of the most remarkable success stories of our species and catapulted us out of misery in the late 19th and early 20th century by finally coming up with a way to treat and nearly eradicate infectious diseases, communicable diseases, and trauma injuries as an all but guaranteed cause of death. In the span of approximately 50 years, this particular fruit of Western Civilization resulted in a doubling of human life expectancy, and these benefits have been spread across the globe through the adoption of Western medicine. From an evolutionary perspective, that’s unprecedented and remains one of the most remarkable achievements of the human race. We strongly recommend the book “*Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*” by Steven Pinker and “*Civilization: The West and the Rest*” by Niall Ferguson to those who wish to more fully understand the monumental achievements brought to the entire world by Western Civilization.

When these “Western” values are adopted outside of the “West” (think non-“Western” countries like Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and India), people tend to thrive; when they don’t, you get less favorable, actually oppressive outcomes.

For the uninitiated, wildly successful racial subgroups in the US like our friends and neighbors of South Asian and East Asian descent would be dismissed as “*model minorities*” by critical race theorists because they exhibit “*internalized whiteness*,” i.e., they exhibit key behaviors and preferences consistent with “Western Culture” and tend to prioritize intact family structures and the value of education. DiAngelo, and CRT in general, can provide no other explanation to explain the distribution of median household incomes in the US as reflected in the following chart based on data from the US Census Bureau. **If the US is truly a “white supremacist country,” it is the least effective system of maintaining the “white supremacy” one could imagine!**



Ms. DiAngelo’s worldview, which is the same worldview as CRT, is inherently cynical and deeply depressing. It teaches every white child that they are morally culpable and forever racist merely for being born “white” and tells every child that is not “white” that the system is forever rigged against them and that the white children around them are their “oppressors.” So, you either hate yourself because you were born white, or you hate white people you because “they” rigged the system against you. *It would be difficult to dream up a more effective way to ensure that our children hate each other and our country.* Is this what we want SLSD teachers to bring into our classrooms based on this professional development work?

The Most Racist Substance in the Universe

DiAngelo reserves her strongest condemnation for “White Women’s Tears.” The following quotations are presented without commentary, as they speak for themselves:

“...emotions are political...” (p.132)

“...well-meaning white women crying in cross-racial interactions is one of the more pernicious enactments of white fragility.” (p.133)

“Whether intended or not, when a white woman cries over some aspect of racism, all the attention immediately goes to her, demanding time, energy, and attention from everyone in the room when they should be focused on ameliorating racism. While she is given attention, the people of color are yet again abandoned and/or blamed.” (p.134).

So, if a “white woman” is upset about being called a racist solely because she was born white, and tears up as a result, she is engaging in a “*pernicious enactment of white fragility*” and therefore racial oppression! You can’t make this stuff up.

DiAngelo’s Recommendations

In Ms. DiAngelo’s pessimistic world, everyone is separated into racial groups that are endlessly in conflict with each other over power and privilege and only “white” people can be racist. The core teaching of DiAngelo’s work is that if as a “white” person you object or reject in any way to the new CRT-based definition of racism, then you are exhibiting “white fragility.” Thankfully, she offers some helpful guidance to those afflicted by “white fragility”:

1. “Be Less White”

“...*a positive white identity is an impossible goal. White identity is inherently racist; white people do not exist outside the system of white supremacy.*” (p.149, emphasis added)

“...*be ‘less white.’ To be less white is to be less racially oppressive.* This requires me to be more racially aware, to be better educated about racism, and to continually challenge racial certitude and arrogance. To be less white is to be open to, interested in, and compassionate toward the racial realities of people of color.” (p.150, emphasis added).

“I strive for a less white identity for my own liberation and sense of justice...” (p.150).

2. Increase Your Racial Stamina

“*An antidote to white fragility is to build up our stamina to bear witness to the pain of racism that we cause...*” (p.128). [To translate, she’s saying don’t be offended when you’re called a racist for being white...]

3. Become an Activist for “Social Justice”

“...demand that we be given this information [CRT-based view of racism] in schools and universities and that we not be required to take special or elective courses to be exposed to it.” (p.146)

“...get involved with multiracial organizations and white organizations working for racial justice.” (p.146)

“...take action to address our own racism, the racism of other whites, and the racism embedded in our institutions.” (p.148)

“...follow the leadership of antiracism* from people of color...” (p.148)

“...break the silence about race and racism with other white people.” (p.148)

Reception by SLSD Staff

While we did not have access to recordings of what occurred during the meetings, the documents produced by the district in response to our request for records provides some insight. For example, one teacher noted that the staff needs to “*act deliberately*” regarding the racism DiAngelo describes, and that it is one of our “*educational challenges*,” *i.e.* to be addressed in educational settings (email dated July 9, 2020):

I found this in one of the discussion guides and I think it fits for us: There is only one reason to engage in emotionally fraught conversations about racism, and that is to end it. As educators, we need to summon up the courage and together act deliberately and honestly to address what remains to be our greatest national and educational challenge.

She goes on to acknowledge that she now understands her “white fragility” and intends to “work hard to make...changes” (email dated July 9, 2020):

I'm glad that Joe shared that just suggesting this book club was way out of his comfort zone because that includes myself. Facilitating is also out of my comfort zone, but I feel I need to push myself if I truly want to understand this issue and help to change it. As I was listening to the book I found myself becoming defensive at some of her points and I might have even tuned out some of the book, but I now understand that understanding my own "white fragility" is a process that I am just beginning and I will need to work hard to make any changes. Since I am not a confrontational person by nature I'm not sure how I can help facilitate the change that is needed and hopefully we can give each other some ideas through our discussions. I will be re-listening to the book to refresh my memory before Monday. I won't have the hard copy I ordered for our first meeting, so please share any passages you think would be helpful.

DiAngelo has won another convert.

The next time an administrator or board member tells you that no CRT-based social justice training has occurred at SLSD, you will know that that person is lying to your face.

A Plea for Sanity

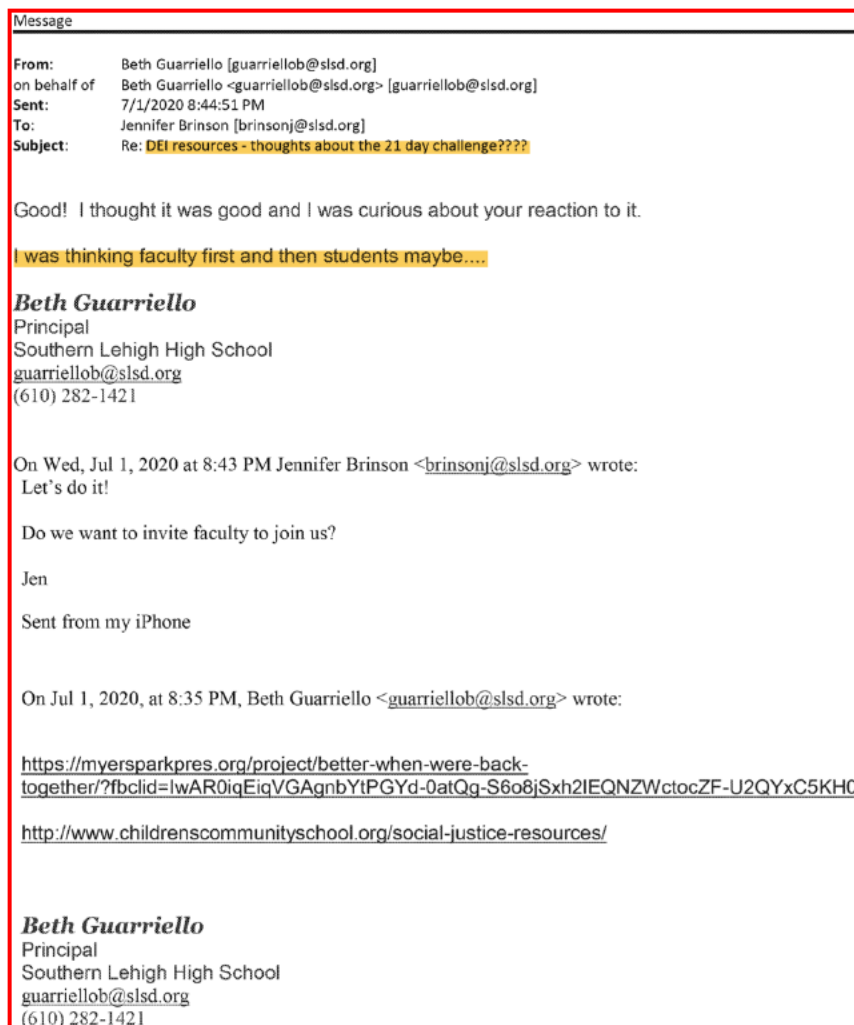
Teaching our children mathematics, science, to read and write, and other core subjects does not require our teachers to be trained in CRT-based concepts of “social justice,” “systemic racism,” and “white fragility.” Those concepts are highly controversial, not to mention not appropriate in any way for children in our schools. At SLSD, we should reject the notion that the most important thing about you is your race.

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8.3 Social Justice Training Example 2 CRT-based “21-Day Challenge” for Faculty and Students

Emails dated July 1, 2020 between former SLSD high school principal and former SLSD assistant high school principal Jennifer Brinson regarding “DEI Resources – thoughts about the 21 day challenge????” Guarriello proposes engaging in a “21 day challenge” and provides links to a site with “21 day challenge” resources, as well as another link with related resources.

Guarriello recommends rolling out the “challenge” to faculty first and then possibly to students as well.



The materials at the linked websites are, unsurprisingly, almost all “social justice” oriented, accept “systemic racism” (and therefore “white privilege”) as a given, and make race the central issue, while also promoting gender/queer theory for good measure.

The first link is for the website of the Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina (www.myerspark.org). On their “21-Day Race Equity Challenge” page, they describe the “challenge,” which consists of watching, reading, or listening to one of the resources they provide each day for 21 days, with the stated goal of “confessing wrongs and moving toward

justice” (https://myersparkpres.org/project/better-when-were-back-together/?fbclid=IwAR0iqEiqVGA_gnbYtPGYd-0atQg-S6o8jSxh2IEQNZWctocZF-U2QYx5KH0, last visited October 17, 2022). The challenge itself, therefore, ***assumes wrongs and injustice*** in the part of those engaging in the challenge! The materials Myers Park provides is a treasure trove of biased social justice materials:

Read	Listen	Notice
<p><i>10 Ways Well-Meaning White Teachers Bring Racism Into Our Schools</i>, by Jamie Utt</p> <p><i>21 Racial Microaggressions You Hear on a Daily Basis</i>, by Heben Nigatu</p> <p><i>Climbing the White Escalator</i>, by Betsy Leondar-Wright</p> <p><i>Explaining White Privilege To A Broke White Person</i>, by Gina Crosley-Corcoran</p> <p><i>Guide to Allyship</i>. Created by Amélie Lamont</p> <p><i>It's Not Just the South: Here's How Everyone Can Resist White Supremacy</i>, by Sarah van Gelder</p> <p><i>Making America White Again</i>, by Toni Morrison</p> <p><i>Understanding the Racial Wealth Gap</i>, by Amy Traub, Laura Sullivan, Tatjana Mescheded, & Tom Shapiro</p> <p><i>What White Children Need to Know About Race</i>, by Ali Michael and Elenora Bartoli</p> <p><i>White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack</i>, by Peggy McIntosh</p> <p><i>Presbytery of Charlotte Letter from Antiracism Team</i></p> <p><i>My President Was Black</i>, by Ta-Nehisi Coates</p> <p><i>Caught Up In God</i>, by Willie James Jennings</p> <p><i>Who Gets to Be Afraid in America?</i>, by Ibram X Kendi</p>	<p><i>Code Switch</i>, hosted by journalists Gene Demby and Shereen Marisol Meraji</p> <p><i>Black Like Me</i>, host Dr. Alex Gee</p> <p><i>Scene on Radio – Seeing White Series</i>, host John Biewen and collaborator Chenjerai Kumanyika</p> <p><i>TED Radio Hour – Mary Bassett: How Does Racism Affect Your Health?</i> host Guy Raz speaks with Dr. Mary T. Bassett, Director of the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University</p> <p><i>Here & Now – Without Slavery, Would The U.S. Be The Leading Economic Power?</i> host Jeremy Hobson and author Edward Baptist</p> <p><i>NPR Morning Edition – You Cannot Divorce Race From Immigration</i> journalist Rachel Martin talks to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas</p> <p><i>Pod Save the People</i>, Activism. Social Justice. Culture. Politics. On Pod Save the People, organizer and activist DeRay Mckesson</p>	<p>Test Your Awareness: Do The Test, This video shows us the importance of paying attention, and how much more we see when we are looking for particular things around us.</p> <p>Use each question below separately as one day's challenge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is and is not represented in ads? • What are the last five books you read? What is the racial mix of the authors? • What is the racial mix of the main characters in your favorite TV shows? Movies? • Who is filling what kinds of jobs/social roles in your world? Can you correlate any of this to racial identity?

Here are a few examples from the materials offered above, from the very documents that our former high school principal and former assistant high school principal agreed should be used by our teachers and “maybe” our students (emphasis added):

- In “What White Children Need to Know About Race,” authors Ali Michael and Eleonora Bartoli assert:
 - “Race is a social construct, not a biological fact.”

- *“Understand systemic racism....”*
- *“Honor and respect racial affinity spaces for students of color.”* If you’re not familiar with this concept, “affinity spaces” means segregated spaces for students based on their race. Thought we left segregation behind us generations ago? Think again.
- *“All white people are white in the context of a society that continues to disadvantage people of color based on race.”*
- In order to create a positive racial identity, *“requires an understanding of systemic racism.”*
- *“While students may need to be reassured that they did not ask to be white, or for any of the advantages that might come with it, they should also know that the reality in which they are embedded **ascribes unearned privileges to their whiteness.**”*
- *“Whites” should “foster an antiracist white identity”* (and remember, “antiracist” does not mean simply “against racism” anymore).

(<https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/summer-2014/what-white-children-need-to-know-about-race/>, last visited October 17, 2022)

- Identified in “10 Ways Well-Meaning White Teachers Bring Racism Into Our Schools”:
 - *“Being ‘Race Neutral’ Rather than Culturally Responsive”* because *“Race neutrality lends itself to defensiveness to **the ways Whiteness** and racism are problematic in our teaching.”*
 - *“Using Racially Coded Language,”* which includes, incredibly, *“if only the parents cared about their kids education”*
 - *“**Unintentionally Mispronouncing Names**”*
 - *“(Inadvertently) Valuing Whiteness” ... “One of the more insidious ways that White teachers bring racism into schools is in how we (often inadvertently) value Whiteness and European ways of being above all others. Whether we are strictly teaching the “canon” that is almost exclusively White or using examples in math or science problems that are more accessible to White and/or wealthy students than others, **White teachers inject Whiteness into our classrooms all the time.**”*
 - *“Doing Little or Nothing to **Advocate for More Teachers and Staff of Color.**”* (Got it? This resource advocates hiring based on race in violating of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution).

(<https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/08/10-ways-well-meaning-white-teachers-bring-racism-into-our-schools/>, last visited October 17, 2022)

- In “Explaining White Privilege To A Broke White Person,” the author asserts that “*it's impossible to deny that being born with white skin in America affords people certain unearned privileges in life that people of other skin colors simply are not afforded.*” She was raised dirt poor in decrepit trailer in northern Illinois, without heat or running water, and had to claw her way up through education into graduate school, but then nonetheless has come to recognize her “white privilege” because she now understands “intersectionality.” (https://www.huffpost.com/entry/explaining-white-privilege-to-a-broke-white-person_b_5269255?utm_hp_ref=tw, last visited October 17, 2022).
- In “Making America White Again,” Toni Morrison” contends “*Unlike any nation in Europe, the United States holds whiteness as the unifying force. Here, for many people, the definition of ‘Americanness’ is color”* (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/11/21/toni-morrison-trump-election-making-america-white-again>, last visited October 17, 2022).

The second linked site is “The Children’s Community School” (CCS), a school located just south west of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The CCS site includes the following as part of it’s “social justice” pages (emphasis added):

“The Children’s Community School is working to promote the values of economic and racial justice. . . We recognize that there are structural inequalities in our society, which systemically disadvantage people of color, poor people, and people with other marginalized identities. We further recognize that institutions such as schools are complicit in these inequalities, and that it is therefore our responsibility to work to actively resist injustice and to create a school where everyone is welcomed, valued, and safe.” (<http://www.childrenscommunityschool.org/justice/>, last visited October 17, 2022)

Social Justice at CCS

The Children's Community School is working to promote the values of economic and racial justice.

We recognize that there are structural inequalities in our society, which systemically disadvantage people of color, poor people, and people with other marginalized identities. We further recognize that institutions such as schools are complicit in these inequalities, and that it is therefore our responsibility to work to actively resist injustice and to create a school where everyone is welcomed, valued, and safe.

It's clear that CCS adopted a critical race theory-based approach to education, assuming the existing of “structural inequalities,” “systematic disadvantages,” and “marginalized identities,” and ascribing blame for those things squarely at the feet of “whiteness.” The resources on the CCS page include the following:

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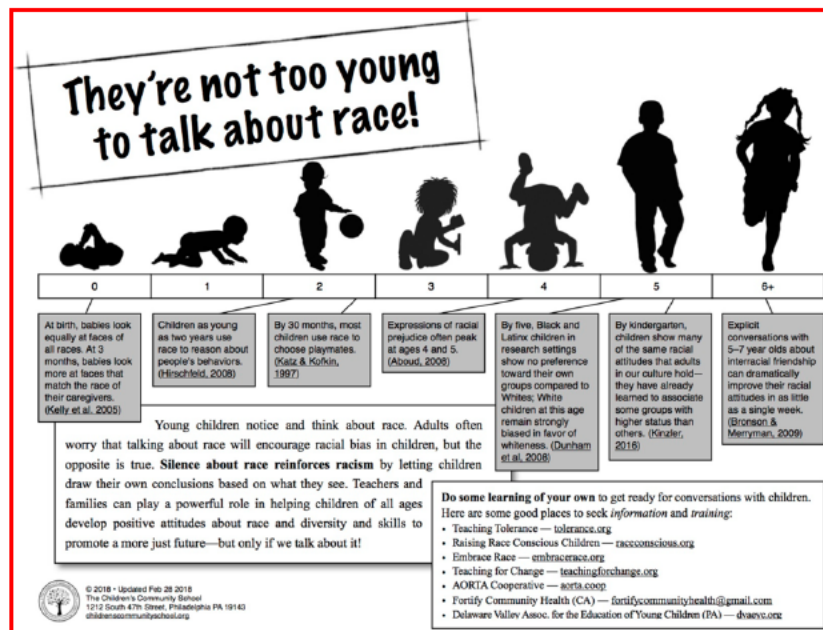
Resources from Around the Internet

Tips and Approaches

- [7 Things to Do When Your Kid Points Out Someone's Differences](#), by Rachel Garlinghouse.
- [Talking With Children About Racism, Police Brutality and Protests](#), by Laura Markham.
- [6 Things White Parents Can Do to Raise Racially Conscious Children](#), by Bree Ervin.
- [How to Talk to Little Girls](#), by Lisa Bloom.
- [Mama, Ella Has A Penis! How To Talk To Your Children About Gender Identity](#), by Marlo Mack.

Are these resources we want to actively put into the hands of our teachers for use in interactions with our children? “6 Things White Parents Can Do to Raise Racially Conscious Children?” “Mama, Ella has a Penis! How to Talk to Your Children About Gender Identity”? What if parents believe that children should be taught to look beyond race, rather than making it a central issue? What if parents believe children should be taught first and foremost to look at people as individual, with their own feelings and experiences, rather than as part a “racial group”? What if parents believe that sex and gender are inextricably linked and that gender is not “socially constructed”? When did it become the role of the school to insert itself into these essential moral conversations between parents and children? When did our school board approve these topics as appropriate for teacher training?

Another resource from the CCS website is an infographic called “They’re not too young to talk about race!” (see below). By its title, the infographic encourages parents to center “race” in conversations with children all the way down to newborns! The infographic states that “Silence about race reinforces racism.” Oddly, there seems to be an assumption that parents are silent about race, which we don’t think is ever the case. The infographic calls out white children as somehow more biased in favor of “whiteness,” and provides further resources on “Raising Race Conscious Children” and on how to “Embrace Race.” So much for looking beyond race...



Teaching tolerance and empathy should be our goal. But doing so from a base that assumes systemic racism and “white privilege” (and therefore guilt) only creates division and fosters resentment. We can and should do better. Materials like these should be rejected.

8.4 Social Justice Training Example 3 **Social Justice Training for School Counselors**

Email dated October 19, 2020 from Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21 (CLIU) to all high school, middle school, and elementary principals in the covered territory with request to forward a monthly update letter from the Lehigh Carbon School Counselor Association to “*your school counselors*.” The letter describes “*upcoming, no-cost professional development*” for school counselors. The letter is signed by Laura Zaharakis, who was at the time president of the Lehigh Carbon School Counselor Association.

From CLIU’s website, “*an Intermediate Unit is an educational service agency that works with schools in a specified region to provide a variety of services from special programs for students to recruiting for human resources departments as needed. Intermediate Units (IU) serve as a liaison between the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the school district.*” (<https://www.cliu.org/Page/25>, last visited October 17, 2022). CLIU #21 covers the Southern Lehigh school district, as well as 13 other school districts in Carbon and Lehigh counties (<https://www.cliu.org/domain/28>, last visited October 17, 2022).

Email from CLIU to covered school district principals. Presumably SLSD middle school, intermediate school, and elementary school principals received this email as well, but those records weren’t provided to us by the district if they exist.

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Brenda Kauffman** <kauffmanb1@cliu.org>
Date: Mon, Oct 19, 2020 at 1:51 PM
Subject: LCSCA letter for School Counselors
To: _HS Principals <_HSPrincipals@cliu.org>, _MS PRINCIPALS <_MSPRINCIPALS@cliu.org>, _ES PRINCIPALS <_ESPRINCIPALS@cliu.org>

Good Afternoon,

Please forward the attached letter to your school counselors. It is from the Lehigh Carbon School Counselors Association with some information about membership and upcoming, no-cost professional development.

Email from SLSD high school principal forwarding attachment to high school counselors. Presumably SLSD middle school, intermediate school, and elementary school principals forwarded this email to their respective counseling staff as well, but those records weren’t provided to us by the district if they exist.

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

Message

From: Beth Guarriello [guarriello@sdsd.org]
on behalf of Beth Guarriello <guarriello@sdsd.org> [guarriello@sdsd.org]
Sent: 10/19/2020 1:54:35 PM
To: HS Guidance [hsguidance@sdsd.org]
Subject: Fwd: LCSCA letter for School Counselors
Attachments: lcsca letter october (1).pdf

On the second page of the attachment, a “Social Justice Webinar” is described. The intent is clear, to teach the counselors “*how to incorporate social justice work into their school environments*” (emphasis added).

November 10th: 3:00 – 4:45 **Social Justice Webinar** |

We hope that this webinar will get you motivated to work towards social justice in your role as a school counselor. Our presenters, Kim Feicke and Camilla Greene, have been consulting with educators and leaders about how to incorporate social justice work into their school environments.

Is it the role of our guidance counselors to “work toward social justice in your role as a school counselor?”

Is it the role of our guidance counselors to “incorporate social justice work into [our] school environment?”

When did our school board approve this role?

We were under the impression that our guidance counselors were tasked with assisting individual students with individual struggles to support the student in being able to learn while at school.

We did not receive any records to confirm whether any of our counselors attended this session in response to our RTK requests, nor did we receive any training materials from that training if they did.

8.5 Social Justice Training Example 4 Credit for Professional Development in “Systemic Racism” and “White Privilege” for High School Counselors

Email dated June 12, 2020 among high school counselors regarding programs or activities that would satisfy SLSD’s “Academy Hours” hours requirement. In recent years, staff have had to complete as many as 12 “academy”/professional training hours per year, although this email identifies the requirement as “18 hours PLUS 12 extra hours,” suggesting that the requirement may be different for counselors versus teachers. To be clear, “Academy Hours” is professional development/training, *i.e., training intended to expand and improve the quality of education and interactions with students.*

The email states that a counselor may “read a book or articles, watch a documentary on system racism, white privilege or any other guidance/counseling related topics...” Why is training on “systemic racism” and “white privilege” appropriate for our counselors, let alone an appropriate framework for our counselors to use in interacting with our students? These topics would suggest that our counselors are being encourage to view our “white” students as oppressors and all other students as “oppressed.”

From: [REDACTED]
on behalf of [REDACTED]@slsd.org]
Sent: 6/12/2020 10:56:03 AM
To: [REDACTED]@slsd.org]
CC: [REDACTED]@slsd.org]; [REDACTED]@slsd.org]
Subject: Re: Academy Hours

All looks great thanks for taking care of that. I did register for the CB Counselor Summer Inst. as well. Thanks again!

On Fri, Jun 12, 2020 at 9:26 AM [REDACTED]@slsd.org> wrote:
[REDACTED] was just asking about the College Board Counselor Summer Institute at the beginning of August, so I thought I would send this to all of you.

I am planning to enter the following Academy opportunities next week (I will put your names on all of them, but feel free to do your own thing as well). I will push the deadlines out for all of them to give us the flexibility to complete them when we are able to). For example, it won't matter if you do the CB Counselor Summer Institute on the scheduled dates in early August or watch the recordings later.

6 hrs: 339 plan/CEW work
12 hrs: CB Counselor Summer Institute Webinars AND other CB Videos
6 hrs: **read a book or articles, watch a documentary on systemic racism, white privilege,** or ANY other guidance/counseling-related topic and what we can do; this will include at least an hour of discussion as a department where we can share information and ideas.
*Lynne had a great suggestion that perhaps we can have our department goal centered around this topic

6 hrs: Update guidance website and add additional resources (this would include researching/reading/stealing from other high school guidance websites)

6 hours are being provided by the district to work on canvas or classroom. I thought we could use that time to add materials for our College App for Seniors and College Prep for Juniors Spartan Period.

The academy hour requirement is the same - 18 hours PLUS 12 extra hours ("snow day"/Prof Dev).

Let me know if you have any questions or want me to submit anything else. Again, feel free to do whatever you wish. I am just trying to save us time so that we are not all individually entering basically the same things...

[REDACTED]
School Counselor

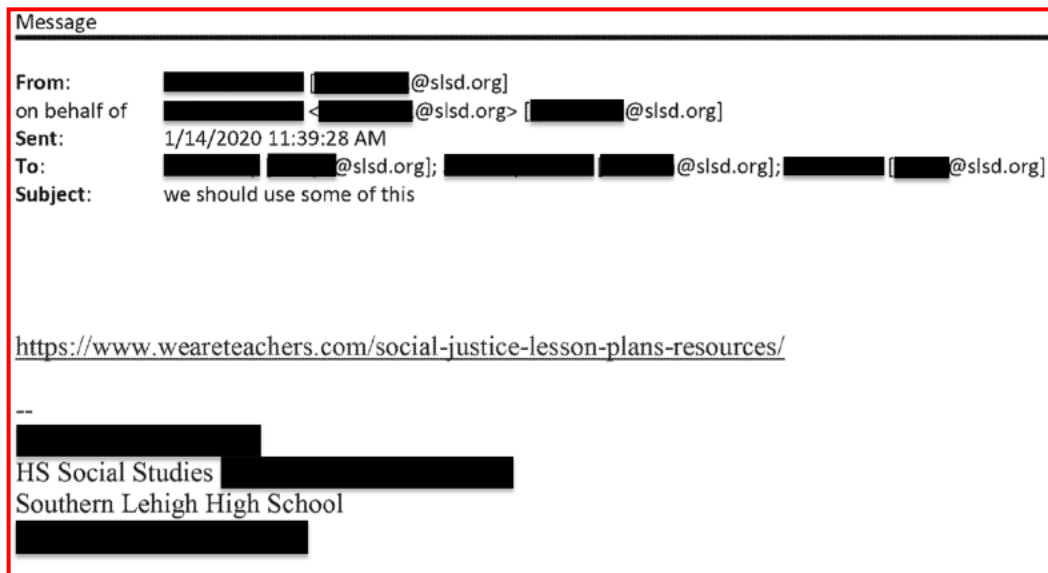
Southern Lehigh High School
5800 Main Street
Center Valley, PA 18034

Ph [REDACTED]
Fx [REDACTED]

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

8.6 Social Justice Training Example 5 CRT-based Resources for Social Studies Teachers

Email dated January 14, 2020 from a high school social studies teacher to other social studies teachers and learning support staff recommending social justice lesson plan resources on a site called “WE ARE TEACHERS” (www.weareteachers.com). Note that the subject line makes clear the intent: “**we should use some of this**” (emphasis added).



While the specific link this social studies teacher provided in the email is no longer live, when you type “social justice” into the “WE ARE TEACHERS” website search function, many lesson plan resources are provided. Here are some examples (emphasis added):

- In an article titled “50 Tips and Tricks to Facilitating a More Inclusive Classroom,” the author recommends:
 - “Avoid using language like ‘mom or dad’”
 - “Support Students in Creating Affinity Spaces. Sometimes marginalized students need a place to get away from people who don’t share their experiences. Help your students start a Black Student Union or a Queer Center on campus.” Yes, apparently segregation is back in style....
 - “Too often marginalized voices go unheard and discounted, especially in schools. Offer your students a wider view of the world (and maybe even some role models that share their experience) by incorporating magazine articles, books, and speeches by people who aren’t white, cisgender, straight men.”
 - “Give space for preferred pronouns...”
 - “Support students in creating pride organizations.”

- *“Use your professional development days to gain more diversity and inclusion training”*
- *“Use content warnings”*
- *“Supplement your curriculum. Make sure your curriculum doesn't center around a European male point of view.”*

(<https://www.weareteachers.com/tips-tricks-inclusive-classroom/>, last visited October 17, 2022)

- In an article titled “10 Ways Teachers can Fight Racism and Teach Tolerance,” the author recommends:
 - *“Racism is such a deeply ingrained part of our society that we may not even recognize it.”*
 - *“A good place to begin is by reading this piece, “The Racist Beginnings of Standardized Testing” on the National Education Association’s website.”*
 - *“Need some inspiration? This guide offers 8 Ways Teachers Can Address White Supremacy in the Classroom.”*
 - *“Start a diversity committee at your school.”*

(<https://www.weareteachers.com/teachers-fight-racism/>, last visited October 17, 2022)

8.7 Social Justice Training Example 6 Materials Distributed to Principals and K-3 Guidance Counselor regarding CASEL’s Commitment to use Social Emotional Learning as a “Lever for “Equity”

In emails dated June 24, 2020, Social Emotional Learning materials and links from CASEL (the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) focused on “Racial Equity” were distributed to SLSD principals, vice principals, and at least one K-3 guidance counselor. CASEL is a major vendor and promoter of “Social Emotional Learning” (SEL) materials.

Please ask yourself, if SEL is just about helping our students manage their emotions, reactions, and behaviors during the school day so that they can be effective learners, then why is CASEL promoting “SEL as a Lever for Equity and Social Justice?” Also, why are we encouraging our administrators and counselors to engage with this information? Finally, why is our CLIU, our “intermediate unit,” pumping CRT-based “equity” concepts into our schools?

Of course, “equity” in this context has the “new” social justice meaning. Fundamentally, CASEL is an organization that believes SEL should be leverages to “take action to fight injustice” (<<https://casel.org/events/sel-as-a-lever-for-equity-and-social-justice/>>, last visited May 30, 2023). When you see CASEL uses terms like “self-awareness,” “self-management,” and “responsible decision-making” in SEL materials, bear in mind those terms mean something

very different than what an uninitiated reader might expect. In fact, those terms are all meant to address social justice-related goals. The following slide from CASEL’s presentation titled “SEL As a Lever for Equity and Social Justice (<<https://casel.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/SEL-as-Lever-for-Equity-Slides.pdf>>, last visited May 30, 2023):

Transformative SEL

- **Self-awareness:** e.g., racial, classed, gendered identities
- **Self-management:** e.g., collective agency
- **Social awareness:** e.g., belonging
- **Relationship skills:** e.g., collaboration/co-construction
- **Responsible decision-making:** e.g., distributive justice/collective well-being

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CASEL wants SLSD to teach our children through SEL training to focus on:

- their race, their class, and their gender (definition of “self-awareness” above);
- Their role as part of a “collective” (definition of “self-management” above); and
- How to achieve “distributive justice,” which means, of course, redistribution of assets and privileges to create equal outcomes (definition of “responsible decision-maker” above).

Does that sound like it is classroom-behavior focused? Obviously not. It is clear that CASEL has a social justice activist goal.

The slide below, from the same CASEL presentation, makes clear the intent of SEL is “use SEL as a lever for equity,” to encourage “cultural competencies” and “culturally responsive approaches” (see Sections 3.0 and 13.0 of this report to understand these CRT terms), and to “dismantle inequities.”

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SEL as a Lever for Equity: District Strategies



Build Foundational Support and Plan

Strengthen Adult SEL competencies and capacity

Promote SEL for Students

Practice Continuous Improvement

1. Explicitly position and communicate about SEL as a lever for equity
2. Prioritize adult learning and critical reflection about their own social, emotional, and cultural competencies
3. Elevate students' cultural assets, voice, and agency
4. Partner authentically with families and communities to develop culturally responsive approaches to SEL; and
5. Establish SEL data strategies that help to illuminate and dismantle inequities.

Below is the email from our CLIU/Intermediate Unit to SLSL principals and vice principals, as well as the email forwarding the materials to an SLSD counselor:

Message

From: Samuel Hafner [hafners@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Samuel Hafner <hafners@sbsd.org> [hafners@sbsd.org]
Sent: 6/24/2020 11:37:01 AM
To: Maria Ramunni [ramunnim@sbsd.org]
Subject: Fwd: FW: Tools for SEL and Equity, State Efforts During COVID-19, and more!

----- Forwarded message -----
From: **Michael Heater** <heaterm@cliu.org>
Date: Wed, Jun 24, 2020 at 11:34 AM
Subject: FW: **Tools for SEL and Equity, State Efforts During COVID-19, and more!**
To: _HS Principals <HSPRINCIPALS@cliu.org>, _ES PRINCIPALS <ESPRINCIPALS@cliu.org>, _MS PRINCIPALS <MSPRINCIPALS@cliu.org>

Sharing some tools centered around SEL and equity...

Michael Heater Jr.
Coordinator of Curriculum & Instruction/Educational Technologies
Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21
(610) 769-4111 ext. 1224

Below are portions for the attachment to that email (which was a lengthy seven page document with extensive graphics that did not load into the version of the document provided by the district):

CASEL's Commitment to SEL as a Lever for Equity

We at CASEL hold fast to the belief that our work must **actively contribute to anti-racism** and to all forms of prejudice reduction. We have rededicated ourselves to the work we've begun but that is seriously unfinished: **diversity, equity, and inclusion at every level of our organization and at every level of our collaborative**. Learn more about **concrete efforts toward racial equity and collective well-being**. [Read the full statement from the CASEL Board of Directors.](#)

Tool: SEL & Equity Pitfalls & Recommendations

As educators, we must strive to advance progress on equity and inclusion in our implementation of SEL. From the National Equity Project, this [downloadable chart](#) provides guidance for educators seeking to advance that commitment.



Mark Your Calendar

June 24-26: Music City SEL Virtual Conference 2020.
[Register](#)

June 26: CASEL Webinar on "Adult SEL to Support Antiracist Practices." [Register](#)

8.8 Social Justice Training Example 7

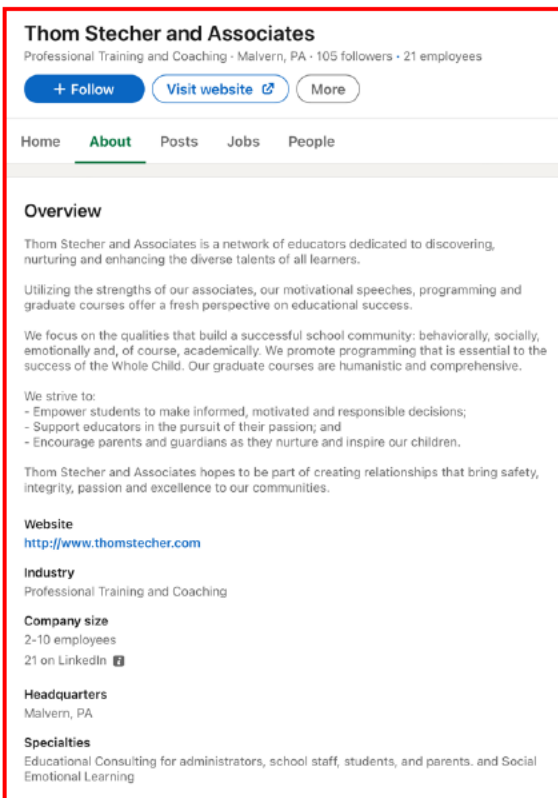
\$28,200 for Extensive Training in Social Emotional Learning for Staff and Students

Thom Stecher and Associates (for purposes of this section, "[Stecher](#)"), a Social Emotion Learning (SEL) training organization with offices in Malvern, PA submitted a "Proposal of Services 2020-2022" to SLSD detailing an extensive set of services including professional

services for staff, training for students, guidance on how to integrate SEL into academic content, and other activities and services. The total charge for the services listed in the proposal is \$28,200. There may be other proposals or subsequent proposals, but this is the only one that we obtained in response to our RTK request. The services were retained, as we have extensive references to services being provided by Stecher in various “Board Reports” in relevant periods (e.g., Southern Lehigh High School Monthly Report for October 2020 submitted by former principal Guariello which includes a lengthy paragraph describing the “High School Professional Development for Teachers,” and the same report for February 2021 which references “Advisory Leadership Student Training,” etc. (these various reports are available on the district website)).

Who is Thom Stecher and Associates?

Stecher is a professional training and coaching company that focuses on “the qualities that build a successful school community.” They do this by teaching and supporting CASEL’s SEL in schools (Stecher’s website has numerous CASEL materials and links to CASEL documents). Below is a screen capture of Stecher’s linked in page and the main page of their website (last viewed on May 30, 2023):



[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

And this is an example of CASEL materials on the Stecher website:

The screenshot shows a webpage header for Thom Stecher & Associates with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. The main heading is "Resources: Current Social Emotional Research". Below this is the title "COLLABORATIVE FOR ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (CASEL)" followed by a link to the "CASEL official website". The page lists the "Mission" (to establish social and emotional learning as an essential part of education) and the "Vision" (a world where families, schools, and communities work together to promote children's success). It also lists "Core Benefits" with six numbered points. A yellow box contains a section titled "What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?" with sub-sections for "SEL - Frequently Asked Questions", "The Benefits of SEL", and "SEL and Academics", followed by a list of five documents with red document icons. At the bottom, it says "SEARCH INSTITUTE & DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS" and provides a link to the "Search Institute official website".

As you will see in the Stecher proposal below, SEL focuses at the high level on building five core competencies in students, all of which sound entirely innocuous: (i) self-awareness, (ii) self-management, (iii) responsible decision making, (iv) relationship skills, and (v) social awareness. Any normal person would think those competencies would be great things for our students to learn, but definitions matter, and how CASEL defines these terms is materially different than the ordinary reader would expect.


[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

Here is how CASEL presents those concepts on its website (<<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/>>, last visited May 30, 2023):

What is the CASEL SEL framework?

For many, our framework is known as the “CASEL wheel.” At the center are the five core social and emotional competencies—broad, interrelated areas that support learning and development. Circling them are four key settings where students live and grow. School-family-community partnerships coordinate SEL practices and establish equitable learning environments across all of these contexts.

[Explore the CASEL Framework](#)





The diagram is a circular 'CASEL wheel' with five concentric layers. The innermost layer is a circle divided into five colored segments: orange (Self-Awareness), yellow (Responsible Decision-Making), green (Relationship Skills), light green (Social Awareness), and light orange (Self-Management). The center of the wheel is a white circle labeled 'Social & Emotional Learning'. The second layer is a blue ring with four segments: 'CLASSROOMS' (top), 'SCHOOLS' (right), 'FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS' (left), and 'COMMUNITIES' (bottom). The third layer is a light blue ring with three segments: 'SEL Instruction & Classroom Climate' (top), 'Schoolwide Culture, Practices & Policies' (right), and 'Authentic Partnerships' (left). The outermost layer is a very light blue ring with one segment: 'Aligned Learning Opportunities' (bottom).

But, if you dig deeper on the CASEL website, you can find exactly what CASEL means when it uses those terms. The following slide from CASEL’s presentation titled “SEL As a Lever for Equity and Social Justice (<<https://casel.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/SEL-as-Lever-for-Equity-Slides.pdf>>, last visited May 30, 2023):

Transformative SEL

- **Self-awareness:** e.g., racial, classed, gendered identities
- **Self-management:** e.g., collective agency
- **Social awareness:** e.g., belonging
- **Relationship skills:** e.g., collaboration/co-construction
- **Responsible decision-making:** e.g., distributive justice/collective well-being

 Made possible with support from 

CASEL wants SLSD to teach our children through SEL training to focus on:

- their race, their class, and their gender (definition of “self-awareness” above);
- Their role as part of a “collective” (definition of “self-management” above); and
- How to achieve “distributive justice,” which means, of course, redistribution of assets and privileges to create equal outcomes (definition of “responsible decision-maker” above).

This is not about helping students management their behavior in school. It’s about indoctrinating students into a social justice/CRT ideology. CASEL is frankly not shy about stating this goal. The slide below, from the same CASEL presentation, makes clear the intent of SEL is to “use SEL as a lever for equity,” to encourage “cultural competencies” and “culturally responsive approaches” (see [Sections 3](#) and [13.0](#) of this Report to understand these CRT terms), and to “dismantle inequities.” This is social justice activism and it's in our schools.

SEL as a Lever for Equity: District Strategies

Build Foundational Support and Plan	1. Explicitly position and communicate about SEL as a lever for equity
Strengthen Adult SEL competencies and capacity	2. Prioritize adult learning and critical reflection about their own social, emotional, and cultural competencies
Promote SEL for Students	3. Elevate students’ cultural assets, voice, and agency
Practice Continuous Improvement	4. Partner authentically with families and communities to develop culturally responsive approaches to SEL; and
	5. Establish SEL data strategies that help to illuminate and dismantle inequities.

Mede possible with support from Allstate Foundation

Stecher Proposal

The Stecher proposal, included in full below, includes \$28,2000 worth of services that include, for example:

- Professional Development training for all staff on the “5 competencies” (described and defined above for reference)
- Creation and curation of a “Southern Lehigh Advisory SEL Curriculum
- Professional Development training for all staff on “Diversity and Equity through a SEL Lens,” including “best practices” for “teaching diversity and equity through an SEL lens”
- Training of “student leadership” (70 students) in SEL

- Instruction on how to integrate SEL into “academic content”

Southern Lehigh High School- Proposal of Services 2020-2022

Southern Lehigh High School - Proposal of Services - 2020-2022				
Timeline	Description of Services	Details	Frequency	
August 26, 2020	Professional Development <i>All staff</i>	Keynote- Building a classroom and school community is essential to the teaching and learning process. When staff and students feel safe and supported, teaching and learning is successful. We will explore the 5 competencies of Social Emotional Learning that are the foundation of creating a climate and culture where community is built. Breakout Professional Development - Social Emotional Learning in Practice This session will focus on Social Emotional Learning research, impact, and best practices in High School Advisory Programs. We will experience the 5 competencies of Social Emotional Learning through engaging activities that anchor these competencies. We will also learn about levels of relationships, giving and receiving honest feedback and stages of group development.	1 full day	\$2,500
Summer 2020	Advisory Planning Committee	Collaboration with Advisory planning committee - Establish overall common language - Establish theme and overall outcomes of Advisory - Creating of lessons for 2020-2021 school year	4 sessions- 3 hours per session	\$2,000
	Creation of Southern Lehigh High School Advisory SEL Curriculum	- Curation of specific Southern Lehigh Advisory SEL Curriculum - Materials for lessons required additional supplies (additional costs TBD) - Digital distribution of curriculum - Copyright release to Southern Lehigh High School		\$3,500
Summer/Fall 2020	Student Leadership day	70 student leaders and 7-8 Invested staff We will explore the characteristics and skills needed to be a servant leader. Through engaging activity and small group discussion, we will learn strategies to utilize in Advisory period.	1 full day	\$2,000
2020-2021 School Year	Student Leadership sessions	70 student leaders and 7-8 Invested staff We will continue our journey in becoming a servant leader. Focusing on the positive impact we can have, empowering voice to inspire growth and change, and building connection and genuine caring for ourselves and our school community.	3 sessions- 2 hours minimum	\$2,500
April 2021	Professional Development <i>All staff</i>	Keynote - Diversity and Equity through a SEL Lens Social Emotional Learning is the foundation of Diversity and Equity, the concerns at the forefront for ourselves and our students. With a common message of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, we can build and grow respect for diversity and equity in our classroom, school, and family community. Breakout Professional Development - Social Emotional Learning in Practice Building on the instruction and integration of the 5 SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, we can see our students through an awareness of diversity and equity. We will develop practical and applicable strategies for best practices teaching diversity and equity through an SEL lens.	1 full day	\$2,500

Thom Stecher and Associates

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6/26/2020

SLSD03069

Southern Lehigh High School- Proposal of Services 2020-2022

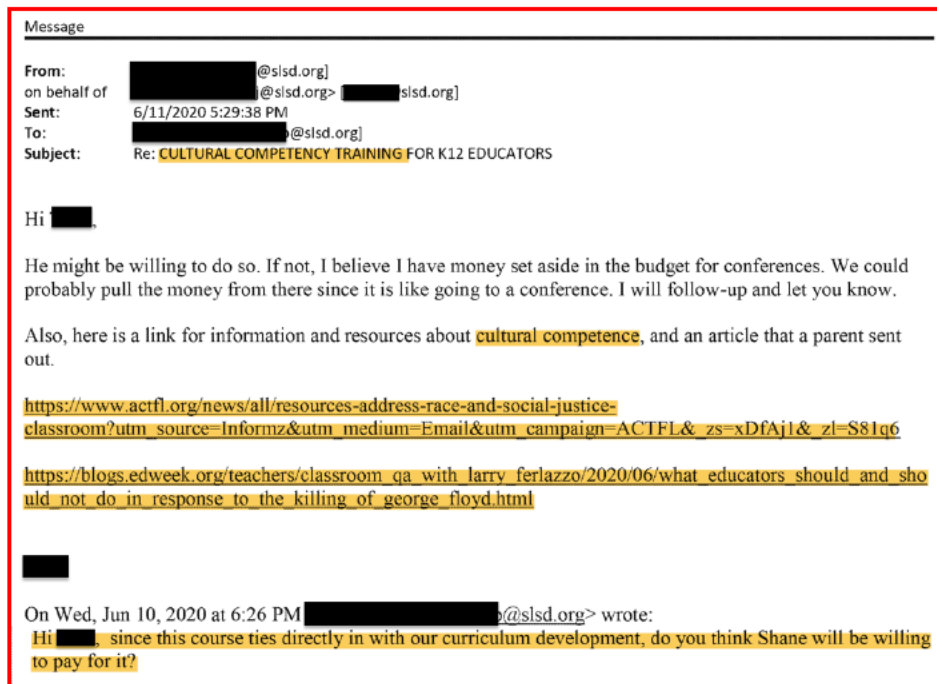
Coaching Model - 2020-2022				
2020-2022 School Year	SEL Coaching Model	Coaching Cohort Arrangements - 6 Cohorts Hallway groupings- 12 teachers per cohort Coaching Half Day Sessions- minimum of 2 hours per session 1. SEL Competencies and Building a Classroom Community 2. Facilitation and processing of activities. Feedback, Grouping 3. SEL integration into academic content 4. Demonstration and experimentation of Advisory lessons	Coaching Sessions 4 Sessions per Cohort Preferably Coaches working with 2 Cohorts on one day	\$8,400
2020-2022 School Year	Coach Observation and Feedback	Observation/Feedback Session 1 per observation per teacher - Coach observes Advisory period - Follow-up between coach and teacher to process and reflect Additional Supports Accountability and follow up of members of each cohort Feedback after each coaching session Continued engagement opportunities between sessions utilizing online platform Coaching reports and self assessments	Observation and Feedback Session approximately 24 Advisory period days with 3 Coaches in building	\$4,800
				\$28,200

Based on the above, it’s clear that “SEL” is a wolf in sheep’s clothing, professing to teacher about self-control and kindness, while in fact putting “race” and “identity” in the forefront as a

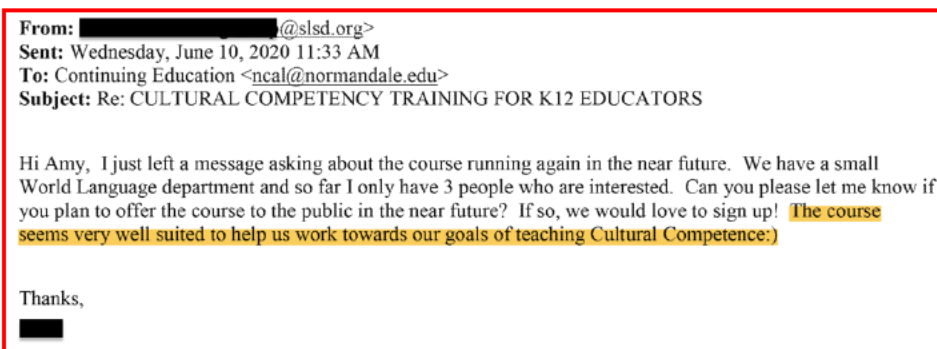
means to “dismantle inequities.” This is the implementation of CRT-based approaches at SLSD. The program should be rejected as corrupt from its inception.

8.9 Social Justice Training Example 8 District Funds Course on “Cultural Competence” to Support “Curriculum Development”

In 2020, SLSD approved and provided funding for a high school teacher to attend a course on “cultural competence.” In emails between teachers, one confirmed that “*this course directly ties into our curriculum development.*” The teacher went on to ask whether Shane Cross, then-director of K-12 Curriculum, would fund attendance out of his budget, given that it was related to curriculum development.



In another e-mail, a teacher confirmed that “*the course seems very well suited to help us work towards our goals of teaching Cultural Competence :)*”:



It is clear from these teacher's own words that the course is intended to inform curriculum creation at SLSD.

So, why is "cultural competence" problematic? A reasonable person would assume that "cultural competence" would mean an openness to understanding other cultures, including how those other cultures may influence the thoughts and behaviors of individuals coming from or influenced by those cultures. Unfortunately, in the world of social justice, "cultural competence" is simply the application of Critical Race Theory to the education world. Please see Sections 3.0 and 13.0 of this report for definitions of both terms.

That "cultural competence" is not a benign concept becomes starkly clear if one follows the links provided in the email above and reviews the materials available there. These are the links:

Also, here is a link for information and resources about **cultural competence**, and an article that a parent sent out.

https://www.actfl.org/news/all/resources-address-race-and-social-justice-classroom?utm_source=Informz&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=ACTFL&zs=xDfAj1&zl=S81q6

https://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2020/06/what_educators_should_and_should_not_do_in_response_to_the_killing_of_george_floyd.html

The first link takes the reader to a long list of links on social justice, including works by the following authors and related materials:

- "Enacting Social Justice in Early Language Classrooms through Critical Cultural Awareness"
- White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo
- How to be an Anti-Racist*
- Anti-Racist Resources for White People

The second link takes the reader to another long list of links on social justice, including works by the following authors and related materials:

- An essay titled: "There is no Apolitical Classroom"
- White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo
- Ibram X. Kendi*
- Ta-Nehisi Coates

** As previously mentioned, Ibram X. Kendi's definition of "anti-racism" is CRT equity-based, and can be summarized by the following quote from the Kendi himself: "The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination." (How to Be An Anti-Racist, Ibram X. Kendi (2019), p. 19).*

If you've read earlier portions of this report, you will know these authors are of the "oppressor/oppressed," social justice mindset. Their works have no place in our schools, except in a handful of appropriate high school-level classes where they would be presented as "viewpoints" (not orthodoxy) and with appropriate countervailing traditional civil-rights based works.

8.10 Social Justice Training Example 9 **Distribution of "Resources for White Parents to Raise Anti-Racist Children"**

Three page list of "Prejudice and Discrimination Resources" list "**Resources for White Parents to Raise Anti-Racist Children**," because, of course, in the world of social justice, only the children of white parents can be "racist" in the first place and thus require "anti-racist" re-education (as we've mentioned a number of times, "anti-racist" does not mean "against racism," as any reasonable person would expect, but has a new meaning (See Sections 3.0 and 13.0). See Attachment 17 for full document.

Prejudice and Discrimination Resources

Resources for white parents to raise anti-racist children:

The list includes the following recommendations:

- The 1619 Project
- The Intersectionality Wars
- Tips for Creating Effective White Caucus Groups
- White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack
- Intersectionality Matters
- How to be an Anti-Racist (by Ibram X. Kendi)
- Me and White Supremacy
- White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to to Talk About Racism
- Zinn's Education Project's teaching materials

[Continued on Next Page]

8.11 Social Justice Training Example 10 Training Program on Social and Emotional Learning that includes “Elevating Educational Equity through Social Emotional Learning”

Email dated September 8, 2019 to all SLSD employees in positions of power (principals, vice principals, etc.) asking for confirmations as to whether the recipients will attend a training program on “Social and Emotional Learning,” which includes a session titled: “Elevating Educational Equity through Social Emotional Learning.”

Message

From: Elaine Lebo [leboe@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Elaine Lebo <leboe@sbsd.org> [leboe@sbsd.org]
Sent: 9/8/2019 8:37:32 PM
To: Ken Jordan [jordank@sbsd.org]; Andria Buchman [buchmana@sbsd.org]; Shane Cross [crosss@sbsd.org]; Mary Farris [farrism@sbsd.org]; Beth Guarriello [guarriello@sbsd.org]; Thomas Ruhf [ruhft@sbsd.org]; Jen Brinson [brinsonj@sbsd.org]; Edward Donahue [donahuee@sbsd.org]; Jack Hankee [hankeej@sbsd.org]; Sean McGinty [mcgintys@sbsd.org]; Lynn Chromiak [chromiakl@sbsd.org]; Lori Limpar [limparl@sbsd.org]; Sam Hafner [hafners@sbsd.org]
CC: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@sbsd.org]; Dr. Michael Q. Roth [rothm@sbsd.org]
Subject: Fwd: Lehigh U. Study Council and GLVCEE October 16th Program Registration
Attachments: October 16th Program Registration.pdf

Good evening, If you responded to this invitation previously, you will not need to do so again. I will need your reply so that I can make reservations by September 30. Both sessions focus on social and emotional learning. Please let me know if you plan to attend morning, afternoon, or both sessions. Thank you!

Elaine Lebo, Administrative Assistant
to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent
610-282-3121, ext. 5102
leboe@sbsd.org

----- Forwarded message -----
From: LUSCC GLVCEE <inlussc@lehigh.edu>
Date: Thu, Sep 5, 2019 at 1:00 PM
Subject: Lehigh U. Study Council and GLVCEE October 16th Program Registration
To: Tracy D. Davis <trd216@lehigh.edu>, Brian Osborne <bgo219@lehigh.edu>, LUSCC GLVCEE <inlussc@lehigh.edu>

Good afternoon!

Hope all is well and that the beginning of the school year is off to a great start! It's that time of year again to begin our Study Council and **Equity Consortium programs**. We are very excited to welcome **Dr. Brian Osborne** to serve as Executive Director this year! He will kick off the October 16th program with a welcome message.

Join us to hear from **Krista Leh of Resonance Educational Consulting** and **Thom Stecher of Thom Stecher & Associates**. They will share "The Power of Relationships, Connection, and Social Emotional Learning" in the AM LUSCC session and "Elevating Educational Equity through Social Emotional Learning" in the PM GLVCEE session.

Thom Stecher is the same Thom Stecher that SLSD paid more than \$28,000 for “SEL”-related services, see “*Social Justice Training Example 7*” above. If it was unclear what the intent of Thom Stecher’s intent is vis-à-vis SLSD, and SLSD’s request of Thom Stecher, this training

session should make clear that “SEL” is intimately tied to the Social Justice concept of “Equity” (a reminder, these terms are defined in Sections 3.0 and 13.0 of this Report).

[End of Section]

9.0 Curriculum Changes, Library Audit, and Book Choices

As discussed in [Section 5.0](#) of this report, former superintendent Evison intended to remake our school district at all levels in the name of “social justice,” and she had the willing assistance of several other key people in our district. Her efforts included not only the DEI initiative with Dr. Joseph Allen and what it would have entailed had it not been stopped, but also attempts embed social justice thought and approaches in the curriculum of our school, as well as books available our school libraries.

In an email from Evison to a local news reporter dated June 10, 2020, Evison makes her intent to use English Language Arts and Social Studies as a beachhead for spreading her version of “equity and diversity” in our schools (emphasis added):

Message

From: Kathleen Evison [evisonk@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> [evisonk@sbsd.org]
Sent: 6/10/2020 12:06:47 PM
To: Christopher Haring [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Southern Lehigh Racism Petition - Saucon Source

Good morning Chris,

Thank you for reaching out.

We truly appreciate that our alumni are engaging in these critical discussions and are sharing their past experiences at Southern Lehigh School District.

A school district plays a critical role in providing experiences for all students that is culturally responsive and include instruction that includes direct anti-racist education, ensuring understanding of issues around identity, power, privilege, the historical context of oppression, and bias. There are many complex steps that need to be taken in order to adopt a new curriculum or add new courses. In order to manage this complex process and ensure consistent and sustained focus, the district implemented a Curricular Cycle for Excellence in 2017. This cycle is designed to fully evaluate all aspects of curriculum and instruction in the district to ensure the needs of students are being met academically, socially, emotionally, and culturally. Once evaluation is complete, the curriculum for that subject is revised or new content created with a focus on state and national standards, best practices, progression of learning, and culturally responsive practices. This cycle works systematically through every curricular area in the district, and each year different subjects are scheduled for this comprehensive process. **This year, English Language Arts and Social Studies are entering the cycle. While all subjects are equally responsible for high quality inclusive curriculum that emphasize equity and diversity, these two subjects in particular are where a majority of opportunities lay to deepen and expand this work.** Throughout this work, the district has and will continue to engage the support and direct input of external partners who are experts in the field of diversity, equity and inclusion.

As educators and as a community, we have much to do, and we look forward to continuing to engage our students, family, staff and stakeholders not only through feedback as issues arise, but also as participants in the challenging work ahead.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

If you haven't done so already, we strongly encourage you to read [Sections 3.0 and 13.0](#) of this report, which explains what terms like “culturally responsive,” “anti-racist,” “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” now mean, and why Evison references concepts in her first sentence like “identity,” “power,” “privilege,” and “oppression.” These terms frequently do not mean what a lay person would expect them to mean. The term “anti-racist,” for example, no longer means “against racism,” as any normal person would expect, but that one endorses and actively engages in discrimination based on race today to achieve “diversity, equity, and inclusion” (as explained by Ibram X. Kendi in his book “*How to be An Anti-Racist*”).

When did our school board decide that our district must provide “*instruction that includes direct anti-racist education*” and that our district must ensure that our students understand “*issues around identity, power, privilege, the historical context of oppression, and bias?*” We have reviewed more than five years of school board minutes and have found nothing that suggests that our school board has ever approved any such curriculum, or that such concepts be embedded within other courses of study. Our view is that Evison was stating **her** view for the district, without ever having aligned, let alone obtained the approval of, the school board.

In an email exchange on May 2, 2021 between Mr. Shane Cross, our former Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12 who reported directly to Evison, and a community member, Cross laid out a long list of areas through which the district was integrating “diversity, equity, and inclusion” into our schools. Evison was copied on the email. Cross stated (emphasis added):

From: Shane Cross <crosss@sbsd.org>
Sent: Sunday, May 2, 2021 8:07 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org>
Subject: Re: DEI Work

Good morning [REDACTED]

Thank you for your inquiry.

The District remains committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as part of our Comprehensive Plan. Over the last several years there have been communications, public forums, DEI committee work, **changes to literature used in courses,** professional development, student groups, and expansion of counseling services. Dr. Joseph Allen is in the process of collecting data for a needs assessment that will guide future DEI work and our next 3 year comprehensive plan. Literacy and Social Studies have now entered the **Cycle for Curricular Excellence (CCE),** where DEI is being considered as part of curricular revisions. Additionally, we have completed an audit of our Library collection and are in the process of expanding the collection to include **more books that all students can identify with. In turn, those books can then be used as part of instruction.**

I want to assure you that whenever issues arise, buildings work with students to discuss and process, where appropriate, in the classroom setting, small groups, or individually.

I have cc'd Dr. Evison so she can also respond.

Best Regards,
Shane

Shane T. Cross
Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12
610.282.3121, Ext 5403
Cell: [REDACTED]
crosss@sbsd.org
#SBSDproud

Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street
Center Valley, PA 18034

In Cross' own words, we know that using "*Literacy and Social Studies*" are/were being used as an avenue to advance "DEI." One would think that a superintendent and a Director Curriculum and Instruction would perhaps instead focus on improving academic performance, but that wasn't the case in our district. We also know that in his position as Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Cross conducted a "library audit," that we also know (see discussion below) resulted in the acquisition of new books for our libraries. Based on the book selections, which are discussed in detail below, it's clear that Evison and Cross wanted to create the next generation of activist social justice warriors.

Cross' statements match statements by Evison to DEI consultant Allen in an email exchange on June 19, 2020, where she confirmed to Allen when speaking about DEI education that "*a piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA [English Language Arts] and Social Studies are in there this year.*"

On Fri, Jun 19, 2020 at 12:57 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon,

This looks really good. **The only other area I feel we're really lacking is the aspect of providing education to our students in these areas. A piece of that is through our curriculum review process and ELA and Social Studies are in there this year.** My concern is that we have a significant percentage of our student body that do not understand race, justice and equity and are either passively, or outright directly marginalizing their peers, using unacceptable language and generally exhibiting racist and biased behaviors. I know that's a lot to tackle, and that our staff and admin need to come first, so maybe just a reference to how this work with staff will then lead to not only culturally affirming practices in pedagogy but also in direct teaching of these issues to students? It's just my thought and I'm certainly open to feedback, but just wondering how we capture the portion of helping our students address their own bias and racism.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
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✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

This approach of using English and social studies as avenues to embed DEI ideology in our schools was embraced by other administrators and teachers as well.

In an email dated April 11, 2021, a former high school principal Beth Guariello wrote to Cross that "*the English department is always working to improve, adapt and broaden the current curriculum in order to address diversity, equity and inclusion issues*" (emphasis added):

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

Message

From: Beth Guarriello [guarriello@slsd.org]
on behalf of Beth Guarriello <guarriello@slsd.org> [guarriello@slsd.org]
Sent: 4/11/2021 5:16:55 PM
To: Shane Cross [crosss@slsd.org]
CC: [REDACTED]@slsd.org; [REDACTED]@slsd.org; [REDACTED]@slsd.org; [REDACTED]@slsd.org
Subject: Honors English 10 Novel Addition to Curriculum
Attachments: Everything I Never Told You Celeste Ng.docx

Hi Shane,

As you know, the English department is always working to improve, adapt and broaden the current curriculum in order to address diversity, equity and inclusion issues. In an effort to continue to improve this program, I am asking that the novel, *Everything I Never Told You*, by Celeste Ng be brought to the board for approval.

In addition to being a novel with important themes of modern exploration of gender dynamics and expectations, implicit bias, cultural expectations, societal pressures on academic success, and the incredibly challenging conversations around cultural assimilation, the author is of Asian American / Pacific Islander descent and we currently do have that group represented in any of our readings. Please note there are some minor, potentially controversial topics throughout the novel so please make sure to review the attached form for approval.

This novel has been on our Summer Reading list for a few years now but the students always had the option to read something else instead but if we include this in our required readings, all students would be exposed to this work. We would have to purchase the novels from the building budget since this is not for a new course. I am aware of this.

Please let me know what more you need in order to move forward with this request. Thank you for your support of our program and our desire to adapt and improve. -Beth



Beth Guarriello
Principal: Southern Lehigh High School
guarriello@slsd.org
(610) 292-1421

The second paragraph gives away the game: “the author is of Asian American/Pacific Islander descent and we current do [presumably the principal meant to include “not” here, otherwise the paragraph makes no sense...] have that group represented in any of our readings.” It’s clear Guarriello was thinking in terms of race, and then bean counting to ensure that each race was appropriately “represented” to achieve “diversity.” Could we not have made this same decision because Celeste Ng writes beautifully and has made a meaningful contribution to the understanding of gender dynamics and cultural differences and expectations? **Intentions matter.** I suspect Ms. Ng would prefer the latter, rather than being reduced to a token Asian so that someone can check the “Asian, female” box on a “diversity” checklist.

In an email dated September 9, 2020, Guarriello wrote to a former student that (emphasis added): “We have also met with our Director of Curriculum and Instruction [Shane Cross] and we are **rewriting our Social Studies and English curricula to include more work with diverse themes and written by more diverse authors**” (emphasis added).

Message

From: Beth Guarriello [guarriello@sdsd.org]
on behalf of Beth Guarriello <guarriello@sdsd.org> [guarriello@sdsd.org]
Sent: 9/9/2020 9:22:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]
CC: Chad Kinslow [kinslow@sdsd.org]; Jennifer Brinson [brinsonj@sdsd.org]
Subject: Re: SPIRIT

Hi [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email and I really appreciate you taking the time to email. I hope Penn State is treating you well. I was the LaVie editor, member of Parmi Nous and Lions Paw and absolutely loved my time up at State College! My kids all attended PSU as did my husband and parents. (We bleed blue and white!) I am so glad to see that such quality students like you are active and giving back to my alma mater. Thank you!!!

You will be glad to hear that we have established a Diversity Council (this grew out of the SPIRIT and Aevium groups) with about 30 students who have been meeting regularly. We have 3 teacher advisors, 3 administrators and Office Mc Laughlin all serving on the committee along with the students. We have met with alumni and gathered their perspective after leaving Solehi and have incorporated their suggestions into our work. **We also have met with our Director of Curriculum and Instruction and we are rewriting our Social Studies and English curricula to include more work with diverse themes and written by more diverse authors.** We also are looking at adding a possible anthropology course to our social studies department to provide the opportunities to learn from various perspectives and cultures. We also have grown our Gay Straight Alliance Clubs and have brought extensive workshops and guest speakers to the school to advocate for understanding and acceptance of all types of diversity. **The district has also hired a Diversity Officer to review all of our practices Kindergarten to 12th grade and provide suggestions for improvement.** This has all been done in the last 2 1/2 years so we are definitely trying to address this very important issue.

So.... I think you and I are on the same page! :) I think it would be great to speak with you and determine how you can help Solehi grow and become better with respect to these important issues. Can we set up a meeting time (zoom or phone call) to discuss how to move forward?

Thank you so much for reaching out and I look forward to speaking with you soon! Take care and be well -Beth

PS- Have a cone at the creamery for me!!!

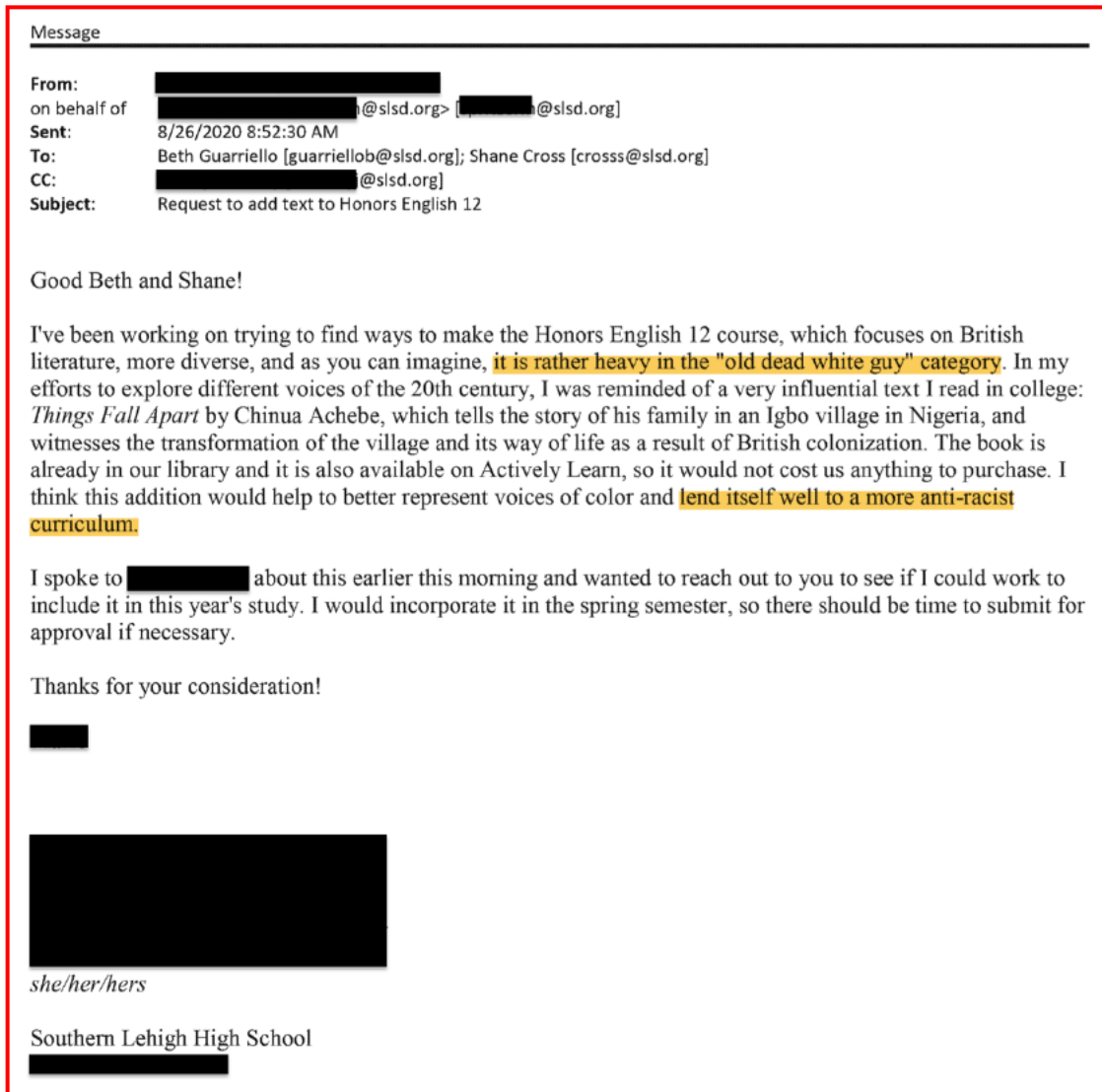


Beth Guarriello
Principal, Southern Lehigh High School
guarriello@sdsd.org
(610) 282-1421

“Diverse themes” (or said another way, viewpoint diversity) is fundamentally a good thing. Reading about different viewpoints and different experiences is one of the ways we can learn and practice empathy. However, choosing authors because they themselves are “diverse” (*i.e.*, their skin color or national origin is different than our own) is discrimination in practice. Literature should be chosen for the value of their content, not the DNA of the author.

Perhaps more disturbingly, the Guarriello (our former high school principal) confirms that “*The District has also hired a Diversity Officer to review all of our practices Kindergarten to 12th grade and provide suggestions for improvement.*” It’s clear that despite district statements to the contrary, the work of the DEI consultant the board retained in 2020 was intended to contribute to the transformation our schools from top to bottom.

In an email from a high school teacher to Guarriello and Cross dated August 26, 2020, the teacher stated:



It's clear from the teacher's own words that *Things Fall Apart* was chosen primarily because Chinua Achebe is not an "old dead white guy," rather than because his excellent book would bring a heterodox perspective on British Colonialism, which is obviously a secondary factor in the selection process.

In a conversation among a principal and two English teachers (below), one of the English teachers expresses concern about words that students sometimes use that the teacher considers out dated and "multiculturally irrelevant"; the second suggests a lesson on "pronoun usage"; the first teacher expresses concern about "how we roll it out so we don't get kick back on "being P.C. [politically correct]."

On Fri, Sep 25, 2020 at 11:51 AM [REDACTED]@slsd.org> wrote:

I think the entire student body definitely needs to be educated about this, but I also think we have to be effective in how **we roll it out so we don't get kick back on "being P.C."** I'm thinking it could follow the **identity molecule lesson** nicely. ([REDACTED] was working on writing up the steps of this lesson, so I'll check in with him on that.) Once we establish that identity is important and have the discussion about what makes us proud and what aspects of our identities are painful, it would make sense to move into a discussion regarding how we appropriately and respectfully acknowledge identity, that it's not about "being PC" but about respecting others as we would want to be respected. **Then maybe explain how and why this terminology for identity evolves.**

I'm just spitballing here. The long and short of it is that yes, we absolutely should work on this! It was a huge problem last year in **English 10** for me as well.



she/her/hers

Southern Lehigh High School
[REDACTED]

Here the intent to reach the “entire student body” is clear. That these teachers feel they get to say which words are acceptable and which aren’t is troubling. What if a student doesn’t agree with the “politics” driving the “P.C.” (political correctness) concern in the first place? What if a student doesn’t wish to be compelled by a person in a position of authority with control over their grades to use someone’s “neo-pronouns” like Ze/Zir or even “they/them,” in references to a single person in violation of basic, long agreed upon rules of grammar? What if the student simply doesn’t wish to be compelled to say something with which he or she doesn’t fundamentally agree? Is this what we expect of our English teachers?

Based on discussions with the “Diversity Counsel” at SLSD, an English teacher proposes changes to the book selections for a high school English course to include more authors that are Asian or Pacific Islanders, despite the teachers notes that the course already includes readings from two Asian/Pacific Islander authors. There is no suggestion that the books would be selected for literary value. The e-mail references a similar “*shift*” that occurred in 12th grade English previously.

On Tue, Mar 23, 2021 at 6:14 PM [REDACTED]@slsd.org> wrote:

Greetings [REDACTED],

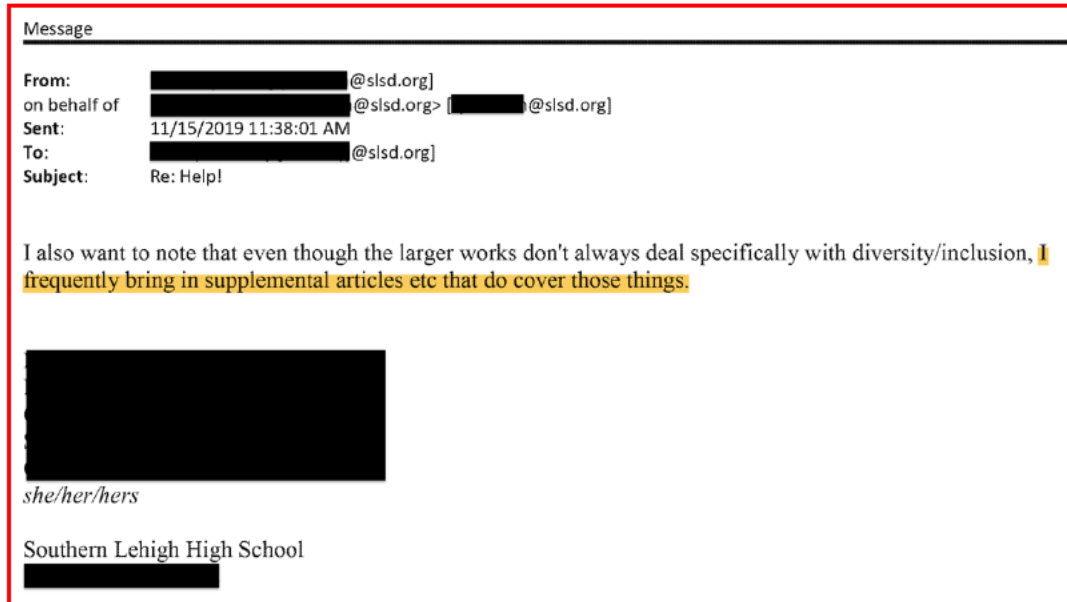
The past few weeks and some recent conversations with Diversity Council has me reflecting on the Honors 10 course. Whereas I have shorter works by AAPI authors in the course, in particular Diana Chang and Jhumpa Lahiri, **I feel compelled to think about an adjustment to the Honors 10 that would include a major work by an AAPI author.** I know that this is a tough time of year to bring this up, and I know it would be something if I wanted to implement next year it might be a hard sell. However, not dissimilar to **when the English 12 shift occurred I feel like these are special circumstances,** and would be something I would happily tackle.

Let me know what you think and what the next steps could potentially be.



Here again, why are we selecting authors based on race, rather than in the impact of their works?

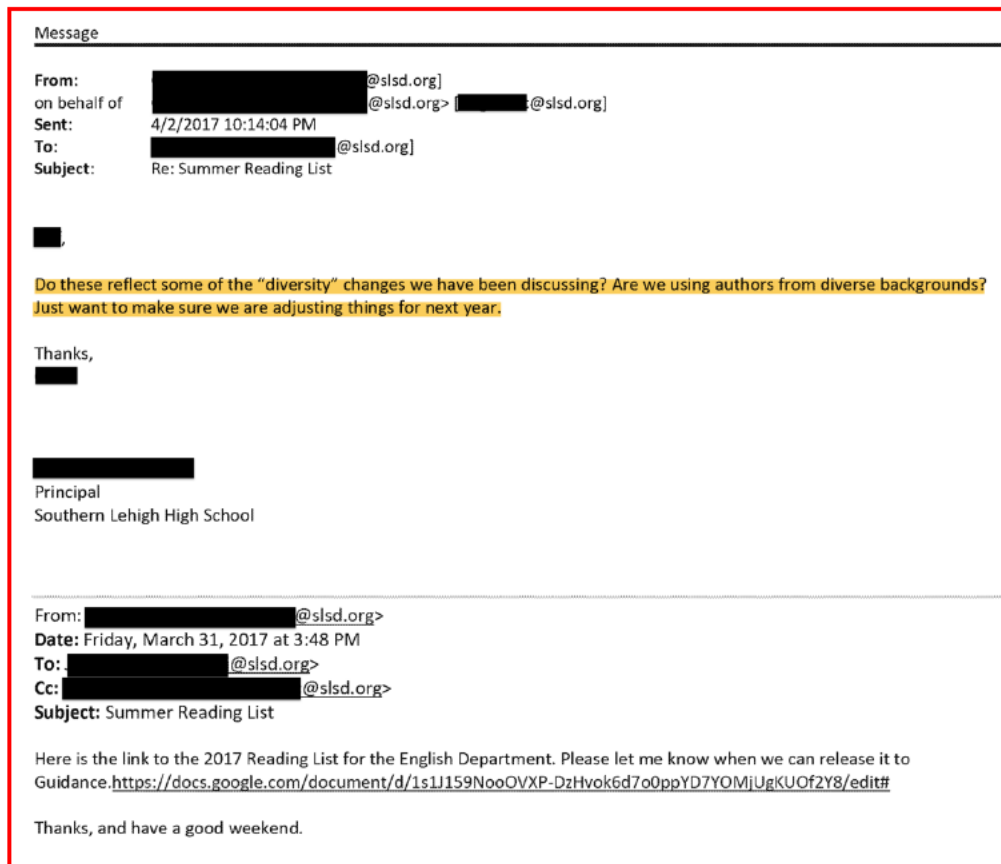
An English teacher notes that the teacher “*frequently brings in supplemental articles etc [sic] that do cover those [diversity/inclusion].*”



There is no suggestion that those “*supplemental articles etc.*” were/are reviewed or approved for use in curriculum. Why does a person we hired to teach English believe it is that person’s responsibility to weave “*diversity/inclusion*” into the English lessons in the first place? Is this part of the job description approved by our school board?

In response to an updated reading list for English classes, Guariello asks for a confirmation that the list “*reflect[s] some of the ‘diversity’ changes we have been discussing,*” whether “*we are using authors from diverse backgrounds,*” and states that she “*just want[s] to make sure we are adjusting things for next year.*” There is no suggestion the literary merit was taken into account, just “*diversity*” (*i.e.*, skin color or ethnicity) of the authors; the key for them again is “*diverse background,*” *i.e.*, race or ethnicity.

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]



Cross makes clear that it was the intent of the administration to use curriculum changes to embed DEI in our schools (see [Section 6.3](#) and elsewhere in this Report an explanation of why Evison’s version of “DEI” should be roundly rejected). These changes included “*expanding*” our library collections, so that “*those books can then be used as part of instruction.*” The results of Cross’ “library audit” were not shared with the public, but we do have at least a bit of insight in the changes he made. There may have been significant additional changes, but we only know what we know based on the district records we received in response to our RTK requests.

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

From: Shane Cross <crosss@sbsd.org>
Sent: Sunday, May 2, 2021 8:07 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org>
Subject: Re: DEI Work

Good morning [REDACTED]

Thank you for your inquiry.

The District remains committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, as part of our Comprehensive Plan. Over the last several years there have been communications, public forums, DEI committee work, changes to literature used in courses, professional development, student groups, and expansion of counseling services. Dr. Joseph Allen is in the process of collecting data for a needs assessment that will guide future DEI work and our next 3 year comprehensive plan. Literacy and Social Studies have now entered the *Cycle for Curricular Excellence (CCE)*, where DEI is being considered as part of curricular revisions. Additionally, **we have completed an audit of our Library collection and are in the process of expanding the collection to include more books that all students can identify with. In turn, those books can then be used as part of instruction.**

I want to assure you that whenever issues arise, buildings work with students to discuss and process, where appropriate, in the classroom setting, small groups, or individually.

I have cc'd Dr. Evison so she can also respond.

Best Regards,
 Shane

Shane T. Cross
 Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12
 610.282.3121, Ext 5403
 Cell: [REDACTED]
crosss@sbsd.org
 #SLSDproud

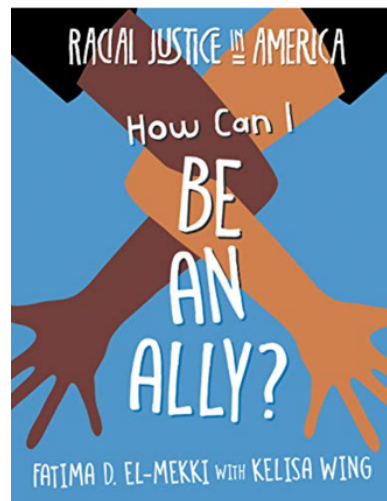
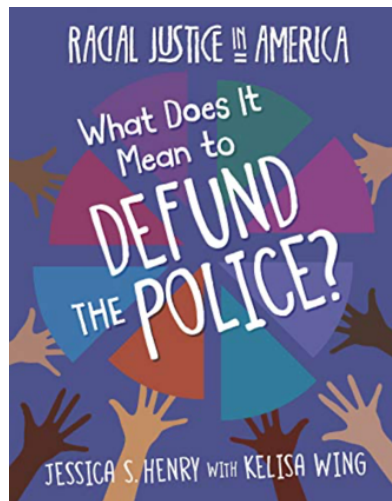
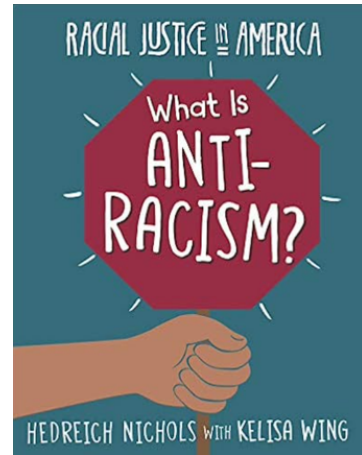
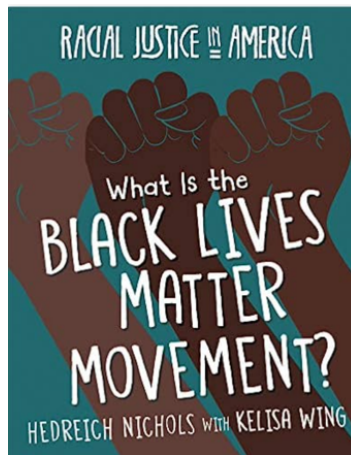
Southern Lehigh School District
 5775 Main Street
 Center Valley, PA 18034

Returning to Cross' library audit, what books did Cross add to our libraries so that "they can then be used as part of instruction?" On April 29, 2021, a purchase order was sent from our school district to Follett, a book seller by Cross and a person working in our guidance office.

A516828	Racial Justice in America (Set/Series) 6 Items <i>Deliver To: Michel, Maggy</i>	Each	1	\$60.3000	\$60.30
1776GD5	How can I be an ally? <i>Deliver To: Michel, Maggy</i>	Each	1	\$0.0000	\$0.00
1776JD7	What are my rights? <i>Deliver To: Michel, Maggy</i>	Each	1	\$0.0000	\$0.00
1776LD1	What does it mean to defund the police? <i>Deliver To: Michel, Maggy</i>	Each	1	\$0.0000	\$0.00
1776ND6	What is anti-racism? <i>Deliver To: Michel, Maggy</i>	Each	1	\$0.0000	\$0.00
1776RD5	What is the Black Lives Matter Movement? <i>Deliver To: Michel, Maggy</i>	Each	1	\$0.0000	\$0.00
1776TDX	What is White Privilege? <i>Deliver To: Michel, Maggy</i>	Each	1	\$0.0000	\$0.00

The books are part of the "Racial Justice in America" Series, and are intended to be read by children from nine to 13 years old. Kelisa Wing is an author on each of the books, with a different second author on each of them. For our district, that age bracket covers, primarily, our intermediate school. The books are:

- What is White Privilege?
- What is the Black Lives Matter Movement?
- What is Anti-Racism?
- What Does it Mean to Defund the Police?
- How Can I be an Ally?



Wing is a controversial figure. She was recently in the news for expressing anti-white tweets and is under investigation by the Department of Defense, where she works as the head of “diversity, equity, and inclusion” at the Department of Defense’s school system (“*Pentagon probing school diversity official’s ‘racially divisive’ Twitter posts,*” New York Post, October 4, 2022). She described herself as “woke.” Her statements included (emphasis added):

*“I’m so **exhausted at these white folx** in these [professional development] sessions this lady actually had the **CAUdacity [Caucasian audacity] to say black people can be racist too**” (below)*



*“I am **exhausted by 99% of the white men in education and 95% of the white women**. Where can I get a break from **white nonsense** for a while?”*

*“**Racism is ingrained in the very fabric of our country.**”*

This is the author to whom Cross turned for books that can be “used as part of instruction” in our schools... a woman who believes racism is part of the fabric of our country (the “1619” narrative) and that a black person can never be racist.

These books aren’t about teaching the history of black people in America. These books are not history or insight literature, instead they are propaganda and indoctrination intended to create social justice activists at the earliest ages. Each book literally includes a call to action for the student:

- In “White is White Privilege,” Chapter 4 is titled “Taking Action” and includes a number of specific actions white students should take.
- In “What is the Black Lives Matter Movement,” Chapter 4 is titled “Supporting BLM” and gives examples of taking part in marches, promoting content on social media, and donating to BLM.
- In “What is Anti-Racism,” students are instructed on how to “Do My Part” in Chapter 4.
- In “How Can I Be An Ally,” well, the whole book is about how to become an activist.

Fundamentally, each of these books assumes that black people are oppressed by white people in America, and that disparate outcomes across groups reflects that oppression. “White Privilege” is what White people have solely by being born white. Wing and her co-author Lee Ann Erickson describe “White Privilege” as follows (p.7 of “What is White Privilege?”):

There are a lot of different types of privilege that exist in society for a lot of different reasons. In the United States, **racial bias** and **racism** have led to something called White privilege. White privilege means that because of ongoing biases and racism in people and the places they work, White people have more access to power and **resources** than a Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color (BIPOC) in the same situation.

Wing and Erickson divide the world into White on one side and Black/Indigenous/Person of Color on the other side, with “White” guilty of “racial bias” and “racism” that is “ongoing.” Shouldn’t we have learned by now that dividing people up by race or ethnicity and ascribing moral guilt on a group basis is a path that leads to horrible places?

Wing and her co-author Fatima D. El-Mekki express the concept as follows in “How Can I Be An Ally?” (p.8):

*“An ally can be someone who belongs to a group that is **oppressing** another group, but the ally stands with those who are being oppressed in order to get justice”.*

You are either oppressor or oppressed based on the color of your skin. The concept doesn’t remain non-specific for long in this book. On that same page, the authors state:

*“When it comes to race, an ally is a **White** person who decides to be an upstander and support **Black** people....”*

In Wing’s twisted world view, a Black person can never be an ally, because all Black people are part of the “oppressed,” where as a White person can be an “ally” because all White people are part of the “oppressors” (even if you are an “ally,” that doesn’t relieve you of the moral guilt of being an oppressor based on the color of your skin as dictated by your DNA, to be clear, in their view).

Each of these books also includes a two page section on “How Can We Be Anti-Racists?” Remember, “anti-racist” no longer means “against racism.” It has been defined. Now it means that you take active steps to fight “systemic racism” and all “disparate outcomes.” It means that you support active discrimination today! In the words of Ibram X. Kendi, who popularized this new meaning in his best seller “How to Be An Anti-Racist” (p.19, emphasis added):

*“The only remedy to racist discrimination is **antiracist discrimination**. The only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination” (Kendi, p.19).*

Wing puts it this way: “*Becoming anti-racist requires actively working against racism using words and actions*” (p.16 in “How to Can I Be An Ally,” p. p.24 in “What is White Privilege,”

p.26 in “What is the Black Lives Matter Movement,” p.20 in “What is Anti-Racism,” and p.20 in “What Does it Mean to Defund the Police”). It’s not enough to be against racism. It’s not enough not to be racist yourself. It’s not enough to not do racist things or act in discriminatory ways. No, you have to fight every disparity wherever one can be found even if there is no evidence that the disparity was caused by racism, because all disparities are, of course, due to oppression based on race in world of Wing and Kendi. (see Section 6.5 of this report for a discussion why this idea is so very flawed).

Wing’s books, selected and endorsed at the highest levels of our school district administration, ask our students to pledge themselves to an ideology with which they (let alone their parents) may not agree. Is this the role of our teachers and administrators? Is this the role of our schools? **These books are intended to create activists out of nine through 13 year olds.** When did our school board approve teaching about “white privilege” to our nine year old students?

The Intent is Clear...

When taking into account the information presented above, together the pipeline of social justice activist information and training sessions from academia into SLD as described in Section 7.0 and the social justice training that has been pervasive for years at SLSD as described in Section 6.8 and 8.0, it is clear that the intent of those involved has been and is to remake our school district in the name of social justice.

[End of Section]

10.0 Manipulation of Superintendent Job Description for Political Advantage

Former Superintendent Kathleen Evison informed the district of her decision to resign as superintendent of SLSD in early 2021. Her resignation was accepted by the school board on April 12, 2021, with a final date of employment of July 2, 2021. The resignation came less than one year into a five year contract, just as Evison completed the “Capstone Project” needed for Evison to obtain her PhD from Vanderbilt University, a degree paid for by district taxpayers, and approximately a month before her commencement ceremony. Her contract did not include a “clawback” provision that would have allowed the district to recover the tuition payments due to her early and unexpected exit. Obviously, Evison’s resignation put the district in the position of having to recruit for a replacement superintendent when it hadn’t expected to deal with that issue for at least another three to four years.

Ms. Anita Desai, then president of the school board, formed an ad hoc informal committee consisting of herself and two other school board members, Ms. Mary Ann Nord and Mr. Jeffrey Dimmig.

On April 23, 2021, Evison sent an email with a draft job description. We cannot be certain of the recipients of the Evison’s e-mail, but we assume them to be only Nord and Desai because of Ms. Nord’s subsequent response (included below in this section).

On Fri, Apr 23, 2021 at 3:39 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@slsd.org> wrote:
Good afternoon!

I completed a first draft in between things going on here today, so I'm not guaranteeing it's anywhere near perfect yet, but it will give you a starting point. I used the 'track changes' in Word so I could both edit and comment, although I think I changed almost everything!

Let me know what you think of the first pass and then I'll work on it more.

Dr. Kathleen T. Evison
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034

On April 24, 2021, Nord responded. There may be other responses, but because of the scope of our Right to Know request, we did not receive them if they exist. Notably, **Dimmig was excluded on Nord’s response, despite being on the committee in charge of recruiting the new superintendent and whose responsibilities would obviously include preparing and finalizing a job description.** To understand the political ramifications of Nord’s email below, it is important to remember that Dimmig ran for school board as a republican. We contacted Mr. Dimmig to confirm my understanding of the order and substantive of the events I described above, and on October 7, 2022 he did in fact confirm that what we have described above is accurate.

Nord's response provides direct evidence of manipulation of the board's recruitment process to achieve "equity" goals and to maximize the likelihood of the advancement of her political views. We believe this is deeply unethical, corrupt, and a breach of public trust.

In Nord's response to Evison, she argues that "we [the district] desperately NEED someone who understands and values equity" but questions "whether we lead with equity" in the job description. She was concerned that:

"people may try to use the fact that it's listed first as proof of the big bad 'Democratic Marxist agenda' to take over our schools [smiley emoji] (I'm sure you have heard about the racist rantings all over Face book this week)."

Mostly importantly, Nord expressly stated that (emphasis added):

"I just don't want to make the hill any harder to climb in the election."

The motivation, obviously, was a political one. This is Nord's full email:

From: Mary Ann Nord <nordm@sbsd.org>
Sent: Saturday, April 24, 2021 10:44 AM
To: Kathleen Evison
Cc: Anita Desai
Subject: Re: First draft of posting

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This is excellent!!! It is a SO MUCH better and a way more accurate description of what we want and what we value in a candidate. I am visiting my mom for the first time in 16 months this weekend so I am reading from my phone and she does not have a functioning computer. So I cannot effectively edit. Any suggestions from me would be minor, for example, where it says "the superintendent will engage all stakeholders in various formats"

I would change "various formats" to "collaboratively." I also thought maybe we should add something specifically about about administrators?

The other thing we should discuss is whether we lead with equity. I think there is a strong argument to do so, but I am also aware that people may try to use the fact that it's listed first as proof of the big bad "Democratic Marxist agenda" to take over our schools 😊 (I'm sure you have heard about the racist rantings all over Facebook this week). I just don't want to make the hill any harder to climb in the election. That said, in order for people to publicly criticize that, they will have to out themselves as not thinking equity is important. I guess what I imagine is certain people twisting it into "our kids haven't been in school full time for over a year and their #1 priority is equity!" (Except they will probably say Critical Race Theory 😊). But...as evidenced by that FB thread, we desperately NEED someone who understands and values equity.

Thoughts?

From Nord's own words, it's clear that she was willing to manipulate the job description so as to not cause a problem for her political party in the fall of that year, and in fact hide the true intent of the hire, which, again, based on Nord's own words, was to hire someone who "understands and values equity."

Simply put, Nord was working with Desai and the outgoing superintendent to make it easier for like-minded politicians to get elected or re-elected in the election that was to be held that fall (2021). To be fair, we do not have any responses to Ms. Nord's email but given that she felt comfortable speaking so freely about manipulating district communications to benefit her political allies in the fall election, we suspect there was no meaningful pushback to her approach. Also, if those responses do exist, they would have included Ms. Nord's e-mail in the thread, and therefore should have been provided to us under our Right to Know requests. If they exist and were not provided, the district would have again violated its obligations under the RTK law.

As a reminder, we directly asked Evison on multiple occasions how the district defines "equity." She artfully dodged the question every time we asked and never provided any definition whatsoever. We asked that same question at school board meetings during the public comments section, and never got an answer. Nord, Desai, and Evison were at those meetings, and any one of them could have provided a definition, but they did not. In the 1,682 individual documents the district provided in response to our Right to Know requests, the district does not define "equity" (or "diversity" or "inclusion" for that matter) even a single time. Yet, in Nord's email, hiring someone who "understands and values equity" is a top priority. They seem to know what it means, even if they're unwilling to say it publicly.

We have not spent time analyzing whether Nord's actions violate any applicable law or policy, but presumably it may be problematic, if for no other reason that it is the obvious use of district IT resources for political purposes (see, e.g., SLSD Board Policy No. 815 on Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources, Section 1, 3rd paragraph, and Section 4, General Prohibitions, Subsection 21, and SLSD Board Policy No. 707, Use of School Facilities, Section 2).

Nord wasn't the only one that was willing to act in inappropriate and corrupt ways to achieve "equity" goals. Please see [Section 11.0](#) of this Report, which discusses Ms. Kathleen Parson's advocacy for using race and national origin in hiring decisions to achieve "diversity" goals in contravention of state and federal law, as well as existing board policies.

[End of Section]

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11.0. Board Member Advocates Hiring Based on Race and National Origin

In an e-mail dated June 6, 2020, Ms. Kathleen Parson, then a member of SLSD's school board, expressly advocated prioritizing hiring staff based on the color of their skin and national origin. She stated (see email below, emphasis added):

“...trying to hire AA [African American] staff should be a priority, but we really need to diversify staff for other nationalities as well.”

She went on to say that *“it will take years to legitimately diversify our staff”* (emphasis added). We leave it to the reader to decide what Ms. Parsons means when she says *“legitimately”* diversify our staff, but one reading would be that she was comfortable using illegitimate means to achieve her goals, *i.e.*, doing exactly what she is advocating for in the email.

To: Kathleen Evison[evisonk@sbsd.org]
Cc: smithj[smithj@sbsd.org]; Emily Gehman[gehmane@sbsd.org]; Mary Ann Nord[nordm@sbsd.org]; Anita Desai[desaia@sbsd.org]; William Lycett[lycettw@sbsd.org]; Jeffrey Dimming[dimmigjeffrey@sbsd.org]; Kyle Gangewere[gangewerek@sbsd.org]; Priya Sareen[sareenp@sbsd.org]
From: Kathleen Parsons[parsonsk@sbsd.org]
Sent: Sat 6/6/2020 8:30:02 AM (UTC-04:00)
Subject: Re: Message to the community

Thank you Kathy for your expanded explanation of what you are doing. I thought your letter to the parents was thoughtful and well written.

Not to make this an ALL lives matter statement, because **trying to hire AA staff should be a priority, but we really need to diversify staff for other nationalities as well.** I'd like to mention that the second largest race, after Caucasians in our demographics, is Hispanic, than Asian and biracial and then african american. <https://nces.ed.gov/Programs/Edge/ACSDashboard/4222350>. Our challenge is that we only have one or two people that retire each year so it will take years to **legitimately** diversify our staff. I agree with what the recent SL graduate just wrote about **educating our students about systemic racism** and bias in general. There's more needed than just an assembly here and there and a club for kids that are probably already aware of the problem.

On Fri, Jun 5, 2020 at 3:58 PM Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org> wrote:

Thank you so much - I really appreciate the feedback. While we do have many adults who are wonderful at working with our students, it is absolutely a significant issue for our students of color to lack any support from educators who have that shared understanding and have dealt with the same challenges. We are continuing to work on this issue. I'm working with a Director of Diversity at a school district in North Carolina and he has a lot of experience in many areas of improving school climate related to diversity and this was an issue I added to my agenda for my next conversations with him I'm sure he'll have very helpful guidance and ideas, so we'll keep working and definitely document. We also continue to research options and best practices and are looking at how we could engage mentors from the community to give students access to support and those types of conversations. I will give you an update as we move forward.

KATHLEEN T. EVISON
Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District
5775 Main Street, Center Valley, PA 18034
☎ 610.282.3121
✉ evisonk@sbsd.org

In an earlier email (included in the email above), former superintendent Evison stated that she is working with the district's DEI consultant, which we know to be Dr. Allen, to “improve school climate related to diversity.” It appears hiring based on race would be part of the effort.

Of course, both federal and Pennsylvania law prohibit the use of race and national origin in hiring decisions. At the federal level, the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, among other laws, make it illegal to discriminate based on race or national origin. At the state level, the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act prohibits discriminating based on race or national origin in employment decisions.

In addition, SLSD has multiple Board policies that prohibit using race or national origin in hiring decisions. For example, Board Policy No. 104 (“*Nondiscrimination in Employment and Contract Practices*”) states (emphasis added):

“The Board declares it to be the policy of this district to **provide to all persons equal access to all categories of employment in this district, regardless of race, color,** age, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, ancestry, **national origin,** handicap/disability, or genetic information.”

Board Policy No. 304 (“*Recruitment, Selection and Approval of Administrative Employees*”), Board Policy No. 404 (“*Recruitment, Selection and Approval of Professional Employees*”), and Board Policy No. 504 (“*Recruitment, Selection and Approval of Classified Employees*”) and each state that (emphasis added):

“All recruitment and selection procedures shall comply fully with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Congress of the United States of America and be applied without prejudice in any form and **shall not discriminate against any applicant on the basis of race,** religion, sex, age, handicap, sexual preference, marital status, **ethnic group,** or political affiliation.”

Despite numerous board members having been copied on Ms. Parson’s email, I’m sad to say that I did not see any follow-up emails in which anyone objected to the notion of making hiring decisions based on the color of the applicant’s skin or their “nationality.” It’s possible someone did, but if so, that document was improperly withheld from us as it would have fallen within the scope of our record requests and would have had to have provided for the same reason the e-mail above was provided.

Thus, Ms. Parsons expressly advocated for SLSD to make hiring decisions based on race and/or nationality and thereby violate both state and federal law, as well as multiple Board policies. Based on Ms. Parson’s own words, it appears she is comfortable discriminating against some people based on the color of their skin for the benefit of other people based on the color of their skin.

We reject this approach as divisive and deeply retrograde. Applicants should be judged as the individuals they are. We should hire based solely on each applicant’s qualifications for the job, and never on the color of an applicant’s skin or from where the applicant hails.

Parsons wasn’t the only one that was willing to act in inappropriate ways to achieve “DEI” goals. Please see [Section 10.0](#) of this report, which discusses Ms. Mary Ann Nord’s proposal to

manipulate district communications by suppressing use of the term “*equity*” in the recruitment process for a replacement superintendent so as to not “*make the hill any harder to climb in the next election.*”

[*End of Section*]

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12.0 Gender Ideology at SLSD: Secret Policies and Egregious Violations of Parents Rights

12.1 The Most Difficult Section to Write

This section of the Report was by far the most difficult for us to write for a number of reasons.

First and foremost, it directly involves children who are struggling to find their place in the world, trying to understand who they are as individuals and who they may become as they grow, and frequently suffering through embarrassing changes that we have all been through during our own adolescence. They are doing so in a brutal environment where communication occurs instantaneously through social media and where bullying that could have at least been left behind at the end of the school day a generation ago can now follow that student online for the remainder of the day and stalk them through every weekend. They are doing so in an environment where peer pressure comes from not just students in our district but also from everyone on whatever social media platforms the student participates in (regardless of age or absence of real world geographic connection). They are doing so in an environment where “affirmation” is readily available in endless supply from strangers that are more than willing to become that student’s new “glitter family” (a group of people, mostly online, who will encourage and “affirm” the adoption of a new “gender identity” by a child, suggesting that their actual family does not love them if they don’t “affirm” the new identity) on a moment’s notice, drawing the student further and further away from their own family and friends. They are doing so in an environment where our own school counselors and administrators will gladly conspire with them to conceal their new “identities” from their own parents.

Second, this is the area where the district’s conduct is most egregious in our view. The district’s position on gender issues reflects a fundamental belief that parents are a danger to their own children, assuming guilt with no evidence. Parents are deemed guilty unless proven “affirming” and supportive of new “identities.” In furtherance of this view, the district has taken steps to actively conceal important information that may directly affect the social, emotional, psychological, and potentially physical well-being of their children from parents.

Third, the district’s conduct in this area, based on the district’s own recent records, is very much ongoing, despite at least some of these issues being raised by members of the public at school board meetings over the past two years.

Finally, it is the topic on which our school board, our district administrators, and the public seem most unable to separate one topic from another and to deal with each individual issue in a rational manner based on the attributes of that individual issue. While people may throw around terms like “the transgender issue,” it is most certainly not one monolithic issue; rather, it is half a dozen or more related issues, each with its own substance, nuance, challenges, and risks.

Nonetheless, we feel a duty to make public the information we received from the district in response to our requests for relevant records. In doing so, our hope is that parents will begin to understand that a small group of dedicated gender ideologues at SLSD have adopted and perpetuated a view and an approach that is wildly out of line with past practice in our district, and which directly and actively undercuts the fundamental, foundational, and essential

relationship between parents and their own children. To be clear, most of what you will see below is based on decisions that precede our current administration and four of our nine school board members. Nonetheless, the policies and practices they inherited appear to be very much intact and continue to govern what is happening in this area on a day-to-day basis. While they may not have created the problem, it's unfortunately theirs to deal with now.

All of our students (regardless of how they “identity”) should be treated with dignity, respect, and kindness, and our policies against unlawful harassment and bullying should be applied equally in all cases to ensure that we have create and maintain an environment where children can focus on learning (the very reason they are entrusted to our schools by their parents).

A Note Regarding the Materials in this Section

The documents in this Section 12 were obtained in response to two targeted requests for records that were separate from requests for records described earlier in this Report and on which all Sections except this one is based.

The first request was submitted on the fall of 2022. That request was for two specific documents we knew existed. We knew because a handful of brave teachers came forward on a confidential basis (because they are terrified of retaliation from administrators and counselors) to tell us that they did. That request resulted in our receipt of (i) the “secret policy” on gender identity discussed at length in Section 12.3 below and (ii) receipt of portions of a training presentation from a training given by the gender clinic at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to a number of SLSD employees. We presented those documents to the school board and the administration, appalled by the idea that our administration and counselors were telling teachers to keep gender identity information about their own children secret from parents and to take instruction from children in our district (including as young as elementary school age) on what they should be called and what their “new pronouns” are. We spoke publicly at a school board meeting about the documents and what our schools were doing. What followed was a handful of opaque “updates” at school board meetings that conveyed no meaningful information it appeared to us that no significant changes would be made, or any at all for that matter.

The failure of the district to course correct led us to file a second and final request for records. We received approximately 3,160 pages of documents, which was quite a surprise, especially considering that we and others were repeated told that there was no “policy.” What they provided was a treasure trove of records confirming that SLSD had fully adopted “*gender affirming care*” as its framework for dealing with gender identity-related issues, key individuals were receiving seemingly endless updates and other communications from gender ideology activist organizations, and the district was receiving guidance from various solicitors that was more activist in nature than disinterested assessments of where the law currently stands. We present and summarize many of those records in this Section 12, and a number of the key documents (when not already presented in full in the body of this Report) are attached to this Report for those that wish to go even deeper.

12.2 What is Gender Ideology?

Definitions

What follows in this subsection is what we hope is a helpful summary of “Gender Ideology” and “Queer Theory,” the ideas and framework that underpin all of the gender-related approaches and activities at SLSD. For most readers, the first paragraph immediately below will provide a general understanding of “gender theory.” For others, the remainder of this subsection may be helpful and seeing the full breadth of the field. Fair warning: these concepts get very technical and very dense very quickly.

“Gender Ideology”/ “Gender Theory” is a catch-all term for Queer Theory (defined below as well), transgender ideology, and gender identity activism generally. The premise of this ideology is that sex and gender are “socially constructed” (i.e., created by society through words rather than based on reality as observed through scientific observation). Gender ideologues believe that the “sex binary” and “gender binary” (e.g., male/female, man/woman, boy/girl, masculine/feminine) are artificial distinctions made to “oppress” people that do not perceive themselves as fitting neatly into those categories. They believe that this system of “cis-hetero-normativity” must be “disrupted” and “dismantled” to relieve “oppression.”

Gender Ideology is therefore political and activist in nature.

In order to “disrupt” and “dismantle” accepted norms on sex, gender, and sexuality, Gender Ideology supports any approach that rejects binary thinking on those issues (and in doing so, rejects the abundant science on which those binaries are based). Gender Ideology therefore embraces “neo-sexual identities,” such as transgender, queer, genderqueer, non-binary, agender/genderless, gender non-conforming, gender atypical, gender fluid, bigender, neuter gender, pansexual, polysexual, or two-spirit, regardless in all cases of whether that person presents as typically male, typically female, or otherwise. For the same reasons, Gender Ideology embraces neo-pronouns, as they too reject the sex or gender binary reflected in standard pronouns (he/him, she/her), including the use terms like “they/them,” “em/eir/eirs,” “fae/faer/faers,” “xe/hir/hirs,” “xe/xem/xyr,” and “ze/zir/zirs” (note that each of the foregoing are not associated with “male” or “female” or “man or woman,” thus rejecting the sex and gender binaries). See [Attachment 22](#) to this Report for a list of neo-pronouns that was included among the records provided to us by the district.

“Queer Theory” is one of the major branches of thought within “Critical Social Justice,” one that is particularly interested in, though not limited to, issues of sex, gender, and sexuality. Queer Theory views the very existence of categories of sex, gender, and sexuality to be artificial and “oppressive,” and believes that those categories must be “disrupted” and “dismantled” to “liberate” those “oppressed” by them.

Queer Theory derives directly from postmodernism (drawing particular inspiration from the works of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida) and is radically skeptical that these categories are based in any biological reality (*i.e.*, it rejects what we perceive as reality based on scientific observation and testing). Instead, it sees sex, gender, and sexuality as existing wholly as a product of how we talk about those issues (what postmodernists, including Queer theorists,

would call “discourses”), believing them to be “social constructs” (*i.e.*, something that society makes up and perpetuates through language, rather than being based in objective, verifiable fact). Among other things, Queer theorists argue that sex and gender are distinct and that there is no correlation between the two, and that in any event, both of those categories are social constructs anyway and therefore mean nothing.

“Norms,” “Normal,” and “Normativity” are considered pejorative in Queer Theory and are often marked by prefixes to denote their status (such as “cis-hetero-normative”). Norms are the very thing that Queer Theory seeks to “Queer.” “Queer” as a verb means to make change or to act in a way that rejects both the normal and norms as a matter of principle.

Like other “Critical Social Justice” disciplines, ***Queer Theory is political and activist in orientation*** (*i.e.*, it seeks to move society toward what “should be” rather than simply observing and describing “what is”). Seminal writers in Queer Theory include Gayle Rubin, Judith Butler, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

Queer Theory, like Gender Ideology generally, endorses “transgressive” sex as a way to liberate oneself from the system of “cis-hetero-normativity,” and therefore supports, among other things, “kink culture,” exposing children to non-cis-hetero-normative sexuality as early as possible to minimize the likelihood that those children are oppressed by it then and as they grow, and “drag-queen story hours.” Central figures in Gender Ideology have even endorsed “disrupting” and “dismantling” the stigma associated with pedophilia (with pedophiles now termed “minor attracted persons) and incest. For example, in his famous essay “*Thinking Sex*” (1984) Gayle Rubin, a seminal writer in Queer Theory, stated (emphasis added):

“...boylovers are so stigmatized that it is difficult to find defenders for their civil liberties, let alone for their erotic orientation ...The law is especially ferocious in maintaining the boundary between childhood ‘innocence’ and ‘adult’ sexuality. ***Rather than recognizing the sexuality of the young, and attempting to provide for it in a caring and responsible manner***, our culture denies and punishes erotic interest and activity by anyone under the local age of consent.”

And in her seminal work “*Undoing Gender*” (2004) (Chapter 7, “*Quandaries of the Incest Taboo*,” p. 157) key Queer Theory figure Judith Butler argued:

“***I do think that there are probably forms of incest that are not necessarily traumatic*** or which gain their traumatic character by virtue of the consciousness of social shame that they produce”; and

“***It might, then, be necessary to rethink the prohibition on incest*** as that which sometimes protects against a violation, and sometimes becomes the very instrument of a violation.” (id., p.160)

If you’ve read the preceding two pages, it is likely becoming clear to you that the aims of Gender Ideology/Queer Theory/Transgender movement are quite different from what most people would understand and think of as the “gay rights movement.” The core argument of the gay rights movement was “we are the same as you and therefore should have the same rights as you”; fundamentally it became seen as an extension of the civil rights movement. The gay rights

movement, however, never argued that “sex” is different than “gender,” or that both of them are simply “social constructs” to be “disrupted and dismantled” to free the “oppressed.” The gay rights movement never argued that a “man can be a woman,” that a “transwoman is a woman” or that a “woman is anyone that identifies as a woman.” The gay rights movement never had trouble defining what a woman is and in fact static definitions of man and woman were essential to the movement itself.

If you disregard the accepted and previously universally understood meaning for a word like “woman” and instead adopt a definition that includes any human who says “I identify as a woman,” then the word “woman” ceases to serve its essential function, i.e., to characterize that human as not a girl, not a boy, and not a man. Before the influence of Gender Ideology and Queer Theory, the word “Woman” was universally understood in the English language to mean “an adult human female,” just like the word “girl” was understood to mean “a female that is not yet an adult.” If now any biological boy or man can say “I am a girl” or “I am a woman,” then the words male, female, man, woman, boy, and girl all mean the same thing and therefore all mean nothing other than “I am a human of some type” (we already have a word for that, it’s “human”).

The gay rights movement never asked for different or new rights, instead it advocated for the same rights that heterosexual people have, whether it was to have access to the same jobs or the right to be married before the law. The transgender movement instead argues for new and different rights than other people have. For example (but without limitation):

- The right to be treated as whatever that person “identifies” as on any given day;
- The right to compel other people to call them by a new name (to do otherwise is the deeply offensive act of “deadnaming”);
- The right to compel people to use newly selected pronouns (*i.e.*, a word like “he” or “his” used to refer to a person to an entirely different person!), which may change from day to day (to do otherwise is the deeply offensive act of “misgendering”);
- The right to access spaces historically reserved as safe spaces for the opposite biological sex, like bathrooms and locker rooms (to deny access would make one a bigot or transphobe);
- The right to participate in sports historically reserved (after a long social battle resulting in Title IX) for women, even if the inherent difference between biological men and women would result in the “transgender girls/women” routinely outperforming their biologically female competitors (to deny access would make one a bigot or transphobe); and
- The demand that others stop using “gendered language” like “he” and “she” to be more “inclusive.”

The gay rights movement did not ask for any of those new rights. These and other differences between the gay rights movement and the gender ideology/transgender movement have given rise to significant rifts in the “LGBTQIA+ community.”

Search the word “TERF,” which is an acronym for “trans-exclusionary radical feminist.” A “TERF” is a biological woman who is homosexual, *i.e.*, a lesbian (a female sexually attracted to biological women) that refuses to date “transwomen” (a biological male). The transgender movement labels these “TERFs” as transphobes because they refuse to date transgender women. Imagine, a lesbian is being labeled a “transphobe” because she refuses to date MEN; it’s happening every day. Obviously, it’s also happening in the other direction. Biological men that refuse to date “transwomen” (biological men) are likewise being as “transphobes.” TERFs also, no surprise, object to transgender women being permitted access to spaces generally reserved for biological women, e.g., bathrooms, locker rooms, women’s shelters, women’s prisons, etc.

Search “GaysAgainstGroomers” and visit their website. GayAgainstGroomers is a rapidly growing national organization of gay Americans, with chapters in 20 states already. They stand against (i) the sterilization and mutilation of minors in the name of “gender affirming care,” (ii) drag and PRIDE events involving children, (iii) propagandizing youth with LGBTQ+ media, and (IV) Queer Theory and Gender Ideology being taught in the classroom (<<https://www.gaysagainstgroomers.com>>, last visited October 15, 2023). They have almost 400,000 followers on Twitter/X.

Search the hashtag “#LGBwithouttheTQ” and see what you see.

Search the hashtag “#detransition” and see what you see.

Visit the “r/detrans” subreddit and see what you see.

“LGB” is fundamentally based on biology. A “gay man” is a “man” sexually attracted to other “men.” A “gay woman” is a “woman” sexually attracted to other “women.” The definitions of “man” and “woman” are understood and essential (and no different than they have been understood for all of history). The attributes of the other person based on biology are at the very center of the attraction.

“TQIA+” is fundamental based on ideology. It rejects biology and all the things that arise it. It posits that anyone can reject the “socially constructed roles” of male/female, man/woman, boy/girl, and masculine/feminine at any time and instead “identify” as anything one feels that he or she is. It then demands that the world recognize, “affirm,” and cater to that new identity.

These things are not the same. LGB ≠ TQIA+.

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Gender Affirming Care

Gender affirming care is steps taken by people around a person who had selected a new “gender identity.” “Gender Identity,” according to GLSEN (a gender ideology activist organization) is:

“A person’s deeply held knowledge of their own gender, which can include being a man, woman, another gender, or no gender. Gender identity is an innate part of a person’s identity.”

That definition comes from p.14 GLSEN’s “*Model Local Education Agency Policy on Transgender and Nonbinary Students*” (Revised October 2020) (<<https://www.glsen.org/activity/model-local-education-agency-policy-on-transgender-nonbinary-students>>, last visited October 6, 2023), which is attached to this Report as Attachment 19. Note that the definition includes only an internal “knowledge.” It is not observable or testable. It cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed. It is the very definition of non-falsifiable. There is no way to confirm that the person’s self-diagnosis is correct, let alone beneficial for that person in either the short or long term.

Try to list the other significant psychological or medical maladies for which we accept a person’s self-diagnosis as definitive. Would we accept as a teenage girls’ assessment that she is “obese” because she “feels obese” and therefore needs to be on a severely calorie restricted diet, even though she was obviously and demonstrably dangerously underweight? Or would we instead question whether she might have anorexia nervosa or bulimia and saw to it that she received appropriate psychiatric evaluation and treatment? Should her “internal sense” or her “deeply held knowledge” of who she is rule the day?

The only way you can know another person’s “gender identity” is if they tell you what it is (hence the phrase often heard nowadays, “*please don’t assume my gender*”). You must accept as truth what the person says, because only that person has access to the “deeply held knowledge” that tells them what they are and are not. This is self-diagnosis at its finest, and it is potentially quite dangerous.

This meaning of the word “gender” is relatively new and arises directly out of Gender Ideology and Queer Theory. It differs radically from the traditional definition of “gender.” “Sex” and “gender” used to be basically synonymous, both referring to male and female. “Sex” was more often used to refer to biology-based differences between men and women and gender was generally used in reference to grammatical forms (masculine form v. feminine form, for example). It was common to see (and still is common to see) either “sex” or “gender” used on a form follow by check boxes for “male” and “female.” What was never unclear, though, was that both “sex” and “gender” referred to either male or female or masculine or feminine, never neither or both or something else. Now it means something entirely different, *i.e.*, sex is entirely separate from gender and vice versa, and both are in any event socially constructed so they really don’t mean anything (at least accordingly to gender ideology/queer theory).

In any event, we accept solely for the purposes of discussing “gender affirming care” GLSEN’s definition of “gender identity.”

“Gender affirming care,” simply put, is a series of social, psychotherapeutic, and medical interventions intended to bring a person’s social interactions and outward appearance in line with their “gender identity” (as defined above). Once a person “identifies” as something other than the sex/gender they were born based on an “internal sense” of who they are (*e.g.*, “*I was ‘assigned’ male at birth, but now I ‘identify’ as female*”), “gender affirming care” typically progresses as set out below:

1. Social Transition / Social Affirmation. Social transition / social affirmation is public adoption of a newly selected “gender identity.” This usually takes the form of changes in clothing, use of make-up (if the transition is from male to female), selection and use of a new name, and selection and use of new “pronouns.” Social transition typically also includes the use of chest binders (to “masculinize” the female chest) and “genital tucking” (to hide the penis and scrotum).
2. Administration of Puberty Blockers. If person is a child and is near or already experiencing puberty, puberty blockers can be administered to “give the child time” to figure out their gender identity.
3. Administration of Cross-Sex Hormones. Cross-sex hormones are administered to be “transitioning” the person’s body to more closely align to their “gender identity.”
4. Gender Affirming Surgeries. Surgeries of various types may occur, including such medical procedures as (non-exclusive list, there may be others):
 - a. facial surgeries (creation of a faux-Adam’s Apple to create a more masculine look or shaving of the jaw bone for a more feminine look)
 - b. double mastectomy (euphemistically called “top surgery”) to remove both breasts to create a more masculine look;
 - c. cosmetic surgery to create breasts on an otherwise male body;
 - d. phalloplasty (creation of a faux-penis);
 - e. vaginoplasty (creation of a faux-vagina);
 - f. orchiectomy (removal of the testicles/castration); and
 - g. scrotoectomy (remove of the scrotum).

To be clear, not all people who identity as “transgender” proceed through all of the steps described above. People who support the transgender person through these steps are called “gender affirming” and “supportive.” People who do not are labeled “transphobic,” “hateful,” and “bigots.”

Needless to say, almost all of the steps above result in *irreversible* changes to the person who undergoes them. The administration of cross-sex hormones is a good example. A biological female who begins taking testosterone for as few as two to three months will experience

permanents changes like (i) a deepening of her voice, (ii) increased body and facial hair, (iii) partial masculinization of her facial features, and (iv) clitoral enlargement (Abigail Shrier, *Irreversible Damage*, 2020, p.170). Eliminating testosterone does not return the female back to where she started, those effects are persistent. Biological females who stay on testosterone for longer periods of time experience vaginal atrophy, muscle aches, painful cramping due to endometriosis, increased sweating, moodiness, and aggression, as well as heightened risk of diabetes, stroke, blood clots, heath disease, and cancers (endometrial cancer in particular) (id., p.171). Women who have been on testosterone for several years often have a hysterectomy, resulting in, obviously, permanent sterility (id.).

Obviously, SLSD is not prescribing testosterone to your female students; we make no such assertion. What is obviously, though, as you will see in heart breaking detail later in this [Section 12](#), is that SLSD is in fact fully supporting the first, second, and third steps of the “gender affirming care” progression set out on the previous page in a fulsome and dedicated manner. It is important then, to be very clear about what “social transition” is.

Social Transition / Social Affirmation

As we described above, “Social Transition” (often also called “social affirmation”) is the public adoption of a newly selected “gender identity. Social transition is public adoption of a newly selected “gender identity.” This usually takes the form of changes in clothing, use of make-up (if the transition is from male to female), selection and use of a new name, and selection and use of new “pronouns.” Social transition typically also includes the use of chest binders (to “masculinize” the female chest) and “genital tucking” (to hide the penis and scrotum).

Dr. Miriam Grossman, M.D., is board certified in child, adolescent, and adult psychiatry, has been in practice for over 40 years, and routinely treats people of all ages with gender dysphoria. In her recent book “Lost in Trans Nation,” she highlights some of the realities and implications of social transition/social affirmation (Grossman, 2023, all quotes below are from pp.118-122):

“...what [social transition] affirms is your child’s rejection of their body, their material reality...you and other adults endorse the child’s belief he or she is in the wrong body...affirming a falsehood is not a loving gesture, especially if it leads to harm”

“‘Affirmation’ has a positive connotation... ‘Affirming’ your child seems kind and loving, instead of distressed, she’s comfortable, she’s happy...”

“‘Social transition’ is a big deal, it’s not a simple act of kindness or a show of respect... if you validate your son’s girl identity, you agree that his body is wrong, and should be rejected. You confirm the disconnect between his mind and his physical reality. You agree that he knows best who he is, and what he needs, and you inform everyone else in his life to follow suit: change how they speak, change how *they think*” (emphasis in the original)... think of the impact in your son. He feels like a girl, and you agree! He wants to run the show, and you’re stepping aside. *I’m listened to, I’m special, I’m getting so much attention at home*

and at school. Adults are making big changes for me. He's never felt so empowered. You've turbocharged his self-esteem. Of course it feels good..."

Dr. Grossman notes, however, that people who are engaged in these acts of "social affirmation" don't seem to consider the many different ways in which they may be harming the child:

"Consider also the possibility that your son's social affirmation may affect the wiring of his brain...neuroplasticity is the well-established phenomenon in which thinking, behavior, and experience alter brain microstructure. Each time your son hears his new name and pronouns it's a learning experience that creates a memory. We all know repetition is a key to learning. We all know that the brain is constantly rewiring – its structure changing – in response to life experiences ...the new name and pronouns concretize false beliefs, perhaps even on a cellular level."

Dr. Grossman also points out the dilemma faced by a student for whom authority figures in his or her life have twisted themselves in knots and bent over backward to provide a "gender affirming" environment that prioritizes respect for each person's "gender identity" and "inclusion":

"What if after one or two years, or more, your son starts to doubt: he's not sure about his girl identity after all. Now he has a dilemma. Yes, he had been so sure. His parents, teachers, friends, therapist, principal, and even the lunch lady went through the trouble of accepting his new identity and getting used to his new name and pronouns. Everyone was careful not to 'misgender' or 'deadname' him. There were many phone calls, appointments, and meetings. He got to use the girls' bathroom. Maybe it caused conflict within the family, between you and your spouse, siblings, or grandparents. You went through a lot, all for him, because he was so sure... How do you make a U-turn after all that? Even an adult would need lots of confidence and courage."

The reader would be well served to remember that childhood-onset gender dysphoria has been shown to have a high rate of natural resolution, with as high as 98% of children reidentifying with their biological sex during puberty (Jiska Ristori and Thomas D. Steensma, *Gender Dysphoria in Children*, <<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26754056/>>, last visited October 16, 2023). However, once social transition/social affirmation is introduced, those resolution rates appear to decrease significantly. In 2014, The American Psychological Association (APA) warned (as quoted in Grossman, p.121):

"...premature labeling of gender identity should be avoided and early social transition... should be approached with caution to avoid foreclosing this stage of (trans)gender identity development," noting that "social transition might be 'challenging to reverse' even if the person is no longer gender dysphoric."

A Dutch study supported this idea, finding that "cross-gender identification and social role transition" were "associated with persistence of childhood [gender dysphoria]"

(quoted in Grossman, p.119, citing the original study, *Factors Associated with Desistence and Persistence of Childhood Gender Dysphoria: A Quantitative Follow-Up Study* which appeared in the Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0890856713001871>>, last visited October 16, 2023). Another researcher found that “social transition of prepubertal children will increase dramatically the rate of gender dysphoria persistence (Grossman, p.119). And finally, *Pediatrics*, a journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, reported in an article published in 2022 titled “Gender Identity 5 Years After Social Transition” that “Of children who were six to seven years old when they socially transitioned, by the age of eleven to twelve, 97.5% remained transgender-identified or “non-binary” (<<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/150/2/e2021056082/186992/Gender-Identity-5-Years-After-Social-Transition?autologincheck=redirected>>, last visited October 16, 2023).

The last several paragraphs were quite dense, so let us summarize them as succinctly as possible. ***There is good evidence that if you take a watchful-waiting approach and do not allow a social transition of a child, most of the time that child’s gender dysphoria will resolve entirely on its own. If instead you enable and support a “gender affirming social transition,” that child is far more likely than not to remain transgendered. Got it? You are likely to ensure that that child’s gender dysphoria persists.***

Based on the information presented in the preceding the preceding pages, it should be clear to the reader that ***allowing, enabling, or supporting a “social transition” for a child is an active psychotherapeutic intervention that has a significant impact on a child’s mental state and prospects for seeing his or her gender dysphoria resolve in the future.***

We urge you to keep the above information in mind as you read the following pages and learn just how thoroughly SLSD has adopted the “gender affirming” model for dealing with “gender identity” issues in our school district.

12.3 SLSD has Adopted the “Gender Affirming Care” Model by Allowing, Enabling, and Supporting “Social Transition” of Students Without the Knowledge or Consent of Parents

We have repeatedly advocated for increased transparency in district activity, both in communications with our school board and in public comments at school board meetings. Transparency builds trust and facilitates constructive exchanges. We argued from the beginning that if you have to hide what you’re doing, you probably shouldn’t be doing it. We seem, nonetheless, to again find ourselves in a situation where controversial policies and practices are being adopted, implemented, and enforced outside of the oversight of our school board and the public.

In this case, and as presented throughout this Section 12, it is clear that SLSD has adopted the “gender affirming care” model of dealing with “gender identity” and “transgender” issues in our school district. It has done so by actively and readily supporting “social transition” or “social affirmation” of students’ new “gender identities.” As you will recall from Section 12.2 above, “social transition”/ “social affirmation” is an active psychotherapeutic intervention that has a

significant impact on a child’s mental state and prospects for seeing his or her gender dysphoria resolved in the future. SLSD has adopted and implemented this model without consultant with parents of the children underdoing the “social transition,” despite the fact that a “social transition” may in fact be contraindicated. SLSD wouldn’t even know whether the child has an existing care team addressing his or her gender dysphoria. Nonetheless, as you will see, our administrators and counselors have decided they know better, they know better than parents and they know better than a child’s existing care team. In doing so, as you will see below, they have needless put children at risk, but students that identify as “transgender” and those that do not.

Our counselors are doing a great job in many areas, but dealing with gender issues is not one of them. In that area, they have fully adopted the “gender affirming care model,” including hiding essential information about the wellbeing of children from their parents.

SLSD Adopted a Secret Policy and Practice on Gender Identity

On September 2, 2022, we informed the district that we had information that our Intermediate School was as a matter of policy engaging in the active deception of parents with respect to gender identity issues. Dr. Mahon engaged with us on a timely basis in his typical professional manner. He did some initial internal investigation and informed us that after speaking with the principals and others that he was unable to find evidence to substantiate our assertions, and that in fact he had been assured it wasn’t happening at a meeting with the principals. Dr. Mahon was sadly being misled (through, at the time, no apparent fault of his own).

We then provided Dr. Mahon with a further level of specificity with respect to the internal emails we knew to exist. We were informed of the existence of these emails through district employees who disagreed with the policy but had decided to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation by district administrators. Having failed to receive a meaningful update from Dr. Mahon or the school board, we decided, and in order to drag these controversial matters into the view of the public where they could be properly reviewed and debated we submitted in late September 2022 a request for records seeking the two specific records that we knew to exist. We received in due course the two requested documents within the required response period with no inappropriate redactions or other noncompliances.

The first of the two documents we received from SLSD confirmed that the principal of our Intermediate School established a school-wide policy that requires the active concealment of gender identity-related information from parents, as well as the use of names and “pronouns” that vary from the student’s enrolled name.

In an email dated October 7, 2021, Mr. Sean McGinty, principal of our Intermediate School, sent an email to the “SLIS Staff” email distribution list (which presumably includes, at a minimum, the 84 individuals listed as “Staff” in the 2021/2022 JPLIS yearbook) that directs them, as “guidelines” and “expectations” of the top manager, the principal, at the Intermediate School to do the following:

- (i) Use a student’s preferred name and pronouns even if they do not match biological sex;

- (ii) Not report to parents information shared with the teacher by the student about gender identity; and
- (iii) Take direction from the student as to what to call the student when speaking with parents.

Below is the complete email as provided to us by SLSD (emphasis added):

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

Gender identity questions and guidance

mcgintys@sbsd.org Sean McGinty Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 4:12:53 PM Eastern Daylight Time
 To: slisstaff@sbsd.org SLIS Staff

Greetings all,

We had a good conversation today about some concerns connected to different situations, and interactions that could occur regarding gender. Here are a few guidelines, and expectations when facing interactions with students related to sexuality and/ or gender identity:

- If a student shares with you that they are either questioning their gender identity or would prefer you to call them a name or pronoun that does not appear to match their biological sex, you should do this.
- If a student shares with you that they are homosexual, transgender, bisexual, or questioning, they are doing this in confidence, just as much as they would with our guidance staff. This is not something you should report to parents, and definitely something you should share with our guidance staff.
- The two situations above can put any staff member in a tricky situation if it comes time to communicate with a parent. A good question to ask the student before you call is, "What name, or how would you like me to refer to you when I call home?"

Bathroom use for students whose biological sex does not appear to match gender identity.

- Students will have access to the bathroom in the nurse's office, but this is not required.
- Barring transgender students from restrooms that align with their gender identity would itself pose a potential Title IX sex discrimination violation.

The second of these two situations can put any staff member in a tricky situation. If you receive any communication concerning "a boy in the girl's bathroom, or girl in the boy's bathroom", please forward those concerns to Sean and Deanna.

Take care,

Sean

By sending this email, and using the terms “guideline” and “expectation,” Mr. McGinty made clear that employees at JPLIS are expected as part of their job to comply with his directions. That, good reader, is what a normal person calls a “policy” (*i.e.*, a guiding principle or plan on which an organization makes decisions and takes actions). Despite this, when asked whether SLSD has a policy on how to handle gender-identity related matters, the district said that it did not! In our request for records dated March 26, 2023 under the Pennsylvania Right to Know law, we expressly and specifically asked SLSD to provide any record of a **policy, practice, or guidance, whether informal or formal** (emphasis added):

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

2. All Records addressing or relating to how SLSD employees or agents should solicit, receive, record, process, disclose, not disclose, store, keep confidential, report, dispose of, or otherwise handle information relating to Gender Identity, including, without limitation:
 - a. Records relating to or reflecting policies (whether formal or informal, whether distributed in writing or orally), practices, or guidance applicable now or in the past at any SLSD school or administrative office relating to Gender Identity, including, without limitation, with respect to the use of names that do not align with that student's legal name as reflected on district enrollment documentation or pronouns that do not align with a student's biological sex;

In its response letter dated May 3, 2023, SLSD stated (emphasis added):

At present, the District has not adopted policies or administrative regulations regarding Gender Identity, including, without limitation, with respect to the use of names that do not align with students' legal name as reflected on District enrollment records. However, the District performed a thorough search of any records responsive to 2(a) of your Request. In doing so, the District identified potentially 24,000+ responsive documents.

Given that we already had the McGinty email our possession, you can imagine our surprise at this response. It boggles the mind how the district continued to maintain that it didn't have so much as an "informal" policy, practice, or guidance on how to handle gender identity issues despite McGinty's email expressly stating that he was stating to the entire staff of our Intermediate School what his, as principal, "expectations and guidelines" were. Further, the language of McGinty's email literally stated things like "you should do this" (first bullet point) and "...this is not something you should report to parents..." (second bullet point). Anyone who has ever had a job with a manager would readily understand that that email stated what was expected of the employee in carrying out his or her duties at SLSD.

In addition, there had by that point been a national news story about the policy at the Intermediate School. Below are two screenshots from the article (<<https://dailycaller.com/2022/10/18/pennsylvania-middle-school-preferred-name-pronouns-without-informing-parents/>>, last visited October 13, 2023):

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

EDUCATION

EXCLUSIVE: Pennsylvania Middle School Asks Teachers To Use Students' Preferred Name, Pronouns Without Informing Parents



Photo by PATRICK T. FALLON/AP via Getty Images

CHRISSE CLARK
EDUCATION REPORTER

October 18, 2022
3:11 PM ET

FONT SIZE: + -

A Pennsylvania school for students aged nine to 12 years old told educators they must use students' preferred names and pronouns without informing the students' parents, according to internal emails obtained by the Daily Caller.

The principal of Southern Lehigh School District's Intermediate School sent an email to the entire staff Oct. 7, 2021, informing educators they must use the name and pronouns associated with a student's perceived gender identity.

The principal appeared to instruct educators to defer to the students regarding gender, instead of the students' parents. Educators were told to ask students what name and pronouns to use when talking with their parents.

Gender identity questions and guidance

Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 4:12:53 PM Eastern Daylight Time

Greetings all,

We had a good conversation today about some concerns connected to different situations, and interactions that could occur regarding gender. Here are a few guidelines, and expectations when facing interactions with students related to sexuality and/or gender identity:

- If a student shares with you that they are either questioning their gender identity or would prefer you to call them a name or pronoun that does not appear to match their biological sex, you should do this.
- If a student shares with you that they are homosexual, transgender, bisexual, or questioning, they are doing this in confidence, just as much as they would with our guidance staff. This is not something you should report to parents, and definitely something you should share with our guidance staff.
- The two situations above can put any staff member in a tricky situation if it comes time to communicate with a parent. A good question to ask the student before you call is, "What name, or how would you like me to refer to you when I call home?"

Bathroom use for students whose biological sex does not appear to match gender identity.

- Students will have access to the bathroom in the nurse's office, but this is not required.
- Barring transgender students from restrooms that align with their gender identity would itself pose a potential Title IX sex discrimination violation.

The second of these two situations can put any staff member in a tricky situation. If you receive any communication concerning "a boy in the girl's bathroom, or girl in the boy's bathroom", please forward those concerns to [REDACTED]

Take care,
[REDACTED]

Southern Lehigh School District's Intermediate School appears to allow transgender-identifying students to use the restroom that corresponds with their perceived gender identity. The principal's email claims it may be a "potential Title IX sex discrimination violation" to **bar** transgender students "from restrooms that align with their gender identity."

As the few paragraphs will show, with supporting evidence directly from the district, McGinty's policy email was in fact fully vested with the administration and other school principals before being sent out.

Gender Identity Policy Vetted with Administration for Consistency with District-wide Practice

We subsequently learned that Mr. McGinty's policy on gender identity information was not an exception but instead reflected the policy of the district as a whole in these matters. In fact, Mr. McGinty vetted his gender identity policy email with the district's superintendent before distributing it to confirm that it was consistent with practices throughout our school district.

In an email to then-Superintendent Mussoline, McGinty expressly states "*I want to make sure I'm on the same page as our MS and HS, and also following expectations that are related to federal law, and recent case law*" (email below, emphasis added). Mussoline confirms to McGinty that "All you wrote...is within these PA cases [referring to a summary of legal cases]":

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

On Thu, Oct 7, 2021 at 2:39 PM Larry Mussoline <mussoline@slsd.org> wrote:
Guys,

I think (I'm old and have memory lapses) I sent this to you all in August. Here it is again - Everything you asked can be referenced to these cases. - <https://www.psba.org/member-services/legal/psba-transgender-legal-update-february-2021/school-district-transgender-policy-in-pennsylvania-doe-v-bovertown-area-sch-dist-897-f-3d-518-3rd-cir-2018-petition-for-certiorari-denied-139-s-ct-2636-2019/>

All you wrote above, Sean, is within these PA cases.

Larry

On Thu, Oct 7, 2021 at 2:13 PM Sean McGinty <mcmcgintys@slsd.org> wrote:

Can you please take a look at some information I'd like to share with the staff at JPLIS? I want to make sure I'm on the same page as our MS and HS, and also following expectations that are related to federal law, and recent case law. I'd really like to give some direction here as I believe there may be some staff who are very concerned and uncomfortable about how this could play out. I also believe some staff want to question/challenge our guidance staff when it comes to these issues, and are not willing to have an open discussion. I had a conversation with [REDACTED] seeking gender identity clarification for union membership [REDACTED] referenced [REDACTED] rep advised, and cited his concern that teachers would be following the direction regarding these issues from guidance staff, who are part of the same association and not administration. The meeting also included Deanna Webb- AP, Brynne Rice- School Psychologist, and myself. Here's what I would like to share:

Part 1: We had a good conversation today about some concerns about different situations, and interactions that could occur regarding gender. Here are a few guidelines, and expectations when facing interactions with students related to sexuality and/ or gender identity:

- If a student shares with you that they are either questioning their gender identity or would prefer you to call them a name or pronoun that does not appear to match their biological sex, you should do this.
- If a student shares with you that they are homosexual, transgender, bisexual, or questioning, they are doing this in confidence, just as much as they would with our guidance staff. This is not something you should report to parents, and definitely something you should share with our guidance staff.
- The two situations above can put any staff member in a tricky situation if it comes time to communicate with a parent. A good question to ask the student before you call is, "What name, or how would you like me to refer to you when I call home?"

Part 2: Bathroom use for students whose biological sex does not appear to match gender identity.

- Students will have access to the bathroom in the nurse's office, but this is not required.
- Barring transgender students from restrooms that align with their gender identity would itself pose a potential Title IX sex discrimination violation.

The second of these two situations can put any staff member in a tricky situation. If you receive any communication concerning "a boy in the girl's bathroom, or girl in the boy's bathroom", please forward those concerns to Sean and Deanna.

Larry Mussoline, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent
Southern Lehigh School District

In a later email from McGinty to Superintendent Mahon, McGinty confirms that he shared the gender identity policy email with “Tom, Beth, Ned, and Larry before it went out” (here McGinty refers to Thomas (Tom) Ruhf (at the time Assistant Superintendent), Beth Guariello (at the time Principal of our High School), Edward (Ned) Edward Donohue (at the time Principal of our Middle School), and Larry Mussoline (at the time Superintendent). **If that’s not a well vetted and fully endorsed policy/practice statement, we can’t imagine what one would be.**

----- Forwarded message -----
 From: Sean McGinty <mcgintys@sbsd.org>
 Date: Mon, Sep 19, 2022 at 3:08 PM
 Subject: Fwd: Gender identity concerns and conversation
 To: Michael Mahon <mahonm@sbsd.org>

Hi Mike,

The email I sent to staff is at the bottom of this email thread. I shared it with Tom, Beth, Ned and Larry before it went out to staff.

Sean

Sadly, when our current Superintendent began to inquiry internally about the original of McGinty’s email in response to a press inquiry, we think he was given only part of the story by those he questioned. In an email to Ms. Chrissy Clark of the Daily Caller dated October 19, 2022, Dr. Mahon stated that “*The principal’s [McGinty’s] email does not capture the district’s current approach...*”:

From: Michael Mahon <mahonm@sbsd.org>
 Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 3:33 PM
 To: Chrissy Clark
 Subject: Re: Media Request: Comments on CHOP Presentation

Chrissy,

Just got back...Here’s my best try at a response.

I checked with our Right to Know officer. He is of the view that the presentation in your attachment, while similar, is not the presentation disseminated by the employee. The attachment in your email, as I am told, has more slides/information/links etc... There is, however, significant overlap between the two.

I have always made a point of trying to be accurate in my responses to reporters. As noted in my previous email, I was not here when the events in question were occurring. That said, I believe the following to be the case:

- The individual who sent information from CHoP was not a district administrator. Any information she sent does not represent district policy. It is not uncommon for staff members to share information among themselves. CHoP is a highly respected organization that does amazing work for children. Recommendations from organizations like CHoP are often considered in the development of practices/policy but are not determinative. For example, the district considered guidance from CHoP regarding the pandemic but did not always follow it.
- I do not believe that representatives from CHoP came to the district, but rather a small number of staff members went off-site to a presentation. Tara Cooke shared information with grade-level teachers only and did not share information broadly across the district.
- The principal who sent out the email certainly has standing unlike the staff member who sent out the slides. Our school district does not have a board approved policy regarding the topics described in the principal’s email. To the best of my knowledge, no other building principals sent out similar guidance/emails. The principal’s email does not capture the district’s current approach, which I did my best to describe in my statement to you yesterday.

I hope this helps. Let me know if you need more information.

Thank You!

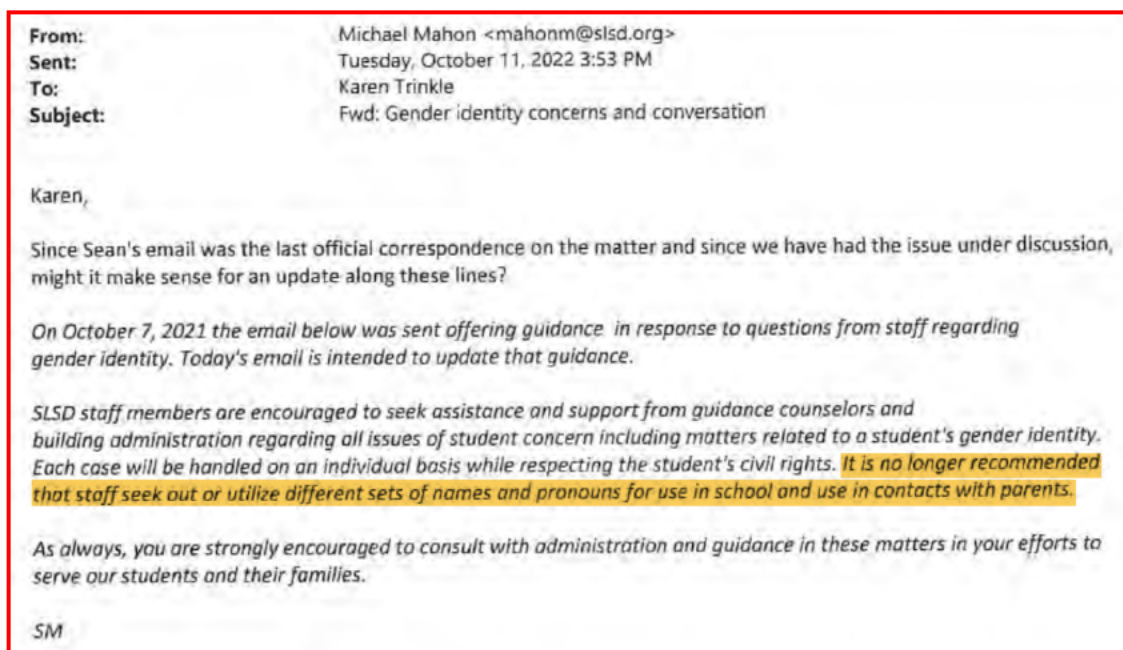
Mike

We know from the emails on the previous pages that McGinty did in fact vet the positions in the “*secret gender identity policy*” with both the administration (then-Superintendent Mussoline) as well as the other principals in the district. Accordingly, someone gave Dr. Mahon a partial picture at best. We also know that if the district had in fact changed direction on its practices to any meaningful degree, we would have seen that in the records the district provided to us (which on this topic would have included topics all the way up until March of 2023). We know that Dr.

Mahon considered making some change, that's for sure, but no update email or other policy/practice change was made (as you will see following the next subsection).

District Actively Sought Out “different sets of names and pronouns for use in school and use in contact with Parents”

SLSD not only used “new” names and pronouns for students who asked that our schools did so, it's clear now that SLSD was actively seeking out new names and pronouns, and, as you will see in [Section 12.4](#) below, keeping separate secret records of those new names and pronouns. How do we know this? In a draft email from our current Superintendent to our current Assistant Superintendent, our Superintendent makes clear that it is “***no longer recommended***” that staff do so. To write that, it has to, a priori, have been recommended previously (otherwise, why would it no longer be the recommendation...)! The email reads (emphasis added):

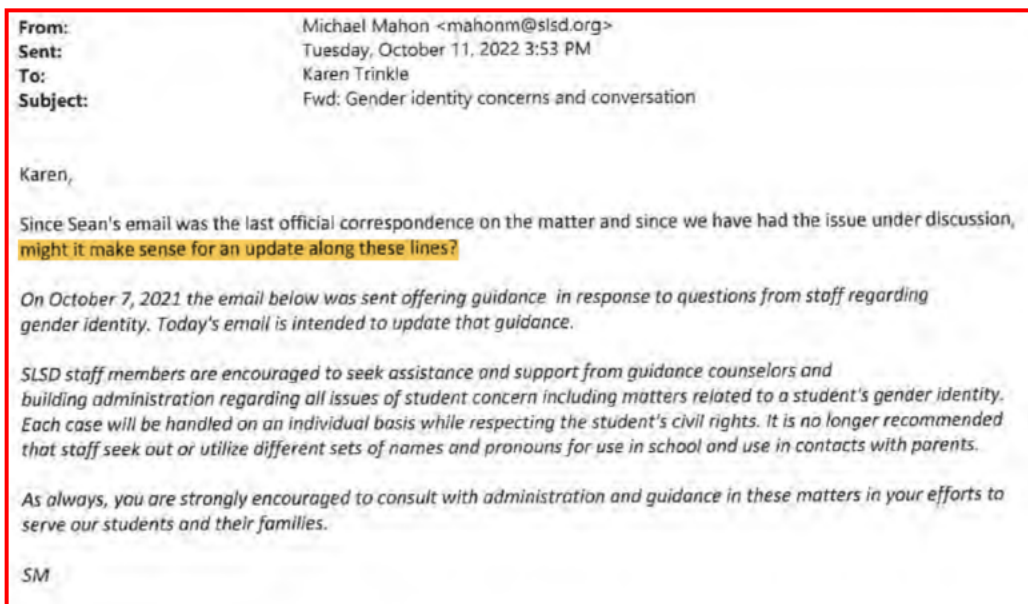


We don't know who sought out “*different sets of names and pronouns for use in school and use in contacts with parents*” at SLSD, but it is obviously widespread for our Superintendent to consider putting out a district wide update email to staff to say that the recommendation to do so has not changed and that they should cease doing so! Obviously, this is occurring without any parent notice or consent.

Updated Guidance Considered but Not Issued

The records provided by the district do not provide any evidence that the “update” from Dr. Mahon was ever sent to SLSD staff. Accordingly, and unless SLSD again failed to comply with its obligations under the Pennsylvania Right to Know law, the original policies (per Mr. McGinty's email above) remain in place today. See the mail below (which is the same as on the previous page), but with different emphasis added:

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Final Thoughts

The district's policy and practice in this area evidence a callous and dangerous disregard for the safety of the children who are in fact identifying as transgender within our schools. These are children who may very well be under the care of one or more physicians or therapists relating to their "gender identity." Accordingly, there may be in place a care plan under which the student is being monitored and/or treated, depending on that student's particular circumstances. By adopting and following a policy and practice of not actively communicating with the parents of the child in question, SLSD is actively pursuing willful blindness and worse, actively administering psychotherapeutic intervention that they are wholly unqualified to administer. What if the actions of a teacher or a counselor conflict with an existing care plan, or in the absence of a specific care plan, the considered position of the child's parents? What is the "social transition" / "social affirmation" in fact worsens the child's gender dysphoria? Our school simply don't have the right to do this, and the administrators and counselors who have condoned and engaged in this practice should be ashamed of themselves for putting these children at additional risk. This simply must stop. It is a major danger to these children, not to mention a massive litigation risk.

We are forced to wonder what else has been done. Have our counselors provided or enabled students that identify as "transgender" to obtain chest binders that help biological girls to flatten their breasts to achieve a more "masculine" look? Have they provide storage spaces for children to change into different clothes for school (i.e., a boy leaves that house dressed as a boy but then changes into typically female clothing at school)? Have our counselors made referrals to gender clinics like CHOP (see Section 12.6 below) so that a student that identifies as "transgender" can obtain cross-sex hormones? The records we obtained did not provide evidence of such things, but those records would have contained individually identifiable information about students and would likely have been withheld entirely under an exception to the Pennsylvania Right to Know law. Just how far has our district gone in implementing "gender affirming care" by allowing,

enabling, and supporting “Social Transitions” of our students without the knowledge or consent of parents?

Being “kind” doesn’t have to mean adopting “gender affirming care” as the model for which we deal with our students. We can be “kind” by being tolerant, by protecting individual expression (whether it be in choice of appearance or in ideas expressed), and protecting every student from bullying and harassment. You can disagree with gender ideology and not be “transphobic” or a “bigot.”

12.4 SLSD Maintains Secret and Separate Records on Gender Identity

The records we received from SLSD on gender identity-related topics also suggest that SLSD has adopted a policy and practice of maintaining two sets of student records, one for “official” use and one secret set of records for “preferred” gender identity information. This bifurcation of record keeping is, of course, entirely consistent with the secret “gender identity” policy examined in [Section 12.3](#) above.

The records we received do not show that SLSD at any point undertook an analysis of whether maintain two separate sets of records on a single student is compliant with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or “FERPA” (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). It’s possible that they did, and withheld that analysis based on attorney-client privilege, but the privilege log (where they summarize what they withheld and what legal exception they relied on to do so) that they provided to us in the Right to Know process did not list such an analysis.

You may recall from [Section 6.7](#) of this Report that FERPA is the federal law that SLSD violated when it disclosed sensitive student information to the subsequently terminated “DEI consultant” Dr. Joseph Allen. In this case, though, SLSD may be in violation of, or be at serious risk of violating, FERPA requirements by **not** disclosing student information to parents when and if requested. Obviously maintaining separate secret records would certainly suggest that SLSD *intends* not to comply with FERPA if a parent of a student who identifies as anything other than birth sex/gender, or who wishes to use non-traditional pronouns, requests to view that student’s records.

What are the consequences of violating FERPA requirements to disclose a student’s education records to a parent? Section 1232g(a)(1)(A) of FERPA states that if an educational agency or institution (that receives federal any federal funds, which SLSD does) has a “*policy of denying, or which effectively prevents, the parents of students ... the right to inspect and review the education records of their children*” then “*no [federal] funds shall be made available*” to that education agency or institution. The full text of this subsection section reads (emphasis added):

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§1232g. Family educational and privacy rights

(a) **Conditions for availability of funds to educational agencies or institutions; inspection and review of education records; specific information to be made available; procedure for access to education records; reasonableness of time for such access; hearings; written explanations by parents; definitions**

(1)(A) No funds shall be made available under any applicable program to any educational agency or institution which has a policy of denying, or which effectively prevents, the parents of students who are or have been in attendance at a school of such agency or at such institution, as the case may be, the right to inspect and review the education records of their children. If any material or document in the education record of a student includes information on more than one student, the parents of one of such students shall have the right to inspect and review only such part of such material or document as relates to such student or to be informed of the specific information contained in such part of such material. Each educational agency or institution shall establish appropriate procedures for the granting of a request by parents for access to the education records of their children within a reasonable period of time, but in no case more than forty-five days after the request has been made.

In Section 1232g(a)(4)(A), FERPA defines “*education records*” as “*records, files, documents, and other materials*” (they can be electronic records, obviously), that “(i) contain information directly related to a student” and “(ii) are maintained by an educational agency or institution...” For those unfamiliar with interpreting federal statutes, the “and” here simply means that both of those elements ((i) and (ii)) must be met for a record to qualify as an “*education record*” under FERPA.

There are a number of exceptions to this rule. The only applicable exception in this circumstance is Section 1232(g)(a)(4)(B), which carves out records created by a single district employee for his or her own reference that remains in that person’s sole possession (*e.g.*, individual notes maintained by a single teacher, but not shared with other teachers or counselors and not entered into a district student information system). The definition and relevant exception reads (emphasis added):

(4)(A) For the purposes of this section, the term “education records” means, except as may be provided otherwise in subparagraph (B), those records, files, documents, and other materials which-

- (i) contain information directly related to a student; and
- (ii) are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a person acting for such agency or institution.

(B) The term “education records” does not include-

- (i) records of instructional, supervisory, and administrative personnel and educational personnel ancillary thereto which are in the sole possession of the maker thereof and which are not accessible or revealed to any other person except a substitute;

Based on the foregoing statutory definition, we believe two things are inarguable. First, records maintained by the district regarding a student’s gender identity fall squarely within the definition of “*education records*” under FERPA because (i) we know they exist (and are therefore “maintained” by the district) because they disclosed some of them to us in response to our Right to Know request, and (ii) gender identity information about a student quite obviously is “directly related” to that student because that information directly describes that student’s identity. Second, the only possible exception does not apply because (i) SLSD staff have been directed to share gender identity information about a student with district counselors under the policy and practice described in Section 12.3 above, and (ii) that information appears also to be entered into district-wide student information systems (see below regarding Sapphire system, for example); therefore, those records are not in the “sole possession” of the maker (*e.g.*, teacher).

Below are excerpts from a number of documents the district provided to us that support our assertion that the district is maintain secret records on students’ gender identity information. The

first two examples from a “lunch and learn” training session provided to SLSD personnel (the records don’t tell us who or how many SLSD employees attended). Notes by the attendee (likely an administrator) address:

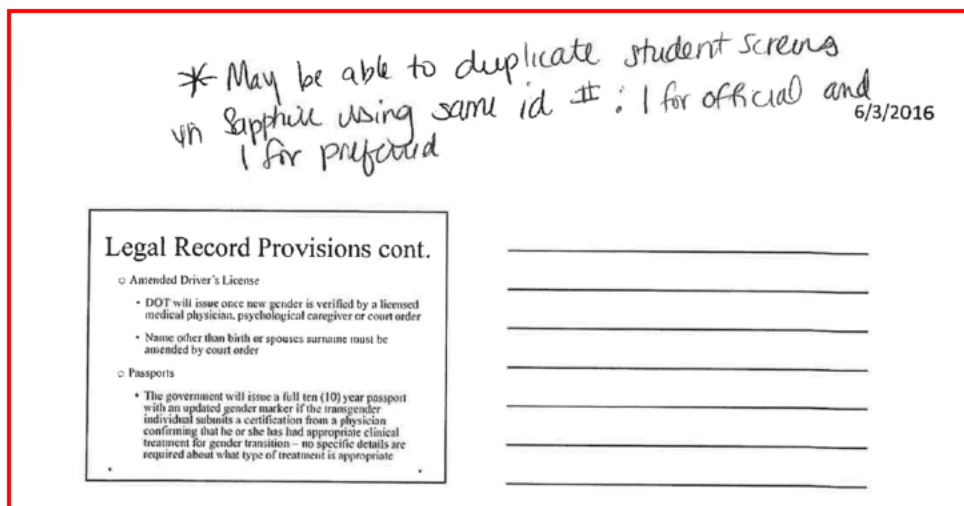
- (i) creating duplicate records, “1 for official and 1 for preferred”;
- (ii) how “day to day records use name and ‘gender’ of the student” while “official paperwork” should “keep the name and gender of birth certificate.”
- (iv) record keepers should “keep bathroom or specific gender accommodations out of IEP or 504” (emphasis in original).

[Note: “IEP” refers to an “Individualized Education Plan,” which is a plan for a child’s special education experience at school. “504” refers to a plan for how the school will provide support and remove barriers for a student with a disability. These are both plans that require discussion with, and disclosure to, parents.]

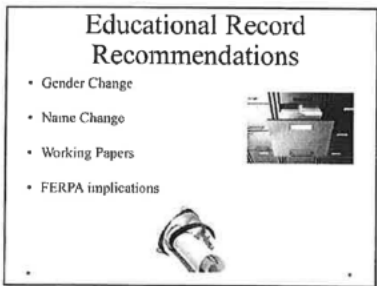
The district’s intent to hide essential information about a student’s well-being from parents could not be more clear.

The full training presentation (with the attendee’s notes is included as Attachment 18 to this Report. Note that the presentation is dated June 3, 2016, so it is possible that SLSD has been maintaining parallel, secret records for at least seven years.

The graphic below shows that the attendee contemplates two sets of records, “1 for official and 1 for preferred”:



The graphic below shows at the attendee contemplates reflected preferred gender identity in “day to day records” but keeping “the name and gender of birth certificate” on “official paperwork”:



Educational Record Recommendations

- Gender Change
- Name Change
- Working Papers
- FERPA implications

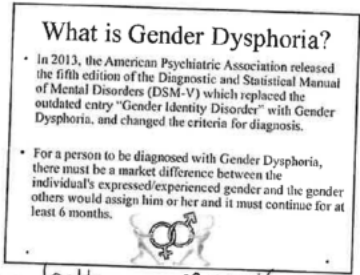
Change student IDs.

Day to day records use name & gender the student identifies

On official paperwork, keep the name & gender of birth certificate

-Must be kept private & confidential

The graphic below shows that the attendee contemplates keeping “*bathroom and specific gender accommodations out of IEP or 304 [plans]*” (emphasis in original):



What is Gender Dysphoria?

- In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association released the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) which replaced the outdated entry “Gender Identity Disorder” with Gender Dysphoria, and changed the criteria for diagnosis.
- For a person to be diagnosed with Gender Dysphoria, there must be a marked difference between the individual’s expressed/experienced gender and the gender others would assign him or her and it must continue for at least 6 months.

** keep bathroom or specific gender accommodations out of IEP or 304.*

Etiquette and Gender Identity

** w/ significant distress as a result*

Section 504 explicitly excludes gender dysphoria or gender identity

• Con evaluate based on co-morbid conditions, such as anxiety or depression

In another record provided by the district, district employees discuss how to modify an existing SLSD student information system (referred to as an “SIS”) to hide gender identity information, specifically new “student pronouns.” Note carefully the first sentence of the email, which notes that “*I found a solution to Student Pronouns being visible in Sapphire.*” Get it? **The problem to which they found a solution that “student pronouns” ARE visible.**

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From: Mel Davis <davism@slsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2022 8:16 AM
To: Beth Guarriello
Subject: Student Pronouns in Sapphire

Hi Beth - I found a solution to Student Pronouns being visible in Sapphire. The teachers can add a Custom Column in their gradebook in the same place they enter Nicknames. They can then make this column visible in their gradebook. Here is a screenshot of what that would look like.



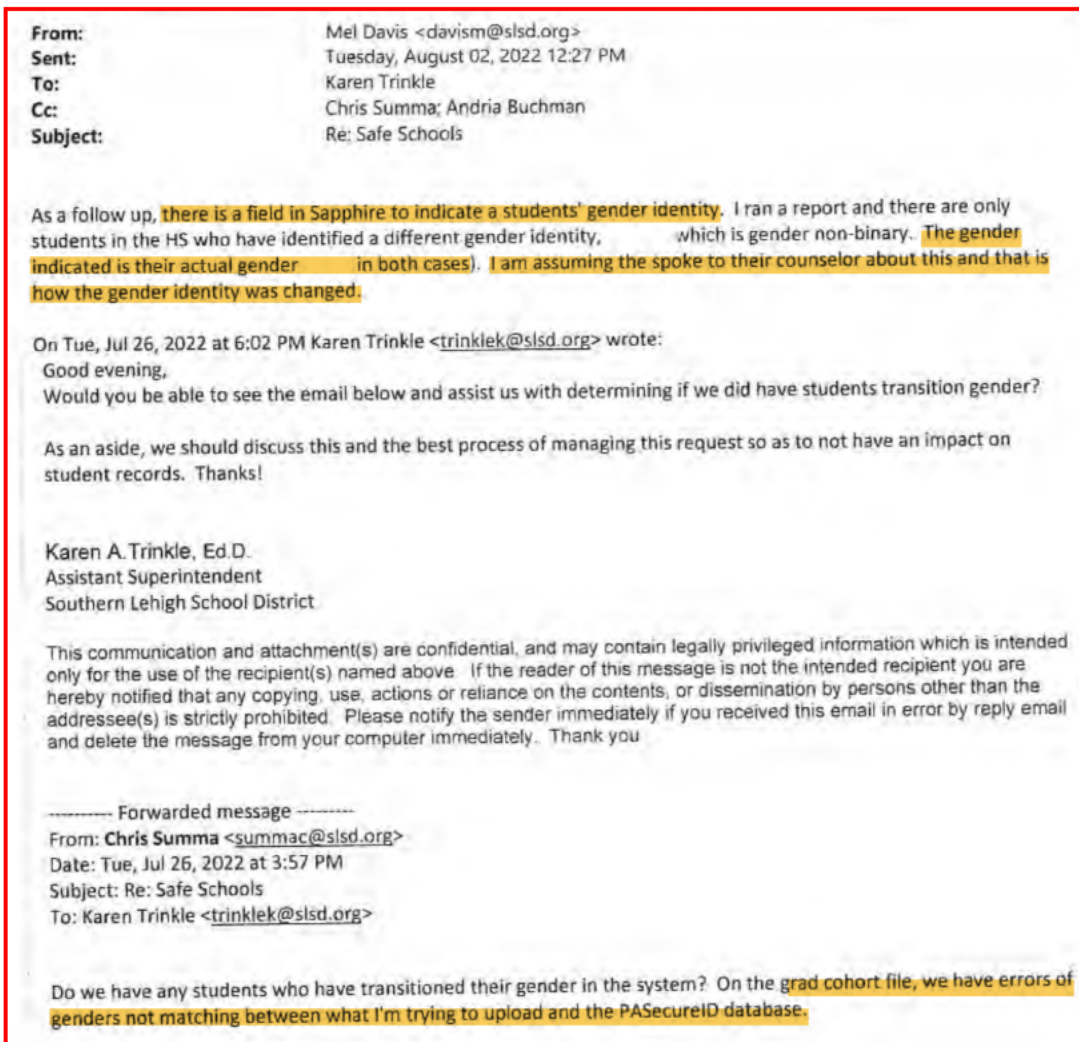
I can do the same thing on the SIS (our) side by adding a custom demographic field. This information will show up on the Quick Look Up Screen if you click on "Other Information"



The email provides further definitive evidence that SLSD is maintaining two sets of records. If you read from the bottom of the thread it appears that the district's Director of Technology prepared a file of student information for submission to the PAsecureID database. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the PAsecureID database is:

"...a unique, permanent, anonymous state-wide student ID assigned to all students upon their first entry into the Commonwealth public school system. A single, unique PAsecureID remains with an individual student throughout their educational career"(<https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/PIMS/PASecureID/Pages/PASecureID.aspx>, last visited October 1, 2023).

However, when the file was submitted, a number of records did not match the information in the PAsecureID database because of a "errors of genders not matching between what I'm trying to upload and the PAsecureID database." SLSD, therefore, is maintaining secret records on gender that don't match state to a state mandated database because of new "gender identity" information tracked by SLSD. The full thread reads (note that the blanks in the top email are redactions by SLSD's solicitor):



Needless to say, we do not believe that SLSD should be keeping separate secret records about any student that are hidden from that student’s parents. Doing so violates the trust we as parents place in our schools, drives a wedge between the school and parents, and in turn between parents and their children. In addition, these practice evidence an intent not to comply with the requirements of FERPA, and therefore put at risk all federal funds that our district receives and relies upon. One is compelled to question whether at any point over the past seven years a parent has requested to review their child’s educational records and been provided access to only the “office records” but not the fuller record which include the other, secret information.

12.5 SLSD Takes Guidance from GLSEN and Adopts its “Safe Spaces” Program

In the absence of a clear policy or other direction from our school board, our administrators, and particularly our counselors, have been left to their own devices to determine how to handle the numerous issues presented by the presence of students who identity as “transgender” (or queer, non-binary, agender/genderless, gender non-conforming, gender atypical, gender fluid, bigender, or neuter gender, or any of the other new “genders” that have come into vogue in the past years, regardless in all cases of whether that person presents as typically male, typically female, or otherwise). As a result, our school board has allowed the most radical of our administrators

(some of whom have thankfully moved on) and counselors to set us on a path that, in our opinion, potentially harms children (and has, in several incidents already harmed children) and reckless exposes the district to litigation. In the absence of leadership from our school board, our district has turned to GLSEN for guidance.

Who is GLSEN?

GLSEN is a radical activist organization dedicated to the promotion of gender ideology and gender affirming care. GLSEN described itself as (emphasis added):

“...a multi-racial, intergenerational LGBTQ+ organization working nationally and locally to ***transform K-12 educational systems*** in the United States. Each year, GLSEN programs and resources reach millions of students and educators in K-12 schools, via action at the national, state, and local level. Since 1990, GLSEN has improved conditions for LGBTQ+ students across the United States and helped launch an international movement to address LGBTQ+ issues in education” (this is the “About GLSEN” paragraph at the end of each of GLSEN’s press releases, available at < <https://www.glsen.org/news-press-list?program=All&type=All&issue=All&topic=All>>, last visited October 1, 2023).

GLSEN further states that its work is “*grounded in racial justice*” and “*gender justice*” (these are part of “Social Justice” generally (see Sections 3 and 13 for an explanation of this essential term), and that its mission includes ensuring that “*educators and administrators should call students by their preferred names and correct pronouns*” (<<https://www.glsen.org/news/glsen-faces-onslaught-attacks-lies-right-wing-extremists>>, last visited October 1, 2023).

Given the intent to “*transform K-12 educational systems*” in the name of LGBTQ+ ideas, it should be no surprise that (emphasis added):

“GLSEN’s policy work strives to ***dismantle all identity-based oppressions*** including but not limited to, race, ethnicity, ability, and immigration status.” (<<https://www.glsen.org/state-and-local-policy-manager>>, last visited October 6, 2023)

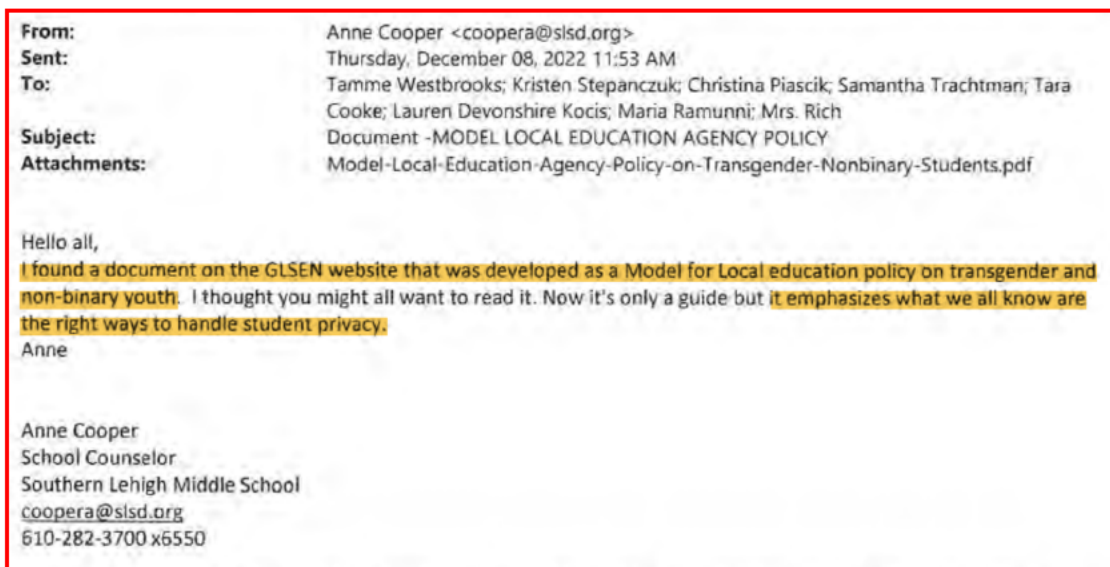
In the Social Justice context, “*Dismantle*” has a very particular meaning, and its use by GLSEN is both intentional and reflective of GLSEN’s world view. “*Dismantle*” in this context means to tear down and eliminate systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization that “woke” or “critically conscious” people believe plague our society because those “systems” allegedly create, maintain, inscribe, and reinforce the relevant oppression, thereby freeing the “oppressed.” In the quote from GLSEN’s website above, they specifically identify “*race, ethnicity, ability, and immigration status*” as areas in which systems of “oppression” must be dismantled. So, you have to believe first and foremost that there is “systemic racism” to believe there is “system” of “oppression” to “dismantle.” See Sections 3 and 13 for discussions of various Social Justice language and concepts.

When did our school board approve taking guidance from an organization that intends to “*transform K-12 education systems*” in the name of “*gender justice*,” or to “*dismantle all*

identity-based oppressions,” let alone adopting its approach in interacting with the students of our district?

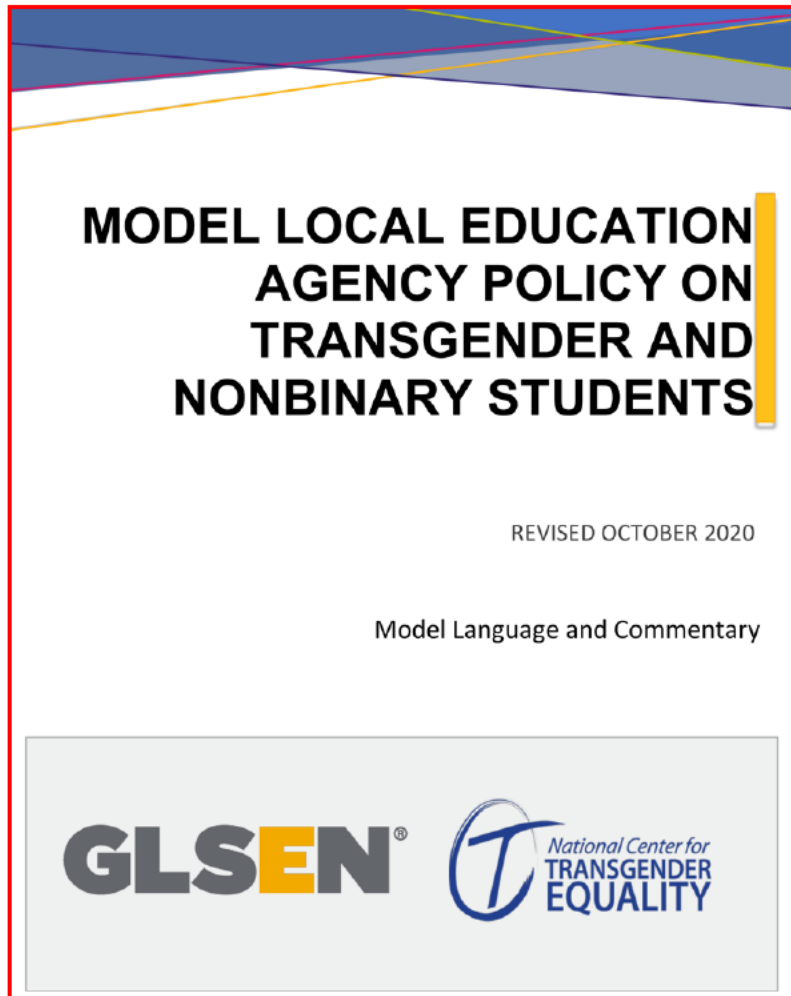
Distribution and Endorsement of GLSEN Model Policy on Transgender Students

On December 8, 2022, Ms. Anne Cooper, a counselor at our Middle School, sent an email to eight other members of our counseling department (constituting the entire district-wide counseling department with only the high school psychologist omitted) informing them that she found a document on the GLSEN website that she was sharing with them because “***it emphasizes what we all know are the right ways to handle student privacy***” (emphasis added):



We will discuss below what the GLSEN model policy recommends, but it is essential to note that ***not a single one of the eight counselors that received that email expressed any concern or objection whatsoever in response to Cooper’s email*** (if such an objection exists, the record of it was not provided to us, and the district would as a result be violation of the Right to Know law). ***The email constitutes an express endorsement by a counselor at SLSB of GLSEN’s approach to transgender issues, and at least a tacit endorsement from those that did not object.*** The email, at a bare minimum, suggests that these counselors are relying on guidance from GLSEN to inform their professional practices in dealing with our children.

Attached to Cooper’s email was GLSEN’s “*Model Local Education Agency Policy on Transgender and Nonbinary Students*” (Revised October 2020) (<<https://www.glsen.org/activity/model-local-education-agency-policy-on-transgender-nonbinary-students>>, last visited October 6, 2023). The language is dense, but this is a document that proposes draft policies to be adopted by school districts. Below is the cover page to the model policy (the entire policy is attached to this Report as Attachment 19):



The content of the GLSEN model policy is entirely consistent with the SLSD email discussed in Section 12.3 that requires teachers to hide gender identity information from parents, use new names/pronouns, etc. Below are some highlights from the model policy (all pages references are to the page in the PDF downloaded from GLSEN’s website as cited above, emphasis added in each case).

Here the model policy acknowledges that parents can access their child’s student records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act or “FERPA” (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) but then, in direct contravention of that federal statute, states that schools should keep gender identity information in those records secret from parents “*unless the student has authorized disclosure*” (p.4):

B. Privacy and Confidentiality

POLICY:

The Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law which applies to all aspects of a student's identity, including their gender identity and transgender status (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Under FERPA, only those school employees with a "legitimate educational interest," the student, or their parent or guardian, may have access to a student's records, including the records of transgender and nonbinary students.

[The local education agency] shall ensure that all personally identifiable and medical information relating to transgender and nonbinary students is kept confidential in accordance with applicable state, local, and federal privacy laws. Staff or educators shall not disclose any information that may reveal a student's gender identity to others, including parents or guardians and other staff, unless the student has authorized such disclosure, the information is contained in school records requested by a parent or guardian, or there is another compelling need. This disclosure must be discussed with the student, prior to any action.

On the same page, the model policy states that just because a student has chosen to use a new name at school or to socially transition at school, that staff are still not authorized to share that information "to anyone" (p.4):

Transgender and nonbinary students have the right to discuss and express their gender identity openly and to decide when, with whom, and how much to share private information. The fact that a student chooses to use a different name, to transition at school, or to disclose their gender identity to staff, educators, or other students does not authorize school staff to disclose a student's personally identifiable or medical information to anyone.

This concept reflects the fundamental view that parents should be kept on the outside. Under this approach, which is exactly the same approach SLSD currently uses, the staff can know, the counselors can know, the teachers can know, and the children's classmates can know about the new names and the social transition, but the parents cannot. Astounding.

On p.6 of the model policy, it states that students have a "right to be addressed by a name, pronouns, and other terms that correspond to their gender identity" and that "educators staff and peers should always use" the new pronoun and name:

D. Names, Parent/Guardian Notification, School Records, and Pronouns

POLICY:

All students have the right to be addressed by a name, pronouns, and other terms that correspond to their gender identity. This foundational respect should not rely on whether a student has access to a legal name change or gender marker change on official documents. Educators, staff, and peers, should always use the pronoun and name with which a student identifies or requests.

Educators, staff, and peers are expected to respect a student's name and pronouns, once they have been made aware of said student's correct information.

As a reminder, GLSEN proposes this model policy for adoption as district-wide policy.

On p.7 the policy directs that if the student has not disclosed their new "identity" to his or her parents, that district staff should hide the "preferred name" separate in the district's systems:

If a student has not disclosed their gender identity to a parent/guardian, and as a result the database/information system information cannot be changed, their affirmed name shall be noted as a "preferred name" in the system. This affirmed name should be used by staff and peers, according to the transgender or nonbinary student's wishes. Attendance rosters and ID cards should reflect the student's wishes with regards to name and/or gender marker/pronouns, regardless of the database/information system. The legal name should be used only where specifically required. Districts and schools should determine which uses require the legal name, including whether it is required for specific testing or reporting purposes.

In a related implementation note on the same page, GLSEN states that "*misgendering*" (e.g. referring to a transgender student as "him" if that student prefers to be referred to as "Xe") and "*deadnaming*" (i.e., using the name under which that student is enrolled in the school; using, for example, "John" if that is the student's legal/enrolled name instead of his new name of "Willow") is a "*major fear and concern*" and that having a policy against such horrible things happening is "*essential for the health and safety of the student*" (p.7):

CONSIDERATIONS FOR NAMES

Misgendering (referring to a transgender or nonbinary person using a word, especially a pronoun, that does not correctly reflect their gender identity) and "deadnaming" (using a student's prior name that does not reflect their identity) in school is a major fear and concern for transgender and nonbinary students. Having a policy that clearly affirms a student's right to use the name and pronouns that are consistent with their gender identity is essential for the health and safety of the student. While mistakes happen, it is important for staff, faculty, and peers to make every effort to correct mistakes, ensure they are not repeated, and address any intentional misuse of a student's name or pronouns.

Got it? GLSEN's position is that if you call a student by his or her birth name / enrolled name, that is unsafe and puts the student's health at risk.

Here GLSEN outright suggests maintaining separate files that remain confidential from parents (p.8):

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOL RECORDS

In some circumstances, school administrators may be specifically required by law to record a student's name or gender as it appears on documents such as a birth certificate. In those instances, school staff and administrators should record this information in a separate, confidential file to avoid the inadvertent disclosure of the information.

GLSEN goes on to state that "Pronouns should never be assumed for any students" and educators and staff must ask each student what they prefer (p.8). The same section advises against such non-inclusive terms as "ladies and gentlemen" and "boys and girls" (p.8).

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRONOUNS

Pronouns should never be assumed for any student. Educators and staff should ask all students what pronouns they use, and have a place to document that information in class rosters, databases, etc.

Educators and administrators should be aware of gendered language utilized in schools. Phrases like “ladies and gentlemen,” “boys and girls,” or circumstances where classes are divided by binary genders are all places that can cause unnecessary stress and anxiety for transgender and nonbinary students. Consider other ways to address or group students including (but not limited to):

- Everyone, folks, friends, or colleagues to address groups of students.
- Grouping students based on their birthdate, their favorite colors, or random numbering, rather than by binary genders.

Under this approach, every SLSD employee has to ask each student what his or her preferred pronouns are and then are required to use them. They have to note this district systems. Bear in mind, that gender identity is fluid and a person’s chosen pronouns may change. Get it wrong and you are making students “unsafe” and threatening their “health.” In no other area of life are we so willing to twist ourselves in knots for the preferences of children.

The model policy goes on to say that “Transgender and nonbinary students should determine which facilities they feel safest and most comfortable using” (p.9):

E. School Facilities

POLICY:

With respect to all restrooms, locker rooms, or changing facilities, students shall have access to facilities that correspond to their gender identity. Schools may maintain separate restrooms, locker rooms or changing facilities for male and female students, provided that they allow all students equal access to facilities that are consistent with their gender identity. Transgender and nonbinary students should determine which facilities they feel safest and most comfortable using.

Any student who is uncomfortable using a shared gender-segregated facility, regardless of the reason, shall, upon the student’s request, be provided with a safe and non-stigmatizing alternative. This may include, for example, addition of a privacy partition or curtain, provision to use a nearby private restroom or office, or a separate changing schedule. However, such alternatives shall only be provided to a student upon that student’s request. Requiring a transgender or nonbinary student to use a separate space against their wishes threatens to stigmatize the student and disclose their transgender status to others. Under no circumstances may students be required to use gender segregated facilities that are inconsistent with their gender identity.

Schools shall designate any existing facilities that are designed to be used by only one person at a time as accessible to all students regardless of gender. However, under no circumstances shall a student be required to use a single-user facility because they are transgender or nonbinary. Schools are encouraged to assess ways to increase privacy for all students in existing facilities, and to incorporate universal-design approaches for all-gender facilities with enhanced privacy in new construction or renovation.

Note what is missing there: any concern whatsoever for what makes the other users of that facility feel “safest and most comfortable.” The compassion flows in only one direction.

This approach applies not only to school facilities, but also to participation in school sports and extracurricular activities; here again, the transgender student decides what happens without regard to how anyone else may feel about it. So if a transgender girl (*i.e.*, a biological boy) decides “she” wants to participate on the girls track team, we must allow it” (p.9):

“Students shall be permitted to participate in all physical education, athletics, and other extracurricular activities according to their gender identity.” P.10

F. Physical Education, Sports, and Extracurricular Activities

POLICY:

Students shall be permitted to participate in all physical education, athletics, and other extracurricular activities according to their gender identity. Participation shall not be conditioned by requiring legal or medical documentation.

If that transgender girl (*i.e.*, a biological boy) was not competitive on the boys team but is now the fastest runner on the girls track team and as a result biological girls can no longer win top spots and their ability to obtain scholarships is reduced, so be it, that’s the “inclusive” thing for us to do. We reject this world view.

The model policy gets even worse in our view. On p.10, the policy provides that transgender/non-binary students get to choose whether they stay with students of the opposite sex on overnight school trips:

For overnight school trips: Students shall be allowed use of an overnight facility that corresponds with their gender identity. Transgender and nonbinary students will be consulted in the planning process, to address any potential concerns and needs for privacy. If applicable, a student’s parent/guardian should also be consulted, unless there are privacy concerns in doing so.

So, without parents’ knowledge or consent, a transgender girl (*i.e.*, a biological boy) can be assigned (at that student’s choice!) to stay in a room on an overnight school trip with a biological girl.

Unsurprisingly, the GLSEN model policy also recommends extensive yearly training for educators, staff, and administrators to ensure that they are onboard and compliant with the rules and approaches of this new world (p.12).

It’s reasonable to ask why our counselors feel they need to, or are free to, look to sources like GLSEN for materials to inform and guide how they deal with our children. Part of the answer is of course the winds of gender ideology blowing through a number of professions over past decade, obviously including counseling, psychology, and medicine in general. Another part of the answer, one much easier to us address, is that our school boards, past and present, have simply refused to establish clear policies and associated operational guidelines for what is and is not acceptable in these situations in a given school district. If our board, for example, had adopted a policy a few years ago stating that our district is not permitted to hide essential information about a student’s well-being from his or her parents, perhaps we wouldn’t be in this mess. If our school board had adopted policies which reflect fundamental, unchangeable biological realities, perhaps it wouldn’t need to hide what it is doing in this area from public view.

Our district’s reliance on materials and guidance from GLSEN does not stop with the model policy discussed above. SLSD has also adopted, endorsed, and supported multiple other GLSEN

programs, including the GLSEN “Day of Silence” Program and the GLSEN “Safe Spaces” program. We discuss the later in the next section.

SLSD Adopts GLSEN “Safe Space” Program

We received a number of records from the district that show it has adopted and endorsed GLSEN’s approaches and programs in deciding how to deal with transgender issues in our district. For example, as early as 2017, Mrs. Spritzer was recommending GLSEN.org as a resource to the administration for “*Safe Space*” information and materials, including “*signs, stickers, and reorganized items to help create Safe Spaces in schools,*” noting it is a “*definite go-to*” (emphasis added):

From: [REDACTED]@slsd.org
on behalf of [REDACTED]@slsd.org <[REDACTED]@slsd.org>
Sent: 4/26/2017 11:22:27 AM
To: Thomas Ruhf [ruhft@slsd.org]
Subject: Safe Space Resources

Tom,

Thank you so much for your time today! The students and I really appreciate it.

1. GLSEN is a national organization that provides resources for education, Safe Spaces and other initiatives such as Day of Silence and Ally Week: <https://www.glsen.org/> They have a lot of materials, signs, stickers and reorganized items to help create Safe Spaces in schools. It’s a definite go-to.

2. Locally, the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBTQ community center in Allentown offers education, training and resources to area schools. I’ve met with them before and they are really open to supporting students in our area. I passed this on to Kathy Evison earlier this spring in the event she wanted to bring them in to help with the diversity training. <http://www.bradburysullivancenter.org/>

Let me know how I can help organize for our Wednesday meetings!

[REDACTED]

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That recommendation seems to have resonated. By 2021, one of our HS counselors was working to spread GLSEN safe space materials outward from the high school into our IS and elementary schools (emphasis added):

From: Tamme Westbrook [westbrookst@sbsd.org]
on behalf of Tamme Westbrook <westbrookst@sbsd.org> [westbrookst@sbsd.org]
Sent: 3/29/2021 8:03:46 PM
To: [REDACTED]@sbsd.org
CC: Christina Piascik [piascik@sbsd.org]; [REDACTED]@sbsd.org
Subject: Re: safe space stickers?

Thanks so much [REDACTED] **We are happy to order more** so just let us know either way.

I hope everything is okay on your end and we'll see you soon!!

Tamme A. Westbrook
School Counselor

Southern Lehigh High School
5800 Main Street
Center Valley, PA 18034

Ph 610-282-1421, ext. 7556
Fx 610-282-2965

On Mon, Mar 29, 2021 at 5:30 PM [REDACTED]@sbsd.org> wrote:

That's great! I might have a few extra ones in my desk at school. I'll be out of the building the next couple of days, but I can look when I get back. Hopefully Thursday.



Southern Lehigh High School
[REDACTED]

On Mon, Mar 29, 2021 at 3:22 PM Christina Piascik <piascik@sbsd.org> wrote:

Hi ladies!

I was wondering if either of you have any extra safe spaces stickers lying around? The counselors at the IS and elementary schools asked, as they are having more students talk to them about these things and they want to show support and openness.

Can you please let me know? They can always order them but we thought we'd ask you first.

Thanks!

Christie

Christie Piascik
School Counselor (A-G)
Southern Lehigh High School
610-282-1421 ext. 7555
piascik@sbsd.org

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If you're not familiar the GLSEN "Safe Space" program, its essential positions directly match the concepts in Mr. McGinty's email on gender identity (which reflects the district's position over all, see [Section 12.3](#) above). **Any classroom that has a GLSEN Safe Space sticker or poster is promoting GLSEN as a resource for use by students. The GLSEN website address is on every sticker and poster. Therefore, the school district is encouraging students to use GLSEN's services, and thereby endorsing its positions on gender identity issues.**



Presumably the principals and vice principals were aware of it, because you can't not see the stickers and posters when you walk around our schools. In any event, the district either approves of this or at least condones it, in our view. What is the implication of this? That our students are not "safe" if they're in a classroom where a teacher does not display these stickers and posters? That some teachers are unsafe but others are safe? Absurd.

We don't believe our school board has ever discussed, let alone approved, whether to adopt the GLSEN "Safe Space" in our schools, but it was clearly supported by former Superintendent Evison's administration. Below is an email from our former Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12 Shane Cross to a community member stating there has been an "expansion of counseling services" as part of the district's DEI efforts (this would fall under the "inclusion" element of "DEI") (emphasis added):

From: Shane Cross <crosss@sbsd.org>
Sent: Sunday, May 2, 2021 8:07 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Kathleen Evison <evisonk@sbsd.org>
Subject: Re: DEI Work

Good morning [REDACTED]

Thank you for your inquiry.

The **District remains committed to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**, as part of our Comprehensive Plan. **Over the last several years there have been** communications, public forums, DEI committee work, changes to literature used in courses, professional development, student groups, and **expansion of counseling services**. Dr. Joseph Allen is in the process of collecting data for a needs assessment that will guide future DEI work and our next 3 year comprehensive plan. Literacy and Social Studies have now entered the *Cycle for Curricular Excellence (CCE)*, where DEI is being considered as part of curricular revisions. Additionally, we have completed an audit of our Library collection and are in the process of expanding the collection to include more books that all students can identify with. In turn, those books can then be used as part of instruction!

I want to assure you that whenever issues arise, buildings work with students to discuss and process, where appropriate, in the classroom setting, small groups, or individually.

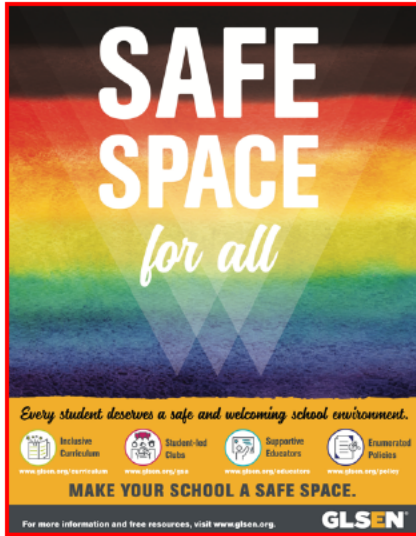
I have cc'd Dr. Evison so she can also respond.

Best Regards,
Shane

Shane T. Cross
Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12
610.282.3121, Ext 5403
Cell: [REDACTED]
crosss@sbsd.org
#SLSDProud

The GLSEN “Safe Space” materials look like this (<https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/GLSEN_Safe_Space_Poster_2019.pdf> and <https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/GLSEN_Safe_Space_Sticker_10_up_2019.pdf>, last visited October 1, 2023>):

*Current Version of
“Safe Space Poster”*



*Current Version of
“Safe Space Sticker”*



Earlier versions can be seen in our schools (see below).

If you are a teacher or counselor displaying a GLSEN space sticker or poster, that means, per GLSEN’s Safe Space Book (<<https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/GLSEN%20English%20SafeSpace%20Book%20Text%20Updated%202019.pdf>>, last visited October 1, 2023), that you commit, among other things, to the following:

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1. “Act in allyship with the LGBTQ community in and outside of school” (lest there be any misunderstanding, “allyship” does not mean just being kind and tolerant, but instead means adoption and promotion of the gender theory/queer theory, *i.e.*, you will become a gender theory activist) (*id.* p.3).
2. “...be familiar with a student’s right to privacy, where you do not disclose identity information to others” (*id.*).
2. “By displaying a Safe Space Sticker, you are telling students that you will listen to them, affirm their chosen ... identities” (*i.e.*, you will support their social transition, which is the first step of “gender affirming care”) (*id.*).
4. “Affirm students’ chosen names and pronouns in conversations” (*id.*).
5. “Learn, use, and affirm new identity and relationship terms and experiences” (*id.*).

WHO SHOULD PUT UP THE SAFE SPACE KIT STICKER?

Anyone can display a Safe Space Symbol to show their allyship to the LGBTQ community, and to promote LGBTQ visibility. You do not have to be an expert in LGBTQ identity to display a Safe Space Sticker. However, teachers who display the Safe Space Sticker should be prepared for students to approach them about LGBTQ identity. By displaying a Safe Space Sticker, you are telling students that you will listen to them, affirm their chosen or shared names, pronouns, or other identities, and can refer them to someone in the school who they can talk to more.

GLSEN requests that educators and school leaders who display our Safe Space Sticker be prepared to:

- ▼ Act in allyship with the LGBTQ community in and outside of school.
- ▼ Have a student approach you to discuss their gender identity or sexual orientation, and be familiar with a student’s right to privacy, where you do not disclose identity information to others.
- ▼ Affirm students’ chosen names and pronouns in conversations.
- ▼ Learn, use, and affirm new identity and relationship terms and experiences.

In addition, teachers/counselors/staff posting or making available GLSEN safe space materials also commit to “bring LGBTQ visibility into your curriculum” (*id.*).

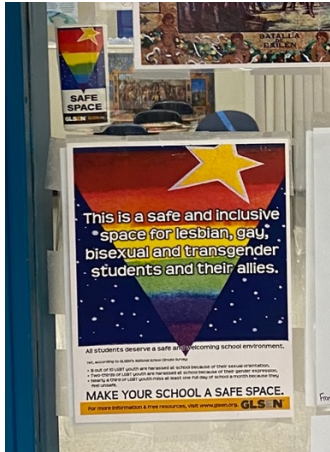
▼ Educate discusses ways to bring LGBTQ visibility into your curriculum and inform other educators and school leaders about institutional supports for LGBTQ students, including policies for combating anti-LGBTQ bias and behavior.

▼ Assure and respect confidentiality. The student told you and may or may not be ready to tell others. Let the student know that the conversation is confidential and that you won’t share the information with anyone else, unless they ask for your help. If they want others to know, doing it in their own way with their own timing is important. Respect their privacy.

Another commitment is to “Assure and respect confidentiality.” This includes telling the student that “*the conversation is confidential and that you won’t share the information with anyone else, unless they ask for your help.*” (*id.* p.18). Needless to say, no good and proper relationship start with “*don’t worry kid, I’m an adult you can trust, it will be our little secret, I won’t tell your parents about it.*”

SLSD has numerous GLSEN “Safe Spaces”

Fundamentally, the GLSEN Safe Space program seeks to turn teachers and guidance counselors into LGBTQ activists, and it seems to have been successful in doing so. This is exactly what we’re seeing in our schools right now, particularly at the IS with 9-12 year old students through Mr. McGinty’s policy (which reflects district-wide practice) and in the high school and middle school through numerous endorsements of GLSEN in classroom entryways. Below are a number of examples (both from our own pictures on Back to School nights and in records provided by the district in response to our Right to Know requests). Many are the older version of GLSEN’s posters and stickers, which suggests the district’s promotion of GLSEN as a resource for teachers and students goes back for years:





A number of classrooms also have “safe space” stickers that are not from GLSEN, as well as “Pride Progress” flags:





Notice these last pictures. They're not GLSEN stickers, but they mean the same thing. You don't need the special circle and inverted triangle (meaning gender affirming/ally space) to indicate that your classroom is a positive space and welcoming to all students, one in which our existing policies against harassment and bullying will be enforced.

What's the thought here? That our classrooms aren't also "safe spaces" for students that don't "identify" as LGBTQ? Aren't all of our students equally protected by our policies against harassment and bullying in every classroom? Do only some students get the benefit of being "safe" in our classrooms? Has anyone considered the implications of this? Weren't our students "safe" before the posters and stickers went up? Will they cease to be safe if they come down?

By adopting this program and posting these stickers in their classrooms, these particular teachers aren't saying "hey, this is a positive space where we don't tolerate bullying, we expect kindness and tolerance, and all are welcome regardless of how you each choose to express yourself." Instead, whether they know it or not, what they are instead saying is "I am an advocate for gender ideology and queer theory in our schools, I will affirm you no matter what you say you are, and I will keep it all secret from your parents." Is that the sort of relationship we want to encourage? One where secrecy is front and center and parents are assumed to be dismissive and out of touch at best and hateful or even abusive at worst?

To be clear, we think many of the teachers who have posted the GLSEN safe space sticker or poster are simply unaware of for what they have inadvertently signed up. If we are wrong in this, then things are indeed much worse than we thought.

On a related note, the GLSEN website which our schools are quite obviously encouraging students to use by posting it our classrooms across the district, includes a function allowing the student to press "esc" three times to immediately make the page disappear and wipe its presence from the browser's history, thereby hiding from parents not only the site itself but also that the site was even visited. Is this what our school board intends to promote or at least condone? Literally teaching our children how to hide things from their parents?

12.6 Training and Distribution of Gender Ideology Training Materials from Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)

Another source of training and training materials for SLSD employees is the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP). CHOP is a nationally renowned institution generally providing excellent care for patients across many areas of medical specialization. We have known physicians there and they have been nothing but top-flight professionals dedicated to helping young patients when they need it most. However, in recent years, CHOP established and continues to operate a “gender clinic.” It’s the activities of that gender clinic, and the distribution of training materials from that gender clinic at SLSD, with which we take issue.

The “Gender and Sexuality Development Program” at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

CHOP’s gender clinic, which they call their “*Gender and Sexuality Development Program*,” offers assistance to children and their families who are struggling with “gender” issues (<<https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/gender-and-sexuality-development-program/about>>, last visited October 11, 2023). The approach of the clinic is “gender affirming,” as the following list of services demonstrates (id., emphasis added):

Our team

Our multidisciplinary team includes specialists in gender identity development from Social Work and Family Services, Adolescent Medicine, Endocrinology, and Behavioral Health. Many of our families come from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware and New York, but we are also honored to support youth and their families from across the country and around the world.

To provide the best care for transgender youth and their families, our interdisciplinary team offers:

- Comprehensive gender assessment
- Gender affirming medical care
- Monthly support groups
- Insurance advocacy
- Legal support

As a reminder, “gender affirming” care means (i) accepting a child’s self-diagnosis as definitive with respect to his or her “gender,” (ii) supporting the social transition of the child (appearance, use of a new name and/or pronouns, etc.), (iii) if the child is near or already experiencing puberty, administration of puberty blockers, (iv) administration of cross-sex hormones, and (v) surgeries of various types, including such medical procedures as facial surgeries (creation of a faux-Adam’s Apple to create a more masculine look or shaving of the jaw bone for a more feminine look), double mastectomy (euphemistically called “top surgery”), phalloplasty (creation

of a faux-penis), vaginoplasty (creation of a faux-vagina), orchiectomy (removal of the testicles/castration), and scrotoectomy (remove of the scrotum). On the same webpage, CHOP lists some of the services it provides, including administration of puberty blockers and surgical referrals for the types of surgeries listed above (id.):

Innovative medical care

Our multidisciplinary team includes specialists in gender identity development from [Social Work and Family Services](#), [Adolescent Medicine](#), [Endocrinology](#), and [Behavioral Health](#). We work with your family to best meet the needs of your child or youth who is transgender or gender nonconforming.

Some of the services we provide include:

- Comprehensive mental health and psychosocial assessments to evaluate for gender dysphoria and confirm the diagnosis if appropriate
- Medical evaluation by pediatric endocrinologists for determination of **appropriate timing for puberty suppression** when indicated
- Evaluation by adolescent medicine for **gender-affirming medical care**
- Referrals for ongoing outpatient therapy and/or psychiatric treatment
- **Surgical referrals**
- Preparation for transition to adult medical care

We know for certain that **CHOP provides, at a minimum, mastectomies to biological females as young as 13 years old**. In fact, CHOP was so proud of removing healthy breast tissue from 13 year old girls that it wrote about the “masculinizing chest surgery” in its “POLICYLAB Issue Brief” for the fall of 2021. The PDF of the article has since been scrubbed from the CHOP website, but it is available through the “WayBack” machine, an internet service that captures copies of various web pages for posterity (<<https://web.archive.org/web/20210825114847/https://policylab.chop.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/publications/PolicyLab-Issue-Brief-Gender-Affirming-Care.pdf>>), last visited October 11, 2023). When the public began to become aware of things like this happening at CHOP, CHOP began to scrub its gender clinic website of a number of incriminating documents, including their recommendation to keep children’s gender identity secret from parents (<<https://dailycaller.com/2023/04/17/heres-what-a-childrens-hospital-quietly-scrubbed-from-the-internet-amid-public-backlash-over-gender-transitions/>>), last visited October 11, 2023).

So what patients does CHOP believe it is appropriate to treat? The answer was provided to the public Ms. Samantha King, the CHOP’s gender clinic’s “education coordinator.” King is also an adjunct professor at Widener University. Her biography on Widener’s website makes clear that she is committed to “*deconstructing binary systems to create equitable environments for all individuals*” (<<https://www.widener.edu/about/faculty-directory/samantha-king>>, last visited October 11, 2023) (emphasis added):



Affiliated Programs

[Affirming Approaches for Transgender Individuals & Communities \(Nondegree Training\)](#)

Education

MSW, MEd, Social Work and Human Sexuality (2016)

Widener University (PA)

BA, Sociology (2012)

San Francisco State University (CA)

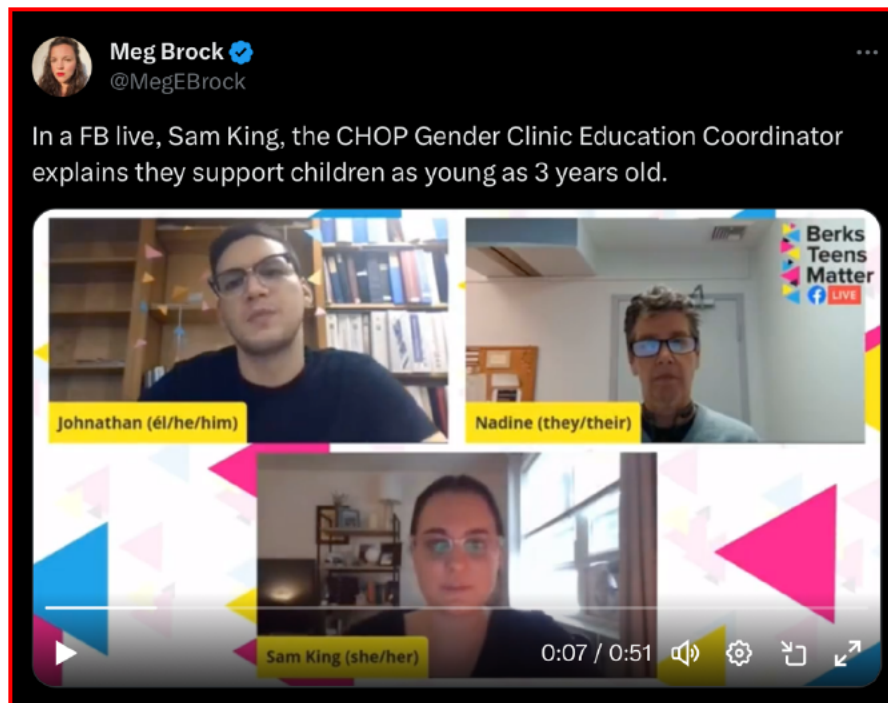
About Me

Since graduating from Widener University in 2016, my work has centered on advocating for transgender and gender non-binary youth. In this work, I provide psycho-education and support to guardians and caretakers to better understand their child's gender and **create affirming family systems**. I also connect with schools and community agencies to give adults the tools necessary to create welcoming and **affirming environments** for transgender youth. **My work centers on deconstructing binary systems to create equitable environments for all individuals.**

In case the meaning of that isn't clear, King has dedicated herself to pulling apart and tearing down the concept of “man and woman” and “male and female” (i.e., a “binary system” of sex/gender) in the name of “equity” (her words: “...to create equitable environments”). Those concepts, and in fact those words, are straight out of Social Justice studies, Queer Theory / Gender Ideology in particular (see Sections 3 and 13 of this Report for relevant definitions and discussions).

King appeared on a “Berks Teens Matter” FaceBook Live streaming event with two other individuals, a person named “Johnathan” with neo-pronouns of “él/he/him” and a person named “Nadine” with neo-pronouns of “they/them.” During the session, the following exchange

occurred (<<https://x.com/MegEBrock/status/1632177964216463360?s=20>>, last visited October 11, 2023) (emphasis added):



Nadine: What is the age range, what is the youngest?

Sam King: **The youngest we support, really is as soon as kids start talking about gender, which we know happens around age 3**, so if families are starting to hear a young one talking about gender in any capacity that they're looking for additional support, we can help provide.

So, typically the structure when we're working with younger kiddos, is actually just through parent support, so any parent/guardian/loved one who has a kiddo really under the age of 8 and they're looking for support around gender for their child we will do parent education and support because everything we're offering pre-puberty is really just social care and social support.

Got it? **CHOP provides "gender affirming" care to children as young as three years old.** For children who are pre-pubescent, that would make support for "social transition," e.g., a biological boy changing his appearance and clothing choices and likely adopting a new name and neo-pronouns.

King was at the center of a series of trainings given to various school districts around Philadelphia from 2017 onward, and are likely ongoing today. While the numbers are at least some what out of date, CHOP's website used to report that it had completed "33 trainings in 15

schools; reaching more than 1,500 educators” (as reported at <<https://dailycaller.com/2022/10/04/philadelphia-gender-clinic-hosts-training-schools/>>, last visited October 11, 2023). The training sessions promoted “trans-inclusive policies,” including keeping gender identity information secret from parents (id.)

Unfortunately, we now know that multiple SLSD employees attended one of those training sessions, one of whom then provided the training materials to numerous other SLSD employees. As you will see below, the training materials reflect a “gender affirming” approach straight out of Queer Theory /Gender Ideology and are entirely consistent with the approach we have seen at SLSD as reflected in the “policy” email by our Intermediate School principal discussed in [Section 12.3](#) above.

This is who we turned to for training relating to transgender issues... a gender clinic at CHOP that helps socially transition children from one “gender” to the other as young as three years old and performs double mastectomies on 13-year old girls.

Training from CHOP’s Gender Clinic for SLSD Employees

We know for certain that at least “*a small number of [SLSD] staff members went off-site to a presentation*” by Samantha King of CHOP’s gender clinic. This was confirmed to Ms. Chrissy Clark of the DailyCaller by Superintendent Michael Mahon in an email dated October 19, 2022 in response to a media inquiry (email below, second bullet point, emphasis added):

From: Michael Mahon <mahonm@slsd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 3:33 PM
To: Chrissy Clark
Subject: Re: Media Request: Comments on CHOP Presentation

Chrissy,

Just got back...Here's my best try at a response.

I checked with our Right to Know officer. He is of the view that the presentation in your attachment, while similar, is not the presentation disseminated by the employee. The attachment in your email, as I am told, has more slides/information/links etc... There is, however, significant overlap between the two.

I have always made a point of trying to be accurate in my responses to reporters. As noted in my previous email, I was not here when the events in question were occurring. That said, I believe the following to be the case:

- The individual who sent information from CHoP was not a district administrator. Any information she sent does not represent district policy. It is not uncommon for staff members to share information among themselves. CHoP is a highly respected organization that does amazing work for children. Recommendations from organizations like CHoP are often considered in the development of practices/policy but are not determinative. For example, the district considered guidance from CHoP regarding the pandemic but did not always follow it.
- I do not believe that representatives from CHoP came to the district, but rather **a small number of staff members went off-site to a presentation. Tara Cooke shared information with grade-level teachers** only and did not share information broadly across the district.
- **The principal who sent out the email certainly has standing unlike the staff member who sent out the slides. Our school district does not have a board approved policy regarding the topics described in the principal's email. To the best of my knowledge, no other building principals sent out similar guidance/emails. The principal's email does not capture the district's current approach, which I did my best to describe in my statement to you yesterday.**

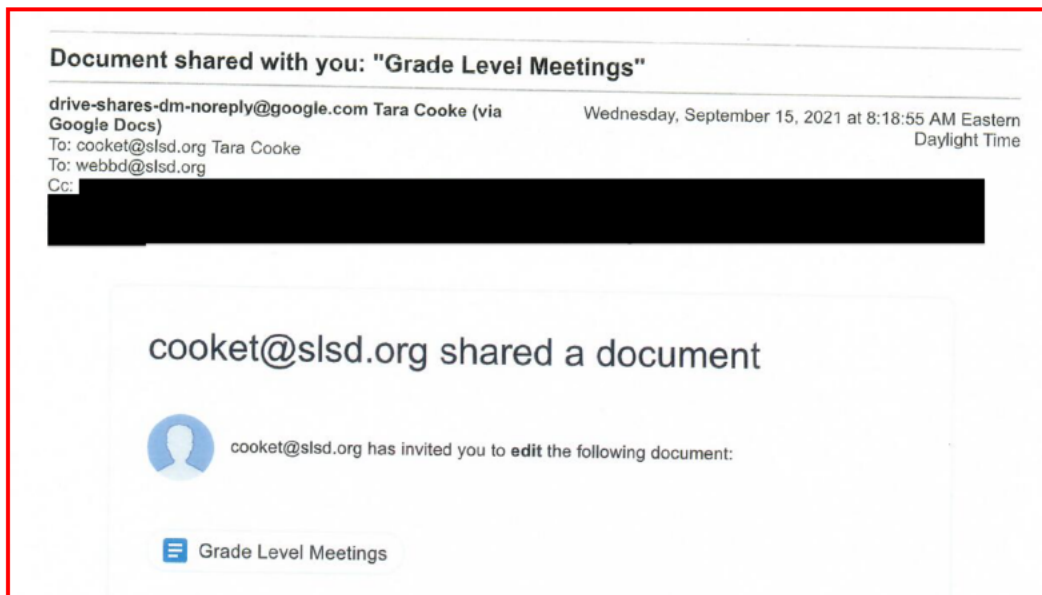
I hope this helps. Let me know if you need more information.

Thank You!

Mike

We do not know what Dr. Mahon considers “a small group.” A “small group” compared to what? From our perspective that could be anywhere from three to a dozen people. We just don’t know and no other records provide any further clarity. **At a minimum, we know SLSD authorized a number of our district’s employees to be trained in radical gender ideology as promoted by CHOP’s gender clinic.**

Following that training, on September 15, 2021 Ms. Tara Cooke, counselor at our district’s Intermediate School, **distributed to a list of 17 other SLSD employees** a meeting summary and attachments from various “Grade Level Meeting.” The summary document appears to be a live document (i.e., updated overtime) as the version the district provided to us included updates from multiple meetings well into 2022. In the graphic below, we have redacted all of the names except for Cooke and then-Vice Principal Deanna Webb:



At SLSD, a “Grade Level Meeting” is a meeting of teachers, administrators, and counselors in that school. The purpose of a “Grade Level Meeting” is to share information, learnings, and procedures and generally to ensure that teachers and staff are performing their job responsibilities in accordance with the expectations of the district. Attendees of “Grade Level Meetings” would presumably be expected to in turn update members of their respective team members that did not attend.

The Grade Level meeting update document evidences five important things:

1. At the September 2021 meeting, a discussion topic was “*Additional Transgender Information/Discussion*” (because of the word “Additional,” it’s reasonable to assume that there was at least one previous discussion on transgender issues with this group of 17 employees, but that information was not provided to us, but we obviously have every reason to believe it does exist) (graphic below, emphasis added):

September 2021

1. Needs - Please let us know of any students needing school supplies, even backpacks. Also, any student needing help for field trips.
2. CYA - Please, please, please do not discuss students at lunch, in the hallway, etc. You never know who might be in earshot, especially in the FCS room where other folks may be eating.
3. IEPs/504s - You must follow these as written. If you feel that you cannot implement the SDI (IEP) or accommodation (504), let Brynne or the special education case manager know.
4. Sharing Information - If a child or parent shares information with you that you think we should know, please forward to us. We have shared any pertinent information with you that we have, but at times parents do not communicate with us.
5. Introduction of LVHN counselor and School Social Worker and their roles.
 - a. [Comparing Student Services Professional Handout](#)
6. Intervention/MtSS Info - Cheryl/Nick
7. **Additional Transgender Information/Discussion**
 - a. **[CHOP Handout](#)**

2. In the summary for the September 2021 meeting (see graphic immediately above), Cooke included a link to a document titled “CHOP Handout”; that handout is discussed below and also included in its entirety as Attachment 20 to this Report.
3. At the October 2021 meeting, a discussion topic was “Follow-up to Transgender Information/Discussion (graphic below, emphasis added):

October 2021

1. **Follow-Up to Transgender Information/Discussion**
 - o **[CHOP Handout](#)**
2. Threats - Any time a student makes a statement to you or their peers that they want to hurt themselves or someone else, or says that someone is hurting them at home, you must let Tara, Brynne, Lori, Sean or Deanna know immediately. We will then conduct a threat assessment or determine if a call to Children & Youth needs to be made. Please do not promise to keep this information confidential and do not wait until the end of the day to tell us. **You are a mandated reporter also!**
 - [Pennsylvania Child Welfare Information Solution](#)
3. SAP Process & Procedures
 - [2021 SAP IS Brochure.docx](#)
 - [CONFIDENTIAL SAP Referral Form 2018-19.docx](#) - Paper Copy

4. In the summary for the September 2021 meeting (see graphic immediately above), Cooke included a link to a document titled “CHOP Handout”; that handout is discussed below and also included in its entirety as Attachment 20 to this Report.

Note: The records provided to us include two similar but somewhat different presentations from CHOP. Because of how the records were provided to us, it is impossible to tell which was linked to in the “Grade Level Meeting” document in which place. We have included both presentations in Attachment 20 to this Report.

We can of course surmise that Cooke believed that the CHOP materials were in fact a good thing to share, and would be useful in informing her colleagues on how to deal with transgender issues in the course of their jobs, otherwise, why would she share it? Twice? We also note that none of the records the district provided indicate that anyone objected to the materials Cooke distributed to them, e.g., suggesting that perhaps adopting “gender affirming” care as the framework for dealing with SLSD students (if such records do exist, they were not provided, and the district would have as a result again violated the Pennsylvania Right to Know law).

To be crystal clear, discussions of how to handle issues relating to students who identify as “transgender” is an absolutely reasonable and appropriate topic for discussion among teachers, administrators, and counselors. **As we have said repeatedly in this Report, each of these students should be treated with tolerance and kindness, their freedom of expression should be protected, and they should each be protected under our policies against bullying and other harassment just like every other student, and obviously held to those same standards with respect to their own conduct.** However, the content of the discussions at Grade Level Meetings, or any other meeting formal or informal in the district matters very much. As you will see below, based on the information distributed at least twice to a broad set of employees in the district is based wholly on the “gender affirming care” model, which is in turn based wholly on Queer Theory /Gender Ideology. That is political by its very nature and has no place in our schools.

Distribution of CHOP Gender Training Materials to Other SLSD Employees

The “CHOP Handout” that Cooke repeatedly distributed to other SLSD employees is primer of Queer Theory / Gender Ideology concepts and a series of recommendations to align school operations with those concepts. Below is a series of slides from the presentation. The presentation is included in full in Attachment 20 to this Report. As you read the slides below, note how perfectly they align with both the materials from GLSEN discussed in Section 12.5 and the policies adopted by SLSD as reflected in the McGinty email discussed in Section 12.3.

[Remainder of Page Left Intentionally Blank]

Observation

The cover slide to the presentation prominently includes the “Pride Progress” flag, a newer version of the traditional “Pride” flag created by American artist and graphic designer Daniel Quasar in 2018. Quasar added chevrons on the left side to promote “progress” for Transgenderism. The trans-colors are white, pink, and blue. Pink and blue represent the traditional colors for “boys and girls,” while the white represents transgenderism.

The “Breaking it All Down” slide makes clear that, consistent with Queer Theory/Gender Theory, CHOP’s view is that “gender” and “gender roles” are entirely socially constructed, which is to say completely unrelated to biological sex whatsoever. Ironically, this is rapidly becoming a moderate view in the transgender community as many now also assert that “sex” itself is “socially constructed.”

The “SOGIE” slide presents a mnemonic for remembering gender ideology concepts, particularly that sexual orientation, gender, identity, and expression all exist as “distinct and separate” phenomena. To believe this, one must believe that biology and what is now called “gender” have nothing to do with one another.

The paragraphs immediately following this table includes information about use of a “SOGIE worksheet” by our counseling department.

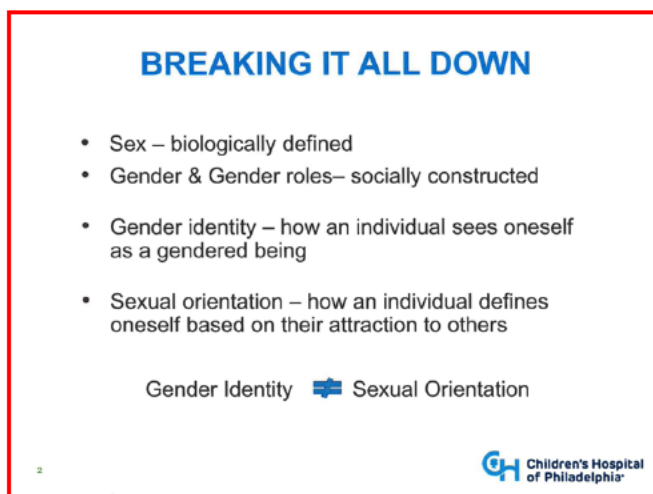
Slide from “CHOP Handout”



SUPPORTING TRANSGENDER AND GENDER EXPANSIVE YOUTH

*Samantha King, MSW, M.Ed.
Family Support and Education Specialist*
*Anson Goo
HRC Youth Ambassador*

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

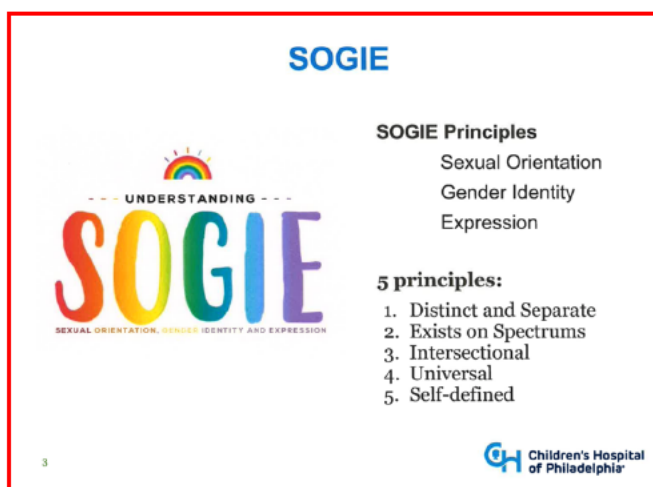


BREAKING IT ALL DOWN

- Sex – biologically defined
- Gender & Gender roles– socially constructed
- Gender identity – how an individual sees oneself as a gendered being
- Sexual orientation – how an individual defines oneself based on their attraction to others

Gender Identity + Sexual Orientation

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SOGIE

UNDERSTANDING
SOGIE
SEXUAL ORIENTATION, GENDER IDENTITY AND EXPRESSION

SOGIE Principles
Sexual Orientation
Gender Identity
Expression

5 principles:

1. Distinct and Separate
2. Exists on Spectrums
3. Intersectional
4. Universal
5. Self-defined

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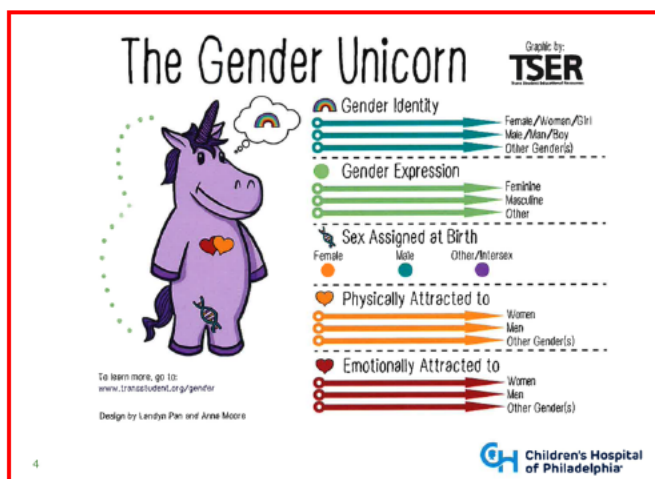
Observation

The “Gender Unicorn” slide is another commonly used infographic in the teaching of gender ideology concepts. The core message of the slide is that one can pick and choose among the many on the slide. The slide also uses the now-common phrase “sex assigned at birth,” suggesting that someone in the delivery room just flips a coin and writes down “male” or “female” on the birth certificate, rather than being established at moment of conception and reflects in every cell in a person’s body.

The “Terminology” slide again uses the “sex assigned at birth” concept as above. This slide also suggests that gender is fluid, which means that it can change moment to moment and day to day. This raises the question, of course, why anyone would be required to “affirm” the gender of another person if it is so changeable anyway. The final bullet point suggests that “pronouns” can be changed and selected at will.

The presentation includes a slide promoting books that help explain gender ideology to elementary school children. The book “they, she, he, easy as ABC” (intended for children ages 7-10) proposes using the following words as pronouns: ze, tree, xe, ne, ve, per, and thon.

Slide from “CHOP Handout”



The infographic titled "The Gender Unicorn" features a purple unicorn with a rainbow mane and tail, a thought bubble with a rainbow, and a heart on its chest. To the right, it lists various gender-related concepts with corresponding colored arrows pointing to the unicorn:

- Gender Identity:** Female/Woman/Girl, Man/Male/Boy, Other Gender(s)
- Gender Expression:** Feminine, Masculine, Other
- Sex Assigned at Birth:** Female, Male, Other/Intersex
- Physically Attracted to:** Women, Men, Other Gender(s)
- Emotionally Attracted to:** Women, Men, Other Gender(s)

Graphic by: TSER
To learn more, go to: www.transstudent.org/gender
Design by Landin Pan and Anne Moore
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

TERMINOLOGY

- Transgender
 - Umbrella term
 - Often refers to individuals whose gender identity does not align with their sex assigned at birth
 - **Note that transgender does not have an “ed” at the end*
- Gender Expansive/Variant/Non-Binary
 - Goal of having fluidity of gender and/or blending of gender identities and expression
- Pronouns
 - She/her, He/him, They/theirs

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ELEMENTARY LEVEL SUPPORT

- Emphasize and protect rights of all children to be themselves
 - Tie gender into values of kindness and respect



Book covers shown: "Red" by Michael Hall, "Julian is a Mermaid" by Julia Cook, "Neither" by Kelly Asakura, and "They She he easy as ABC" by Wang-Li Gardner.

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Observation

Likewise, the presentation includes recommendations to explain gender ideology for middle school and high school students.

Note the second bullet point, which specifically calls for recruiting “allies” and created advocates for/of gender ideology.

The “Supporting Gender Expression/Exploration” provides a series of suggestions for how educators, counselors, etc. can discuss and encourage exploration of “gender” among school age students.


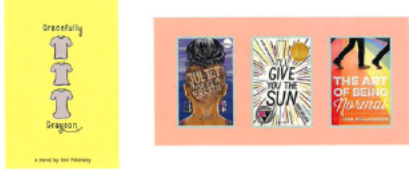
One must wonder why our educators and counselors would want to involve themselves in the sex and gender lives of our children.

The “Resources” slide includes a number of lines to gender ideology advocacy organizations, including GLSEN. GLSEN is discussed at length in Section 12.5 of this Report.

Slide from “CHOP Handout”

MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM SUPPORT

- Critically examine gender roles and messages (now and throughout history)
- Build allies and advocacy



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SUPPORTING GENDER EXPRESSION/EXPLORATION

- Start a conversation
 - How do they understand gender? Others and their own?
- Explore own thoughts/feelings about gender
- Review resources
- Follow child's lead
 - Allow room for exploration
- Reach out to supports
- Love = the best medicine

11

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RESOURCES

- Set up Google Alerts (ie: transgender schools)
- Schools in Transition Guide: <https://www.aclu.org/report/schools-transition>
- GLSEN: <http://www.glsen.org/>
- Gender Spectrum: <https://www.genderspectrum.org/>
- HRC Welcoming Schools: <http://www.welcomingschools.org/>
- Trans Educators Network: <https://www.transeducators.com>

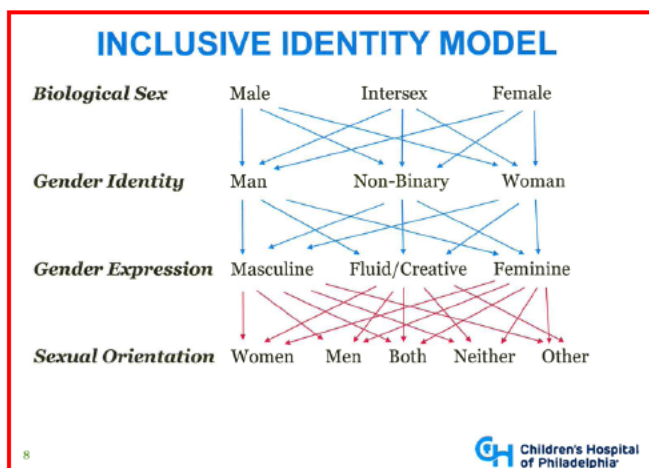
13

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Observation

The “Inclusive Identity Model” slide reinforces the fundamental message of gender ideology, i.e., that all or almost all things are “socially constructed.”

Slide from “CHOP Handout”



The “Honoring the Moment of Sharing” slide uses the inverted triangle symbol which is used by gender ideology advocates to indicate a “Safe Space.” A “Safe Space” in this context is one where the educator, counselor, or other staff member commits to keep the conversation confidential, including from parents. See [Section 12.5](#) of this Report for a discussion of the GLSEN “Safe Space” program adopted by our school district.

HONORING THE MOMENT OF SHARING

Thank you for sharing that with me!

Can you tell me what that means for you?

How can I incorporate this into our work together?

The slide features three questions and a logo. The logo is an inverted triangle with a rainbow background, a transgender symbol in the center, and labels for sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity. The slide is labeled with the number 9 in the bottom left and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia logo in the bottom right.

The “Creating Gender Support Plans” slide provides a framework for the creation of individualized plans for how a school can support a particular “transgender” student. Note in particular that there are multiple bullet points that suggest that a parent or guardian may not even be involved.

The link in the slide no longer works and the document it linked to appeared to have been scrubbed from the “genderspectrum.org” website.

CREATING GENDER SUPPORT PLANS

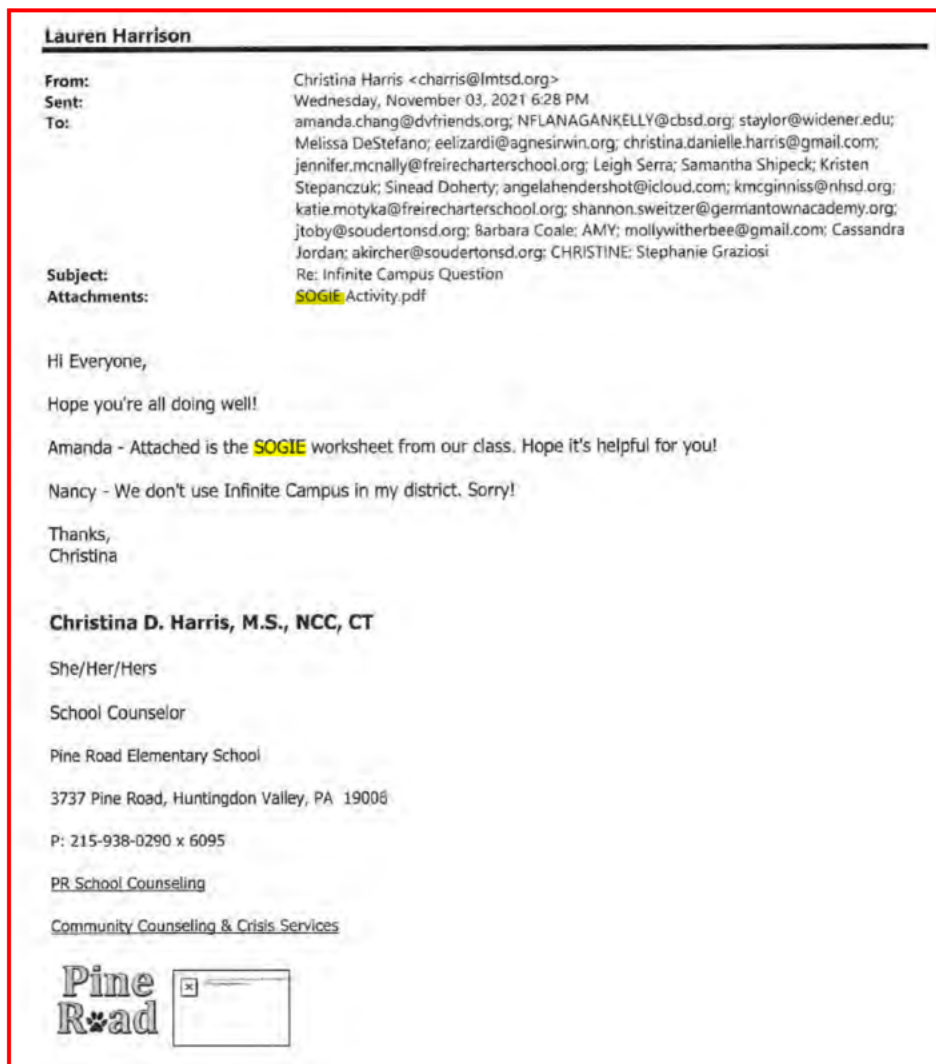
- What
 - Individualized plan
 - Living document
- Who
 - Student only? Adult/guardian involved?
 - Staff included: Guidance Counselor, Administrator, Key Teachers/Support Staff
- When
 - At any point!
 - Recommend first meeting be with just parent/guardian (if involved)
- How
 - Let student/guardian complete prior to the meeting
 - Collaborate on content – do your homework!

<https://genderspectrum.org/articles/using-the-gsp>

The slide is labeled with the number 21 in the bottom left and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia logo in the bottom right.

We respectfully remind you that these materials were discussed and shared in our schools with at least 17 educators, counselors, and staff (possibly more, but this is what we know for certain). Not a single objection is reflected in any district record we received.

With respect to the “SOGIE” slide above, we received two other records from the district that include the “SOGIE” approach to discussing and understanding gender ideology concepts. The first is an email distribution by a school counselor to a number of counselors at in other school districts, including at least one SLSD counselor. The email included an attachment titled “SOGIE Activity.pdf.” Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly, SLSD failed to provide us with the attachment (which it should have under the Right to Know request pursuant to which we received these records. What was surprising, from this thread, though, is that we see another appearance by Samantha King from the gender clinic at CHOP. We have included the entire thread in Attachment 21 to this Report.



We obviously don't know how or where the “SOGIE Activity” document has been used at SLSD, if at all, because we simply don't have the records to show that one way or the other. A

reasonable follow-up question to our counselors would of course be whether it is or was used, how often, and to what result?

Another SOGIE-related record we received from the district is a two pager document titled “Applying SOGIE Principles” from the Los Angeles LGBT Center:

LOS ANGELES LGBT CENTER
RISE

Applying SOGIE Principles

SOGIE is...

- 1. Distinct and Separate:** Sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation are each distinct from one another.
- 2. Exists on Spectrums:** SOGIE identities exist on spectrums, language to describe identities on these spectrums varies by the individuals that use that language.
- 3. Intersectional:** SOGIE identities intersect with other identities like race, class, and ability to create unique life experiences.
- 4. Universal:** Everyone has a SOGIE, and identity development is a natural, ongoing part of the human experience.
- 5. Self-Defined:** How one understands, articulates and shares their SOGIE is self-determined.

Instructions:
Apply the principles above to the following scenarios as guides to share best practice and address misconceptions about sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE).

1. Address what the person is missing about the SOGIE principles based on their statement.
2. How might you respond to help answer their question/assumption?

Parent/Caregiver: "I think my child might be gay, he's been wearing nail polish and asking to grow out his hair."

Professional: "There are so many terms! Transgender, non-binary, pansexual, what's the difference? Wouldn't it just be easier if they would pick one term?"

Youth: "I think I might be non-binary but I find myself feeling aligned with my assigned gender some days. Does that mean I can't be non-binary?"

Parent/Caregiver: "Do you really need to talk to Kindergarteners about gender? I think that's way too young for them to be learning about sex and it's doesn't seem appropriate."

Professional: "My caseload is mostly youth of color who deal with issues of racism, not homophobia or transphobia. I guess I just feel overwhelmed learning about all of this stuff that isn't relevant to the youth I work with."

Youth: "If she wants people to believe she is a girl, she should probably dress in a more feminine way."

Scenario: A student at your school has decided to share his gender identity publicly with the community. After sharing you are having a conversation one on one with someone and they say, "Did you hear that Matthew is transgender? That's so great he shared this with everyone, I had no idea! You couldn't even tell!"

- How would you respond if this statement came from a professional?
- How would you respond if this statement came from a student?

The records we obtained provide no context for from whom the document came or how or if it is or has been used in our schools. We know only that the document exists in our district. It is possible that this document is the “SOGIE Activity.pdf” document referenced above but given where the document appeared in the set of records provided by the district, that seems unlikely. Here again, the document promotes the same gender ideology concepts at the CHOP presentations and the other materials we have seen from the district.

So there’s no confusion, Dr. Mahon confirmed that “some have used CHOP as a resource in the past” (emphasis added) in an email to Daily Caller reporter Chrissy Clark on October 19, 2022 (emphasis):

From: Michael Mahon <mahonm@sisd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 1:03 PM
To: Chrissy Clark
Subject: Re: Media Request: Comments on CHOP Presentation

Chrissy,

Thank you for sending the presentation. I do want to assist you with your work. I'll offer the following:

- **While some in the district have utilized CHoP as a resource in the past,** I do not believe the presentation attached to your email was ever made to our staff. I have been here less than a year, so I could stand to be corrected.

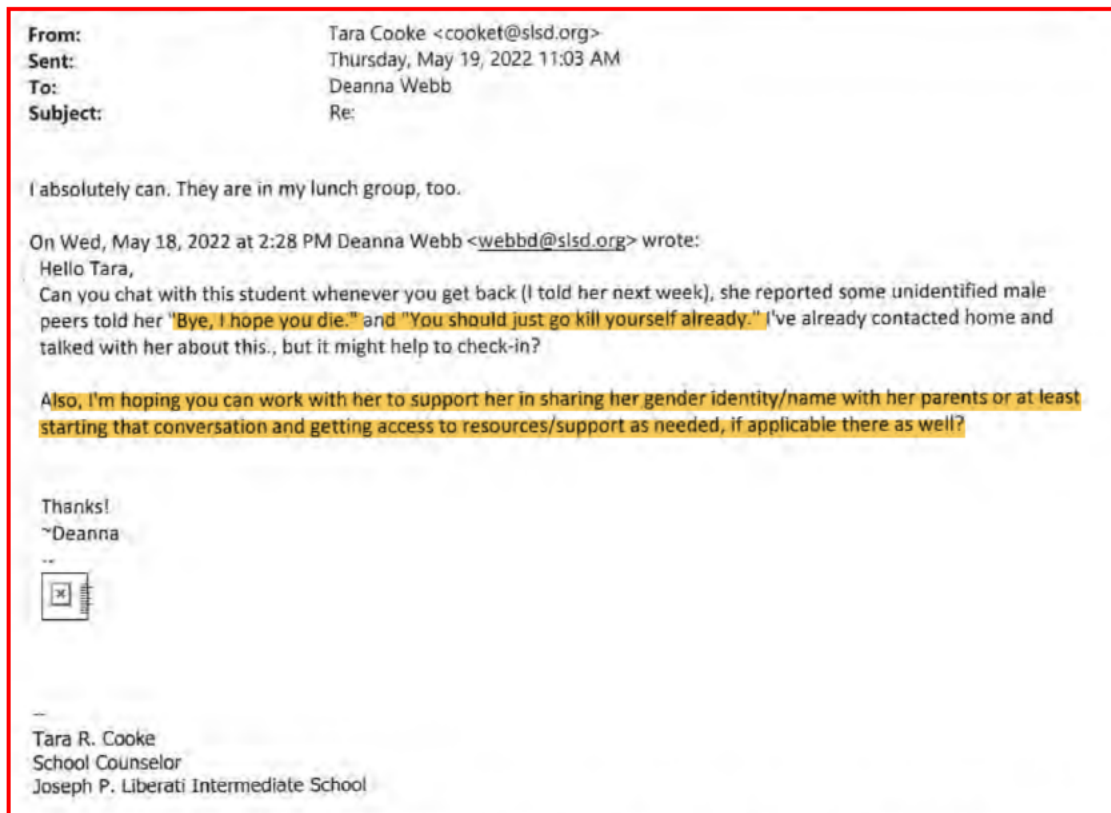
While he said in that email that he doesn't believe that the particular version of the CHOP presentation was given to SLSD staff, we know from an email later in that same day (presented earlier in this Section) that "a small number of [SLSD] staff members went off-site to a presentation" by Samantha King of CHOP's gender clinic.

Other than Dr. Mahon's email, there is no record that was provided to us that SLSD personnel have stopped relying on guidance from CHOP, not a single document (if such a record does it exist, it should have been provided to us, otherwise SLSD would again have violated the Pennsylvania).

12.7 Vice Principal and Counselor Conspire to Hide Nature of Bullying Incidents from Parents of Transgender Child

Among the approximately 3,160 pages of records provided to us in response to our request for records about how SLSD addresses "gender identity" matters was a single email that was easily among the most disturbing documents we received.

The email, dated May 19, 2022, is between Tara Cooke, Intermediate School counselor, and Deanna Webb, who was Vice Principal of the Intermediate School at the time (she is now Principal of our Middle School). The email exchange addresses a situation in which a transgender student is being bullied. The taunts from this student's male peers included such phrases as "I hope you die" and "You should just go kill yourself already." One can only imagine how often statements like these were made to this young child. The email is presented in full below (emphasis added):



Obviously, this sort of bullying and harassment is a violation of existing school policies. Those policies should be enforced in all cases regardless of who the transgressor is. Student must know that there are consequences for behavior that is so flagrantly out of line with our board-approved district policies. We have no evidence to know whether those policies were enforced in this case, *i.e.*, the district did not provide any records that would suggest that any action was taken – it’s possible it was, we just don’t know.

If Webb or Cooke believed the transgender child was at risk from his or her own parents, they would have an legal duty under mandated reporting rules to notify child protective services. There is no evidence that they have done that.

Based on the content and context of the email, the student being bullied and harassed is likely a biological boy who has “socially transitioned” at SLSD with the support of our administrators, counselors, and teachers to a “transgender girl” and adopted a new name. Under our existing “policies” (and in particular, the express direction of Principal McGinty at the Intermediate School discussed at length in Section 12.3 of this Report), remember that if (i) a child asks to be called by a different/new name, the SLSD employee should do so, and (ii) the SLSD employee should not tell the parents that a social transition has occurred. Under SLSD “policy,” everyone can know what’s happening except the parents.

The email above makes clear that the child has not “come out” to “her” parents because the last sentence of the email is a request from Webb to Cooke for Cook to “*support her in sharing her gender identity/name with her parents.*” Got that? Webb and Cooke (and presumably all of this students teachers and classmates) know this child has socially transitioned from boy to “girl” and has adopted a new name, but the child’s parents are completely oblivious. As a reminder, students in our Intermediate School are typically between nine and 12 years old. Our Intermediate School was (and still may be) actively hiding this information from the parents of a child that may have been as young as nine years old at the time this email was sent.

If that wasn’t egregious enough, it is clear that while Webb had “*already contacted home about this* [the bullying incidents],” the nature of the bullying itself has not been disclosed to the parents. The context of the email strongly suggests that the bullying and harassment are directly based on the students “gender identity,” otherwise why would both topics be so intertwined in the email itself?

In our view Webb and Cooke are very much engaged in the unauthorized practice of medicine, making judgments about the mental and physical health of the bullied child outside of the knowledge of that student’s parents. Webb and Cooke don’t seem to consider for even a moment that this student may already be receiving psychological and medical care from an existing care team in coordination with the student’s parents. ***Webb and Cooke don’t seem to have considered for even a moment that there may be an existing care plan under which a “social transition” for this student is in fact contraindicated for this student’s mental health. What Webb and Cooke are doing here, through willful blindness and intentional disregard of parental rights, needlessly puts our most vulnerable of children at significant additional risk.***

This particular situation is all the worse because the idea of suicide has been repeatedly and viciously put into this child’s head by other students. Yet, Webb and Cooke refused to

affirmatively share with the child's parents' essential information about what's happening so that they can provide what is likely much needed support and care (possibly including psychological and medical care). In the view of Webb and Cooke, that can't happen until the child shares his or her gender identity information and new name with his or her parents first! This is an egregious disregard of the schools' fundamental duty to keep parents informed of what's happening with their children while entrusted to the schools. **By keeping secrets from this child's parents, Webb and Cooke may have in fact increases this children's risk of suicide or other self-harm.**

What if this child fixates on the ugly recommendations of those doing the bullying? What if the pressure and discordance of "socially transitioning" at school with the full and eager support of the most important figures of authority in our schools while continuing to live a separate identity outside of school causes such distress that the student tries to harm him or herself? What if this child as a result attempts suicide? What if this child is successful in doing so? This exact scenario has happened before. Is SLSD really unaware, or not concerned, that this has happened many times in other districts?

A key example of the potential consequences of secret "social transitions" comes out of California. Yaeli Mozzelle Galdamez was "affirmed" in gender transition by her teachers and counselors in her school in Los Angeles County, California. The transition, along with all of the referrals and contacts the district provided, were kept secret from Yaeli's parents. Another trans student taught Yaeli what do to and say to be removed from her parents' home and placed in foster care so that she could get the state to pay for her "gender reassignment surgery." Without her parents' consent, Yaeli was put on cross-sex hormones and set on a path of endless medicalization. Yaeli committed suicide by kneeling on track trains with her arms raised to the sky in 2022. Yaeli's mother was told the heart breaking story of Yaeli secret transition by the schools and subsequent medicalization before the Judiciary Committee of the California State Senate on June 13, 2023. We urge you to watch it. Her testimony is available on YouTube at (last visited October 14, 2023): <https://youtu.be/glygWmWD_6w?si=lptfoU_CDEWBeXND>. What if instead of keeping secrets from Yaeli's parents, they were informed what was going on with their own daughter? What if her parents had the time to get Yaeli the psychological and/or medical help she needed? Would she be alive today? Does this sound like "kindness" and "inclusion" to you? To us it sounds like unmitigated cruelty.

Our district's conduct here is appalling, irresponsible, and direct act on the rights of this student's parents to protect and raise their own child. It exposes this district to massive lawsuits should one of these children hurt themselves or others. These are the sorts of things that happen when our school board fails to adopt clear policies on important matters and instead leaves individual school principals, vice principals, counselors, and other staff to come up with approaches on their own.

12.8 SLSD Disregards the Safety and Well-Being of Female Students

The preceding incident, which took place at the Intermediate School, is one in which our schools failed to protect a transgender student. Below is an example of direct harm caused by SLSD's policies and practices to a biological female, one quite serious and heartbreaking. We have omitted the names of the students involved and are intentionally vague on dates. We relate the

story below with the permission of the young woman involved and her family. Our account is based on direct testimony.

A high school student, we'll call her Jane in the interests of anonymity, was raped. The rape occurred off school grounds, but the girl carried with her the trauma of that experience every day and was working toward healing as time went by. One day at our high school, she was in the girls' bathroom when a "transgender girl" (a biological young man) walked in and used the facilities. The "transgender girl" (biological young man) was at this time dressed in a typically male fashion (at later times this student began to present in a manner that was somewhat more feminine).

The presence of a biological male in the girls' bathroom shocked Jane, made her feel deeply uncomfortable and vulnerable, and as a result, she immediately left the bathroom. The presence of the biological boy in what was supposed to be an actual safe space for her re-opened the trauma of her rape. On her way out, she ran into two other high school girls, she told them there was a boy in the bathroom, and they immediately turned away and did not enter the bathroom; they too were obviously uncomfortable.

Jane reported this both to her parents and to the administration. Jane and her parents were told by our school high school psychologist and Jane's school counselor that they could help her "get comfortable" with the "transgender girl" (biological young man) being in the girls' bathroom. Jane and one of her parents was told by her school counselor that, and we quote: "The policy is that if someone identifies as a male or female they can go in which ever bathroom they prefer/choose." When pressed for a copy for the "policy," the school could produce none. The parents even submitted their request for a copy of the "policy," and were told by the district that none exists. Somehow the counselors and administrators all know what the "policy" was even though the district tells us there is no policy.

It was Jane that had to adjust, of course, because SLSD has adopted a "gender affirming" and "inclusive" approach to dealing with these issues. At SLSD, the legitimate concerns of our biologically female high school students must take a back seat to the preferences of a handful of students who "feel" that they are "female" in the name of "inclusion," despite being enrolled in our schools as males. The message was clear – this was Jane's problem to deal with, not the school's or the "transgender girl"/biological young man's problem.

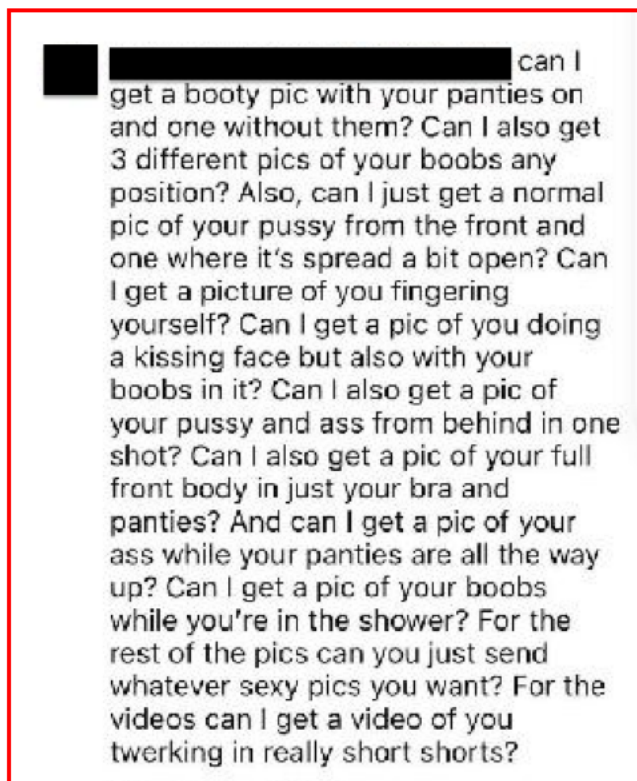
Jane again encountered the "transgender girl" (biological young man) in the girls' bathroom room. **This repeated forced exposure to a "transgender girl"/(biological young man) in a space our high school girls reasonably expect to be private and safe caused Jane to have a panic attack, including severe chest pains. Jane was admitted to the hospital for treatment as a result.**

There were multiple occasions where Jane saw the "transgender girl" (biological young man) near or about to go into the girls' bathroom. She would avoid going to the bathroom entirely each time this occurred.

It would be fair to ask whether Jane over reacted. It would be fair to ask whether the "transgender girl" (biological young man) was simply trying to "exist" in a space where "she"

was most comfortable and not intending to cause anyone any trouble. Conversely it would also be reasonable to ask why we must ignore fundamental biological realities in favor of granting never before granted rights to access spaces historically reserved for females based on a person's internal, non-verifiable, non-testable "sense" of who they are. It would be fair to note that 93.6% of sexual abuse offenders are males and that a person doesn't cease being "male" because they decide they "feel" like a female (<https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/quick-facts/Sexual_Abuse_FY21.pdf>, last visited October 14, 2023). It would be fair to note that allowing biological young men into girls' bathrooms and lockers rooms therefore introduce a potential threat to young women because of those facts alone. To be clear, we are not suggesting by any means that biologically male transgender students present a higher risk than other biological males; however, because "transgender girls" are in fact biologically male (despite how they may "feel" about their "gender identity"), they at a minimum present, *on average*, at least the same risk of sexual assault as other biological males. That risk wasn't present for our female students before our school began allowing biological males into girls' bathrooms and locker rooms. SLSD introduced a new risk, and did so without notice to parents, without a public discussion, and without a clear board policy on how and when access may occur.

It would also be fair to ask whether there was any information available that might have cast light on "her" intent. It turns out there was and that it was ignored by both the school board and the administration (it was provided to both by the Jane's parents). Below is a portion of a screenshot from SnapChat from the "transgender girl" in Jane's story to an underage female:



can I
get a booty pic with your panties on
and one without them? Can I also get
3 different pics of your boobs any
position? Also, can I just get a normal
pic of your pussy from the front and
one where it's spread a bit open? Can
I get a picture of you fingering
yourself? Can I get a pic of you doing
a kissing face but also with your
boobs in it? Can I also get a pic of
your pussy and ass from behind in one
shot? Can I also get a pic of your full
front body in just your bra and
panties? And can I get a pic of your
ass while your panties are all the way
up? Can I get a pic of your boobs
while you're in the shower? For the
rest of the pics can you just send
whatever sexy pics you want? For the
videos can I get a video of you
twerking in really short shorts?

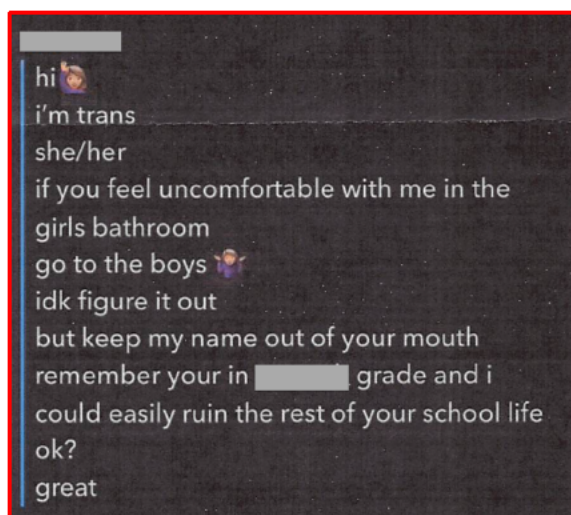
We have the full screenshot, and thus were able to verify that it did in fact come from the individual in question. The screen name also matches to this individual's TikTok account. The

full version (with the identifying information) was provided to our administration and school board. We leave it to the reader to decide whether this was a student “just trying to fit in” or something else.

Despite pleas to the school board (in writing), administrators, and counselors at our high school by Jane and her parents, they did nothing to prevent further trauma to Jane caused by the district’s practice of allowing biological boys into the girls’ bathrooms and locker rooms of our schools. Apparently only certain students get to “feel safe” at SLSD.

The unresolved situation and the obvious lack of empathy for Jane’s safety and well-being by our administrators and counselors directly and materially contributed to a subsequent suicide attempt by Jane. Thankfully Jane did not succeed in her attempt. Jane continues to struggle with the trauma of her earlier rape, which has been extended and exacerbated by the callous and dismissive attitude of SLSD. Her parents decided to pull her out of SLSD all together to protect her because SLSD would not do so.

We are aware of other incidents, including one at the Middle School where a young girl walked into the girls’ bathroom to find a “transgender girl” (biological boy) already there. Deeply uncomfortable and disconcerted, she went to the administration and was ultimately, consistent with what Jane was told, instructed that the problem was hers and that she would just have to get used to it. The young girl was then bullied and harassed by text by the “transgender girl” (biological boy):



As you can see, the position of the “transgender girl” (biological boy) is the same as our administrators and counselors: the problem is with the actual biological girl, not that a biological boy is in the girls’ bathroom. The “transgender girl” threatened to ruin this poor girl’s school life for the rest of the years she is at SLSD. Bullying and harassment goes both ways. Her parents also pulled her out of SLSD because the district refused to protect her. What about her right to feel “included” and “safe”?

We are also aware of a number of other students who are deeply uncomfortable with our district’s decision to, without notifying parents, allow biological males into the bathrooms and

locker rooms historically reserved for biological females. They have told us that they refuse to come forward for fear of being labeled “transphobic” and suffering social consequences as a result. In a district that has adopted the “gender affirming care” model, facilitating and supporting “social transitions” without the knowledge or consent of parents, this is not a surprise. **The message from the authority figures in our district like principals, vice principals, and counselors is clear: you must accept this whether you like it or not, and if you don’t, you are the problem.**

We hope that the examples above shocked you. They certainly shocked us. The callous disregard for safety and well-being of the young women in our district is inexcusable.

12.9 An Appalling Disregard for the Fundamental and Constitutionally Protected Rights of Parents and Teachers

The idea that the people to whom the community has entrusted their children for the limited purpose of academic instruction is, as an official policy, actively hiding essential information about the social, emotional, psychological, and potentially physical well-being of their children is appalling and a breach of trust that is difficult to put into words. The idea that our administrators and counselors have put teachers in the position of having to actively deceive parents, and to take direction from students as young nine year old or younger on how to communicate with parents, is patently absurd and deeply offensive. Our teachers are owed an apology for having been put into such an awful position. Let teachers do the jobs we hired them to do (which does not include being forced to lie to parents).

Setting aside the betrayal of public trust and the impossible position our administration and counselors we have put our teachers in, our district has needlessly and recklessly exposed itself to litigation on multiple fronts. For example (and without limitation):

- Actively concealing information about the social, emotional, psychological, and potentially physical well-being of students violates parents’ rights under the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution to direct the upbringing and education of their children, giving rise to individual legal actions by parents, as well as parents as a group in a class action setting (see, e.g., *Troxel v. Granville*, 530 U.S. 57, 65 (2000) (this right is “**perhaps the oldest of the fundamental liberty interests recognized by this Court**” (emphasis added)); *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205, 232 (1972) (“**This primary role of the parents in the upbringing of their children is now established beyond debate**” (emphasis added)); and *Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510, 534-35 (1925) (the state may not interfere with “the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control.”));
- Requiring district employees to use a name or “preferred pronouns” that doesn’t match the student’s enrolled name and sex may constitute prohibited compelled speech under the First Amendment to the US Constitution and Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania;
- Requiring district employees to use a name or “preferred pronouns” that don’t match the student’s enrolled name and sex may constitute a violation of freedom of religion under

the First Amendment to the US Constitution and Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

- By allowing or suffering the “establishment of policy” at the intermediate school regarding the handling of gender identity-related information without submitting that policy to the required process of review, discussion, and approval at a public board meeting, the district may have violated the PA Sunshine Act because, among other things, the “establishment of policy” constitutes an “official action” under that act that requires a public meeting, etc.

We provided these case citations to the school board in October 4, 2022, but it doesn’t seem to have been considered, let alone supported a course correction, at least based on the records we obtained from the district and the public statements of our board and administration.

Our district should take note, though, that we are now routinely seeing litigation on these issues across the country, and they generally being won or settled in favor of those advocating for transparency and parents’ rights.

The Eight Circuit Court of Appeals just ruled in favor of the plaintiff Parents Defending Education against Linn-Mar Community School District in Iowa (<<https://www.thegazette.com/staff-columnists/linn-mar-lost-in-court-but-laws-against-discrimination-havent-changed/>>, last visited October 16, 2023; opinion can be read in full at <<http://media.ca8.uscourts.gov/opndir/23/09/222927P.pdf?fbclid=IwAR16x360b2-997TlBxGIzXAmZapFsaND6l8sVUI5E6HFqVZEur1oqWTUYk>>, last visited October 16, 2023). Linn-Mar had a policy in place that included the same key concepts as SLSD’s policies and practices, specifically hiding gender identity information from parents and requiring teachers to use new names and pronouns of students with new “gender identities” students. The court concluded that Linn-Mar’s policy requiring students and staff to “respect” others’ gender identity by mandating the use of preferred gender pronouns was “unconstitutionally vague.” The relevant district court has now issued a preliminary injunction, prohibiting the school district from enforcing the policy during the rest of the litigation. The Eighth Circuit also made clear that Linn-Mar’s policy of hiding a student’s transgender status from their parents is unlawful throughout the State of Iowa.

A Wisconsin court ordered a school district not to socially transition children without parents’ consent earlier this month in the matter of T.F., et al. v Kettle Moraine School District (opinion available at <<https://reason.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/TFvKettleMoraineSchoolDistrict.pdf>>, last visited October 16, 2023). The decision included the following order: “*Kettle Moraine School District is enjoined from allowing or requiring staff to refer to students using a name or pronouns at odds with the student’s biological sex, while at school, without express parental consent.*”

Another relevant legal action was filed in the US District Court of Kansas in the matter of Pamela Ricard v. USD 475 Geary County Schools Board Members (filed 3/7/22). That complaint survived a motion to dismiss and the matter was then settled by the district in favor of the plaintiff teacher, with a \$95,000 payment (see related press release at <<https://adfmedia.org/case/ricard-v-usd-475-geary-county-schools-school-board-members#>>, last visited October 16,

2023). The facts of the case will sound familiar: the district violated a math teacher’s First Amendment rights when it reprimanded and suspended her for addressing a student by the student’s legal and enrolled name and forced her to conceal the student’s social transition from the student’s parents.

A new lawsuit has been filed by the Parents Defending Education organization against the Olentangy Local School District in Ohio, which allegedly “forces students to use their peers’ ‘preferred’ pronouns, which compels students to affirm a specific viewpoint on gender ideology that is contrary to the students’ deeply held beliefs ... Refusal to do so can result in severe punishments, including expulsion” (<<https://defendinged.org/lawsuits/17-states-and-15-advocacy-organizations-file-amicus-briefs-in-parents-defending-education-v-olentangy-local-school-district-board-of-education/>>, last visited October 16, 2023). The plaintiff Parents Defending Education has received the support of 10 amicus curiae briefs (these are “friend of the court” briefs that encourage the court to rule in this case in favor of the plaintiff) from a broad range of organizations, including a coalition of 17 state attorneys general and groups ranging from religious groups through the First Liberty Institute to the ACLU.

This short list of representative examples suggests a trend in this area, even if they don’t provide binding precedent here in Pennsylvania; however, they certainly stands for the proposition that hiding information about children from their parents is generally not a good way for a school district to proceed (let alone rebuild trust after the actions of former Superintendent Evison and others).

Our teachers, counselors, and administrators are not primary caregivers, parents are. In this area it is the job of the district to inform parents of information that is relevant to a child’s well-being so that parents can make the important decisions. If a teacher believes a child is at risk of abuse or is being abused, they are required to report it, so SLSD’s policy and practices in this area (“gender identity” matters) is obviously about something more. If administrators, teachers, or staff (including, without limitation, guidance counselors) believe students are so at risk based on information about their gender identity that it must be actively concealed from parents, have those individuals complied with their obligations as mandated reporters under the PA Child Protective Services Laws? Presumably there would have been a significant number of reports filed by mandated reporters within SLSD on this issue under the CPS laws, otherwise our administrators, teachers, and staff would be subjecting themselves to criminal penalties for the failure to report suspected child abuse (see § 6319 of PA CPS Law, which makes it a crime, among other things, to willfully fail to report a reasonable suspicion of abuse).

To us, from the evidence presented in this Report, the district’s positions on this important matter sadly appear to be an ideological preference for “gender affirming care.” That is a political act because the Gender Ideology on which it is based, as you know from Section 12.2 of this Report, is inherently and explicitly political and activist in nature. Former Superintendent Evison may have set us on this path, but nobody has yet had the courage to get us off of it.

12.10 What Neutrality Would Look Like

The issues our schools face with regarding how best to handle issues relating to gender identity are numerous, different, and difficult. It is not simply of question of whether to “be kind”;

although well intended, that is far too simple a concept for an issue set that is so complex and varied, with social, psychological, and legal implications. Many significant rights and obligations are implicated, including (but not limited to):

- the right of parents to direct the upbringing of their children as protected under our federal constitution and supreme court precedent;
- the right of individual students to express themselves as they see fit within the bounds of the first amendment, including by dressing and presenting themselves to the world in a manner that doesn't align with traditional concepts of masculine and feminine;
- whether we should (or can) compel SLSD employees to use new names and neo-pronouns;
- whether we should (or can) hide essential information (and even keep separate secret records) about the physical and psychological wellness of children from their parents and guardians;
- whether our schools should support "social transitions" that may in fact be contraindicated for a given student, thus putting our administrators, teachers, and counselors in the role of licensed doctors and therapists; and
- whether our schools should take a position on hotly debated political topics, including in this area, by adopting and acting under a "gender affirming care" model, without fulsome public discussion and the adoption of a clear and unambiguous school board policy.

Given the diverse views in our community and the highly contentious state and national debate that continues to rage around these issues, our view is that our schools should adopt a position as close to neutral as possible. It is not the role of our schools to affirm or disconfirm what any student believes about anything. It is the role of our schools to teach the subjects they have been appointed to teach and to generally create an environment that is safe for all students (in the traditional, objective, measurable sense). Our policies against bullying and harassment should, of course, be enforced equally, regardless of whether the violator identifies as "transgender." That's it. Sometimes the answer to "what should we do!?" is "nothing." Obviously, we are always required to do the bare minimum that we are actually and specifically required to do by well-settled law.

The adoption and implementation by SLSD of "gender affirming" measures consistent with the recommendations of the most radical gender ideology advocacy groups in the country is a political act. Our administrators and counselors should not be using gender theory-based approaches as a framework for interacting with our student body. Our schools should not be in the business of adopting and implementing a highly controversial, deeply divisive viewpoint. If you change the status quo by introducing something new and then people notice and object, it's not the objection that caused the problem, it's what you introduced.

Many of those gender identity-related measures SLSD adopted were hidden from public view, undermined parental rights, and damaged the trust we put in our schools. We have a simple rule

in our home that we think applies here: if you have to hide what you're doing, you probably shouldn't be doing it.

Our teachers, counselors, and administrators should not play a role in the sexuality or “gender” of our children, other than providing the same sort of standard biology-based sex education class that all intermediate/middle school students receive. Our schools should not be propagating concepts such as “gender identity” or “social construction” at a time in our culture where those concepts remain the subject of heated debate across our country and the subject of endless rounds of legislation and litigation. Likewise, there should never be a situation where a district employee says, “*hey kid, don't worry, I'll keep what you tell me about sexuality and gender identity a secret from your parents, you can trust me...*” That sort of institutional secrecy does nothing but dangerously interfere with the relationship between a parent and a child, alienating the child from the parent in favor of an unrelated adult. This is not what parents sign up for when they enroll their children in our taxpayer funded public schools. Our district's position on “gender identity” should be only that it will comply with the clear requirements of the law, but beyond that it doesn't have a position because our children's sexuality and “gender identity” is none of their business.

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13.0 Glossary of Social Justice Terminology

13.1 Introduction

We present the definitions and chart below for the purposes of helping the reader understand how these terms are used by people who support “Social Justice,” and by extension, what these terms mean when used in the various SLSD document referenced or included in this report. We do not agree with many of the definitions, as they reject the common, long-standing, and relied upon understanding of meaning of these words that enable us to communicate effectively with our fellow citizens.

Hijacking and redefining essential words like “racism,” “diversity,” and “inclusion” to mean something other than what we all thought they meant five minutes ago is an exercise in deception and manipulation and we reject it. Please see [Section 3.0](#) of this report for a discussion of how the definitions of important words have been changed for purposes of “Social Justice.”

A number of these concepts are quite complicated and reflect the development of certain streams of Western philosophy over the course of many decades. While we have strived to keep the definitions as short and understandable as possible, some of the definitions are unavoidably lengthy. We have attempted to provide a graphical representation of the developments in this area following the body of the glossary as sometimes a chart can go a long way in pulling it all together.

The definitions below were assembled from numerous sources to achieve balance of perspective, fullness of explanation, understandability, and readability. Where possible, definitions are copied from or based directly on the work of the applicable seminal author (*e.g.*, Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic for “critical race theory,” Gloria Ladsen-Billings for “culturally responsive pedagogy,” Ibram X. Kendi for “antiracist,” Robin DiAngelo for “white fragility,” and Kimberlé Crenshaw for “intersectionality”). Other key sources were *Cynical Theories* by Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay (2020) and their other works generally, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* by Richard Delgado and Jean Stenfcic (2017), *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, edited by Kimberlé Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Piller, and Kendall Thomas (1995), *Is Everyone Really Equal?: An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education* by Ozlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo (2012), *Whiteness as Property* by Cheryl I. Harris (1993), *Thinking Sex* by Gayle Rubin (1984), *Undoing Gender* by Judith Butler (2004), *Irreversible Damage* by Abigail Shrier (2020), and *Lost in Trans Nation* by Miriam Grossman (2023).

Below are the most relevant “social justice” terminology for what has happened at SLSD. The Glossary is followed by a chart showing the relationship among the various “theories” and “studies” referenced below and their application in the real world.

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13.2 Glossary

Critical Consciousness

The state of seeing society in terms of systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization coupled with a dedication to become an activist against these perceived systems.

If you have attained “critical consciousness” then you have become aware that you are either oppressed or an oppressor—or, at least, complicit in oppression as a result of your socialization into an oppressive system. To have a critical consciousness is to be aware of—and generally unhappy about—your position in society, i.e., your relationship to systemic and institutional power as determined by Critical Theory and based mostly on facts concerning what demographic groups of which you are a part.

Critical Consciousness is referred to colloquially as being “Woke” (see below).

Critical Race Theory or “CRT”

Critical Race Theory is the belief that:

- (i) racism is ordinary, not aberrational (i.e., it is everywhere all the time);
- (ii) our system of white-over-people color supremacy serves important purposes for whites that are both psychological and material; and
- (iii) race is a “social construct” made up to maintain the existing “white over people of color” order.

The purpose of Critical Race Theory is to:

- (i) understand how a regime of white supremacy and its subordination of people of color have been created and maintained in America, and in particular, to examine the relationship between that social structure and professed ideals such as “the rule of law” and “equal protection”; and
- (ii) to change that regime.

Critical Race Theory rejects traditional civil rights discourse, which stresses incrementalism (i.e., step-by-step “progress,” no matter how small each step is).

Critical Race Theory rejects the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law.

Critical Race Theory is an activist theory because it has the stated goal of changing the regime that it purports to have described.

Critical Theory

“Critical Theory” is framework of analysis and activism that seeks human “emancipation from slavery,” acts as a “liberating ... influence,” and works “to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers” of human beings. Because of this last element, Critical Theory is *activist* in orientation.

Critical Theory arose among a group of German philosophers and social theorists in the Western European Marxist tradition known as the Frankfurt School (which among others, included Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse). These theorists initially sought to explain why Marxism had not spread more effectively to the “West” while it had succeeded wildly in what became the USSR and China. The essential observation of these theorists was that Marx was wrong about capitalism in that capitalism did not result in a worse life for the “workers” (in fact, it generally led to higher standards across the West as compared with the rest of the world. Marcuse observed that “the working class” (in Marxist terminology, the “proletariat”) would no longer be the base of Marxist revolution because they did not see themselves as oppressed as the Russian and China proletariat did.

Instead, these theorists apply Marxist conflict analysis (*i.e.*, the proletariat oppressed by bourgeoisie, leading to class conflict, leading to revolution, leading to an “equitable,” classless society, which is to say, socialism/communist) to types of “oppression” that are not “economic.” As a result, and when combined with postmodernism (also defined in this glossary), a number of subfields were born. These include: Critical Race Theory, Critical Social Justice (often referred to as simply “social justice”), Queer Theory, Postcolonial Theory, Intersectional Feminism, Disability Studies, and Fat Studies, among others. Thus, because all of these are based on Marxist conflict analysis, these various sub-theories are frequently referred to as “cultural Marxism” (as opposed to the “economic Marxism” of the original). They are also often called “grievance studies” because they start from the premises that a particular group is “oppressed” by another group.

Fundamentally, any field of inquiry or mode of analysis that first and foremost seeks to identify an “oppressor” and an “oppressed” *at the group level*, is likely to fall with the family of “Critical Theory” subfields. Critical Race Theory is called Critical Race Theory because it is a “Critical Theory” of Race (*i.e.*, Critical Theory applied to “race” as dimension of oppression).

The focus on identity, experiences, and activism, rather than an attempt to find truth, leads to conflict with empirical scholars and undermines public confidence in the worth of scholarship that uses this approach. Because critical theories nearly always begin with their conclusion—their own assumptions about power dynamics in society, how those are problematic, and the need for their disruption or dismantling—and then seeks to find ways to read them into various aspects of society (see discourse analysis and close reading), the body of scholarship that has been growing for the last fifty years has become a towering and impressive mountain with very insecure foundations.

Critical Theory is often referred to in the literature simply as “Theory” due to the fact that it has become so pervasive over the past several decades as an underpinning in the social sciences that it need not be differentiated with other approaches.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Application of Critical Race Theory to educational environments, as pioneered by Gloria Ladson-Billings. Common variations of this term include:

- culturally responsive education practices
- culturally relevant teaching
- culturally congruent teaching
- culturally responsive teaching
- culturally responsive learning practices
- culturally competent /cultural competency
- culturally aware

Disrupt

In the context of Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Social Justice generally, “Disrupt” means to:

- (i) Interrupt what the person perceives to be a situation in which oppression is occurring, for example by silencing or shaming someone in the moment by chanting slogans or shouting them down (also referred to as cancelling or de-platforming), engaging in sit-ins, blocking throughways, presenting administrators with lists of “demands” as part of a protest, etc.;
- (ii) call attention to the allegedly oppressive situation; and
- (ii) by doing so, imply that the person doing the disrupting is either oppressed him or herself or acting as an “ally” by standing up for the oppressed.

Dismantle

In the context of Critical Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Social Justice generally, “Dismantle” means to tear down systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization that “woke” or “critically conscious” people believe plague our society because those systems create, maintain, inscribe, and reinforce the relevant oppression. The call to “dismantle” is typically directed at the “systems” that purportedly support and reinforce racism, sexism, homophobia and heteronormativity (i.e., the notion that heterosexuality is the preferred or “normal” mode of sexual orientation), transphobia and cisnormativity (i.e., the idea that having a “gender identity” that aligns with your biological sex is preferred or “normal”), ableism, fatphobia and thin-normativity (i.e., that idea that being thin conveys health benefits, is preferred, and is “normal”), patriarchy, misogyny, and white supremacy, to name a few.

Diversity

Representation of groups (typically but not always race or sex) in a given context proportional to their presence in society generally. “Diversity” in this context takes into account “privilege” and “marginalization” in evaluating who is “represented” and who is not and calls for corrective action to address a failure to achieve appropriate “representation.” Therefore “diversity” aims to privilege the marginalized and marginalize the privileged in order to correct under representation of a particular group.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

A set of tools used by Social Justice adherents to disrupt and dismantle systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization. See individual definitions for “Diversity,” “Equity,” and “Inclusion.”

Occasionally appears as Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (DIE).

Equity

Forced redistribution of access, rights, and resources to achieve equal outcomes to correct for the results of systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization. To quote Vice President Kamala Harris from a 2020 campaign ad, “equitable treatment means we all end up in the same place” (*i.e.*, equal outcomes) (<https://youtube.com/shorts/w4kowE_YIVw?feature=share>, last visited 8/3/2021).

Gender Affirming Care

As used in Gender Ideology (defined below), “gender affirming care” is a series of social, psychotherapeutic, and medical interventions intended to bring a person’s social interactions and outward appearance in line with their “gender identity” (defined below). Once a person “identifies” as something other than the sex/gender they were born based on an “internal sense” of who they are (*e.g.*, “*I was ‘assigned’ male at birth, but now I ‘identify’ as female*”), “gender affirming care” may progress through the following stages: (i) social transition/affirmation, (ii) administration of puberty blockers, (iii) administration of cross-sex hormones, (iv) performance of various “gender affirming” surgeries or other medical procedures including, without limitation, (a) facial surgeries (creation of a faux-Adam’s Apple to create a more masculine look or shaving of the jaw bone for a more feminine look), (b) double mastectomy (euphemistically called “top surgery”) to remove both breasts to create a more masculine look, (c) cosmetic surgery to create breasts on an otherwise male body, (d) phalloplasty (creation of a faux-penis), (e) vaginoplasty (creation of a faux-vagina), (f) orchiectomy (removal of the testicles/castration), and (g) scrotoectomy (remove of the scrotum).

Gender Identity

As used in Gender Ideology (defined below), “gender identity” is a person’s deeply held knowledge of their own gender, which can include being a man, woman, another gender, or no gender. Gender identity is an innate part of a person’s identity.

Gender Ideology / Theory

“Gender Ideology” / “Gender Theory” is a catch-all term for Queer Theory (see separate entry below), transgender ideology, and gender identity activism generally. The premise of this ideology is that sex and gender are “socially constructed” (*i.e.*, created by society through words rather than based on reality as observed through scientific observation). Gender ideologues believe that the “sex binary” and “gender binary” (*e.g.*, male/female, man/woman, boy/girl, masculine/feminine) are artificial distinctions made to oppress people that do not perceive themselves as fitting neatly into those categories. They believe that this system of “cis-hetero-normativity” must be “disrupted” and “dismantled” to relieve “oppression.” Gender Ideology is therefore political and activist in nature.

In order to “disrupt” and “dismantle” accepted norms on sex, gender, and sexuality, Gender Ideology supports any approach that rejects binary thinking on those issues (and in doing so, rejects the abundant science on which those binaries are based). Gender Ideology therefore embraces neo-sexual identities, such as transgender, queer, genderqueer, non-binary, agender/genderless, gender non-conforming, gender atypical, gender fluid, bigender, neuter gender, pansexual, polysexual, or two-spirit, regardless in all cases of whether that person presents as typically male, typically female, or otherwise. For the same reasons, Gender Ideology embraces neo-pronouns, as they too reject the sex or gender binary reflected in standard pronouns (he/him, she/her), including the use terms like “they/them,” “em/eir/eirs,” “fae/faer/faers,” “xe/hir/hirs,” “xe/xem/xyr,” and “ze/zir/zirs” (note that each of the foregoing are not associated with “male” or “female” or “man or woman,” thus rejecting the sex and gender binaries).

Gender Ideology endorses “transgressive” sex as a way to liberate oneself from the system of “cis-hetero-normativity,” and therefore supports, among other things, “kink culture.” Likewise, Gender Ideology supports exposing children to non-cis-hetero-normative sexuality as early as possible to minimize the likelihood that those children are oppressed by it then and as they grow, and therefore supporting things like “drag-queen story hours” and early education about sex generally but with inclusion of detailed information on non-heterosexual activity. Central figures in Gender Ideology have even endorsed “disrupting” and “dismantling” the stigma associated with pedophilia (with pedophiles now termed “minor attracted persons) and incest (like Gayle Rubin in his essay “*Thinking Sex*” (1984) (Rubin’s essay is available free online at <<https://bpb-us-e2.wpmucdn.com/sites.middlebury.edu/dist/2/3378/files/2015/01/Rubin-Thinking-Sex.pdf>>) and Judith Butler in “*Undoing Gender*” (2004)).

Inclusion

Creation of a welcoming environment for groups considered marginalized from a Social Justice perspective. Feelings and perceptions of the “marginalized” take precedent. Creation of an “inclusion environment” may require the exclusion of those considered “oppressors” or “privileged” (resulting in a “safe space”), the de-prioritization of the “oppressors” or “privileged” by limiting the number in attendance, ask them to listen but not speak, asking them to sit toward the rear of the venue, charging them a higher fee, etc. Because the feelings of the “marginalized” are paramount, concepts such as words (of those who are not

supportive of the “marginalized” or “oppressed”) causing “harm,” constituting “violence,” or making people feel “unsafe” are commonly associated with “inclusion” and “safe spaces.”

Institutional Racism

The idea that the institutions of our country (broadly understood) are conceived and maintained in such a way as to oppress people of color in favor of whites. Any disparate outcome between white people and people of color is evidence of “systemic racism.”

Intersectionality

The idea that an individual can be oppressed across multiple dimensions. For example, a woman of color may claim to be discriminated against because she is black and because she is a woman. If she is disabled, that would be a third way in which she is discriminated against. If she is also a lesbian, that would be a fourth way she would be discriminated against.

Interrupt

See definition of “disrupt.”

Oppression

The idea that “systems of power” or systems of “privilege” result in inequitable outcomes for people of certain groups.

Postmodernism / Postmodern

In Western philosophy, a late 20th-century movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism; a general suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power.

Postmodernism is fundamentally a rejection of the key holdings of the Enlightenment, as the following table demonstrates:

Enlightenment / Modernism	Postmodernism
There is an objective natural reality with existence and properties are logically independent of the minds, their societies, their social practices, or their investigative techniques of human beings.	There is no objective reality. “Reality” is a “conceptual construct,” an artifact of scientific practice and language.
The descriptive and explanatory statements of scientists and historians can, in principle, be objectively true or false, and can be investigated through the application of reason and logic.	There is no “Truth” because there is no objective reality.
Through the use of reason and logic, and with the more specialized tools provided by science and technology, human beings are likely to	Reason and logic have failed, as evidenced by the destruction of World War II (the aftermath of WWII drove postmodern thought). Science and technology,

Enlightenment / Modernism	Postmodernism
change themselves and their societies for the better (more humane, more just, more enlightened, and more prosperous).	and even reason and logic, are inherently destructive and oppressive, because they have been used by evil people, especially during the 20th century, to destroy and oppress others.
Reason and logic are universally valid, i.e., their laws are the same for, or apply equally to, any thinker and any domain of knowledge.	Reason and logic are merely “conceptual constructs” and are therefore valid only within the established intellectual traditions in which they are used.
There is such a thing as human nature; it consists of faculties, aptitudes, or dispositions that are in some sense present in human beings at birth rather than learned or instilled through social forces.	Postmodernists insist that all, or nearly all, aspects of human psychology are completely socially determined.
Language refers to and represents objective reality.	All language is relative. Language is semantically self-contained, or self-referential: the meaning of a word is not a static thing in the world or even an idea in the mind but rather a range of contrasts and differences with the meanings of other words.
It is possible to construct general theories that explain many aspects of the natural or social world within a given domain of knowledge. It should be a goal of scientific and historical research to construct such theories through the application of logic and reason, even if they are never perfectly attainable in practice.	Any such theories are pernicious not merely because they are false but because they effectively impose conformity on other perspectives or discourses, thereby oppressing, marginalizing, or silencing them.

Problematize

The process of identifying a system, mechanism, or manifestation of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization so that it may be “disrupted” or “dismantled” in the name of “diversity,” “equity,” or “inclusion.” The concept of “problematization” gave rise to the now commonly used phrase that “[insert thing/action/outcome] is problematic.”

Queer Theory

Queer Theory is one of the major branches of thought within “Critical Social Justice,” one that is particularly interested in, though not limited to, issues of sex, gender, and sexuality. Queer Theory views the very existence of categories of sex, gender, and sexuality to be artificial and “oppressive,” and believes that those categories must be “disrupted” and “dismantled” to “liberate” those “oppressed” by them.

Queer Theory derives directly from postmodernism (drawing particular inspiration from the works of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida) and is radically skeptical that these categories are based in any biological reality (*i.e.*, it rejects what we perceive as reality based on scientific observation and testing). Instead, it sees sex, gender, and sexuality as existing wholly as a product of how we talk about those issues (what postmodernists, including Queer theorists, would call “discourses”), believing them to be “social constructs” (*i.e.*, something that society makes up and perpetuates through language, rather than being based in objective,

verifiable fact). Among other things, Queer theorists argue that sex and gender are distinct and that there is no correlation between the two, and that in any event, both of those categories are social constructs anyway and therefore mean nothing.

“Norms,” “Normal,” and “Normativity” are considered pejorative in Queer Theory and are often marked by prefixes to denote their status (such as “cis-hetero-normative”). Norms are the very thing that Queer Theory seeks to “Queer.” “Queer” as a verb means to make change or to act in a way that rejects both the normal and norms as a matter of principle.

Queer Theory, like Gender Ideology generally, endorses “transgressive” sex as a way to liberate oneself from the system of “cis-hetero-normativity,” and therefore supports, among other things, “kink culture,” exposing children to non-cis-hetero-normative sexuality as early as possible to minimize the likelihood that those children are oppressed by it then and as they grow, and “drag-queen story hours.” Central figures in Gender Ideology have even endorsed “disrupting” and “dismantling” the stigma associated with pedophilia (with pedophiles now termed “minor attracted persons) and incest. For example, in his famous essay “*Thinking Sex*” (1984)¹ Gayle Rubin, a seminal writer in Queer Theory, stated (emphasis added):

“...boylovers are so stigmatized that it is difficult to find defenders for their civil liberties, let alone for their erotic orientation ...The law is especially ferocious in maintaining the boundary between childhood ‘innocence’ and ‘adult’ sexuality. **Rather than recognizing the sexuality of the young, and attempting to provide for it in a caring and responsible manner**, our culture denies and punishes erotic interest and activity by anyone under the local age of consent.”

And in her seminal work “*Undoing Gender*” (2004) (Chapter 7, “*Quandaries of the Incest Taboo*,” p. 157) key Queer Theory figure Judith Butler argued:

“I do think that there are probably forms of incest that are not necessarily traumatic or which gain their traumatic character by virtue of the consciousness of social shame that they produce”; and

“ It might, then, be necessary to rethink the prohibition on incest as that which sometimes protects against a violation, and sometimes becomes the very instrument of a violation.” (id., p.160)

Like other “Critical Social Justice” disciplines, Queer Theory is political and activist in orientation (*i.e.*, it seeks to move society toward what “should be” rather than simply observing and describing “what is”). Seminal writers in Queer Theory include Gayle Rubin, Judith Butler, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

¹ A full copy of Rubin’s essay is available free online at <<https://bpb-us-e2.wpmucdn.com/sites/middlebury.edu/dist/2/3378/files/2015/01/Rubin-Thinking-Sex.pdf>>.

Racism

As redefined in Critical Race Theory and Social Justice literature, “racism” means a structure that works to preserve the power of “white” people to the detriment of “people of color.”

Under this new definition, only “white” people can be racist, because only white people have “power.” While individual “white” people can be against racism, they still benefit from the system that privileges “whites as a group” and are therefore always “racist.”

Under this new definition, “people of color” may have prejudice or discriminate, but that can’t constitute “racism” because “people of color” do not have the social and institutional power that would transform that prejudice or discrimination into racism.

Safe Space

A physical or electronic space free for members of an “oppressed group” that is free from those that are “oppressors” or “privileged over the “oppressed group.” A “safe space” would be physical (or even electronic) space that is free *from* the presence, speech, or other stimuli (signs, videos, images, etc.) that represents or embodies the source of the “oppression, privilege, dominance, or marginalization.”

Social Justice

As used in works based on Critical Theory (defined above in this glossary), “Social Justice” refers to a specific theoretical perspective that asserts that society is stratified (i.e., divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Critical social justice asserts that inequality is deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., as structural), and actively seeks to change this (i.e., “social justice” is activist in orientation).

The term “Social Justice” is an overarching term for any field of endeavor that seeks to address inequities in any area (per above, race, class, gender, sexuality, etc.). “Social Justice” applied to these various areas would share the following principles:

- All people are individuals, but they are also members of social groups.
- These social groups are valued unequally in society.
- Social groups that are valued more highly have greater access to the resources of a society.
- Social injustice is real, exists today, and results in unequal access to resources between groups of people.
- Those who claim to be for social justice must be engaged in self-reflection about their own socialization into these groups (their “positionality”) and must strategically act from that awareness in ways that challenge social injustice.

- This action requires a commitment to an ongoing and lifelong process.

Social Justice, like Critical Theory and all of its subfields, requires that adherents become life-long activists.

Because “Social Justice” incorporates as a core element Marx’s “conflict theory,” it *must* always identify an “oppressor” group (which would be the “norm” or “normative”) and an “oppressed” group (and therefore “marginalized”), as demonstrated in the follow chart (examples only, not exhaustive):

Type of Oppression	Oppressor / Dominant Group	Oppressed / Marginalized Group
Economic	Capital Owners / Bourgeoise	Poor / Blue Collar / Proletariat
Racism	White	People of Color
Sexism	Men (patriarchy)	Women
Heterosexism	Heterosexuals	Gays, Lesbians, Bi-Sexual
Transphobia	“Gender Conforming,” “Cis-Gendered”	Transgender, Gender Queer, etc.
Religious (e.g., “Islamophobia”)	Christians (because “dominant” in the “West”)	Muslims, non-Christian
Religious / Anti-Semitism	Gentiles	Jews
Nationalism	Citizens	Immigrants
Ageism	Elderly	Young, Middle-Aged
Adultism	Children	Adults
Colorism	Lighter Skinned	Darker Skinned
Pro-Natalism	Fertile	Infertile
Language Bias	Native English Speakers	English as a Second Language
Eurocentrism	European Origin	Non-European Origin
Educationalism	Literate, Credentialed	Illiterate, Non-Credentialed

Social Justice Warrior

Refers to any individual who has adopted the “social justice” worldview and engages in activism to achieve its goals.

Social Transition / Social Affirmation

The public adoption of a newly selected “gender identity. Social transition is public adoption of a newly selected “gender identity.” This usually takes the form of changes in clothing, use of make-up (if the transition is from male to female), selection and use of a new name, and selection and use of new “pronouns.” Social transition typically also includes the use of chest binders (to “masculinize” the female chest) and “genital tucking” (to hide the penis and scrotum).

Systemic Racism

The idea that the systems of our country (broadly understood) are conceived and maintained in such a way as to oppress people of color in favor of whites. Any disparate outcome between white people and people of color is evidence of “systemic racism.”

Systems of Oppression

Any system of power, privilege, dominance, or marginalization that allegedly disadvantages one group in favor of another group.

Transgender

As used in Social Justice studies generally, and in Gender Ideology and Queer Theory in particular (see separate entries for each of the foregoing terms), a person is considered “transgender” when that person “identifies” with a “gender” other than that typically corresponds to that person’s biological sex. So, if a biological male “feels” or “identifies” as a “female,” then that person is a “Transgender Woman/Girl.” The belief or feeling itself is the thing that renders to person “transgender.”

The core idea of “transgender” is based on the proposition that “sex” and “gender” are two different things and that in any event both are “social constructs,” *i.e.*, created by society through the use of words rather than based on objective reality and scientific observation. Thus, because the categories of “male” and “female,” and “man” and “woman” are socially constructed, a person can reject them and “identify” as the other, neither, or somewhere in between. Obviously the belief is entirely internal to the person claiming to be “transgender,” and is therefore not testable or verifiable through any objective test or process whatsoever.

A person may be “transgender” regardless of whether that person presents as typically male, typically female, androgenous, or otherwise.

White Fragility

A term coined by author Robin DiAngelo, author of “White Fragility,” which she defines as follows.

“White Fragility” is the “racial stress” or “racial discomfort” that white people feel when confronted in “conversations about race” when it is suggested that being “white” connects us to a “system of racism” (*i.e.*, systemic racism) that white people use to dominate society (*i.e.*, to oppress people of color for the benefit of “whites”), because it challenges white people’s “very identities as good, moral people” and white perceive such challenges as “an unsettling and unfair moral offense.”

The “racial stress” or “racial discomfort” white people experience manifests in a “range of defensive responses,” such as “feelings of discomfort and anxiety, anger, fear, guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and withdrawal from the stress-inducing situation.”

The “racial stress” or “racial discomfort” is caused by a “lack of racial stamina,” (i.e., an inability to tolerate being accused of racism or being called a racist) that infects white people because white people are usually “insulated from racial stress” because white people “white people in North America live in a society that is deeply separate and unequal by race, and white people are the beneficiaries of that separation and inequality.”

A white person’s expression of white fragility is a “means of racial control,” a way to protect “white advantage,” and are intended to “reinstate white equilibrium as they repel the challenge, return our racial comfort, and maintain our dominance within the racial hierarchy.”

Whiteness

A “socially constructed” system of power reflected the privileges “white” and “white behaviors” over all others that is centered as “normal” in our society and therefore “marginalized” the “race” and “behaviors” of people of color. Social Justice / Critical Race theorists assert that “Whiteness” consists of legal political, economic, and social rights and privileges that are denied to people of color, and that therefore “white” people have unjust access to by virtue of having been classified as white.

Social Justice / Critical Race Theory further holds that “Whiteness” is in fact a type of “property” that belongs solely to those classified as “White,” although some “people of color” can access that property, and therefore those benefits, but in doing so they become “complicit” with “White Supremacy.” Such “people of color” may be accused of: “acting white,” “talking white,” being a “model minority,” having “internalized racism” or “internalized oppression,” or of seeking “white approval.”

White Supremacy

A descriptive term to capture the all-encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of people defined and perceived as white and the practices based on this assumption. White supremacy in the social justice context refers an overarching political, economic, and social system of domination that is intended to ensure the ongoing dominance of “whites” over “people of color.”

In Social Justice circles, any disparate outcomes between “white” and “people of color” is evidence and confirmation of the existence of “white supremacy.”

Woke, Woke-ism

The state of seeing society in terms of systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization coupled with a dedication to become an activist against these perceived systems.

Woke is the belief that (i) all of society is currently and intentionally structured to oppress, (ii) all gaps in performance between “groups” illustrative that oppression, and (iii) “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” are the solutions to the “problem.”

Frequently preceded by “stay,” as in “Stay Woke,” meaning that it is imperative to remain aware of the impact of “systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization” and remain focused on engaging in activist to “disrupt”/“dismantle” those systems.

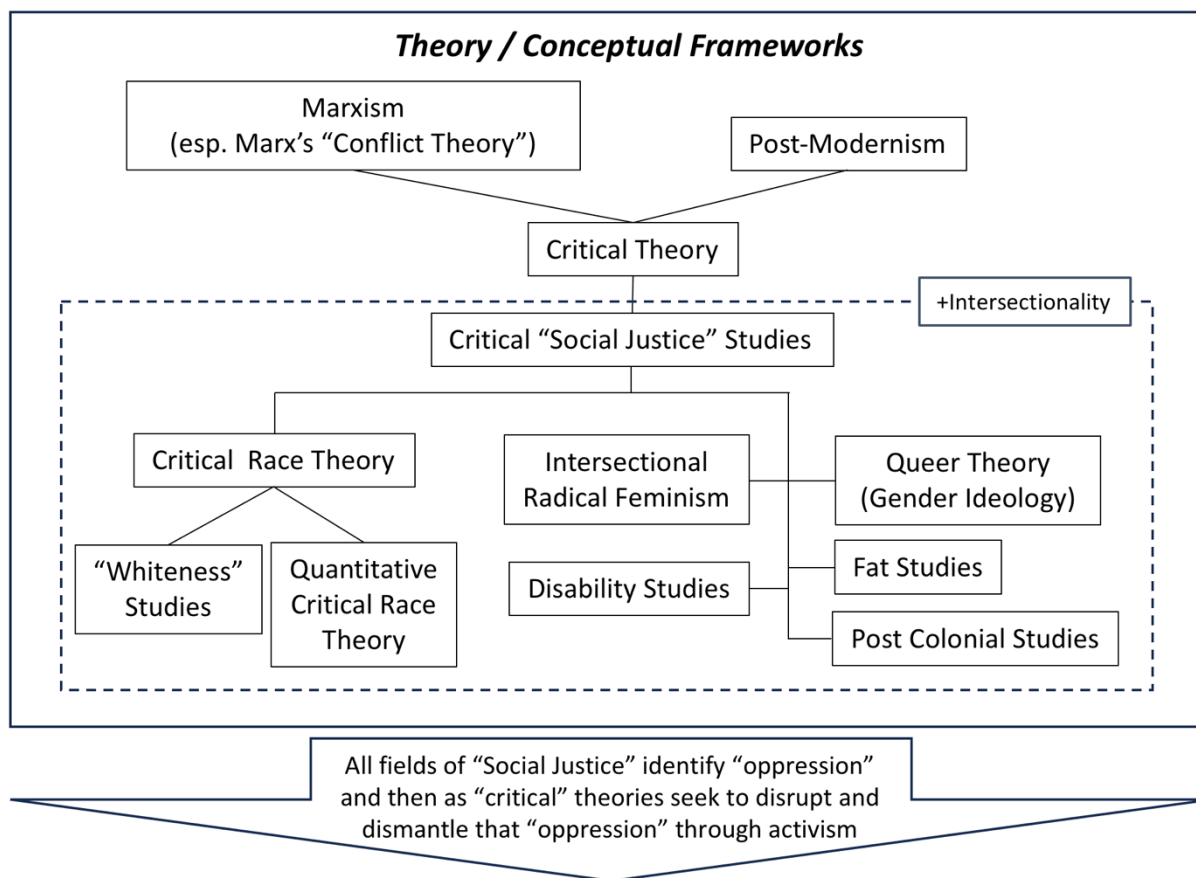
Synonymous with “Critical Consciousness” (see above).

Woke Policies / Practices

Any policy, practice, or approach that is intended to disrupt and/or dismantle systems of power, privilege, dominance, oppression, and marginalization that oppress or disadvantage “groups” of people with the intent of creating a more “diverse,” “equitable,” and “inclusive” world, as those terms are used Social Justice studies, *i.e.*, fields of study based on Critical Theory.

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13.3 Development of “Social Justice” Studies and Elements of Applied “Social Justice”



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Applied Social Justice / Tools / Activism

<p>Draw Attention / Disrupt / Dismantle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silencing / shaming • Negative Characterization of Motives as “Hateful” • Name calling (racist, transphobe, bigot) • Chanting slogans / yelling to prevent speech or action • “Silent” protests (e.g., “Day of Silence”) • Sit-ins / Blocking commonly used paths of movement • Presenting lists of “Demands” 	<p>Words as Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-opt and redefine core terms (e.g., “racism” or “diversity”) • Accuse others of being “racist” or being against “diversity” because they don’t agree with new definitions • Characterize the motives of others as “hateful” 	<p>“Evidence”-Creation and Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity “Surveys” • Equity “Audits” • Establishment of DEI Staff/Office or outsource to a DEI Consultant (needed based on “evidence” from “survey” or “audit”) • Creation of DEI “Action Plans” to propagate Social Justice concepts into district operations and curriculum
<p>Diversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate staff/teachers and students to determine “representation” of population subgroups and “identities” • Take active measures to achieve “representation”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hire based on race/identity • select authors/curriculum based on race/identity rather merit • Assume “Diversity is our Strength” • Exclude diverse points of view 	<p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure all achievement and access by race/identity • Take active measures to achieve equal outcomes by race/identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate AP/Honors Classes • Restorative Justice to reduce “disparate impact” on “people of color” • Establishment minimum “grades” • Eliminate academic / graduation honors 	<p>Inclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterize words as “violence” or causing people to feel “unsafe” • Establish “Safe Spaces” free from “oppression” and “marginalization” • Exclude the “privileged” from “safe spaces” • Commit to “Affirm” “Identities” • Celebrate the “non-normative” • Silence speech that is not supportive • Limit attendance/role of “privileged” • Compel use of neo-pronouns • Stop use of gendered language

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14.0 Final Thoughts

We never expected to have to ask a school district superintendent how the district defines a particular word like “equity.” We never expected to be denied basic information about what was going on in our schools. We never expected to feel compelled to speak at public meetings in favor of viewing people as individual humans with their own attributes regardless of the color of their skin. We never expected to have to resort to legal processes to force the district to disclose what it was doing behind closed doors, let alone find what we found. We never expected to feel that we had a duty to the public to inform them of what went on.

Our intent is not and never was to stir up controversy or to dig up things that happened “years ago,” let alone do anything that would damage the reputation of our schools. However, it was clear to us that our district had unfortunately been led down a path that is inconsistent with its core mission, *i.e.*, to teach our children mathematics, science, reading and writing, critical thinking, etc. Led initially by former Superintendent Evison, our administrators were spending substantial amounts of time training in Social Justice topics and were working, in their own words, to remake our schools accordingly. So, for whatever consternation our disclosures may cause (every one of them backed up by the district’s own records, don’t forget), our hope is that they help refocus our schools on educating our children and put an end to efforts to bring Social Justice ideology into all areas of district operations.

Imagine if instead all of the time and money spent on the activities described in this Report (from the time Evison spent conspiring with activist professors at Lehigh University to remake our and other school districts in the name of social justice (see [Section 7.0](#)) to the hours our teachers spent reading and discussing the book “White Fragility” for district training hours, learning that only white people can be racist and that white people can never not be racist (See [Section 8.1](#))), that time and money had been spent ensuring that our teachers were armed with the best curricula and other tools to maximize the likelihood that our children would flourish academically. What if our schools spent more time identifying individual students who were falling behind and targeting those students with additional assistance?

Imagine if instead of endlessly punting to the administration, previous SLSD school boards had done their core job of providing oversight to ensure that the administration stayed focused on education rather than ideology? What if our school board took the responsibility of establishing clear policies for our administration to follow that required staff to keep parents apprised of major mental wellness issues like whether their child out of nowhere asked to be called by a different name and to access the bathrooms historically reserved for students of the opposite sex? What if our school board had told our administrators and counselors, no, you cannot enable and support the active psychotherapeutic intervention of “social transition”/“social affirmation” for a student without that student’s parents’ involvement and consent? Perhaps we wouldn’t have had secret policies and practices adopted in our schools out of public view and without oversight (see [Section 12](#)). Perhaps our guidance counselors wouldn’t be allowed to turn to one of the most radical transgender advocacy organizations in the world for how to handle students experience gender identity issues (see [Section 12.6](#)).

One issue that continues to bother us deeply is that it does not appear that any administrator or school board member at any time asked whether and how any of these social justice-related

activities (including the DEI initiative centered on the work of the district’s “DEI consultant” Dr. Joseph Allen) would contribute to the academic success of our students. No one seems to have inquired as to how we would measure success. If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it, and therefore you can’t improve it. If evidence of such inquiries exists, we could not find it the many thousands of pages of district records we reviewed, nor is it reflected in school board minutes.

If anyone had asked these important questions, they would have rapidly learned that there is no convincing evidence whatsoever that these DEI programs as an independent variable have any positive effect at all, let alone ones that are lasting. In a recent Wall Street Journal article, one of the two co-creators of the infamous “*implicit bias test*” so popular in Social Justice circles acknowledges that DEI programs as formulated in recent years (*i.e.*, those based on Critical Theory and Social Justice concepts) simply do not work and are more often than not counterproductive, leaving participants feeling they were unfairly accused of being racist. Even Harvard and the University of North Carolina were unable to marshal any convincing evidence in their defense of affirmative action (which falls into the “diversity” bucket of the “DEI” world) that forced diversity based on the color of one’s skin conferred any academic benefit to anyone at all. If instead they recruited for diversity of viewpoint, diversity of experience, and diversity of expertise rather than on melanin levels dictated by DNA, perhaps their programs never would have been challenged in the first place, let alone overturned at the Supreme Court this year.

We should not be asking why students who belong to this racial group outperform that racial group. We should be asking why any of our students are underperforming against established competency benchmarks, and to the extent any SLSD student is underperforming, how we can help that individual student get on track to competency, and hopefully eventually to academic excellence. As we argued in Section 6.5 of this Report, a student may fail to excel for any number of reasons and not a single one of them has anything to do the color of that student’s skin or from where his or her ancestors come.

These programs ultimately fail to produce any measurable enduring benefits for the obvious reason (obvious to us, anyway) that they have departed so far from commonly held and long cherished American civil rights values, like that we should judge people not on the color of their skin but on the content of their character (this is commonly referred to acting in a “colorblind” or “race-neutral” fashion). Instead, DEI programs today are almost inevitably based on a Social Justice world view, which is in turn based on Critical Theory (see Section 3.0 and 13.0). This basis for otherwise well intended work fails because it by definition starts by dividing people into groups and then classifies them as oppressor and oppressed. It takes as evidence of oppression any disparate outcome between large groups (*e.g.*, income level, education level, discipline rates, etc.) as evidence of oppression (most commonly racism), but it does so without establishing any causal link whatsoever. We must reject this flawed view of the world. How can we come closer together if we don’t focus on the common humanity we share? We should reject these color-based, group-based approaches and instead focus on the success of each individual SLSD student as the individual human being that they each are.

In light of the events, policies, and practices reflected in this report, we respectfully offer the following recommendations:

First, have patience with your neighbors and those who serve us on the school board and in our schools. Our board members, administrators, teachers, and other SLSD staff are busy people who serve our community, a commitment which we hold in high regard. The vast majority of them are doing a great job for us all and we should remember to thank them from time to time, even if we disagree with them on a particular issue. Assume good intentions, ask questions reasonably, and give people a reasonable time to respond. Seek to understand where your views differ and why. Appreciate that people of good will and intent can see the same issue differently and can respectfully agree to disagree. Sometimes that simply will not be possible, but we think the ideas in this paragraph should always be your starting point for interacting with our public servants.

Second, embrace a pro-human approach to equality and tolerance, one that focuses on “advancing civil rights and liberties for all Americans, and promoting a common culture based on fairness, understanding, and humanity,” while also providing “an inclusive learning environment that recognizes both our unique identities and common humanity” and “encourage[ing] curiosity and critical inquiry, welcom[ing] a diversity of opinions and perspectives, and teach[ing] students to engage in civil discourse as a constructive means toward a better and more unified future” (fairforall.org/fair-schools).

Third, reject all approaches, wherever and however they appear, that would ascribe moral or legal blame to individuals or groups based on the color of their skin, their national origin, or other immutable characteristics. Ensure that no training or other activity that contradicts that principle is permitted. Where issues of race, history, war, and the manifold ways humans can be awful to one another, ensure that those topics are taught fairly with context and balance.

Fourth, embrace transparency on all fronts and at all levels *to the extent permitted by law* (some things, like student-specific information, are required by law to be kept confidential, of course). Parents and other community members have the right to know what’s going on, and their questions should be answered directly and without needless delay even if the answers may be embarrassing. Getting caught hiding something will make you look far worse than if you had been transparent in the first place. *Errors in judgment can be forgiven, public corruption cannot.*

Fifth, given that our community, like most others, includes people of many different viewpoints from all sorts of backgrounds, recommit to the principle that administrators, teachers, counselors, and other SLSD employees must be politically neutral while acting within the scope of their employment. Our schools shouldn’t be taking political positions on disputed issues or endorsing as orthodox things that are very much not.

If you’ve made it this far, we offer our sincere thanks for your dedication and willingness to engage with difficult content and frustrating ideas and facts.

[*End of Section*]

Attachments to Report Immediately Follow