
From: Sarah Dockins
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 6:55 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Kristen McNeils message

Your message tonight was completely uncalled for. When attacks were taking place with BLM protests, or own town being torn down, due to these protests, the school district didn't say anything. My family and children were scared then, yet you said nothing!

Yet tonight, you feel it's necessary to reach out because protests turned violent, but on the sides of the conservative.

I feel your message is politically motivated. You are there to educate my children. Stay out of politics.

If you need to send me a message regarding school closures or safety, that is one thing. But not over politics.

Keep your political views and message away from me and my children's education.

Sent from my iPhone
Sarah Dockins

From: Andrew Cristancho
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 10:05 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: BoardMembers
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Message from Superintendent McNeill

To Dr. Kristen McNeill,
Thank you for the words you wrote in this email regarding the tragic anti-American unrest that took place in the capitol today. Writing these words and sending them to us shows guts and leadership!
Thank you!

Happy New Year!
Stay Safe, Stay Healthy, Help Community!
Thanks,
-Andrew Cristancho
NNRMLS Director of Marketing

From: WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT <email@blackboard.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 6, 2021 6:42 PM
To: Andrew Cristancho
Subject: Message from Superintendent McNeill



Good evening, Washoe County School District families and staff—

This is Superintendent Kristen McNeill.

I am a lifetime educator and a parent, and like many of you, I was shocked and angry as I watched the violent events that took place in our nation's capital today. This was an assault on our sacred democracy, the same democracy that makes it possible for us to teach, learn, and live in freedom.

I want us to remember that our children are learning from what they are seeing. What they saw today does not reflect who we are as a school district, a community, or a nation. All of us at the Washoe County School District are dedicated to creating a community of respect where our students are leading us to a better future. As a district we remain committed to protecting our children and each other from harm.

As educators, it is our sacred duty to create the finest civilization we can before we pass it to the next generation, and we simply cannot pass the violence we witnessed today to our children. *They deserve better, and we must do better for them.*

So tonight, let us remember: Our children are watching. It's important that we talk with them, encourage them to express their feelings and fears, answer their questions with information they can understand, and reassure them they are safe. Our staff members stand ready to support our students, providing whatever help and resources they need. Please do not hesitate to reach out to our staff if you and your child need assistance. Links to resources are posted on our website at www.washoeschools.net.

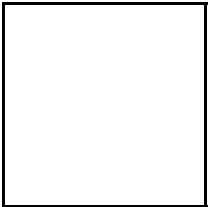
I join with our District staff in wishing you and your families peace, courage, and strength during the difficult days ahead.

Thank you, and good night.

From: Zak Woodhead
Sent: Thursday, January 7, 2021 7:58 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Message from Superintendent McNeill

There have been riots going on since May where was this message back then – none of the riots are acceptable . Maybe you should send another message clarifying none of this is acceptable.

From: WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT <email@blackboard.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 06, 2021 6:44 PM
To: Zak Woodhead
Subject: Message from Superintendent McNeill



Good evening, Washoe County School District families and staff—

This is Superintendent Kristen McNeill.

I am a lifetime educator and a parent, and like many of you, I was shocked and angry as I watched the violent events that took place in our nation’s capital today. This was an assault on our sacred democracy, the same democracy that makes it possible for us to teach, learn, and live in freedom.

I want us to remember that our children are learning from what they are seeing. What they saw today does not reflect who we are as a school district, a community, or a nation. All of us at the Washoe County School District are dedicated to creating a community of respect where our students are leading us to a better future. As a district we remain committed to protecting our children and each other from harm.

As educators, it is our sacred duty to create the finest civilization we can before we pass it to the next generation, and we simply cannot pass the violence we witnessed today to our children. *They deserve better, and we must do better for them.*

So tonight, let us remember: Our children are watching. It’s important that we talk with them, encourage them to express their feelings and fears, answer their questions with information they can understand, and reassure them they are safe. Our staff members stand ready to support our students, providing whatever help and resources they need. Please do not hesitate to reach out to

our staff if you and your child need assistance. Links to resources are posted on our website at www.washeschools.net.

I join with our District staff in wishing you and your families peace, courage, and strength during the difficult days ahead.

Thank you, and good night.

From: Kate Pflughoeft
Sent: Saturday, January 9, 2021 8:45 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Current events deserve attention

Hello,

I wanted to thank you for drawing attention to recent current events. Part of being a good citizen is being aware of what is going on in our country and around the world, and young citizens are no exception. I interact with students at UNR on a daily basis, and more often than not they tell me that they should pay more attention to the news than they do. Discussing the news during the K-12 years will instill life-long habits, creating a more informed population.

Best,
Kate Pflughoeft

From: Graeme Reid
Sent: Saturday, January 9, 2021 1:56 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments re Kristen McNeill's ill-advised January 6, 2021 e-mail

Dear Trustees,

I complained to you on January 6, 2021 regarding Kristin McNeill's ill-advised "selective outrage" e-mail to parents that same evening with her personal feelings on the public disturbances in Washington, D.C. I received only one response, from Jeff Church, which I appreciated. This is a confirmation of that complaint and my public comment for your meeting on January 12. Here is the text of my prior complaint:

"This is nothing more than selective outrage. Where was the condemnation over the past year as the country burned, police officers were attacked and murdered by left wing activists? Our children were in far more danger as riots in Reno raged - and where was your condemnation there? Nowhere to be seen. Keep your political opinions to yourself!"

No-one is disagreeing that the conduct of certain individuals on January 6 was inappropriate, however, despite what is being claimed by WCSD in "defense" of the e-mail, there was no such condemnation of the far more serious and violent rioting that was ongoing throughout 2020, including multiple murders, violence toward US Senators, setting fires to public and private buildings, mass vandalism, occupations of public spaces, etc, some of which was right here in Reno. Ms. McNeill's contention that she treated the left-wing mob riots the same is false.

Ms. McNeill's e-mail is a clear violation of her position of trust. She used her position of authority to advance her personal political agenda. Such an individual should not be involved in teaching our children, never mind leading the school district.

Ms. McNeill should be removed from her position immediately.

Graeme Reid

From: Jonathan Acosta
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 9:01 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment

To the superintendent,

Did you send emails like the one the other evening as ANTIFA and BLM burned cities and wreaked havoc and violence and death upon many over the summer? I don't recall that.

Did you send emails like this as cops were being beat and shot at and targeted off-duty while the "peaceful protests" were going on?

Don't get it twisted, I do not like what took place the other day at our capital at all. I've been to the capital twice; I served this country and was sent overseas to Iraq twice so I know a thing or two about real violence and have seen what real oppression is. That being said, if you weren't appalled about the violence that took place over the summer but are appalled by what happened today, that makes you a hypocrite.

If you are okay with what happened in cities such as Portland, Atlanta, Seattle, and others then you should feel fine about what took place in DC. But I digress, in our country nowadays hypocrisy is the new norm.

Semper Fidelis

From: Diane Patricia
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 5:56 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Distance Learning

Good evening,

I would like to suggest that due to pandemic strengthening, spreading, and mutating, and the fact that the vaccine distribution has been so severely lacking, that you extend the full distance learning for middle and high school children.

Unfortunately, while these age groups may be less susceptible, they are also more likely to be lax in precautions and therefore more likely to be carriers and spread to the public at large.

I hope this will be addressed.

Respectfully,
Di

From: Colleen Wallace
Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2021 7:37 PM
To: COVID19Plans@dir.nv.gov
Cc: bthompson@niaa.com; Public Comments; Minetto, Ellen
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Directive 034 - Youth Sports guidance

To Whom It May Concern:

My son is a student athlete who plays basketball at Reed High School in Sparks, Nevada. Unfortunately, basketball has been considered a high-risk sport and is therefore prohibited under Directive 034. I am aware the NIAA sent correspondence to the governor's office on December 22, asking the provision for basketball and wrestling be revised to allow either or both. The Governor's office responded, "Upon review of the proposed plans and feedback from state and county public health officials, the Governor will not be revising the directive as requested at this time."

I am sending this email to ask the Governor's office to reverse the provision for high-risk sports, in particular basketball regardless of the "pause". Young adults playing high school sports are extremely low risk for complications from COVID-19. I have not seen any study illustrating youth sports of any type are a primary spread of COVID-19. In fact, it is well established the household is the primary place COVID-19 is spread. Many other States are successfully playing all youth sports.

Participating in sports is a choice. If a parent and/or athlete is not comfortable competing, they do not have to. If a coach is not comfortable coaching they do not have to. This virus disproportionately impacts individuals who are unhealthy. The Governors Office is asking young adults to avoid one of the best ways to prevent having complications to COVID-19, health. Our children need healthy outlets. Sports is one of the best activities to reduce stress, provide exercise and garner the feeling of being a part of something greater than yourself.

I fear the blanket directives from the Governor's office do indiscriminately impact populations who are not at risk from complications secondary to COVID-19. I am troubled the myopic approach to this pandemic will cause more harm to our youth than the virus itself. The "pause" was advertised as a two-week period following the Thanksgiving holiday. What does it teach our children when the Government gives them hope of normalcy and then arbitrarily pulls it away?

Now we know so much more about the virus and the people at risk. I do not blame anyone for the reactions at the beginning of the pandemic. Today we need to make reasoned and rational decisions and follow the current science to provide our children the things they need to grow into healthy adults.

Please respond to the request of the NIAA reinstating youth school sports, including basketball and wrestling.

Colleen and Russell Barnum

From: Clinton Toledo
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 11:26 AM
To: BoardMembers; Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Extend Distance Learning Until Safe

Members of the Board,

I'm writing to urge you to continue the current distance learning model for middle and high school students until all teachers have had the opportunity to become vaccinated and it's safe to return.

Currently, Nevada is second highest in test positivity in the United States. We have not seen a substantial decline in active cases in our state, or in our region, but rather we've seen cases continue to increase. High test positivity compounded with the fact that there is now a new strain of COVID that is 50%-70% more contagious than previous strains makes returning to the classroom much more dangerous than it was before schools left for break.

Exposing our students and staff to this new strain puts our most vulnerable students at risk, while putting our already overburdened teaching staff directly into harm's way. By waiting until we have fully vaccinated educators in the classroom, it will limit the spread of COVID in our community, and ensure that our most vulnerable students have even more protection from the virus than before.

Best,

Clint Toledo

From: Karri
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 6:49 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Phone call?

Is Dr.McNeil going to address the phone call about the capitol riots during the meeting Tuesday?

Also, why is it okay for Mt.Rose to use playground equipment, but the rest of the schools can't?

Please excuse errors...
Sent from my iPhone

From: Alisha Twitchell
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 7:43 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding the January 6th Robo-Call

To the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees:

I support and was impressed by Dr. McNeill's choice to engage with parents and express her support as we navigate explaining to our children the events of the day. I was glued to the news and my 4th grader saw what was happening. I had to speak to him and assure him he was safe. I was impressed that our superintendent thought to support us in that moment.

Her statement was not political, her statement was factual. Maybe someday soon people will recognize that there are facts that exist in this world. A riot at our center of government occurred. It is unprecedented. Our families felt uneasy, even scared. She stepped up as a leader in our community. I am proud of her and support her.

Let us be clear, our children will one day learn of these events in their history lessons. Our children are living through history and our schools have an obligation to support their families as we attempt to hold their hands through turmoil we never could have anticipated. I appreciate and welcome that support.

-Alisha Twitchell
Parent, WCSD

From:
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 9:48 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Concerns over inconsistency in messages to parents

Superintendent Kristen McNeill,

Your inconsistencies in condemning the recent DC riots while ignoring other riots and crimes against humanity are blatant; we see your true intentions loud and clear. It needs to be asked: Why was there no message sent out during the riots of 2020 which began in May and continued for months on end? The 2020 riots cost over a billion dollars, multiple lives, damaged many government properties even in our local community, and worst of all left us feeling terrorized and frightened here in Washoe County. People chanted "NO JUSTICE NO PEACE". Yet during that time there was silence from you. And still now you do not condemn the 2020 riots; you haven't even condemned ALL riots equally. Why? If you're going to abuse your power to draw attention to one event of your choosing, why not condemn this behavior from ALL people, not just the people associated with one political party? This is clearly pushing a left leaning agenda disguised as nothing more than virtue signaling. It is unacceptable.

-Gary Purdum, Parent of a WCSD Middle School Student

From: Matthew Montognese
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 10:07 PM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Caudill, Andrew B; Taylor, Angela; Minetto, Ellen; DNicholet@washoeschools.net; Thigpen, Kurt L; Calvert, Jacqueline M; Church, Jeffrey; McNeill, Kristen
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public_Comment_Meeting-2021-01-12

Hello esteemed WCSD Superintendent and Board of Trustees. I thank you for your tireless efforts, and service, as I come to you with gratitude.

I am a resource in the community and many have shared their thoughts with me recently. As a parent and coach, I realize and appreciate the sacred importance of providing all subject specific information to the kids I instruct and am responsible to for their growth, but that does not include my personal opinions. Opinions are not necessary and can be disruptive to the families if not solicited. Students belongs to their parents, and parents ALONE have the authority to choose who will instruct their children on the means of politics, origin, religion, sexuality and social issues. Our cumulative duty is to simply provide all objective facts to our children in good faith in neutrality, but in these times we are plagued by skewed facts, and truths that are unfortunately broadcast by polarized agenda prone outlets.

Over the course of 2020 and 2021 there has been ongoing tension, violence, chaos and destruction; we are missing something. There is no side to take, we are all saddened and shocked by the contentious acts we see in our nation and the disrespect thereof. I believe the root issue is a character deficit, and the cure is love, love for neighbor, love for Country and love for self. And I like many other Americans I also take privilege in my spiritual well-being as to love for God.

As you state we should have a community of respect, I agree! I would add, as adults we are responsible for our character, but charector can not take form unless it's beholder is first: peaceable, humble, patient, kind, faithful, gentle, self controlled, etc. Character through education, I submit is what our children should be taught along with A,B,C's and 1,2,3's; a right view of ourselves and others will heal our mental health. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of true **education**." In the spirit of Dr. King, let us consider this, and allow our children to think for themselves and build their character; not choose who's side to be on. There is no peace or safety in that. United we stand; we are United by our freedoms. Our children should be taught the definition of America, where ALL men are created equal. It is said by some that America is a democracy (Greek - rule by people) and by others a republic (Latin - of the people's concern), either way we are governed by the constitution federally for and by the people.

As a district sharing an opinion of politics, origin, religion, sexuality and social issues will deepen the divide and is not altogether inclusive. Perhaps we should call on the character of each in our community instead.

Our Nation is the finest civilization, and we are the imperfect example of the ageless freedom experiment; we are honorable ambassadors as to the light of the sacred freedom we enjoy.

I am concerned that the recent statements from the district directed to the public were not in the flavor of concern for all. I would also like to know the basis of how this recent statement, as explained by a certain Trustee is supported by all board members without a public meeting? I hope for a bright future for all of our board members and a positive start to usher in the newly elected members. I have met many of them and see a bright future ahead.

As we love our Nation, all fears will die, as we each take personal responsibility for our actions, our character will grow, our freedom will survive. I pray for our Nation to be grateful for the wonderful blessings we indeed have, and let us honor and defend our gift of America and her people. Let us celebrate together an upcoming Federal Holiday for a man who said, "I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Sincerely,

Matthew Montognese
40 year Reno resident and father.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Chris Hogle
Sent: Monday, January 11, 2021 10:56 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] comment from Jessie Beck parent

Local news media sources have reported public controversy over the WCSD phone message on the US Capitol riots. I support WCSDs actions and believe the superintendent's message was professional and appropriate. The violent event clearly crossed the line from politics to a national emergency. We should be focused on the health and welfare of WCSD students at this critical time and not on the political discomfort of parents or other adults.

Chris Hogle
Jessie Beck Elementary Parent

From: Rossi, Christa
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 8:23 AM
To: Public Comments; COVID Questions; BoardMembers; McNeill, Kristen; Biersdorff, Debra; Curtis, Jeana; Jeffrey.chruch@washoeschools.net
Subject: Addressing Agenda Item: COVID-19 Update Re: Use of Playground Equipment

Good morning,

Welcome to the new board members. As a teacher and a parent I look forward to working with all of you in efforts to support our students and children in every aspect of education.

In this correspondence I am hoping that teachers and parents will be receiving a timeline for use of playground equipment at elementary schools.

If students have been permitted to share balls, jump ropes, hula hoops, etc. then the use of playground equipment should also be permitted.

My son is in a pre-k program but can't use the playground equipment. Kindergartners can play with tennis balls on a ball wall (all touching the ball), 4th graders can play football (all touching and catching the same ball), the 6th graders can play basketball (all touching the same ball), but can't use the playground equipment. I also would add that the football and basketball games are played in rather close proximity because that is the nature of the game, but they still can't use the playground equipment.

My question still remains, why is the playground equipment still off limits if other games and balls are already being shared? Stating that social distancing can't be maintained is absurd as students are playing games together anyway. All students are still required to wash hands after touching the shared balls, hula hoops, jump ropes, etc. The protocol would be the same with playground equipment. I know for a fact that if my students (Kindergartners) had the opportunity to play on equipment they would also be willing to help wipe it down after to sanitize.

Or is it a matter of teacher comfort? Could schools and/or teachers at schools have the autonomy to decide what they would like to do for their students? Or is it an a factor of liability? Could schools, with the help of the district legal department, develop a waiver for students to use the equipment with verbiage that indicates that all sanitary protocols for use and hand washing would still be in place?

My son's class is unique as they are the only ones who would utilize the playground equipment on the playground they use, so sanitizing it isn't an issue. As a parent who also works at the same school I would volunteer to sanitize it for them if required. They also wash hands so often throughout the day that their hands would be clean after use of equipment.

To further support the use of playground equipment for young children, the American Association of Pediatrics published an article in October stating, "Reducing classmate interactions/play in Pre-K aged children may not provide substantial COVID-19 risk reduction." Similarly, they also stated, "Reducing classmate interactions/play in Elementary school-aged children may not provide substantial COVID-19 risk reduction to justify potential harms."

I am aware and have been told that many community members, teachers, administrators, doctors, and pediatricians are a part of the COVID re-opening committee for our district. Is this being discussed? When can pre-k and elementary aged students expect to be allowed to interact and play again? If it's being worked on and discussed this is fabulous! Providing teachers and parents with a date and/or timeline is even better and deserved for our children.

Thank you for reading and have a great day.

Christa Rossi
(Mom and teacher)

From: Carrie Parker
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 8:46 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] public comment - Focus on Education

I write in relation to Trustee Church's letter to the editor criticizing Superintendent McNeill's January 6, 2021 message regarding support and resources for students who may be troubled by recent events in our nation's capital. This is a time when most students are not attending school in person and they feel fear and anxiety about what is happening in our community and our world. It is not "troubling," to use Trustee Church's word, for the Superintendent to communicate to students and family that the school district offers support and resources.

As the school district attempts to navigate these difficult times and prepare for Legislative Session, I hope that the Board will focus on moving forward and working to overcome the learning gap caused by the pandemic. Much was lost in spring 2020 and continues to be lost in the current school year. Please focus on improving education and not on manufacturing political fights.

Carrie Parker

From: Cinnamon Steinhardt
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 8:50 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Endangering our students

Teachers are making it commonplace to have political discussions during class time with students. After classes are over, students who have different opinions are being targeted via social media, text messages etc including being physically threatened. The political climate in this country is way to polarized and heated right now and the district is putting students in danger and making them afraid of retaliation by their peers and disapproval from their teachers by participating in these discussions. When students don't participate, then it is obvious and their opinions are assumed, and they are then targeted as well. Teachers have no business, in such a dangerous political climate, putting our children in danger and need to stick to teaching their curriculum and stop promoting and allowing these discussions in class before someone is hurt. There are several parents discussing a lawsuit against the district for allowing this to take place and the district is being incredibly irresponsible.

Cinnamon Steinhardt.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Matt Tate
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 9:20 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Middle/High School Sports and Extracurricular Activities

Board of Directors

I am writing in reference to the hold out on sports and extracurricular activities. We as parents appreciate you sending out student support app, student counseling information, and outside mental health resources, however many students will not utilize these resources on their own. The mental well-being of most children is in the form of human connection. This comes from many places in one's life and for many children it comes in the form of extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, band, and drama. I have to say, most of my high school memories are from playing sports. The comradery, teamwork and work ethic are vital to life lessons and help kids learn how to deal with everyday life. Furthermore, this is the place many will open up to coaches/teachers regarding difficulties in their life and can then be addressed, not from an app they need to access alone. I hope you see the urgency in getting kids back on the field, court, stage or music theater. I am sure there are many parents writing regarding this matter and we all hope you can make the right choice in getting our kids back in action. Please make your case to the Governor, NIAA or whomever to make extracurricular events happen this year. It is vital to our children's mental and physical stability and further success!

Thank you,
Matt

From: Repko, Margaret
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 10:03 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Public Comment for 1/12/21 Board Meeting

The district may move forward with plans to open schools for in-person and hybrid learning beginning next Tuesday, January 19th. What problems exist with that plan?

First problem: teacher illness and the substitute shortage. The district has been short up to 200 substitutes a day since August. **Where is the data-** how many substitutes have been hired and trained, ready to work next Tuesday?

Second problem: Covid-19 cases among students and staff and contact tracing. **Where is the data-** how many people are fully trained and prepared to contact trace beginning next Tuesday? If my school, Vaughn Middle School, has an outbreak, which contact tracer will be there for us to find out who was exposed?

Third problem: A deadly virus spreading silently and quickly through our county. Despite low testing numbers, 21% of Covid-19 tests in Washoe County are coming back positive (RGJ 1/11/21). New variants of highly infectious Covid-19 are also certainly spreading, silently and undetected, through our community. 84% of hospital beds are currently occupied in Reno (RGJ 1/11/21). My students are majority Latinx, which means their risk for testing positive for covid-19 is 50% higher than white people, and their risk of hospitalization is 48% higher than white people (RGJ 1/4/21).

Well-to-do families, healthy families, organic food families, can't understand the devastation and pain occurring in the dim backstreets and crowded apartments of the city. What cries of grief and loss are muffled by the wealthy & white who demand "back to normal!" What normal?

27% of teachers are considering **quitting** after this school year (CNBC 12-14-20) Returning to in-person learning will cement and exacerbate those numbers. I am teaching in the oldest middle school building in Reno, built in 1956. Our school is not equipped for safe social distancing in cramped hallways and classrooms or air purification during breakfast and lunch.

Plan and prepare for the long-term success of your school district. Keep schools on the current distance model until March 29th or later- when our test positivity rate lowers to 5%. Train teachers in effective, caring, successful distance learning pedagogy. Protect your teachers. Keep us and our students safe from schools and the deadly Covid-19 virus.

Maggie Repko
English Language Arts Teacher
Vaughn Middle School

From: Sarah Laubach Gur
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 11:39 AM
To: Public Comments; Church, Jeffrey; BoardMembers; McNeill, Kristen
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Dr. McNeill's statement

Dear WCSD Trustees and WCSD community:

As a parent of two WCSD students, I was heartened to receive Dr. McNeill's email on January 6. Her message was comforting, appropriate and deeply appreciated by all families with whom I discussed it. It was an appropriate use of the district's technology to call/email parents to express words of comfort and support on a frightening day. Let us not overlook what happened on that day. Armed insurgents killed two Capitol police officers, urinated on our Capitol building, and desecrated the literal center of American democracy in an attempt to interrupt a Congressional vote. Five humans lost their lives. Dr. McNeill rightly called this an assault on democracy. Who can credibly argue it was anything but?

The attempt to politicize her email is misguided and malignant. Why is a school district superintendent not permitted to say we are "a community of respect" and to encourage parents to support their children and "answer their questions"? Why is this a polarizing email? Why are some in our community -- including and especially new trustee Jeff Church -- using their energy to mischaracterize Dr. McNeill's email and rabble rouse?

I was comforted to know that our district encourages respect, reverence for government and the rule of law, and a willingness to speak up when objective norms are breached.

We have a pandemic to fight and a nation to rebuild. Let's focus on what matters. Trustee Church, shame on you for desecrating our WCSD community. As a former law enforcement officer, you would, I imagine, be outraged by the two officers who lost their lives that day. Apparently petty politics matters more to you than the lives of your brothers in blue.

Sincerely,
Sarah Laubach Gur
Parent to K and 2nd grade students

From: YeVonne Allen
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 12:40 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] WCSD BOT 1/12/21 Public Comment

Hello Wonderful WCSD Folks,
Below is my public comment for the WCSD BOT 1/12/21 Meeting.

For the record, YeVonne Allen, Program Director for Equity, Inclusion, and Sustainability at Truckee Meadows Community College and City of Reno Civil Service Commissioner.

I am providing comment today to welcome my colleagues and friends Diane Nicollet and Kurt Thigpen to the Board of Trustees. You are wonderful additions to the Board! I encourage you to stay true to ideals of inclusive environments for our students, closing equity gaps, and representing ALL students. I look forward to continued collaboration with all of you (Shout out Dr. Angie!). I also want to recognize and thank Superintendent McNeil for her steadfast disposition in a time where so many people are so full of hate. Thank you for standing up for what's right and just. Let us all please remember this moment when applying vague rules to the classrooms and to our students. Keep standing up for what is best. This has demonstrated that messages and acts of human decency are not political, they are compassionate. That is exactly what our community and our youth need right now, and it is all of our jobs to provide them with it. Decency, and compassion. Thank you.

YeVonne Allen



Phil Kaiser, President
Tom Stauss, Executive Director
Dana Galvin, UniServ Director

January 12, 2021
Board of Trustees and Superintendent McNeill,

Last night, Governor Sisolak extended COVID-related restrictions for an additional 30 days, because of the high rates of spread of the virus and the strains placed on hospitals and health-care providers. January could be the worst month yet, according to infectious disease experts, because of holiday parties at which precautions were not taken. The school district has had to exclude two elementary schools, because of potential exposures.

All students and staff deserve a safe environment for learning and working, and we are concerned for their health and welfare. We are not convinced that there is adequate testing and tracing to contain the spread of the virus, and we urge the board to consider carefully the in-school policies. Our lives are in your hands.

While the initial vaccinations are welcome and promise hope that the virus may be less of a threat in the future, the risks remain very high. If WCSD cannot effectively provide timely COVID-19 tests and timely contact tracing and vaccinations for all educators, which is currently the case, then all of our schools should be on full distance learning.

Sincerely,

Phil Kaiser, President, WEA

From: Scot Krause
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 2:47 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] letter to board

Board of Trustees,

I am writing to voice my approval of Dr. Kristin McNeill's reminders of district and community resources that might assist families after witnessing the DC riots last week. The idea that her message was somehow political speech does not ring true to me. Whose political beliefs include the desire to change the outcome of a democratic election and why would we want to present that political ideology as viable to our students?

It seems to me that the real question of protest should always be whether or not the ends justify the means. In the case of last week's riot, the ends (overturning the process of the Electoral College and instilling fear in the minds of democracy-supporters) was clearly not a case of the ends justifying the means. Some responses to the superintendent's message I have read seem to think that the ends did not justify the means with the Black Lives Matter events that were especially prevalent this summer and that somehow this opinion is relevant to the DC riot. This is not a useful line of argument. Many have argued more convincingly than I could about the disparate treatment of BIPOC communities in the United States. Progressives and conservatives might argue about the causes of these disparate treatments and outcomes, and there are disagreements as to what the "means" of improving conditions should be. But each end of the political spectrum can at least appreciate the need for some kind of "means" to fix the inequalities in the United States. What occurred at Black Lives Matter events across the nation might not reflect the same "ends" everyone in the country might have thought best or most appropriate, but at least they were advocating for a cause (end of disparities) that a wide range of people can get behind. I fail to understand how anyone could appreciate either the ends or the means of the riots last week. This is why the comparison to Black Lives Matter doesn't make sense to me.

President Trump lost the election yet he has continued to lie to his supporters for months. His supporters rioted against our nation's political ideals of democracy. That is frightening and flies in the face of the democratic ideals our school district should be promoting. The district cannot expect civics and history education to take happen while refusing to acknowledge the world today in all its shades of gray. Our students deserve an education that engages the world. If students aren't prepared to engage the world and all of its complexities from any perspective other than their own, we will continue to have misinformed people angry with the wrong power structures causing riots whose purpose is to undermine the very values they are claiming to protect. I am disheartened that I have to articulate this idea, but I truly appreciate that the district has encouraged dialogue about the riots in DC. Students have questions after major events and school staff need to be equipped to talk about the wider world.

I don't consider Black Lives Matter to be political speech, but even if I did, their actions didn't lead to the death of police officers this summer despite being pepper sprayed, beaten, and harassed all summer. The rioters last week killed an officer. There is video of another officer being bludgeoned with an American flag on a pole while people sang the Star Spangled Banner. Imagine if a Black Lives Matter protester did this. If these events and groups were comparable, and I want to be clear that I don't think that they are, we should be comparing Black Lives Matter's relative peace this summer to the embarrassing spectacle last week. The rioters in DC erected gallows! Thankfully, nobody was hanged, but the symbolic effects were powerful. Our children need help processing this spectacle that opposes the ideals of the United States.

From: james wessel
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:09 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 1/12 Mtg.

Please do not be misled by the declining Covid case numbers. Per the WCHD "this decline does not represent (or) reflect the true disease burden in the community" but is simply a result of drastic reductions in testing. Positivity rates are extremely high and hospitalizations and deaths (while declining) remain alarmingly high. We are all experiencing a degree of Covid fatigue- days with four thousand national deaths barely receive attention at this point. Continue distance learning until all the criteria indicate otherwise- do not place the health and safety of students, staff, and the community at risk by opening schools.
Thank you.

From: Cher Daniels
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:49 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Message from the Superintendent Kristen McNeill

In my humble opinion the message sent to parents about the January 6, 2021 DC protest was unnecessary. Parents know best how to deal with the children, they do not have to be told by anyone else. Please, in the future keep your leftist ideas to your self. There Trump supporters that were there were 99 % peaceful. The left has been assaulting our sacred democracy for the last five years.

Cher Daniels

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From:
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 4:02 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Revision of Distance Learning to Be More Equitable

The current plan for middle and high school students is a poorly rated supplement used primarily for credit recovery. Schools are left to implement distance learning with no consistency between schools. For stable students, this is inadequate as many schools leave students to fend for themselves with little guidance from teachers. This is especially problematic for transient students who may move schools and see no consistency.

Edgenuity is rated 1.5 stars in reviews and has been dropped by most states. Materials are well over a decade outdated - for example "Academic Success" references MySpace and using CD-Roms, PE teaches about the Presidential Fitness Award which was discontinued in 2013. Students are learning about things that are no longer relevant.

Edgenuity also does not provide curriculum like actual music, theater and other connected curriculum. Some schools have implemented and integrated these other classes while others like SSHS rely solely on the Edgenuity platform.

Students are also disconnected from their classmates creating more social and emotional issues.

I ask you implement an equitable distance learning plan that is uniform across schools especially middle and high school and that allows for interaction and continuity.

The district can and should do better.

Sincerely,
Michelle Beck
Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

From: Michelle Depoali
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 4:07 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thank You Superintendent McNeil

Dear WCSD:

I wanted to send a sincere note of thanks for the thoughtful and appropriate call made by Dr. McNeil on January 6th. As a parent with two first graders at Jessie Beck, the call felt incredibly timely that evening, as I, like many parents, was struggling to explain the day's horrific events to my children. Dr. McNeil's call allowed me to feel supported by the WCSD in a moment of crisis. I think it is important that we talk to our children about these matters and the thoughts expressed on the call were comforting and appropriate. I understand there has been some uproar over the call and I wanted to firmly express my gratitude for the responsibility taken in the moment by Dr. McNeil who understood that families would be struggling with those conversations and the need to talk to children about a very scary day in our shared history.

All my best,

Michelle Depoali

From: Katy McPherson
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 5:00 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Superintendent McNeill's January 6 Message

To the Board of Trustees,

Superintendent McNeill's phone call expressing her concern for our children over the impact of the Capitol breach on January 6th was astoundingly tone-deaf, to say the least, and here's why:

The mayhem in our cities in 2020 was no joke. The Superintendent's phone call, combined with teachers' overdone focus on the topic of last week's Capitol breach in Zoom classes since the incident, gives the impression that our educators think the riots, fires, deaths, and destruction of 2020 was less alarming.

Let's review. Last spring and summer, police precincts, city halls, and courthouses were broken into, burned, defaced, and destroyed. Treasured monuments were tied, pulled down, and spit upon. People were injured. Police officers were shot in cold blood. Many died. In some places, law enforcement was held at bay while insurrectionists claimed entire city blocks as autonomous zones. American business owners who were already facing bankruptcy due to pandemic shutdowns had their livelihoods stolen from them.

Were these insurrections NOT "assaults on our democracy?"

Last week, Americans from all walks of life and from every corner of the country risked catching COVID and boarded planes to DC to pray with one another for the future of our nation and to stand in peaceful solidarity in their call upon their representatives to audit the election. After all, if Americans' votes don't count, Americans' no longer have a voice. Now THAT'S an assault on our democracy.

We the people aren't dumb. We can see how education has joined up with the press, Big Tech, and the entertainment industry to treat the Biden crime family with kid gloves, while recent state legislature hearings have revealed glaring instances of election fraud and results that are statistically impossible. Legislators, governors, election officials, and judges seem to be operating from political prejudice, cultural pressure, and fear, rather than from a genuine interest in finding out the truth.

Given all of this, Americans are weary. Possibly the best and most accomplished president of our lifetime is vilified, hounded, lied about, distorted, illegally spied upon, and called a Russian agent. Good, hard working, regular folks who want to make America great again are daily called racists, Nazis, xenophobes, and brain-washed dangerous insurrectionist cult members.

It certainly is disheartening that the Save America rally, a cheerful gathering of tens of thousands of peaceful patriots, will instead be remembered for the disgusting violent actions of a few hundred and the lives tragically lost as a result on that day.

Thankfully, law and order was quickly restored and the Senate reconvened and finished the business of the day. Last year, we weren't so lucky. Our hearts grieved the destruction and the loss of

life and livelihoods of the riots that seemed to never end. We watched law enforcement officers die, a domestic terrorist group called Antifa take over entire sections of Seattle, and Black Lives Matter marauders topple and deface our beloved memorials, loot businesses, and set fire to entire city blocks. Police precincts, city halls, and courthouses were breeched and burned. We locked our doors and prayed for peace.

The year 2020, for most of us, was an unprecedented assault on our democracy, as mob rule, violent hostility, and efforts to defund the police, of all things, rendered any sense of law and order obsolete.

Superintendent McNeill's phone call rang insincere and phony, considering what we have endured before January 6th.

Signed,

Katy McPherson
Spanish Springs Mom

From:
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 3:54 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Dissatisfaction with Superintendent McNeill's Message

To the Washoe County School Board,

I write this letter to express extreme dissatisfaction with Superintendent McNeill's outrightly politically biased and emotionally motivated mass message to the parents of Washoe County. It was a gross misuse of our district's emergency communications system and has served to undermine our trust in the decisions and motivations of our school district.

With this emotional show of true intention from our district's Superintendent, and the support from the Board of Trustees, how can parents believe that any decision of the school district over the last year (any beyond) has been without bias and truly in the best interest of our children? I may speak only for myself when I say I now question not only the curriculum regarding current events, but also all decisions related to COVID with inherent political motivations driving actions during the pandemic. Are these elements discussed and decided upon using the same emotional, political bias as was displayed in this message? The doubt is fully seated.

Furthermore, where was the message of peace and unity when Antifa and BLM were literally burning and breaking down our local government buildings and local small businesses here in Reno? Where was the reassurance that our children were safe, with offering of local support and resources, when this was happening at our front door vs 3,000 miles away? Where was the emotional knee-jerk reaction from our 'educators' shaking the finger at parents (to prevent the) "passing the violence we witnessed today to our children" related to those egregious and unacceptable acts of violence?

Shame on Superintendent McNeill for misusing the district's emergency communications system to push personal opinion when it was not invited or necessary. As far as I am concerned, our opinions (from all sides) need to stay as far away from our children's education as possible to give them a foundation free of bias.

Lauren Davis

From: LARRY KATES
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 6:58 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] WCSD COVID Data Dashboard & District News Releases Regarding COVID-19

Madam Superintendent, School Board Trustees, and applicable School District Staff,

Over the past months, many of you lauded the districts openness and reporting in regards to reporting the spread of COVID-19 through the "WCSD COVID Data Dashboard ".

Admittedly the dashboard is a great tool to display a snap shot of information but for me there are multiple issues that should be addressed and fixed:

- First the updates do not happen as advertised. The first sentence of the district homepage says the Dashboard will be updated on "Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of each week" but as I write this during the break in the school board meeting, the dashboard reads "Updated 1/11/2021 11:00 A.M." (which was a Monday).
- Second the data does not match the information provided on the "School-by-School Covid-19 Case Status." The sum of total student cases and staff cases on the Dashboard is 444 (235 student/209 staff). The sum of the "Total Since 8/7/2020" column on the Case Status Report is 468.
- Finally, the dashboard does not have a historical record in which readers can look how things have changed over time. The TMRPA Risk Rating which is the first metric listed on the Dashboard does maintain a historical record for people to look at changes over time.

Please get whomever is posting this information to: check their work, and publish each update to the dashboard not only to the homepage but also to the "News Release" section of the Communications Department.

The district stopped publishing news releases regarding COVID-19 on 13 September. If nothing else, please return to publishing any updates to the case numbers, and exclusions like you once did.

Larry Kates

From: Elizabeth Parsons-Lenz
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 8:03 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Recent Public Statement by Superintendent Kristen McNeill

Dear Ms. McNeill,

I am opposed to your statement on many levels.

1. You never made a statement about the more evil and egregious violence by BLM - Black Lives Matter. The January 6th event, proven to be instigated by members of Antifa were you to actually learn how to research, was a drop in the bucket compared to the ongoing violence against businesses and citizens around the country. Clearly you are biased.
2. You talk about sacred democracy, yet you dismissed the fact that 99.9% of attendees were peaceful, country and President loving patriots making a show of support against the obvious election fraud that occurred. Clearly you are biased.
3. Our children are learning from a propaganda mainstream media machine, which is why I'm smart enough as are my children not to watch these news channels. For a superintendent of a school district you've shown you are not capable of doing some independent research for some actual facts. Clearly you are a victim of this propaganda.
4. I have worked over 15 years in international economic development trying to help those post-Communist countries that are still ravaged by long term damages caused. It seems to me you are promoting the same twisted sense of utopia or "finest civilization." I am in constant contact with colleagues in these countries and they are sickened that some in America are openly and blatantly courting communist ideas.

In conclusion, perhaps I have you to thank for the important talk I have had to my children about your twisted ideals.

Keep them to yourself.

Elizabeth Lenz

From: Lisa Lee
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2021 9:52 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Accolades for Dr. McNeil for her Message on 1/6/21

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

From: Lisa Lee
Date: Tue, Jan 12, 2021, 6:08 PM
Subject: Accolades for Dr. McNeil for her Message on 1/6/21
To: <BoardMembers@washoeschools.net>
Cc: <kmcneill@washoeschools.net>

Dear esteemed board members:

January 6th was a devastating day to be a parent and to be an American. My daughter, a freshman at AACT's medical academy, was busy doing her studies via distance learning. My son and I opted to watch Congressional proceedings live as part of our homeschool studies on government. We watched in horror as domestic terrorists smashed out windows of the Capitol building and gained entrance to terrorize members of Congress. We watched our nation's representatives don gas masks and evacuate through tunnels. We were both in tears, not quite knowing how to react. My son, an eight year old with a genetic disorder (Williams Syndrome) that makes him friendly and empathic asked, "mommy, are we going to have a civil war?" How does a parent answer this question? My daughter showed me messages from classmates who were engaged in heated conflict about the day's events.

Parents, children, and everyone in our nation is exhausted from the collective trauma of surviving a global pandemic that has killed loved ones and hospitalized others. We have prevailed through mutual aid, sharing resources, being kind, and checking up on each other. I was so relieved to receive the call from Dr. McNeil. I gathered my children around to listen together. We sighed collectively. We felt seen. We felt heard. We felt cared for.

The message, which I received via telephone and email, was to offer resources to students who may be feeling stressed. As a doctoral student in public health, as a person who works in behavioral health, and as a person in long-term recovery from substance use and mental health challenges, I will offer my perspective. It is well documented that national conflict and community violence adversely affects physical, emotional, and psychological health. In fact, it can impact adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and disproportionately impact students who experience chronic stress via other stressors (domestic violence, parental substance use, divorce, etc.) Given those factors coupled with everything else our children have experienced in the past 10 months (more toxic stress) it is right for us to be worried about the children and know where to get resources. I'm proud to be a parent of a child in the WCSD and I'm damn proud of Dr. McNeil! Thank you, Dr. McNeil for putting your students first. Keep up the good work. Board members, I urge you to support our Superintendent and the health and wellness of our children. They truly are our future, let's focus on keeping them well in the present.

Respectfully,

