

Date : 9/28/2017 7:35:14 AM

From : "Joyce Brown"

To : "Kate Pett"

Subject : RE: clarification

Attachment : image001.jpg;image002.jpg;image003.jpg;

Well Kate I am not quite so awesome as you. I'll have to wait to discuss until I can do so without bawling. I may have to harden my heart. I am afraid that in short order I am going to become as cynical about the people in Asheville as Martha and Shaunda are. Out of self-preservation I have deleted the facebook app off my phone so that I can have some distance from it. my friends will have to call me to tell me what they think about things.

From: Kate Pett [mailto:kate.pett@acsgmail.net]

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 9:46 PM

To: Joyce Brown <joyce@equinoxenvironmental.com>

Subject: Re: clarification

I have been called a racist on Facebook and faced years of veiled claims of the same for starting IRL and taking black kids from black providers. Joe Bly, an older very respected educator called me a racist on a very viral thread on Facebook after a presentation I gave at AHS.

More recently I was told I was a racist in not quite so many words by our last superintendent.

It seems to go with the territory of being a leader in this town. And it hurts. I am sorry you are facing that.

It's been tough as my husband can attest but it has made me more resilient and humble.

Hang in there.

Xo

On Wed, Sep 27, 2017 at 8:53 PM Joyce Brown <joyce@equinoxenvironmental.com> wrote:

I may have to let it sit a while first. When you are the one being vilified on Facebook as racist, perhaps you will understand my perspective.

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 27, 2017, at 8:02 PM, Kate Pett <kate.pett@acsgmail.net> wrote:

Maybe let's consider having one in-person conversation about this during which we might agree to disagree (or not). I think what we have learned from our study of structural racism is that race is always a factor. And given that this policy has been inconsistently applied, and would serve to actually prevent a great swath of invaluable leaders from presenting, and given that this policy itself would/will more frequently prevent people of color from appearing as presenters (by nature of incarceration rates) and given that it is exactly people of color, like William Barber, who should be speaking to our youth but won't be able to do so, structural racism is most certainly a factor, in my opinion.

But let's get coffee and talk it through. This is a topic worthy of conversation.

On Wed, Sep 27, 2017 at 4:23 PM Joyce Brown <joyce@equinoxenvironmental.com> wrote:

The board has received clarification on [REDACTED] about the Bree Newsome event. I share it with you for your information. [REDACTED], but in my opinion it was inappropriate for Ellie Richard to take her frustrations to the public the way she did. Between her actions, and Jodi claiming racism where there was none, we have a lot of people misunderstanding this situation and thinking that the leadership of ACS is racist. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As part of its collaboration with Asheville Middle School ("AMS"), Americans Who Tell the Truth ("AWTT"), a project that, through portraits and narratives, highlights citizens who address issues of social, environmental and economic fairness, informed AMS that the author of *Hidden Figures*, Margot Lee Shetterly, would be available to speak with the eighth-grade class on September 29, 2017. *Hidden Figures* is the non-fiction, biographical novel and recent motion picture which chronicles the lives of three African American women working at NASA during the space race in the early 1960s.

In preparation for Ms. Shetterly's visit to AMS, eighth graders attended a screening of *Hidden Figures* and copies of the novel were purchased for eighth graders to read. In addition, using *Hidden Figures* as its primary text, AMS aligned its curriculum with AWTT to implement a Paideia project. The project resulted in students learning about active citizenship and their future selves. Additionally, several students created portraits of local heroes that will be displayed at the YMI Cultural Center in Asheville.

Late this summer, AWTT notified AMS that Ms. Shetterly had a scheduling conflict and would not be available to speak at AMS on September 29th. As an alternative to Ms. Shetterly, AWTT invited Bree Newsome; she was not invited by Asheville City Schools. Ms. Newsome is a filmmaker, speaker and activist from Charlotte, North

Carolina. In July 2015, Ms. Newsome was arrested in Columbia, South Carolina for removing the Confederate battle flag that was on display on the grounds of the South Carolina State House.

School Board Policy 3535 states that the involvement of any visiting speaker regarding citizenship issues must be “correctly structured” by the school’s professional staff. The policy also states that the advocacy of illegal acts by a speaker is not permitted. This Paideia project was specifically based upon Ms. Shetterly’s novel and its themes regarding citizenship. The policy strikes a balance between the vital role of our schools in exposing students to differing viewpoints with the need to present those viewpoints within the school curriculum. Given these considerations, the Asheville City Schools declined the offer of Ms. Newsome to participate as an alternative to Ms. Shetterly.

Joyce Brown
Operations Manager

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Check out our website and blog! Visit us at
www.equinoxenvironmental.com



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Whole Children. Whole Community.

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