

Date : 9/27/2017 6:00:42 PM

From : "Shaunda Sandford"

To : "Denise Patterson", "Marshall Hammer", "james.lee@ashevillecityschools.net", "joyce.brown@ashevillecityschools.net", "martha.geitner@ashevillecityschools.net", "patricia.griffin@ashevillecityschools.net", "shaunda.sandford@ashevillecityschools.net"

Subject : Re: Bree Newsome

Good evening Marshall,

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns. We value your feedback and we understand how this contributes to strong school communities as well as the success of our students.

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.

A 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.

Thank you again for your passion and commitment to Asheville City Schools, and I hope we can all work together to ensure the success of all students.

Best,

Shaunda

On Wed, Sep 27, 2017 at 4:37 PM Marshall Hammer <fallenn2place@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi,
Activist Bree Newsome was dis-invited to speak to Asheville Middle School, the principal citing the fact that she had been arrested for civil disobedience. Surely AMC teaches and cares about civil rights both historically and currently. After all, NC Senator Terry Van Duyn has visited and spoken with students after having been arrested for civil disobedience.

This is very upsetting and does not set a good example for the students and young minds being educated there.

Please make a public statement and correct this wrong.

Thank you for your time.
Marshall

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Marshall K. Hammer

--"Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence."
-Abigail Adams

--"The world is not respectable; it is mortal, tormented, confused, deluded forever; but it is shot through with beauty, with love, with glints of courage and laughter; and in these, the spirit blooms..."
-George Santayana

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Inline image

