

June 18, 2020

Dear Supt. Copeland,

I am the parent of two children enrolled at Gladwyne Elementary School. On Tuesday, June 9th, I was puzzled to receive a “Cultural Proficiency Lessons Family Letter” from Principal Ellers that expressed the conclusion of “educators” (I assume the LSMD Administration) that children enrolled in the school system need additional explicit lessons on equity and race. Aren’t students already engaged in numerous educational programs to foster empathy, understanding, and compassion towards everybody? Yet somehow, as a result of the social unrest in recent weeks, the school felt compelled to address the issues yet again, but with something called “cultural proficiency”, a completely unmeasurable and frankly, ridiculous exercise to achieve some unclear result!

What particularly outrages me is that the “Cultural Proficiency Committee” (which sounds like something out of Maoist China) imposed a lesson plan to indoctrinate the children into the “woke” culture, using reprehensible resources designed to inoculate Caucasian children with feelings of guilt for the color of their skin and the “sins” of their forefathers. The material selected for this indoctrination pumps their brains with LIES that puts unbearable emotional burdens on them for years to come. Why must our kids feel like villains and hate themselves for something they had no control over – the color/pigmentation of their skin?!? Whatever the school’s intentions are, this “proficiency” program threatens to unleash hate upon white children. My nine-year-old very perceptively commented: “They are doing to us what they told us not to do to others.” In other words, this cultural proficiency lesson completely flips the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King (judge people by the content of their character and NOT by the color of their skin) on its head! Why has the school so dramatically deviated from the philosophy of this great American which you taught the children earlier in the school year? Dr. King is probably rolling over in his grave now!!!

At the same time the messages the school is conveying instills a sense of victimhood and lack of responsibility into black children. Your cultural proficiency program assures them that they are not responsible for their actions or lack of achievement (in cases where they do) since after all, everything that has gone wrong in their lives (in cases where it did) is the fault of the so called “white privilege.” Your approach promotes and instills anger and hate in their hearts and minds rather than responsibility, ambition and hope because they are EQUAL to any other kid!

What does “cultural proficiency” exactly mean? Is it like “math proficiency” or “English proficiency”? Does it have a set of skills and knowledge and the kids will be tested and given a score? How would you benchmark cultural proficiency? Will the test be standardized and administered to kids of all skin colors/pigmentations or only to the “white” kids? What about the kids who are mixed race? Maybe these kids will undergo skin pigmentation test prior to taking the test to determine their level of dark pigmentation and the “eligibility” to take the test. Does it address black bigotry towards whites? Nothing in the “proficiency” materials addressed this very real problem. White students who attend pre-dominantly black inner-city high schools fear for their lives daily, but no one marches in the streets declaring “White Lives Matter”, much less loot and vandalize their communities to bring attention to this issue. Why does LMSD give its students the perception that bigotry is only a “white” problem? In fact, did you know that anti-Semitism has been on the rise in the U.S.? According to a 2018 FBI data, Jews were 2.7 X more likely than blacks, and 2.2 X more likely than Muslims to be victims of hate crimes (“...the hate crime victimization rate per 100,00 population of each group were 14.8 for Jews, 6.6 for Muslims and 5.5 for blacks”). But there is no “Jewish History Month,” no riots of any kind (violent or otherwise) by Jews” and you haven’t implemented any lesson or program to address it.

To put things in perspective I’ll tell you a bit about myself. After thousands of years of slavery, expulsion, persecution, pogroms culminating in the Holocaust our people returned home and built our country in 1948. Along with thousands of Jews, my parents fled persecution in Iraq (where the Jews lived for thousands of years) in the early 50’s and settled in Israel. For several long decades there was a widespread discrimination (much like towards the blacks in this country) by the European Jews who controlled the country towards the Jews who came from Muslim countries. I grew up very poor in one of the toughest slums in Israel. Consequently, I choose to study social work and graduated with a bachelor, masters and doctorate in this field from top universities specializing in child welfare.

I can say unequivocally that the United States of America is not a “racist” country and doesn’t have “institutional” or “systemic racism.” In the United States of America, as in every society, there are bigots. They come in all skin colors, faiths and uniforms, including blue ones!!! But this is a country that no longer keeps one race down to benefit another. People of color have been successful in all avenues of society, as Supreme Court justices, legislators, mayors, captains of industry,

best-selling authors **and** school superintendents. If you believe we are a nation of white privilege, then you believe that African Americans achieve their success because of their skin color, rather than their eminent qualifications. Then that makes you the bigot!

The problems in the black community are not rooted in any kind of “racism” but rather in the collapse of the nuclear family and the high percentage of black children who are born to single mothers (almost 70%), most of whom are teenagers and are raised in single family households. Further, many blacks don’t receive a good education because they are denied school choice (ironically, by Democrats who oppose school choice and continue to prop up failing schools). It’s no surprise that in Philadelphia, 44% of public school teachers put their kids in private schools!

Unfortunately, the problems facing many black people and communities have been used by cynical politicians, activists and race baiters (like Al Sharpton) who have been playing identity politics - using the “race card” to advance their power and agenda rather than addressing real needs of the community they profess to represent. Their solution was the establishment of the “welfare state” which according to the black economist Prof. Walter Williams “has done to blacks American what slavery couldn’t have done and the harshest racism couldn’t have done namely to destroy the black family.”

The Cultural Proficiency Committee sanctioned by LMSD approaches these real social problems with dishonesty, hypocrisy and falsehood, which on the one hand perpetuates the despair of black communities and on the other hand causes major damage to our society as a whole. LMSD’s Cultural Proficiency is nothing more than virtue signaling. It does nothing to promote understanding, acceptance, compassion and empathy, but only fans the flames of hatred and make the real bigots feel good about themselves.

Here is just a handful sources for factual information of the issue which will provide the children (and you!) valuable education rather than indoctrination:

FACTS by Walter E. Williams, distinguished prof. of economics at George Mason University (originally from Philadelphia):

<https://www.the-dispatch.com/opinion/20190816/walter-e-williams-how-important-is-todays-racial-discrimination>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzNYCPZXvlw>

FACTS by Carol Swain, Prof of political science & Law at Vanderbilt University:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_a7dQXilCo&fbclid=IwAR30eFcznJwuOQPpbPoJXmzp_rZwqMzJRELe9axtbr1eR7YJuz7uczoD6E0

The Plight of the Black People and the myth of Systemic Racism:
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/TQEbUMX1uug?enablejsapi=1&feature=oembed&wmode=opaque&vq=hd720&&&>

FACTS: Larry Elder on systemic racism in America
<https://www.facebook.com/RealBrigitteGabriel/videos/719032492204373/UzpfSTEwMDAwMTM0ODUwMDI2OTozMTE1NDYxMTE4NTA4ODA4/>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIGE9dg7fyM&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR1bhaeTlmxyZK0PDp1ybQGu1dqURvyghdQg0I_0gb_G45lFeIfA7rdvCYo

FACTS: Ben Shapiro debunking viral systemic racism explained video:
<http://easternontarionetwork.com/index.php/2020/06/10/ben-shapiro-debunks-viral-systemic-racism-explained-video/>

Sincerely,
Dr. Elana Fishbein