



Kris Arduino <kris.arduino@harlem122.org>

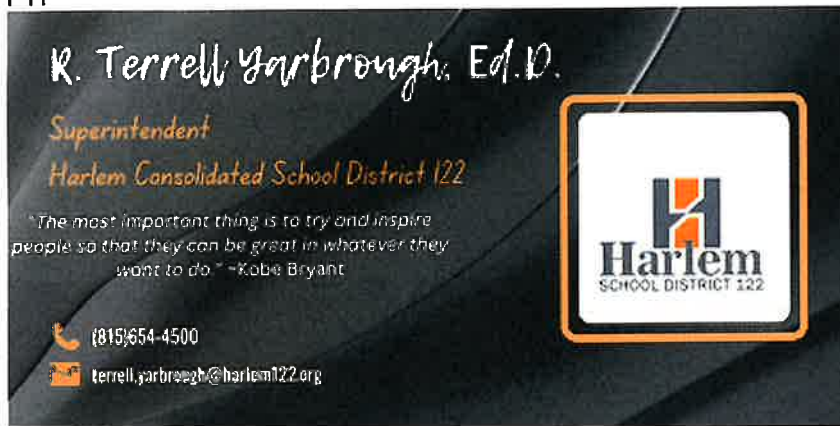
Fwd: Comment from the Community

1 message

Terrell Yarbrough <terrell.yarbrough@harlem122.org>
 To: Kris Arduino <Kris.Arduino@harlem122.org>

Mon, Jan 13, 2025 at 4:40 PM

FYI



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

From: **Caitlin MacRoy** <caitlin.macroy@harlem122.org>

Date: Mon, Jan 13, 2025 at 4:30 PM

Subject: Comment from the Community

To: Terrell Yarbrough <terrell.yarbrough@harlem122.org>, <boardofeducation@harlem122.org>

Good evening members of the board,

I would like to join you tonight but unfortunately I have caught the crud that is common this time of year and when choosing between going home and resting so that I can be with my class tomorrow or coming to speak to you, my students win hands down. Please take no offense from that. I know it is no longer customary to read the letters to the board aloud, but I wonder if you might grant me this tiny favor of sharing my observations this one time.

I sat in the COTW meeting and listened to activities being done across our district that related to our Equity and Social Justice work, the intangible Equity work that our staff has engaged in, that we bring into our buildings along with our Social and Emotional Learning and I couldn't help but noticing the ongoing theme of inclusion, community and the importance of belonging. Even though the theme of the night was not belonging, it is such a core fundamental human need, that it is foundational in everything we do.

Our teaching programs that prepared us to enter this profession talked about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, basic human needs that must be met to make progress in life. The foundation of the pyramid is the physiological needs: food, water, sleep. The very next layer of the pyramid from the bottom up is safety: stability, freedom from fear, security. This is followed by love and belonging in the middle of the pyramid. Belonging, a basic fundamental need that all humans have -- every kid in our classrooms, our staff members, and our community members. Those community members who include you, the individuals who have committed your time to serving on this board.

I, like one community member shared at the previous meeting, watch these meetings every week if I am not in attendance. I support each member of our board in having the right to their votes, but I expect a level of accountability for those votes as well. I may not agree with every decision you make, but you have the right to make those decisions as elected members of the board. At the end of the day, you are still humans, with basic needs that should be respected.

It is not acceptable for any student in our schools to be attacked for who they are, nor is it acceptable for any adults to be attacked for the same thing. We all have an inherent need to belong and no one has the right to tell another person that their basic human need, one that every human on this planet has, is wrong. The way Megan was attacked by a community member was tactless and disgraceful. What's worse is that this is an adult in our community who wants to set

- an example for students in a leadership role. You, as board members, are expected to set examples for our students to follow, as we are as teachers, and we need our community members to set the same examples. Bullying is not acceptable in adults anymore than it's acceptable in children and it's really hard to show children it is wrong when there are adults acting worse. Cyberbullying is still bullying.
- We all disagree at times. I have disagreed with many of you. I disagreed with Megan on a big vote and felt pretty let down by not only her, but by several of the board members. However, Megan and I had a talk about that vote, following an ESJ meeting, and it was a hard uncomfortable conversation, but an important discussion. We could agree to disagree without being disagreeable.

I would like to thank Megan for all of the work she's done in her time on the board. I am disheartened and disappointed that, in part, the immature behavior of adults has led to her not running again. She has been an incredible voice for many of our marginalized students who feel unrepresented and who shared as much when a different collection of this board voted on banning books from our library. As a community member, at the time, she spoke up as a member of the LGBTQ community that was being targeted in the book bans and supported our students who voiced their support of these books that made them feel supported and nurtured that basic fundamental need of belonging and being accepted. She did that while other board members spoke down to those current and former students and dismissed their concerns, further invalidating their basic need of belonging and feeling accepted.

There is a reason our Social Emotional work and our Equity work intertwine around the idea of belonging and acceptance because we all need to experience that. We work on it in all of our buildings because our students come from our community and as a community, we need more members to exhibit that sense of belonging. We need board members running who understand the importance of belonging and that this basic fundamental need that each of us has must be respected if we are to make any progress in life. Our current board has been able to make the progress they've made over their tenure because there is an overwhelming sense of commitment to fostering that belonging in our schools. I hope anyone running to fill these seats understands and respects that basic human need... and I hope more community members will recognize that acceptance is something we all deserve, and to be kind or be quiet.

Thank you for your time and the work that you do.

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Caitlin MacRoy

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