

Lisa Cross &lt;lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us&gt;

## Community Comment for Board Meeting October 21, 2020

1 message

constance palaia <[REDACTED]>  
To: lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us

Wed, Oct 21, 2020 at 11:23 AM

Dear Three Rivers Community,

I have enclosed the ***Black Lives Matter Resolution*** from the Oregon State Department of Education dated October 15, 2020, and a news release from ODE in reference to a joint letter of support from education organizations around the state. Both documents are attached in their entirety and, in the interest of brevity, I am quoting from each.

"We cannot be silent in response to the racism that students and staff experience in Oregon's schools," said ***Oregon Department of Education Director Colt Gill***. "The Oregon Department of Education is committed to ensuring that Oregon's schools are safe and inclusive for all students and staff, and that means conclusively and repeatedly saying, 'Yes, we affirm the dignity and humanity of Black people.' That's what Black Lives Matter means, as a statement of love and justice. And love and justice are the side of history we all need to be on."

"We applaud the Oregon State Board of Education for adopting a Black Lives Matter resolution today. This is an important step -- one of many -- toward affirming our Black children and families. Their lives, their dreams, and their futures matter," said ***Craig Hawkins, Executive Director of Coalition of Oregon School Administrators***. "As school leaders, it is our responsibility to make sure that all of our students feel seen, safe, and welcome in our schools so they can fulfill their potential and achieve their goals, and we commit to partnering with Black students and community to ensure that our systems change."

"We fully support Black Lives Matter as a civil rights movement that aims to combat racism and support Black individuals," said ***Jim Green, Executive Director of Oregon School Boards Association***. "We stand beside Black Lives Matter, as a statement of social justice and an affirmation of the value and worth of Black people."

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education has directed all Oregon school districts, public charter schools, and education service districts review and, where necessary, strengthen relevant policies, procedures, and practices, including those related to addressing racial bias incidents, with attention to non-punitive, remedial approaches (OAR 581-022-2312); and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Office of Special Counsel issued an advisory opinion that it is not a violation of the Hatch Act for federal employees to show support for the Black Lives Matter movement and the Black Lives Matter Global Network while on duty, including wearing or displaying materials related to the cause, because they address issues such as racism, which are not inherently aligned with a single political party and do not meet any criteria for a "partisan political group"; and WHEREAS, we strongly support the declaration that "Black Lives Matter" in the findings sections of several bills enrolled by Oregon's bipartisan Legislature (HB 4203, HB 4205, HB4207); and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge that throughout Oregon's history, institutional and structural racism have caused division and fear for our communities, and that we share in the responsibility to respond to these circumstances on behalf of all Oregon school districts, educational professionals, students and families; WHEREAS, we acknowledge that the authors of Oregon's constitution declared that no Black people could reside in the state or hold real estate, a law that wasn't repealed until 1926; and that racist language in the state constitution wasn't removed until 2002, all of these causing lasting negative consequences for Black communities;

I applaud this resolution and thank you for your service,

Sincerely yours,  
Constance Palaia

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Constance Palaia  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



Lisa Cross &lt;lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us&gt;

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**public comment for school board meeting**

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**Keith Haley** [REDACTED]  
To: Lisa Cross <lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us>

Wed, Oct 21, 2020 at 8:45 AM

Hello Lisa

I don't know how this works with Virtual meetings. Will this be read by someone or do I need to be allowed to comment?

Here is my public comment:

**Dear TRSD School Board**

I would like you to consider allowing teachers to fulfill their distance learning duties from home. We are professionals and should be treated as such. Thousands of employers across the country are allowing employees to work from home. Educators should be afforded the same level of consideration and respect as a bank employee or MBA working for a Fortune 500 company. If a teacher is not adequately able to perform their job from home, they should be required to work from their specific campus, sanctioned, or terminated.

We are seven weeks into the first quarter. I have found few benefits to working from campus that cannot be duplicated at home. I have a professional and dedicated workspace. I have Charter high speed internet and a new router and modem. I have no problem with the district coming up with a checklist of requirements that must be met, in order to teach from home.

I am afraid that we are short-changing employees who have students at home trying to navigate the minefield of distance learning without supervision. It is not an ideal situation when teachers are required to be on campus in empty classrooms while our own children are floundering. We are seeing more success in our students that have at least one parent at home during distance learning. Many teachers are questioning why we are needlessly putting our own children at a disadvantage.

I truly believe that teachers can provide high quality and engaging lessons from home. Being allowed to work from home would improve morale. Distance learning is not great for students and it is not great for teachers. We are risking mass infection of our district teaching staff.

Personally, I am in a high-risk group and I also have elderly parents that live in my household. I am posing a risk to their health.

As we look toward having to teach remotely for another quarter, I would ask that you consider allowing licensed staff to teach from home.

Keith Haley

October 19, 2020

My name is Sean McKee, and I have been a public school music teacher for 28 years. This is my 14<sup>th</sup> year with the Three Rivers School District. In 2010 I was awarded Teacher of the Year for Oregon by the American Legion. I am writing because I am extremely disappointed and concerned about the Board's/District Office's decision to include language in the teacher contract that shows distrust in the professionalism of the teachers, and oversteps the TRSD's reach as far as employee First Amendment rights are concerned.

It is clear that some guidelines are necessary for any organization to avoid litigation, including the prohibition of offensive/coercive/sexual/etc. comments or actions in the workplace or involving minors, but to include off-duty behavior that is not illegal or doesn't create a hostile work environment is a violation of Free Speech. There are court cases (including from the Supreme Court) that support this, especially when the language/action is considered protected. The proposed new TRSD contract language is especially chilling.

The statement that TRSD employees will be subject to disciplinary action and/or dismissal if a disruption occurs is absurd, considering the TRSD's definition of disruption: "...includes, but not limited to, one or more parent threatens to remove their children from a particular class or particular school, actual withdrawal of a student or students from a particular class or particular school..." This clearly cannot work. If a parent with an opposing view sees a photo in the paper of an employee at the Women's March, sees a Facebook post of another holding an automatic weapon "defending the flag" at Grants Pass Toyota, or simply doesn't like the grade their kid received, this contract makes it policy to punish those employees based on someone else's point of view rather than a hard, cold violation of the standards the community sets for professionals. Simply put, school employees have a right to Free Speech, even if parents, TRSD Board members, and TRSD Directors don't like what we have to say. We also have the right to criticize school policy and decisions we don't agree with as long as it does not create a hostile work environment.

This contract language, and other recent decisions (such as the insistence that we work on site) by the TRSD have historically shown a distrust of teachers, and a willingness to believe that we are out to do the least work and get away with a litany of offences. There is also fear of retribution if employees speak out about their concerns, such as this new addition to the contract. Several teachers expressed their anger over the language, but are unwilling to write or say anything because of past behavior exhibited by administrators and District Office personnel. I have no such compunction, as I have worked in another district, and never witnessed this kind of censorship and ill treatment of employees there. Speak to the ones who *do* violate the rules, but let the professionals be professional. We're pretty good at it as it turns out.



Lisa Cross &lt;lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us&gt;

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**Written Comment for Agenda Item for board meeting regular Session Oct 21st, input requested**

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Harrison Pride &lt;[REDACTED]&gt;

Tue, Oct 20, 2020 at 4:32 PM

To: Lisa Cross &lt;lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us&gt;

Good Afternoon Ms. Cross,

I am writing to you in reference to the proposed agenda item: GCAB Personal Electronic Devices and Social Media Staff. As a teacher at Three Rivers, I find this proposal concerning, chilling, and can affect the quality of learning in my classroom. My written comment is as follows:

"As currently written, I find the proposed language for staff use of social media outside of the classroom concerning. At the core of my concern is how the low bar is to prompt a disciplinary hearing over a teacher's conduct outside the classroom. As stated, the standard of 'one or more parents threaten to remove their children from the classroom' can be easily met by any individual acting in bad faith towards a teacher, what they teach, or their identity.

For instance, I could see the following posts causing a reaction on social media:

- A teacher posts about attending a science conference on the human causes of climate change
- A teacher posts about some fossils they found at a museum, and how they want to use that information in their class to discuss evolution.
- A teacher who is a member of the LGBT community posts a picture of them marrying their partner
- A teacher makes a post in support of Black Lives Matter
- A teacher makes a post about how vaccines do not cause autism.
- A teacher makes a post of them attending a protest.
- A teacher makes a post of them holding a rainbow pride flag

All of the above situations are actions that either I, or teachers I count as colleagues, have done that have caused controversy with parents, and spawned numerous emails. It costs nothing for a parent who disagrees with any of the above actions to threaten to remove their child from a class; prompting a hearing where a teacher would have to justify why they posted about their time in a museum, or a wedding with a lifelong partner. As written, this is a can of worms waiting to be opened.

I would argue that it either needs to raise the bar for what is considered a disruption. Or we need to define what kind of posts would be accepted for a teacher to make outside of the class.

Thank you for listening, and stay safe"

--

Harrison Pride  
Fleming Middle School  
8th Grade Science

"...Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,  
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,  
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars."

Walt Whitman ~ When I heard the learn'd astronmer.



Lisa Cross <lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us>

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## Board Meeting

1 message

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Theresa De Souza <~~theresa.de.souza@threerivers.k12.or.us~~>  
To: lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us

Wed, Oct 21, 2020 at 4:15 PM

Hi Lisa,

I am sorry I'm emailing my comments so late, but I would like to comment on the boards revision to social media posting from teachers:

I have worked at a district that had similar rules in place and they were NOT used in equitable ways and made developing personal friendships with colleagues almost impossible. This is a small community and we are all connected through many different ways as people outside the school system. Enacting rules limiting social media would place a strain on those relationships and with relationships within our small community. Constantly having to worry about whether or not a post may be offensive to a theoretical parent is not conducive to a healthy life. Wanting to limit or police personal social media accounts is absolutely not acceptable. We are paid to teach students and be neutral for 9 hours a day, not 24/7. This new policy assumes that district employees are district employees all hours of the day and that we should be thinking as employees during every hour of every day.

Thank you.



Lisa Cross &lt;lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us&gt;

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**teacher posts**

1 message

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**Loralyn Townes** <loralyn.townes@threerivers.k12.or.us>

Wed, Oct 21, 2020 at 4:14 PM

To: Lisa Cross &lt;lisa.cross@threerivers.k12.or.us&gt;

To the Board of the Three Rivers School District,

I understand the fear that parents will disagree with individual teachers' posts, but as Americans, who happen to be public school teachers, we are allowed, by law, to have and to express our opinions.

How will the district entice new teachers, young people, to work in our schools if they are policed for sharing their lives online? Younger people post vacation pictures, party pictures, and other memories of their existence. What happens if a picture is taken at a bar or if the teacher, or the teacher's spouse, is in a skimpy bathing suit? Will they lose their jobs for being "in the wrong place" or wearing the wrong clothes?

Do our personal lives need to be policed by public opinion? In the end, that is the real question.

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*Loralyn Townes  
HVHS English Teacher  
HVHS Student Government*