She just sent this

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

On Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 4:32 PM, [name] wrote:

Dear fellow River families,

The Sandpiper, our incredible Carmel High School newspaper with impressive levels of journalism, just published two critical articles:

https://thesandpiper.org/influx-in-hate-speech-on-chs-campus-shocks-students-staff/


These news reports are timely!

There is a CUSD Board Meeting tonight at 5:30 PM at Carmel Middle School Library at 4380 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel, California 93923.

Please attend and talk about the need for increased inclusion, diversity, and equity at the wonderful schools in Carmel Unified School District for all our wonderful students & staff! These news articles show that this issue is real and widespread and needs immediate attention from our schools!

Sadly, right now, the opportunity to teach against antisemitism and bigotry of all forms is being lost at our beloved elementary school. Between last week and this week, there have been multiple school-sponsored & schoolwide programs and activities that are giving the wrong impression about minorities being less American than others because they do not celebrate certain holidays or fit into certain boxes. In the Spring, the school will start its annual promotion of unnecessarily gendered events that excludes LGBTQ+ and others who do not fit into the outdated box that the school is wrongly promoting as the only "acceptable" one.

The most effective antidote to hate is education. We need to start at the elementary school level where there is an opportunity to teach a lifelong lesson of tolerance and inclusion. Please come to the CUSD Board Meeting tonight and share your concerns about this reported "influx" of hate speech and your desire to make our schools safe, welcoming, and inclusive places for all students and staff.

Just last week, Hanukkahs (Jewish symbols) and Kinaras (African American symbols) were banned at the River tree lighting event (unless they were hung up on the Christmas tree). Hanukkah has been taught in Kindergarten annually as an Israeli holiday, directly teaching kids that it is less American than Christmas and that the students who celebrate it are similarly less American. This week, there were only Christmas-character programs (Rudolph Day, Grinch Day, Santa visit, etc) without any schoolwide spirit days similarly reserved for Diwali, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, or any other holiday. Combined with the discrimination LGBTQ+ and other minority families have noted, this issue of discrimination is widespread.

We need parents to speak up at today's board meeting in favor of working hard to include more kids.

I know I'm not the only one who truly believes that we can make a difference and make our schools wonderful places for all students, staff & teachers, so I hope that parents attend and speak tonight.
If you are afraid of speaking up tonight, please at least reach out to Nancy Appel at NAppel@adl.org of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) privately with your concerns.

The ADL has been working with CUSD for multiple years and has resources to help on this issue. Moreover, the ADL is already in contact with different parents who are concerned with different issues of bigotry so they have a lot of background information.

Thank you for participating in civil engagement by making the Board aware of your concerns and by working hard to defend all staff and students who are not empowered to speak up and/or who may be concerned about retaliation. We can be their voices!

Warmest,

Shel Lyons

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To view this discussion on the web visit https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/riverparents/CA%2B3SxD6cbwbrZ1gLxy_LEMSWVr8pOka%3DLqBjmyoKDO_YoP5u%3DA40mail.gmail.com.
Hey, I just scheduled another appointment so whatever we decide my open window is 9:15 to 10:00.
Thanks,

J

On Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 3:54 PM Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org> wrote:
I can do 9:00.

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 3:48 PM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:
I have to be done by 10:00 because I have another Zoom meeting although I could start as early as 9:00 if that is better.

J

On Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 3:46 PM Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Looks like we are going to do Thursday at 9:30.

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 2:50 PM Majo Spencer wrote:
Yes! I can do it tomorrow too if the holiday store is all set up if not I can do Thursday at 9:30?

Majo

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 14, 2021, at 2:29 PM, Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Majo, Melissa,
Could the two of you meet either Thursday or Friday morning here at school? Debrief about last Friday's event? 9:00 on either day is good for me.
Thanks
Jay

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Thanks!
J

On Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 2:54 PM Majo Spencer wrote:
Thanks. I will be there.
Majo

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 14, 2021, at 2:48 PM, Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Good Afternoon Folks,

We have to establish an LCAP site committee that analyzes our school data to determine what is working, what we should focus on for improvement, and what actions and services we recommend to the district to improve our program. This has historically been the purview of the School Site Council, which is also why I’ve included Jon and Sarah as teacher reps per their professional duty sign up earlier in the year. Gretchen and Melissa... we only need one of you unless you both wish to attend.

I don’t see this as taking more than two meetings, and they need to occur in January so I'm going to send you invitations to attend on January 6 and 13, 3:15 to 4:15. If we need less time then we could always cancel the second meeting. If you are a classified staff member then you'll be paid for your time if you could possibly join us.

I'll send the invites shortly.

Thanks,
J

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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Fwd: Re Carmel River holiday celebration

From: Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org>                                       Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 1:10 PM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

--------- Forwarded message --------
From: David Scher
Date: Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 1:08 PM
Subject: Re Carmel River holiday celebration
To: <manderson@carmelunified.org>, Tatiana Chacon Ramos

Melissa,

Jay Marden shared your email as a point of contact regarding the PTA.

We have some questions regarding the tree lighting ceremony that took place last week. I believe it would be best if we met with Majo as acting president. Can you please provide the best email to get in touch with her?

Thank you in advance,

David Scher

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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Yes!! Thank you Kerith

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

On Friday, December 10, 2021, 11:05 AM, Kerith Harrison wrote:

Shel -

I strongly agree with your desire to include everyone of every religion, faith and belief in all events but wish you hadn't personally attacked Majo Spencer, our PTA president.

As a seasoned volunteer at River School I am well aware of how much energy and effort goes into putting on any event at the school.

Having worked with Majo on many occasions I am confident that her (and her team) are trying to add an enjoyable experience for ALL kids in this community.

Please refrain from the personal attacks as you work toward your desired outcome.

Many Thanks,

Kerith Harrison

parent, PTA member (as anyone who donated to TUF is automatically) + Volunteer

On Fri, Dec 10, 2021 at 8:56 AM wrote:

All,

I just got the sad news from the PTA President that all menorahs (Kinara, Hanukkiah, any other religious minority symbol) are banned from the PTA Christmas Tree Lighting unless it follows her parameters. Her parameters were that an item has to fit inside a lunch bag and decorate the tree.

I think everyone knows that menorahs just don't fit completely inside lunch paper bags. Maybe some people have smaller ones, but unlike Christmas tree ornaments, they aren't sold with the purpose of being small. So making that a parameter bans most or all menorahs.

More importantly, I think everyone knows that menorahs aren't used to decorate Christmas trees. It's not sharing culture to tell Jews to hang menorahs from Christmas trees. Indeed, it is demeaning to a Jew to tell them to use a 2000 year old symbol of their 4000 year old religion & culture as a mere tiny decoration of a huge Christmas tree. I understand that some interfaith families where at least one parent is Christian may use such Christmas ornaments as a token to their Jewish family members but the purpose of the tree is 100% Christian. For a Jewish family, directing them to hang a menorah on a Christmas tree is akin to telling them to endorse Christianity as the superior religion. I will not do it and am offended by even the suggestion of it. So making that one of the parameters is equivalent to banning all menorahs.

*If you want to include Jewish or other minorities, please do not hang a menorah or another minority's symbol on a Christmas tree.*

I had a lot of faith in our PTA President as a fellow religious minority, respected community member, and parent of my children's friends, who admitted that she understood my point when we talked last week and had previously given her unequivocal support and approval for the menorah. So her decision that I received this morning greatly disappointed...
me. If was 100% her own decision since Jay Marden and Ted Knight have since admitted that they have no authority at all in the PTA and that the PTA President could do whatever she wanted. She decided to exclude minorities from participating tonight. If fellow religious minorities won't stick up for each other, who will?

So do "not" being a menorah tonight. The superintendent said he can take legal or Board action against parents if they violate the PTA parameters above. The information that I had received last week from the PTA president, the principal, and the superintendent that menorahs are okay is completely different than the information that I received this morning.

That said, I haven't decided what to do tonight (or moving forward). I have been told that the public sidewalk is a public space for free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment where I could display a menorah, Kinara, or any other minority symbol to try to have something there to alert more families of this issue of discrimination. I guess that if I get enough community interest in that option (me and at least 4 other people who will walk with me), I'll come with other families at 4:15 and stay until 4:45 so we can alert the families who are coming to the Christmas Tree Lighting of this issue. We can each hold a menorah, Kinara, other minority symbol, or a sign to let people know. If I get enough interest from families who can guarantee that they will make it, I will post again just to let everyone else know. If not, I'm not sure that I have any other options. For the time being, a very sweet community family who lives across from the school on 15th is displaying a menorah in support all day today, so please show your support!

All the kindness that I've received in the past two weeks by community leaders, friends, fellow parents, and will never be forgotten! And I still believe that we can make a difference. So please reach out to Nancy Appel with the Anti-Defamation League. If you're unfamiliar with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), it is a century-old anti-hate organization with the founding mission to counter antisemitism and bigotry of all forms. Nancy's email is NAppel@adl.org. Please contact her. Nancy is gathering a group of parents, community members, and leaders who can then together work to have more power in the PTA and will ensure that this discrimination never happens again to anyone. We can make a difference!

Please forward this email to other families know. I don't want anyone getting in trouble for bringing a minority symbol that they don't want on the Christmas tree. The irony of it all is that today is Human Rights Day where all human rights are supposed to be respected. I was hoping for a multicultural and inclusive event today, but tonight's Christmas tree only event will be neither.

Warmest regards,

Shel Lyons
PTA member

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To view this discussion on the web visit https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/riverparents/CAGvRUdRgRHATWwziVwPP0Paj47z5NAqwHk20XvK7__HZkSjw%40mail.gmail.com.
Hi Veronica,

You and I talked this morning about this, and I know we’ll be discussing it more in the near future. Thanks for sharing with me your perspective on this because it does take courage given what individuals such as yourself are experiencing in return.

Sincerely,
Jay

---

On Wed, Dec 8, 2021 at 10:10 AM Veronica DeGracia wrote:

Good morning gentlemen,

I am forwarding the response that Shel Lyons had to my initial email. I wanted to forward this to show you both that THIS is the reason parents do NOT step up and say anything because of responses like this. When they are called names and whatnot for simply expressing their own opinions and stating that they should look on the flip side. I am no longer communicating with her as I feel like I am not being silly for expressing my feelings.

Thank you kindly,
Veronica Wheeler

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Begin forwarded message:

On Sunday, December 5, 2021, 9:28 PM, [Redacted] wrote:

Dear Veronica,

Thank you for reaching out. I’m so glad you did! Feel free to call me, [Redacted]. We’re friends -- you can call me and we can figure it out! My number is still [Redacted]. I don’t want you or anyone else to feel left out! I’m going to reply to each issue you raise in order in this email but please call! This is 100% silly when our kids will be going to school together for the next 10 years and will graduate together. There is room for both of us. I’d love for you to come over for coffee! Tomorrow afternoon? Call/text/email! I am available!

First, I 100% refer to it as a Christmas tree in every email with Jay. I honestly just used Xmas because it was shorter. Your assumption that I won’t use it is silly. I promise you that it isn’t true. I was just writing it so much and it was getting to be so long. You can ask Jay -- every single email to him uses the long word. It’s just another way to spell it, like Chanukah, Hanukkah, Chanuka, Hanukka, Chanuka, Hanukah, etc -- why act like it’s offensive to use one of many different accepted spellings? It’s okay if you teach your kids to only use one but please don’t be offended if other people use other spellings. That’s silly and petty and I know lots of Christians use Xmas (and actually had Christian River parents check my email and give feedback before sending it) so that’s your personal issue and not a consensus.

Second of all, telling kids that they can decorate a Christmas tree is not inclusive. Telling them to make a Christmas ornament is not inclusive. Telling my kids to stay at home is not inclusive. It’s a public school and Mr. Marden and the PTA have both assured me that they are fully supportive of having a menorah at the PTA lighting. Why can’t you be, as well? I get that it’s an existing tree but it’s not an existing Christmas tree which is why it’s being turned into. Instead, we are adding to the tree to make it into a Christmas tree. So let’s add to it to even further to be a menorah lighting too! I’m not stopping the tree event -- I’m adding to it! It’s a positive thing, not a negative thing. You say that you have lots of friends who are minorities so ask them! They’ll tell you that it doesn’t take away from your Christmas tree! I promise that I don’t want to take away from your Christmas at all!

Third, it’s not a religious celebration. That’s hilarious. A menorah is as religious as a Christmas tree. It’s not a nativity scene (how hilarious!). It literally has nothing to do with the foundation or creation of Judaism -- the closest thing to a nativity scene world probably be the 10 commandments. So yes, school lists have been used (by Mr. Marden himself!)
to promote the lightings because they are "not" religious -- Mr. Marden agrees. To call it a religious celebration while accepting the tree as not religious is just ignorance/silly. To compare a River school PTA event with your church's event is just ignorance/silly. To compare a menorah with a nativity scene is just ignorance/silly. Even it was during Hanukkah, it would be 100% fine! But, as you said, it's even 4 days after Hanukkah so it's not even a celebration of Hanukkah! It's just for fun -- to make it inclusive and festive for everyone! As a side note, I'm happy to talk about the racial persecution that my people suffered in recent history in events such as the Holocaust that make me feel it is necessary to continue the culture even though I do not share the religion if you want but please know that I don't do anything religious anyway ever so I'm not a threat to you!) You are making a non-religious object (menorah is just as religious as a tree) at a non-religious place (school and not a church) for a non-religious event (PTA event) by a non-religious person (me!) is just utter nonsense. I'm not saying that to offend you but just so you really know how silly you sound -- which I appreciate! I thought there would be anti-Semitism or hate of the unknown and I was scared of being bullied but you are just afraid of the unknown and that's easy to handle! I can show it to you and you won't be afraid anymore! And I even asked people to bring Kwanzaa menorahs (called Kinaras) -- do you find African American culture religious too? It's not a religion at all -- it's literally just another race. The racial history behind these celebrations prove these accusations are bizarre. I get that you don't know what you are talking about but you should ask or do a Google search. For instance, did you know that Hanukkah isn't mentioned in the Torah because it didn't even exist? It's a historical holiday that observes the fight and freedom of religion in a battle that occurred a millennia after the invention of Judaism. It's as silly as calling July 4th a Christian holiday -- Hanukkah didn't even exist when Judaism was invented. And Hanukkah was celebrated by Jesus and is still celebrated by many Christians today so it's not even offensive to Christians. I think you are getting upset because you don't know about it so you think it's something that should offend you but let's meet for coffee -- my treat! - and please give me a chance to tell you why it shouldn't. I still have my Hanukkah decorations at my house outside -- would you be willing to come over and let me show them to you? I think different races aren't as scary when you get to know them so let me please show you. And feel free to invite anyone else who is scared too! There is a lot of xenophobia at River, I know, so send an email to anyone else who you think is scared and invite them to come over tomorrow to my house in the afternoon. I can show them to everyone and treat with coffee or hot chocolate!

(Also, I never used any list that I got from you as PTA parent -- I never even got a list from you so that can't be true. I just clicked reply all to a class email from another parent. Go back and check the emails from you -- you never gave me a class list and I would never abuse the room parent info like that. I'm super careful.)

Third, I'm a bit offended that you think that my kids need to make something for the Christmas tree -- why can't they bring a holiday menorah instead? I'm not making your kids light a holiday menorah but your kids get to bring something to share their culture. I'm not telling your kids to stay home if they don't like the menorah lighting! I want your kids to feel included at every event and that does not mean telling them that they are limited to making a menorah that "symbolizes your holiday practice". That's offensive to limit them to participate by celebrating my culture -- that's how it sounds when you say it. My kids aren't making a Christmas ornament to share Hanukkah. It's bizarre to even suggest it. It's actually offensive. My kids should feel just as included as your kids too, and like I said, Mr. Marden and the PTA is fully supportive of me bringing a menorah -- I asked first. Also, I'm sorry your kids didn't learn any Christmas songs yet this year but in kindergarten they learned about 5 Christmas songs (I don't remember them all but I remember that my [blank] kept asking me to help [blank] remember all the reindeer names and a bunch of other stuff that we don't know that's definitely Christmas related) and only learned one Hanukkah song (I had a little dreidel) which isn't religious at all. Last year, I know you left but they did an entire thing on the nutcracker (which is 100% about Christmas) and nothing similar for Hanukkah and definitely nothing religious for Hanukkah ever. This year, I only know about one Hanukkah song which was about candles and also not religious. If they haven't done any Christmas songs, I'm sorry -- I 100% do believe in inclusion and that includes Christmas songs too! Let's do Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Shinto songs! I'm an atheist so the idea that I'm trying to exclude other religions is just fully bizarre and foreign to me! I am fine with them all (or none) being included. Atheists don't really try to convert or exclude people -- we actually put humanity and kindness above all else! I want Christmas AND Hanukkah (and Eid and Diwali and every other holiday). I love Christmas being included! My guess is that they'll do Christmas next week or the week after though -- why don't you ask Ms. Barca Hall and tell her that you are worried she won't do one Christmas song? I don't control what she teaches so don't email me about it. That's silly! And it's not like school is out yet so it's not too late to email her! I promise that I have no say in the River curriculum at all.

Can you please call or come over? We are friends! Our kids are friends! We were co-room parents. I vocally supported you to be PTA president. Let's not let a little ignorance stand in the way of what could be great progress for our school and our friendship.

And yes, thank you for reaching out! I actually am very grateful and found your entire email both hopeful (no hate -- thank you for that!) and entertaining (I think you have mistook me as a religious person which is hilarious because it's so far from the truth!). Once you get to know me, I think you'll see I'm not a threat at all!
Call or text anytime!

Warmest,

Shel

P.S. I have no idea what you mean by going about it in a "disappointing" way -- I went to both the PTA, the principal, and the Superintendent and was assured that I (or others) could bring a menorah, especially because we didn't feel comfortable with decorating a Christmas tree. Yes, I didn't talk to you, but it never occurred to me and seems a little silly if that's what you expected. And I received dozens and dozens of emails, phone calls, and messages of support, including from staff since I sent out the email. You are the first person who seems offended but nothing you are offended about us even true so I don't even think you are offended but you just seem to know nothing about the holiday or me at all. I think we can resolve it! Will you call?

On Sun, Dec 5, 2021, 7:33 PM Veronica DeGracia wrote:

Good evening Shel,

I have gone back and forth as to whether I should reach out or just let it be for [redacted]

Let me be very clear as to why I am even emailing you in regards to the tree lighting. I am all for inclusion and exposing kids to other ways that kids all over the district celebrate the holidays. It's the way you go about it is what makes it so off putting. I understand you have been met with opposition as to trying to host a proper menorah lighting. However, the school has not once said this is a religious lighting (not saying it's a Christmas tree lighting). I only say religious because as a practicing Catholic and raising my kids in said faith, you are also purposely not saying Christmas in any of your email correspondence. You have been purposefully writing X-Mas on every occasion you can. We have raised our children to NOT write X-Mas because the reason for the season for us is Christ. So are you intentionally making a point as to not write Christmas because of the word Christ? That's just one instance as to how I am just so saddened with how this has played out.

I have so many friends of different faiths and backgrounds and we don't push our beliefs onto one another but we absolutely 100% respect them. If they celebrate Hanukkah we say "Happy Hanukkah". If they celebrate Christmas we say "Merry Christmas". If they choose not to celebrate any of the two then we simply say "Happy Holidays". We don't force them to only acknowledge us in Merry Christmas because if they want to wish us a Happy Holidays we say "The same to you!" Just because the children will be at the school celebrating lighting a tree (which is already an existing tree on school grounds) does not mean we are excluding others. This is not a mandatory event either. Those who do not feel like it fits their family can choose to not come.

Again, this has nothing to do with bringing in the celebration of Hanukkah. This is simply how you have gone about it. You have used school email lists to promote a Menorah lighting. Which I am also curious as to how you are going to go about explaining this when Hanukkah will have been over for four days. Is it typical to light a menorah after the fact? Most people do not use the emails you have been provided to promote religious celebrations. How would you feel if I used said list to promote my churches Christmas Eve mass schedule? Or I use the same list to promote the living nativity procession that happens? There is definitely a time and a place. Those email lists that you have (because you were co-room parent in that class) were to discuss classroom related issues.

In conclusion, I am all for trying to make those in the minority feel included. It is even stated in Mr. Marden's email that they can bring any special item to symbolize their family's holiday practices to hang on the tree. I also read your email that states you all don't own ornaments (again he didn't say it had to be an ornament). My children are making an ornament because we were not sure about how we would even get them back. I'm sure your children could have been resourceful in making a special item to symbolize your holiday practices. I'm just saying the pushing of your practice makes the other families who also have their own practices are not right because they are not like yours. We would love to have a nativity scene out there as well. But we are also very aware of having to separate church and state when it comes to our faith and family practices. Our kids cannot sing songs about Christmas at school because it's considered religious. But they know all the songs about Hanukkah because those are allowed. Doesn't make sense to us and our faith but we are not pushing for Hanukkah songs to not be taught. All I am saying is that you should see the flip side. It is the way you have gone about this all is just very disappointing.

Best Regards,
Veronica Wheeler

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone
Thanks…is the textbook used actually called European Explorers? That term doesn’t accurately give a historical picture so in hope not but that’s what [redacted] old me. If so, that’s the appropriate venue for giving feedback to the school district/state (I’m very unaware of how the education system works at that level so unsure the appropriate body or person that receives that type of feedback).

I’ve unfortunately had such a mixed experience with racism since moving here—from a teacher from River School referring to a crayon color in distance learning last year as “skin colored” when I was overseeing schooling for someone else’s child one day to two of my son’s teachers at CHS using the “N word” in class—so I’m vigilant about this stuff but want to use the proper mechanism to give such feedback within the system.

Thanks,
Cindy

On Tue, Dec 7, 2021 at 9:08 AM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Cindy,

Regarding social studies, we’re using state adopted materials, and those adoptions were recently approved for implementation by our district. In my professional opinion, the issues that you describe are very much represented in newer social studies adoptions in the state.

Sincerely,
Jay

On Tue, Dec 7, 2021 at 7:55 AM Cindy Stein <cstein@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi—

I wanted to thank you again for meeting the other day— is there any further action required on my part right now?

Also, I forgot to mention on our call—I think it is worth considering using new books and getting rid of the “European Explorers” one being used in [redacted]. It is pretty antiquated to call them explorers, as they were conquerors and genocidaires for the most part. We should probably be teaching kids about history through a neutral and truthful lens rather than a European one.

I think this also applies to the [redacted] curriculum that I struggled with last year in trying to explain the actual truth about the mission to [redacted] as well as the day they were asked to dress like California natives and some kids came dressed as Indians and settlers.

Thanks again,
Cindy

--

Cindy A Stein Ph.D, CNM, MPH

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Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

On Monday, December 6, 2021, 3:26 PM, [Redacted] wrote:

All,

If there was any confusion, the River menorah lighting does *not* change the River tree lighting flyer.

This is the menorah (Hanukkah and Kinara) flyer:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1-yLOML2adjyrZsHBO1N4kYqNixygJbfTLhUmtxVMMI/edit?usp=drivesdk

This is the tree flyer:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1L-Xn1K8FyfPgfThkvMXCQda3q_OkKwBfo2KtNzO0sBc/edit?usp=drivesdk

This menorah lighting does NOT conflict with the tree lighting or subtract from it! Come to both!

Please email Nancy Appel at NAppel@adl.org and tell them that you want your voice heard and your child included! We can include Muslim, Buddhist, Hindi, Sikh, Shinto, and others!

Yay!

Shel

---

RiverParents is an internal email group for sharing resources and information inside the River School community. Neither CUSD nor the River School PTA endorses or sponsors any activity or information presented in this email.

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You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "RiverParents" group.
To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to riverparents+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.
To view this discussion on the web visit https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/riverparents/CA%2B3SxD751hWomXYxTJryVW0LMqpeTm%3D RVmyf%3Djhsr368P_8YLg%40mail.gmail.com.
Re: New issue

From: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>  
To:  
Cc: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>; Appel, Nancy <NAppel@adl.org>  

Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 2:01 PM PST (GMT-08:00)

It is my understanding that the PTA is not changing its position regarding the tree lighting as communicated to River families this past Friday. Consequently, there will be no Menorah lighting and any item that will decorate the tree must be small/fit in a lunch paper bag. Unfortunately, there is a modified PTA invitation that has been sent to dozens of River families, which reflect the changes to the event that Ms. Lyons desires. The flyer was changed without permission. The River parent body will be informed to disregard the altered invitation per River PTA request.

Sincerely,

Jay Marden

On Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 8:36 AM  wrote:

Jay is saying that he's not involved. It's a PTA event. You are saying that it's a school/principal event. I'm just confused. Is it a school/principal event or a PTA only event? I feel like you are cherry picking.

And no, Jay, definitely does not know the law on this issue. When  they only learned Christmas songs. It's unfair to expect Jay to be a lawyer. And I don't think the music teacher is involved at all.

On Mon, Dec 6, 2021, 8:29 AM Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Ms. Lyons,

As I suggested in my previous email, on another issue, I believe that this would be best handled at the school level. I believe that the Principal and music teacher are aware of laws surrounding musical performances around a holiday and will follow those laws. After you have spoken with both, please let me know if you still believe that there is a law or policy violation.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

On Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 9:09 AM  wrote:

I was just informed him that there is a Christmas music performance and only Christmas songs will be performed -- there is no Hanukkah or any other holiday song at all included. The music performance has a much stricter legal rule, as you know. There needs to be at least one Hanukkah or other holiday represented. That's the law for musical performances. Will you be including a single Hanukkah song? I heard that it is a compilation of dozens of songs but only Christmas.

Thanks,

Shel

--
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
River Tree Lighting

From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  
To: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>; Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org>; Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>; Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org>; Anne-Marie Rosen <arosen@carmelunified.org>; Seaberry Nachbar <snachbar@carmelunified.org>; Karl Pallastrini <kpallastrini@carmelunified.org>

Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 12:14 PM PST (GMT-08:00)

All,

I understand that there have been numerous conversations, and dozens of emails surrounding the upcoming River Tree Lighting. In an effort to clarify statements and bring this issue to resolution, I am emailing everyone, in lieu of a meeting. I want to first clearly state the position of myself and the “district” in this matter. I strongly believe that this is a local issue and one that should be rectified at the site level with the principal, PTA, and River community. I have stated, on numerous occasions, that my role as the superintendent is not to interject my personal beliefs, make local decisions broadly, or strong arm staff and community members. In instances such as this, I have been consistent that I will step in and give a directive if board policy or law is violated, if it hasn’t been violated, then I won’t. I have received legal advice that the PTA event of a River Tree Lighting does not violate board policy or law, nor does the invitation to bring an item that represents family values, heritage, or faith. Additionally, I have received legal guidance that the addition of a large, blowup menorah to this event does not violate board policy or the law. Therefore, as I have maintained all along, this is a decision to be made by the principal, PTA, and the River community. I have received conflicting information about who has agreed to what and have been misquoted several times in emails that are being sent and received. Therefore, I will clarify here exactly what I have said, and what I have heard from others. Again, I have clearly stated that my role in this situation is to ensure that no board policy or laws are broken and I have not and will not interject with my personal opinions or what I do or do not support. If you have heard anything different, I can assure you that it is not accurate. Additionally, I have received emails that suggest that the River PTA is moving forward with the event as originally planned. However, I have also received correspondence that claims that the principal and PTA are supportive of including a large, blowup menorah to be included in this event. Again, I am not stating my support or opposition for either event and either event is legal and within board policy. I have received emails that claim that the principal has approved an additional menorah at the event, I have received emails that claim that the PTA has approved the same, and I have also received emails that claim that these statements are false. At this point, I believe that the school, PTA, and community need a formal decision that is communicated out from the school and at that point it would be my expectation that all community members abide by that decision and follow the parameters that are decided upon. My suggestion continues to be that all involved in this situation get in a room together and have an honest and open, transparent discussion since there appears to be several versions being communicated, and each seems to state what others have agreed to.

I am including a screenshot of two separate invitations that I have received, and am assuming the community has received. I am concerned about the message this is giving our community and the possibility of a lack of trust in messages coming from their child’s school.
As you can see from these two messages, community members are most likely confused as am I. Again, I am supportive of whatever is decided, given that both are legal and within board policy, but we need to be clear with our community what the school and or PTA has decided. Please work together to rectify this situation and provide clear guidance to the community that falls within the legal boundaries.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

---
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020
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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Ms. Lyons,

I am writing to you this evening to share with you the legal advice that I have received in reference to your complaint about the River PTA tree lighting. I have been informed that the River tree lighting, and the decision to include items that reflect family values, heritage, and/or faith, does not violate district policy or law. Additionally, the PTA’s decision to limit the size of the item to something that fits into a paper bag does not violate district policy or law, this includes not allowing the large blowup menorah that you are requesting to be included. Therefore, as we have discussed before, I will not intervene on this issue as it does not violate district policy or the law. It is, however, my expectation that you follow the parameters that the River PTA has set forth as not following a school/principals direction could be a violation of district policy and law. Additionally, I have spoken with school board leadership and we will not be granting your requested board agenda item as your request does not fall within the purview of the school board. I will be following up on your formal complaint but please consider this email as my final decision on this matter and a formal directive to follow all applicable requests from the principal at River Elementary.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Hi Ted,
The email was sent by Melissa Anderson, PTA VP, I told her not to send from her school email account in that the business she is communicating is PTA in nature.
Thanks,
J

On Fri, Dec 3, 2021 at 1:41 PM [Redacted] wrote:
Jay,

Please don't send emails from the PTA email address pretending like it was from the entire board. The entire board doesn't even have access to that email or even knew about your email.

Please stop. It is childish. And I was on the phone with the PTA president when I read it so it's physically impossible, too. I get that you want to pretend that I don't have support but I do.

Thanks,
Shel

On Fri, Dec 3, 2021, 12:59 PM River School PTA [Redacted] wrote:
Shel,

We are very much looking forward to our first ever tree lighting that we are hosting next Friday, December 10th.

We have been informed of conversations that are occurring regarding you bringing a 6ft blow up menorah to the River School tree lighting event. You will see on the flier that will be going home today, we have asked all families to participate in decorating the tree with an item that reflects their families values, heritage and/or faith. This item must be within the size parameters that we are requesting, it must be able to fit inside a student lunch size paper bag.

Thank you for respecting our request and event!

Sincerely,
The PTA Board
Good Morning Shel,

In regard to the PTA hosted Tree Lighting, I am again supportive of families bringing any artifact they wish to the tree lighting that represents their values. This includes any item that represents their heritage or faith. I do know that the PTA will be communicating, however, that they wish for families to bring in an item that can "fit in a lunch paper bag" because they want to ensure that items are equitably and equally represented to the greatest extent possible. This is also due to size/capacity issues. I understand your concern about the perception of the tree lighting, but as you know the tree has been ruled to be a secular symbol. I’m informing you of this because I don’t want you to be surprised that the PTA's expectation does refer to the size of the objects.

I do think there is an opportunity here that we can seize and commit to for the future to better address your concern and the spirit and regulations embedded in our policy. In our school office, we annually exhibit secular symbols such as reindeer, a Christmas Tree, and a Menorah. It would be festive and community building to more publicly display larger symbols on the exterior of school. Whether they are in front of the office or elsewhere it would be a welcome addition to our school. It would also be the environment where the size of a larger object would be better suited and displayed among other, similar symbols. Finally, it would be school sponsored as opposed to relying on the PTA to assume such a responsibility.

Sincerely,
Jay

On Thu, Dec 2, 2021 at 4:32 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

Jay,

I just wanted to separately apologize to you in front of Ted. I wrongly assumed that you would not allow a menorah to have a similar place as the tree in this party. I made that assumption based upon the fact that it was called only a tree lighting, only advertised it with the kids as a tree lighting, and were telling the kids to all decorate it even kids who would feel uncomfortable since, while it is a secular object, it represents a very religious holiday. And, you hadn't asked me to bring a menorah, even though I had asked you to include one on a schoolwide basis in the same way that you include and promote secular Christmas symbols. I didn't want it to be a tiny one or one hidden in your office or one only in one classroom or only one grade, but just treated exactly the way you treat the secular symbols of Christmas (the Santa parade, the tree lighting, etc).

I wrongly didn't think you would ever agree that a secular symbol of Hanukkah should get the same treatment as a secular symbol of Christmas. I sincerely wish that you had come to me and told me that a menorah was going to be allowed and that you were willing to call it a menorah and tree lighting, and that it was finally going to be multicultural program at River and not just lip service where all the kids were going to gather around and decorate a "holiday" tree but a holiday menorah was going to be some tiny thing hidden on the side. I think coming to me would have been the right thing to do, knowing that there was no way for me to know that you were supportive of including a menorah. But, on the other hand, I equally should have gone to you before involving Ted or filed a complaint with the District. So, I am sincerely sorry and hope that we can work together from now on to make River more inclusive for everyone. I'd love to be on the same side as you for once! And, this event is going to be spectacular and really multicultural!

And, Ted, I apologize for involving you even though you are incredibly busy. I obviously made a very easy issue into a very dramatic one. Can you please call me so you can let me know how I withdraw the complaint and donate this blow-up menorah to the District so it's displayed at the River school lower playground next week (and the week after if the tree decorations are staying up)?

While I do hope you talk to Jay about what religious objects he is including in this school program, I feel like my own personal issue -- to have a holiday menorah (a secular symbol of Hanukkah) treated on par with the holiday tree (a secular symbol of Christmas) is resolved, so I think that these religious objects that Jay is including is a completely different issue.
Please both accept my apology. I am sincerely sorry for thinking that the tree lighting would be just like the Santa parade and that a menorah would not be welcomed and invited at that same level!

Thank you.

Warmest regards,

Shel
Re: Holiday menorah okay?

From: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>  Thu, Dec 2, 2021 at 3:43 PM PST (GMT-8:00)
To: [Redacted]; spencer[Redacted]; Appel, Nancy <NAppel@adj.org>; Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>

I am responding to Shel's email to provide an accurate account of my involvement in this matter:

- Throughout the process, I have been fully supportive of including a Menorah or any other secular or religious symbol at the tree lighting
- The tree lighting has not been described as a Christmas Tree Lighting
- On the intercom, I never used language that referred to decorating, with ornaments, a Christmas Tree
- On the intercom, I communicated to the students and staff, after wishing them a "Happy Hanukkah," that the PTA was going to host a "Tree Lighting on December 10" and that their "families are invited to decorate the tree with an ornament or item that reflects their family, heritage, and/or faith."

The PTA flyer will be distributed tomorrow and will contain the above language in the invitation.

As Principal, I remain committed to ensuring that our students receive a diverse and culturally rich and appropriate education. This includes honoring the different customs and traditions that our families celebrate during the holiday season. This week, for example, our kindergarten classes are learning about the significance of Hanukkah and the Menorah as taught by one of our instructional assistants who is of Jewish faith. This is but one of many examples that I can provide to demonstrate our commitment to this ideal.

Sincerely,
Jay Marden
Principal

On Thu, Dec 2, 2021 at 9:53 AM [Redacted] wrote:

Ted,

I think there is some sort of confusion.

Jay told the PTA president, Majoc Spencer, when she separately asked if the menorah could be included, that Jay just wants to be left out of it and doesn’t want to make the decision. He told her that if you send an email that okays it, he is fine with it. Of course, you already told me since you started in July that you are 100% okay with it and sent multiple emails that said as such. And the CUSD lawyer gave Trisha Dellig a length analysis back in June (that she gave you) that said that a menorah is allowed to be included.

Can you just quickly circulate an email that confirms that you are okay with it to everyone on this chain? It's just Jay, the PTA president, and the representative from the Anti-Defamation League who is working on this issue (and your secretary). I think that may just solve the problem that easily! If I don’t hear from you, I will include it since we've been working on this issue since Monday and I know you are busy (and you already okayed it so I feel like it's a bit silly)!

Thanks!

Also, the district is paying for the Christmas lights and for the Christmas lights to be installed on the Christmas tree which is going to be kept on the lower playground on the school campus during school hours. While I understand that everything is so last minute that I will need to lend the District a holiday menorah this year to be displayed during that same period, it does seem like the District should be investing in its own diverse holiday decorations since it’s doing it for Christmas and the District has plenty of funds to represent all other cultures and their different holidays too.

Either way, I'm so glad to hear from our PTA president that Jay is no longer against the menorah and will allow it if you allow it! That's the exact opposite from what I've experienced with him for years! Inclusion is exactly what we need!

Warmest,
Good Morning Heather, Ben,

I will get back to you today or tomorrow at the latest regarding this issue/your concern. While I understand it's been a couple of days before responding to Ben's email, please know that you may direct all of your questions regarding River School to me or other River staff directly. This includes all Covid matters as well. The supermajority of the time I respond in 24 hours, but occasionally it might take 48. Of course, if you have any concern about a decision communicated by me as your last River contact, then a CUSD Director would be the next appropriate contact. This practice also promotes healthier communication between home and school while organizationally ensuring that district communication is conducting business most efficiently.

Sincerely,
Jay Marden
Principal

On Wed, Dec 1, 2021 at 4:57 PM Heather Palmer [...][...][...][...] wrote:
Are we interpreting the language in this new guidance to mean that [...][...][...][...] are experiencing heavy exertion during choir?

After speaking to both the Governor's Office and CDPH neither acknowledges that the language was meant to be interpreted this way and that further work is being done to refine this language for further understanding.

Carmel Unified has impressed us with their conservative careful approach to COVID safety for our students and this new action seems misaligned with all current work that's being done which is why we are inquiring further with you.

We have experienced little to no discomfort this year with our [...][...][...][...] back in school and this new direction seems out of left field. As parents it is important for us to let you know when something seems misguided or interpretation is incorrect. As a [...][...][...][...] has many contacts within these agencies and they have all showed extreme surprise and advised us to continue to ask questions since this language was not intended to be interpreted this way.

With the emergence of a new variant, holiday travel and flu season this seems to be coming at a highly inopportune timeframe.

I guess what is difficult to understand is why the performance couldn't be held outdoors or in some way further protecting the students if they are to remove masks. Something further than a rapid test which has questionable results even in the best lab controlled scenario.

Thank you!
Heather

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 1, 2021, at 8:56 AM, Rick Lopez <rlopez@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Hi Ben,

We plan to update the Data on the website weekly at the end of each week.

Also - as you’ve likely seen, Jay has amended and updated the process for testing at River and he would be the best resource to provide information on testing procedures at River.

Best, Rick

On Tue, Aug 31, 2021 at 7:22 PM Ben Palmer wrote:

Hi Rick,

Thanks — we’ve seen lines of [redacted] in the morning waiting to get tested over the past few days. Are those results up yet?

Also, the line for testing is right in front of school with all the kids walking by. Concerned that if there’s a positive case in the line that other students could get exposed and make it worse. Any forthcoming policies or procedures to move the testing line away from the main entrance to the school?

Thank you,
Ben

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 29, 2021, at 9:51 AM, Rick Lopez wrote:

Hello Ben,

This is Rick Lopez … just wanted to let you know the numbers have been updated.

Best

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 28, 2021, at 11:08 PM, Ben Palmer wrote:

Hi Craig,

We called on Friday and were told by the district that additional numbers would be reported. Dashboard hasn’t been updated since 8/19. When should we expect an update?

Thank you,
Ben

---

From: Craig Chavez <cchavez@carmelunified.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 19, 2021 10:20 AM
To: Ben Palmer
Cc: Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>; Heather Palmer; Pancho Naveja <naveja@carmelunified.org>; Rick Lopez <rolope@carmelunified.org>
Subject: Re: COVID Update

Mr. and Mrs. Palmer,

I am in the process of updating that chart and placing it on the website. I plan to have that updated today.

Craig Chavez
On Thu, Aug 19, 2021 at 9:55 AM Ben Palmer wrote:
Hi Tricia,

Does that mean that you aren’t going to release the case count?

Thanks,
Ben

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 19, 2021, at 9:52 AM, Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Good Morning Heather,

Thank you for your input.

Tricia Zarevich (she/her/hers)
Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. Box 222700, Carmel, CA 93922

tzarevich@carmelunified.org
office (831) 624-1546 ext. 2021
Fax (831) 626-4052

On Thu, Aug 19, 2021 at 8:44 AM Heather Palmer wrote:
Thank you Tricia!

This information really needs to be more easily available to families.

Heather

Sent from my iPhone

> On Aug 18, 2021, at 9:34 PM, Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org> wrote:
> >
> > Hello Heather,
> >
> > I have included Rick Lopez and Craig Chavez on this email for an answer to your question.
> >
> > Thank you,
> > Tricia
> >
> > Sent from my iPhone
> >
> >> On Aug 18, 2021, at 8:58 PM, Heather Palmer wrote:
> >>
> >> I haven’t been able to get a response from anyone on this. Can someone let us know where to find this information?
> >>
> >> Thank you!
> >>
> >> Heather
> >>
> >>
Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 16, 2021, at 6:34 PM, Heather Palmer wrote:

It looks like the COVID school count has not been updated since Spring. Is this going to be updated for fall? Can you tell me what the numbers are for all school sites as of today 8/16? I have

Thank you!

Heather

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Craig D. Chavez
Chief Human Resources Officer
Carmel Unified School District

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Hi Tom,

We could make Monday or Tuesday in the time frame of starting at 11:45 ending by 12:30 or Tuesday at 1:15.

Thanks,

Jay

On Wed, Dec 1, 2021 at 11:27 AM Thomas Lehmkuhl <tlehmkuhl@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi all,

I am looking for a last minute performance possibility for my CHS Concert Choir men to perform their short (15 minutes) set of Christmas/Holiday songs at your site.

We can perform outside and masked. We can also test before we come. We would be 14 total. We would love to sing for a segment of your student population as decided by you and your music teachers. I am not going to try and try and setup sound equipment. It would just be 14 bodies and a music stand and a bald guy waving his arms.

Next week is really the only option given the finals schedule at CHS the last week before break. From my end, probably Monday or Friday would best. Tuesday might work. So that’s December 6th or 10th.

Dan - probably the easiest at CMS is to just have them come to sing for my choir kids during one period or lunch. If you felt we could add to that group, let me know.

I realize this is last minute and probably a long shot but I feel like I need to at least try and get some exposure for my program. Numbers are horrendous at CMS and early reports suggest they are not great at the ES sites either. Covid has done a whammy.

Thanks for even considering it!

Tom

Tom Lehmkuhl
Director of Choral Music, Carmel Middle & High School
PTA Board,

First let me thank the board for allowing the [redacted] to present their perspectives. As our children grow to become adults, the inherent responsibility of parents and teachers is to support growth in the direction that allows them to become great people. Conversely, it is sometimes helpful for our children to see how not to act as well. As adults, we strive to illustrate the former, but often our inabilities cause us to fall to demonstrating the latter. As a leader of a large team and as an active duty military officer that has led Soldiers in combat operations, I realize that leadership is not always easy, quite often it is extremely difficult. Any decent leader would agree that building a great culture requires building trust in the organization. The general response from board members on this matter, the disposition of the board leadership during the in-person PTA meeting, and the decision articulated in the below response will no doubt work to erode trust.

At its purest aspect, the issue started with [redacted] offering an independent reflection of the simple name of the events while appreciating the notion that the name(s) were discriminatory to fellow classmates. From there the
students (on their own) crafted the idea of starting a petition in order to gain consensus and subsequent momentum for change. While these actions should have been met with utter joy over the activism expressed by the students, the school and PTA's immediate response was to defend and to deflect. The school’s Principal’s first reaction when seeing the petition was to defend the name of the dance by directly confronting the [redacted] class and discussing the severity of signing petitions. When the issue was brought up at the virtual board meeting, the board’s initial response was to deflect and fallback on the notion that “everyone loves the dance”; totally misunderstanding the organizing concept of the students’ concern. The aforementioned actions do not reflect serious leadership, they reflect a serious lack of leadership skills. What I found particularly harmful in your response below was the attempt to call out the students’ desire to achieve equality and inclusion as merely a method to “advance one group’s own interests”. The fact remains that families of this district are not all the same. We have families in this community with vastly different backgrounds and situations. Personally, while I'm thankful that I survived a combat deployment so I can watch [redacted] grow up, I try to appreciate the degree of unnecessary trauma that a Father/Daughter Dance would have caused if things went another way. There is no one that I know of that is actively attempting to downplay the goodness of these events. The desire to rename these events in order to strike a more inclusive tone does not require the events to be canceled. The simple fact is that as we go forward as a society, we get better at things. We learn more about ourselves and others. We grow to appreciate and to celebrate differences.

As a personal reflection from attending the PTA meeting, while I was very happy with the board’s decision to allow the students to speak, I was also quite disturbed by the two adult men that decided to speak. One male parent actively attempted to suggest that the sheer name of the dance was a positive contributor to the successful relationship he has with [redacted], which as a [redacted] I found both bizarre and sad. The other gentleman actively asserted that non-traditional families were also families with disabilities. Now this was particularly difficult to listen to and I found myself squirming in my seat and wishing he would simply sit down rather than to further subject the audience to incoherent and ridiculous rhetoric. The meeting ended with a bizarre plea from the board leadership asking parents not to send too many emails as the sheer volume of correspondence constituted threatening actions. As a leader, I was literally knocked over with hearing that request. Serving on the PTA board is just that, it is service to others. Any good leader will tell you that once you move into a leadership position, it becomes all about serving others and not yourself. Leadership is certainly not for everyone and it is not a right, but rather a privilege. Leadership is about standing up for what is right. Leadership is about taking on the minority viewpoint because you know it benefits the organization moving forward. In my estimation, albeit an expert opinion at the very least, the board shrank from its duties here. Your written response was not only severely misguided, it was utterly disrespectful. To suggest that parents operating in non-traditional households can simply choose to not attend an event if they feel unwelcome is absolutely the wrong answer not only in a public school scenario, but in any given system. It does seem a bit odd that rather than simply convert the name of the dance to the Carmel River Dance or another name that doesn’t seek to alienate, you would hold your ground and tether yourself to an antiquated disposition.

I’m sure you realize that this issue has not concluded, but rather will shift to a different venue. I’ve included a few examples from across the country that express how other school officials and PTA boards have addressed this nationally growing concern.

Thank you
Jim Peelman

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On Sat, Nov 20, 2021 at 6:23 AM River School PTA wrote:

Good Morning,

As you are aware, there is a request before the PTA Board to change the name of the Father/Daughter Family Dance and the Mother/Son Family Carnival to, for example, the River School Dance and River School Carnival. The Board understands that the primary reason for the request is because those desiring the name change feel that the events are not inclusive of all students. Before sharing the Board's decision, we would like to recognize and thank the [redacted] who spoke to the PTA to communicate their sincere opinions regarding this topic. They are courageous, thoughtful individuals who should be celebrated for taking the time and energy to compose and present their position.

It is important for those who desire name changes to understand why the events were originally created. The rationale was that River School parents wished to honor and celebrate the relationships between Fathers and Daughters and Mothers and Sons and chose these particular events for parents and their children to enjoy a special afternoon/evening with one another. The parents have also expressed to the various Boards a desire to create a memorable experience for parents and their children to bond before the children enter adolescence when they gain greater independence from their parents.

It has been communicated to the Board that omitting reference to Fathers, Mothers, Sons and Daughters would still ensure that the events would remain intact - we disagree. Changing the names of the events changes the essence and purpose of them as described above. The Board recognizes that there are students whose family dynamics might not align with the names of the events, and the Board fully embraces and invites those students to attend the events as is annually written in its invitations. The Board appreciates the sensitivity of the issue, but it is inevitably up to each family to navigate their particular set of circumstances to decide whether it will attend the optional events (e.g. bring a family member, family friend, etc.). The word "Family" is also included in the event names to convey that all are welcome at the events.

These events have enjoyed tremendous and positive feedback through the years, and the exceptionally high attendance at both events speaks volumes about how well received they are by the parents and students who participate. To advance one group's own interests by potentially abolishing events cherished by hundreds of participants annually is simply wrong and not something we will support. For the reasons cited above, the Board unanimously has voted to retain the names of the events as currently title. Please know that if any parent is interested in creating an additional community building event that addresses the concerns that have been shared with the Board, the PTA would be wholly open to such proposals.

Sincerely,

PTA Board

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 19, 2021, at 12:18 PM, Melissa Ullo [redacted] wrote:
Dear Majo and Melissa,

I hope you had a productive and fruitful meeting yesterday. Can you tell us your decision and the next steps?

Kind regards,

Melissa

On Fri, Oct 29, 2021 at 8:58 PM Melissa Ullom wrote:

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I’m so sorry to bring this up. Could we please reopen the discussion of allowing online participation in the meeting?

Thank you for your understanding,

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The room will be well ventilated and due to its spaciousness we can also safely distance, although distancing is not a requirement. We have had a lot of parents request that the meeting time be right after school for convenience.

Melissa there is no "minor misunderstanding" as long time members of the school community we are well aware that the request is to rename the events, but this does essentially eliminate the intent of both events, which amounts to elimination of events that have enjoyed exceptional historical support.

Lastly, as Melissa Anderson previously wrote, we are allowing Zoom so that parents can virtually attend, but they must be present to address a topic - this is just what the CUSD school board does. This allows for parents to be in-the-know about PTA business and promotes healthy communication between PTA members (in-person that is) because when in a remote environment the desired connections and healthy communication is greatly compromised.

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If the children only speak during open comments, are you willing to allow us to move for a vote even though they are not on the agenda?

Regarding the in person meeting at 3:15, I do not understand why we can not follow the safety and convenience measures of the September 15th meeting which was virtual and at 6:00pm. Can you say more about that so I understand?

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School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

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Also, can we know if it will be virtual or hybrid, so we can plan our work schedules?

Thanks again,
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I think that there's been a minor misunderstanding. Nobody is trying to do away with the dance or carnival -- just make it inclusive to all genders. While it's clear that some parents think the dance is already inclusive, several students say they feel excluded because of the names and the fact that they do not receive invitations while others do.

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If you are not interested in doing it the same way as before, then I think we should officially add this as an agenda item as was originally promised, and make the meeting virtual and in the evening so that more parents can participate and the kids are not at risk of infection unnecessarily.

Thank you for your understanding and support of our students,

Melissa Ullom

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelinunified.org>
Date: Tue, Oct 26, 2021 at 9:33 AM
Subject: Re: Dialogue on Dance/ Carnival ahead of PTA Meeting
To: Melissa Ullom

Hi Melissa,

Please know that the kids are going to speak at the meeting and that they’ll be able to speak closer to the beginning of the agenda. I agree with Majo that the discussion about the topic should take place at the PTA meeting as opposed to a small group discussion outside the PTA that essentially would only include one collective voice on the topic that feels a particular way. Being new to the community, I do feel that you should be aware that there are very strong and differing opinions on the subject and that these particular events have been exceptionally well attended and the feedback to the school has been overwhelmingly positive. This does not mean that traditions can’t be changed or improved, but it does mean that we need to carefully consider all sides and perspectives to arrive at a decision as a school community. I believe Majo will get back to you regarding whether parents will be able to Zoom into the meeting.

In the end, it will be a PTA decision that determines the outcome, and I will support whatever needs the PTA has to facilitate the events.

I look forward to the discussion.

Jay Marden

On Mon, Oct 25, 2021 at 7:14 PM Melissa Ullom wrote:

Dear Majo and Jay,

I read through the PTA agenda and see that the dance/ carnival was not added as an agenda item. Can you catch us up on the discrepancy? My understanding was that Amy made the request in plenty of time and Jay agreed to have the children speak at the meeting. Please let me know if there is some kind of misunderstanding.

Where do you stand on meeting ahead of time? I want to stress that the children do not what to cancel the dance or the carnival, just to rename them and invite all the children.

If you’d like to think through this with a third party, we can meet up with the principle from Tularcitos on how they made the change.
Kind regards,
Melissa

On Mon, Oct 25, 2021 at 12:29 PM Melissa Ullom wrote:

Dear Majo and Jay,

As you may know, I am a new parent at Carmel River Elementary with [redacted]. I have been really impressed with the academics at Carmel River, the beautiful campus, and especially the teachers. I’ve been volunteering with the science teacher since Majo suggested it.

I attended my first River PTA meeting on September 15th, where I learned about the student concern on inclusivity for the dance and carnival. I reached out to learn more about it and spoke with some of the parents of [redacted] who wrote the petition as well as other concerned parents such as Jillian Heisman, Amy Melton, Erin and Leti Moses, and Lindsay and Jim Peelman.

Based on those discussions, my understanding is that the students wish to rename the Father/Daughter Family Dance and the Mother/Son Family Carnival to simply Carmel River Dance and Carmel River Carnival. In addition, they would like all children to be invited to both events, rather than extending gendered invitations.

This is a concept that I very much support as the mother of [redacted] who love to dance. They danced at the Carmel Dance Center before we moved abroad, and will return after they are able. [redacted] That being said, I wondered if we might meet in a small group to discuss this before the next PTA meeting so that the children can raise their concerns privately outside the spotlight of official PTA minutes. I understand that Amy Melton has already reached out to put it officially on the agenda, but if we could address student concerns ahead of the official meeting it might keep things more lighthearted and calm some nerves.

The students are available to meet with you, the rest of the PTA board, and other concerned parents you may wish to invite at the following times:

Tuesday, October 26: 3:00-8:00pm
Wednesday, October 27: 3:00-8:00pm
Thursday, October 28: 3:00-8:00pm
Friday, October 29: 5:00-8:00pm

If this can be resolved ahead of the PTA meeting, then we can withdraw the agenda item and stay focused on the other business of the day. If you do not wish to meet ahead of the next PTA meeting, then we’ll keep the item on the agenda as the students have said they wish to speak regardless.

Thanks for hearing us out. I really appreciate your dedication to our students.

Kind regards,
Melissa Ullom

PS: Please share this with Alex Sanchez and Jenny Panzier, as I do not have their email addresses.

The information contained in this email may be personal and confidential and is intended only for the recipients named above (and any of the recipient's authorized designees). If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient of this message or of any attachments to the message, you are hereby notified that you have received this document in error and that any review, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this message, including any attachments, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original message. Thank you.
The information contained in this email may be personal and confidential and is intended only for the recipients named above (and any of the recipient’s authorized designees). If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient of this message or of any attachments to the message, you are hereby notified that you have received this document in error and that any review, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this message, including any attachments, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original message. Thank you.
Good Afternoon Ted,
The PTA is planning on a tree lighting with a Polar Express performance at 5:00 pm on 12/17. The PTA is inviting all River families to decorate the tree (it's a large Oak tree) with an ornament that represents their family, culture and/or faith. The PTA will be sending the flyer home shortly. Let me know please if you have any questions or concerns.
Thank,
Jay

On Mon, Nov 29, 2021 at 5:18 PM [REDACTED] wrote:
There is a River school Christmas tree now?

Can I get an update on that?

I'm a bit aghast that you won't allow a menorah (an 8-prong candle holder -- not religious!) on River school campus (I've asked to bring a large one to put outside or in the auditorium) and not hidden in the office where no students see it) but now the students are all being asked to decorate a Christmas tree?

On top of the huge Santa parade and everything else that River does to blatantly promote Christian and Christmas holidays at the expense of all other traditions of students from other races and religions? You don't think that doing more -- adding decorating a Christmas tree AND lighting it -- which is definitely religious (at least as religious as lighting a menorah) -- is asking for trouble?

You can't make this stuff up.

Someone needs to go to River asap and teach some anti-discrimination training. I am highly concerned.

And please do not humiliate yourself by aiming that a Christmas tree lighting is somehow "inclusive". You couldn't be more alienating to minority students if you tried. River is a public school -- someone needs to stop the constant barrage of pro-Christian-only holidays. If there is now a Christmas tree lighting, there absolutely should be a menorah lighting with a menorah of comparable height to the tree.

On Mon, Nov 29, 2021, 4:58 PM Jay Marden via ParentSquare <donotreply@parentsquare.com> wrote:

Carmel River Elementary School

Jay Marden posted in Carmel River Elementary School

PTA agenda next week

Good Afternoon River Parents,

Next week, December 8th, 3:15 pm in our Ottertoreum, our PTA will host its next meeting.

The agenda is as follows:

1. Welcome and norms
2. Treasurer report
3. Teacher appreciation week report of breakfast and lunch
4. Field trips update
6. River School Tree Lighting and Holiday Store
7. Principal report

We hope you can join us!

Majo Spencer, PTA President
Melissa Anderson, PTA Vice President

Please do not reply to this email.

Stay involved with your child’s learning and activities at school.

Download on the App Store  Get it on Google Play

You received this email because you are a ParentSquare user in Carmel River Elementary School. If you received this email in error or wish to disable your account, click here to unsubscribe.

ParentSquare Inc · 3905 State St, Suite 7502 · Santa Barbara, CA 93105
Re: PTA Update

From: Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org>                        Mon, Nov 29, 2021 at 12:07 PM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>                              Cc: Suzanne Marden <smarden@carmelunified.org>

I like it!

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Mon, Nov 29, 2021 at 11:53 AM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Jim,

While you have not posed a question to me, I feel compelled to respond to your email regarding my involvement as you described. I learned that the petition was forthcoming from the classroom teacher, Mrs. Winkler, who invited me to speak to the students about the petition. My "first reaction" was positive and supportive of the students given the interest and motivation they demonstrated in gathering signatures. As Mrs. Winkler will confirm, it was a very healthy discussion as we talked about the petition process, responsibilities of the petitioners, and those in leadership positions once they receive petitions. What you have characterized by describing my reaction as "confronting the fifth grade class and discussing the severity of signing petitions" is wholly untrue.

In my role as a school leader, I always ensure that students, staff and parents are extended "due process" when involved in a conflict or disagreement. You did not speak directly to me about my "first reaction" or, from my perspective or that of the classroom teacher, seek feedback about the nature of the conversation. In the future, please extend us the courtesy of speaking with us directly so that we are afforded that right instead of furthering a false narrative.

Sincerely,
Jay Marden

On Sat, Nov 27, 2021 at 4:07 PM Jim Peelman wrote:

PTA Board,

First let me thank the board for allowing the [redacted] to present their perspectives. As our children grow to become adults, the inherent responsibility of parents and teachers is to support growth in the direction that allows them to become great people. Conversely, it is sometimes helpful for our children to see how not to act as well. As adults, we strive to illustrate the former, but often our inabilities cause us to fall to demonstrating the latter. As a leader of a large team and as an active duty military officer that has led Soldiers in combat operations, I realize that leadership is not always easy, quite often it is extremely difficult. Any decent leader would agree that building a great culture requires building trust in the organization. The general response from board members on this matter, the disposition of the board leadership during the in-person PTA meeting, and the decision articulated in the below response will no doubt work to erode trust.

At its purest aspect, the issue started with [redacted] offering an independent reflection of the simple name of the events while appreciating the notion that the name(s) were discriminatory to fellow classmates. From there the students (on their own) crafted the idea of starting a petition in order to gain consensus and subsequent momentum for change. While these actions should have been met with utter joy over the activism expressed by the students, the school and PTA’s immediate response was to defend and to deflect. The school’s Principal’s first reaction when seeing the petition was to defend the name of the dance by directly confronting the [redacted] and discussing the severity of signing petitions. When the issue was brought up at the virtual board meeting, the board’s initial response was to deflect and fallback on the notion that “everyone loves the dance”; totally misunderstanding the organizing concept of the students’ concern. The aforementioned actions do not reflect
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To: Melissa Ullom

Hi Melissa,

Please know that the kids are going to speak at the meeting and that they’ll be able to speak closer to the beginning of the agenda. I agree with Majo that the discussion about the topic should take place at the PTA meeting as opposed to a small group discussion outside the PTA that essentially would only include one collective voice on the topic that feels a particular way. Being new to the community, I do feel that you should be aware that there are very strong and differing opinions on the subject and that these particular events have been exceptionally well attended and the feedback to the school has been overwhelmingly positive. This does not mean that traditions can’t be changed or improved, but it does mean that we need to carefully consider all sides and perspectives to arrive at a decision as a school community. I believe Majo will get back to you regarding whether parents will be able to Zoom into the meeting.

In the end, it will be a PTA decision that determines the outcome, and I will support whatever needs the PTA has to facilitate the events.
I look forward to the discussion.
Jay Marden

On Mon, Oct 25, 2021 at 7:14 PM Melissa Ullom wrote:

Dear Majo and Jay,

I read through the PTA agenda and see that the dance/carnival was not added as an agenda item. Can you catch us up on the discrepancy? My understanding was that Amy made the request in plenty of time and Jay agreed to have the children speak at the meeting. Please let me know if there is some kind of misunderstanding.

Where do you stand on meeting ahead of time? I want to stress that the children do not what to cancel the dance or the carnival, just to rename them and invite all the children.

If you'd like to think through this with a third party, we can meet up with the principle from Tularitos on how they made the change.

Kind regards,
Melissa

On Mon, Oct 25, 2021 at 12:29 PM Melissa Ullom wrote:

Dear Majo and Jay,

As you may know, I am a new parent at Carmel River Elementary with [censored]. I have been really impressed with the academics at Carmel River, the beautiful campus, and especially the teachers. I've been volunteering with the science teacher since [censored] suggested it.

I attended my first River PTA meeting on September 15th, where I learned about the student concern on inclusivity for the dance and carnival. I reached out to learn more about it and spoke with some of the parents of [censored], who wrote the petition as well as other concerned parents such as Jillian Heisman, Amy Melton, Erin and Leti Moses, and Lindsay and Jim Peelman.

Based on those discussions, my understanding is that the students wish to rename the Father/Daughter Family Dance and the Mother/Son Family Carnival to simply Carmel River Dance and Carmel River Carnival. In addition, they would like all children to be invited to both events, rather than extending gendered invitations.

This is a concept that I very much support as the mother of [censored], who love to dance. They danced at the Carmel Dance Center before we moved abroad, and will return after they are able [censored]. That being said, I wondered if we might meet in a small group to discuss this before the next PTA meeting so that the children can raise their concerns privately outside the spotlight of official PTA minutes. I understand that Amy Melton has already reached out to put it officially on the agenda, but if we could address student concerns ahead of the official meeting it might keep things more lighthearted and calm some nerves.

The students are available to meet with you, the rest of the PTA board, and other concerned parents you may wish to invite at the following times:

Tuesday, October 26: 3:00-8:00pm
Wednesday, October 27: 3:00-8:00pm
Thursday, October 28: 3:00-8:00pm
Friday, October 29: 5:00-8:00pm

If this can be resolved ahead of the PTA meeting, then we can withdraw the agenda item and stay focused on the other business of the day. If you do not wish to meet ahead of the next PTA meeting, then we'll keep the item on the agenda as the students have said they wish to speak regardless.

Thanks for hearing us out. I really appreciate your dedication to our students.

Kind regards,
PS: Please share this with Alex Sanchez and Jenny Panzier, as I do not have their email addresses.

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Re: dates

From: Majo Spencer Fri, Nov 19, 2021 at 12:16 PM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>

Yes of course.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 19, 2021, at 11:02 AM, Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hey, could we do the store on the 15th and 16th? We've got a musical performance in the evening of the 14th so we'll need the multi to rehearse.
J

On Fri, Nov 19, 2021 at 10:56 AM Majo Spencer wrote:
Awesome.
Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 19, 2021, at 10:38 AM, Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Majo,
Let me ask Veronica, and the time for the Santa visit will be 11:00 a.m. Let's do December 13 and 14, 2:00 to 4:00 in the multi for the store?
J

On Fri, Nov 19, 2021 at 9:38 AM Majo Spencer wrote:
Jay,
A thought... do you think you can talk to Veronica to see if the pal students will help us wrap present at the market and put tags on. We will provide everything, they just need to show up. Probably four kids at a time to help will be awesome.
Let me know.
Majo

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 19, 2021, at 8:37 AM, Majo Spencer wrote:

Good morning Jay,
Ok. What do you think if we do Dec 13 and Dec 14 from 2:00-4:00??? With the Kindergarten hour after school???2:00-3:00 both days and 3:00-4:00 for the rest of the grades???
Santa is confirmed Dec 16th, what time???
Majo

Sent from my iPhone
On Nov 18, 2021, at 1:23 PM, Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Majo,
Are you sure that one day of shopping is going to do it? It might work, but we'd need a large window of time before and after school. If they allow it, I'll suggest a few days.
Regardless, it's your call!
J

On Thu, Nov 18, 2021 at 11:07 AM Majo Spencer [REDACTED] wrote:
We only need one day for the store.
Dec 16th sounds great for Santa.
Majo

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 18, 2021, at 9:36 AM, Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Majo,
What do you think about December 13, 14 and 15 for the holiday store and the 16th in the morning or afternoon for the Santa visit?
Thanks,
Jay

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That's a great question Jay. I would assume in any questionable situation we would ask for court documents stating who has decision authority.

On Fri, Nov 12, 2021 at 9:01 AM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Ted,
We're starting to get some questions and directives from parents to ensure that their children do not receive the vaccination today or in the future at school. Easy enough if the parents were together. If we have divorced parents and one wants the vaccination for their child and one does not how do we proceed? We assume not to vaccinate, but that could very well be wrong if there's joint custody or if the one requesting not to vaccinate has minority control of their child.
I'll try to get ahold of you today in advance of the clinic.
Thanks,
Jay

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E Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624 1546 ext 2020

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He already came by first thing. Thank you all for your help and support on this!

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Wed, Nov 10, 2021 at 8:07 AM Dan Paul <dpaul@carmelunified.org> wrote:
He will be by today.

Dan

On Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 1:49 PM Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Awesome! Thank you! Maybe Adam can come check out our water situation? If so tell him to come see me and keep it 😄

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Nov 9, 2021, at 1:47 PM, Dan Paul <dpaul@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Melissa,
1 - we did not set up the water dispenser, but can probably move it.
2 - yes, we are installing a door.
3 I’ll have Johnny get with you

Dan

On Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 1:15 PM Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Dan

Couple things I could use your expertise on with our staff room makeover.
1) Our water dispenser system- did you guys set that up? I’m hoping to get it slightly moved?
2) Connie had mentioned in the past putting in a request for a door in between the staff room and the hallway. It’s needed for multiple reasons but I was hoping we could make that happen. Thoughts?
3) Let Johnny know that I need his input on how much pain to purchase so to be sure to come see me by some time next week.

Thank you for your assistance on this. It is greatly appreciated.

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Re: rep

Excellent choice, Jay. Thank you.

On Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 2:57 PM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Ted,
My nurse, Melissa, is going to be a regular member of the covid safety committee from now on. She's a great resource and will be a contributing member.
Thanks,
J
Re: River Vaccine Clinic

From: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>  Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 11:59 AM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: Rick Lopez <rlopez@carmelunified.org>
Cc: Connie Weilenmann <cweilenmann@carmelunified.org>; Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org>; Kristin Cardinalli <kcardinalli@carmelunified.org>; Tina Gerow <tgerow@carmelunified.org>; Deborah Taylor <dtaylor@carmelunified.org>; Jessica Hull <jhull@carmelunified.org>; Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>

No worries, we'll get there.

J

On Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 11:45 AM Rick Lopez <rlopez@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Jay,

Ok good luck ... Tina and I will ask any of the contact tracers and health aides if they'd be willing to assist you (and/or Ryan).

On Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 11:09 AM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Rick

Signage is not a problem, but getting 10 people and/or volunteers will be tough. We'll see what we can do.

J

On Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 11:04 AM Rick Lopez <rlopez@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hello Jay, et.al.,

As of this morning your sign up numbers for Friday's clinic is at 129. I stopped by to see you this morning but you were in a meeting behind closed doors. Do you need anything in preparation for Friday's clinic? Have you been able to secure volunteers (10) to assist during the clinic? If you have employees willing to work extra hours we can certainly approve them to get paid. Can you get signage for the clinic to direct folks to your vaccination location?

Thanks, Rick

--

Rick Lopez
COVID Response Coordinator
Carmel Unified School District
(831) 624-4462 ext. 2894

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--

Rick Lopez
COVID Response Coordinator
Carmel Unified School District
(831) 624-4462 ext. 2894

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Re:

From: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>  
To: Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org>  
Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 11:58 AM PST (GMT-08:00)

Not sure, but Dan or DO business office would know.

J

On Tue, Nov 9, 2021 at 11:52 AM Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hey, so you have a contact for our water dispenser company? In the staff room. I want to see if we can get it moved. I nt it tringalli.

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nur e
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

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Re: THANK YOU!

From: Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org>  Mon, Nov 8, 2021 at 1:54 PM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: Amy Williams Melton  
Cc: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>; Majo Spencer  
Luca-  
Jenny  

Hi Amy,

Thank you. We will make sure that everyone sees the notes you provided. We will be getting back to [redacted] after our board meets and has a discussion.

Have a great day!

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Mon, Nov 8, 2021 at 11:05 AM Amy Williams Melton wrote:

Hello Jay, Majo, Melissa, Alex, and Jenny,

Thank you for allowing the [redacted] to present to you about the Dance and Carnival in last week’s PTA meeting. This was a very meaningful experience for them. They worked incredibly hard together to create a presentation of their own thoughts and in their own words that they could articulate to you all. I appreciate your giving these kids “the floor” to speak about something they care about so deeply and to take part in this process of citizenship.

[redacted] asked me to provide the attached copy of their presentation for those who were absent or unable to hear [redacted] wants to be sure that all decision makers in the closed session meeting will have heard or read their presentation.

I also want to offer that my husband and I will certainly join an event committee to help make these inclusive events a success should the board adopt such modifications. I am happy to rally more families to help, too, and show these kids that we can all come together within our school community to make these events welcoming and fun for everyone!

Thank you for your time, efforts and caring considerations that support our River School. They do not go unnoticed in our family and we appreciate you each and all.

Sincerely,

Amy

--

Amy Williams Melton

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whichever you would prefer is fine with me, I just worry you all are missing some key info when decisions are being made by the group

On Mon, Nov 8, 2021 at 9:05 AM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Morning Ted,
I'm filling my "professional duty" list with teachers, so if I don't attend then one of my teachers will if that's okay.
Thanks,
J

On Mon, Nov 8, 2021 at 9:05 AM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:
On Fri, Nov 5, 2021 at 6:04 PM Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org> wrote:
No worries Jay, I always assume positive intent just helping to make sure everyone knows the processes. Are you able to attend or send anyone from River to our Covid meetings? Have a great weekend, Ted

On Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 1:19 PM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Hi Ted,
I called Rick on Friday and asked about who should be on the string, sorry but I was under the impression that it was only Rick and the school principals who are affected by/with siblings. I'll add you back. Perhaps this topic is on the agenda for a reminder tomorrow, but hopefully we could also add a bit of time to reinforce the standards/expectations around volunteers as well. Just would like to see where we are in terms of the new guidance language and our practices at all sites.
Thanks,
J

On Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 12:59 PM Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Hey Jay,

I'm hearing that there may have been a positive covid case last week at River. I don't think that I received a text so I wanted to check and make sure that you all were aware of the protocol.

Thanks, Ted

--
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020
Thank you sooo much!!

**Melissa Anderson, LVN**  
School Nurse  
Carmel River School  
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Nov 5, 2021, at 1:49 PM, Dan Paul <dpaul@carmelunified.org> wrote:

I confirmed he will be here and can do it.  
He may stop by to have a quiet conversation about the project.  
I told him to di cu it only with you or Jay

Dan

On Fri, Nov 5, 2021 at 1:44 PM Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org> wrote:  
Oh yes your right. I mean for him to paint on the 22nd.

Thanks so much!

**Melissa Anderson, LVN**  
School Nurse  
Carmel River School  
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Nov 5, 2021, at 1:40 PM, Dan Paul <dpaul@carmelunified.org> wrote

Hi Melissa,  
I think your date are off by a week  
Our painter has not requested the time off so I'll double check that he doesn't intend to be gone and he can do it all in one day

Dan

On Fri, Nov 5, 2021 at 1:31 PM Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org> wrote:  
Hey Dan,  
Jay shared with me that you guys will help the PTA with painting of the staff room. We super appreciate that! Our plan is to have it done when they return from thanksgiving break (our gift to staff. It’s a surprise so no one other than jay knows). We planned to spend the 13th and 14th cleaning out the room. Is there any way it can be painted on the 15th and we can come back in on the 16th to finish things up?

Let us know.

Thank you!
Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

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Dan Paul
Director of Facilities and Transportation
Carmel Unified School District
831 624 6311

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Dan Paul
Director of Facilities and Transportation
Carmel Unified School District
831 624 6311

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Hi Corinne,
No problem, it'll be covered in field trips which includes not only trips but "entrance fees," which while on site I'm sure the pta will support, but you're correct about timing, it'll be a while before pta can cut the check.
Thanks,
J

On Tue, Nov 2, 2021 at 7:27 PM Corinne Bonynge <cbonynge@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Hi Melissa and Jay,
I want to fill you in on a complicated communication that I had with the Ohlone Sisters today in case it becomes an issue.
Back in August, I scheduled for them to come present about the Rumsen Tribe to our 4th grade classes in the garden after lunch on Thursday, November 4.
They never mentioned a price, I didn't ask about the price, I didn't know there was a fee. I thought it was just a family wanting to share their culture.
Today, (two days before the presentation), Desiree asked if I want an invoice. I told her that I didn't know there was a fee, how much is it? I told her that I need an invoice ASAP so that I can get the funding approved and that I don't think that I can have her check ready by Thursday. She responded with an invoice for $500. I told her that I wish I had received the invoice several weeks ago, this is very last minute. She told me that I should have known there was a fee because they presented to the 4th grade class and didn't I talk to the 4th grade teacher about the experience? I asked her if the PTA can mail her a check once it's approved, maybe next week. She hasn't responded yet. I submitted the invoice and request to the PTA today, but I know it's not reasonable to expect anything by Thursday.
My concern is what if the payment is not approved? If so, I would need to cancel before Thursday.
I'm sorry that this happened, but I think it was unprofessional of them to ask if I want an invoice two days before, which is the first time payment was even mentioned. I heard from Kim that the presentation is great. I don't want to upset them but should I keep the appointment? Should I reschedule to allow time for approval, or assume that the funding is there? I respect that the PTA needs time and has yet to decide so I'm not sure what to do.
-Corinne

--
Corinne Bonynge
Teacher
Carmel River Elementary School.

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Re: [riverspecialists] [riverallstaff] [cusdallstaff] Monterey County Indoor Face Covering Mandate Begins Friday, November 5

From: Melissa Anderson <manderson@carmelunified.org>  Tue, Nov 2, 2021 at 11:42 AM PDT (GMT-07:00)
To: Erinn Barca-Hall <ebarcahall@carmelunified.org>; Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>

I will get an answer for you.

Melissa Anderson, LVN
School Nurse
Carmel River School
(831) 624-4609 Ext. 2293

On Mon, Nov 1, 2021 at 6:49 PM Erinn Barca-Hall <ebarcahall@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Does this change the testing to be unmasked at a concert protocol for December?

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Je ica Hull jhull@carmelunified org
Date: November 1, 2021 at 4 25 41 PM PDT
To: Je ica Hull jhull@carmelunified org
Subject: [riverspecialists] [riverallstaff] [cusdallstaff] Monterey County Indoor Face Covering Mandate Begins Friday, November 5
Reply To: jhull@carmelunified org

Good afternoon CUSD staff,

You may have heard news reports that the Monterey County indoor face covering ordinance has now triggered a mask mandate after Monterey County’s transmission rate is being reported as in the "substantial" tier by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Enforcement of the mandate will begin on Friday, November 5. The mandate will remain in effect for 30 days or until the Monterey County Board of Supervisors ends it.

In September, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors approved an indoor mask ordinance that would be triggered when the county’s COVID-19 transmission rate is considered high or substantial according to the CDC data.

The ordinance requires all residents, both in cities and unincorporated areas, to wear facial coverings indoors with some exemptions:
- When people are in their own homes
- If alone or with members of their household in a closed room, office or vehicle
- When taking part in an activity where masks cannot be worn such as eating or swimming
- Where a mask would impede a medical or cosmetic procedure
- At meetings or gatherings where all vaccinated persons show proof of vaccination and unvaccinated persons wear face coverings at all times other than when eating or drinking.

For CUSD campuses and office spaces, this means our current face covering requirement (any unvaccinated person must wear a face covering when around others) remains in place (face coverings are already required by all any time students are present, no matter vaccination status, by California Department of Public Health).
We will continue to update you on the status of this mandate when the county’s transmission rate decreases and/or if ended by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors.

Jessica Hull (she/her/hers)
Director of Communications and Community Relations
Carmel Unified School District
P.O. Box 222700, Carmel, CA 93922
jhull@carmelunified.org
office (831) 624 1546 ext  2022
cell (209) 679-4858
CalSPRA President-elect
NSPRA Southwest Region Front-Runner 2021

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Board member visit

From: Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>  
To: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>; Connie Weilenmann <cweilenmann@carmelunified.org>; Susan Roberts <sroberts@carmelunified.org>  
Cc: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  

Hello All,

Seaberry Nachbar will be attending the River PTA meeting on Thursday.

Thank you!

Tricia Zarevich (she/her/hers)
Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. Box 22700, Carmel, CA 93922
tzarevich@carmelunified.org
office (831) 624 1546 ext 2021
Fax (831) 626-4052

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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Re: Anti Semitic Speech by Students

From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  
To: Jay Marden <jmadden@carmelunified.org>  
Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 6:59 PM PST (GMT-08:00)

Sounds good Jay, there are a couple of possible Title IX statements here also that we will need to investigate. Have a good weekend and yes that was a crazy game. Ted

On Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 1:44 PM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Ted,
Let's talk next week about this if you're working, hopefully not too much, I'll be on the clock next week, not the entire week, but a portion thereof.
Congrats on the crazy Chiefs victory.
J

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Melissa Ullom [redacted]
Date: Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 12:29 PM
Subject: Re: Anti Semitic Speech by Students
To: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org>
Cc: Michael Ullom [redacted] Michelle DiGirolamo [redacted] Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>

Jay,

With all due respect, [redacted] will have to walk past Nurse Melissa Anderson's office to get to your office, and you and the rest of the PTA executive board refused to make a request to be invited to the Father-Daughter Family dance. Even if it is not your intention, [redacted] may feel intimidated.

We would like a neutral third party to interview [redacted] I also would like one of us to be present as [redacted] [redacted]

Michelle already addressed the issues of [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

Sincerely,
Melissa

On Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 11:48 AM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Michael,
As I shared with Melissa, the incident she brought to our attention is being addressed. I was not aware of the bathroom incident that you've described. Please let me know when this occurred. Regarding such reports, school protocol is to speak to both students about such incidents separately as part of any investigation. The same holds true if [redacted] were called [redacted] which is entirely unacceptable and a violation of school and district policy. Also as protocol, school administrators daily meet with students when conducting such investigations and interviews, and without parents present. In order to fairly and justly navigate such issues, meeting with students alone is a right administrators exercise. I'm happy to talk on the phone about this practice if you'd like to call me. Perhaps hearing about the practice directly from me would ease any concern you may have about such conversations. In the interim, please know that our school staff is wholly committed to educating our students about character, equality and equity, and we employ a number of resources and programs to assist us in this goal. There is also much data that I could share with your that demonstrates our success in this regard should you be interested.

Sincerely,
Jay Marden
Principal

On Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 10:15 AM Michael Ullom [redacted] wrote:
My apologies for being late to this email chain, I've been preparing for show cause motions yesterday and responding to the gravity of what has occurred is something that takes time for me to conjure a thoughtful response.
statements are accurate (the shame of not having a response to defend Jewish friends rings the bell of truth for me, along with his consistent character), and saying "Hanukkah is bad" is a hell of a statement to hear from a [redacted]. I appreciate that the speaker does not have an adult's experiences to measure its meaning. The fact that it was a child who said it does not minimize the hurt that Jewish children could have felt from it, nor did it stop the realization of my children that it was not ok and that they had a duty to speak out. The contents of the speech includes prejudice against a religious holiday and by extension it's practitioners. It's understood that denigrating a holiday denigrates those who celebrate it, which is why every few years I hear claims about the "war on Christmas". Hate speech as defined by 1st Amendment Analysis is also by no means the only situation where restraint on speech is acceptable by schools under *in loco parentis*.

Measuring whether or not it is abusive or threatening enough speech to qualify under 1st Amendment Analysis standards for governmental action, it's speech from non-Jewish students that rightfully would make Jewish students feel unwelcome at school, contrary to what I understood to be the values promoted for its students, and not something I expect to be dismissed. Frankly, as children have less constitutional rights, this is more easily addressable by action from the school. It's speech that can be corrected by the school, and should be addressed. Hiding behind the often lax requirements of the law as a decision making process promotes a lowest common denominator of response and I am hopeful that is not what is happening here.

It's also speech that frankly, after two years of living in Austria and seeing the scars still present, led to a long discussion on the Holocaust on Wednesday and why we don't talk this way about people who are different than us or say that things we don't understand that are different are bad. Hate gets its start somewhere, but there is no reason to accept it being normalized from peers at school. My understanding is that my kids "like" [redacted] and hold him in regard. There may be another story, as I understand that this is the same [redacted].

My mother was an elementary school teacher and a school librarian. I appreciate that we are learning how to interact with each other at school and experience each other's differences and that figuring out this as kids can be difficult.

I won't be sitting by while that happens to my child and if I hear that being made unwelcome I will be an advocate.

I expect the school and its employees, as representatives of the state with the grave responsibility of educating our children, to promote a culture of inclusion and acceptance of their peers. We're not asking for a child to be disciplined. We *are* asking to ensure that children understand why statements such as these denigrate their peers, that prejudicial statements are not something accepted at Carmel River, and request your help in making that happen.

My understanding is that parents are encouraged to share their cultural experiences in class at times, and a presentation on the harm that speech can cause with an age appropriate understanding of historical events caused by harmful speech is something I'd be interested in exploring and something I believe would be beneficial to children to learn where speech such as this can lead in the long run.

Respectfully,

Michael Ullom

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Virus-free. www.avast.com

On Thu, Dec 16, 2021 at 10:37 AM Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Melissa,
I will investigate this with the classroom teacher. As protocol, please know that potential disciplinary issues are addressed with students and parents, but we do not convene meetings between families to address such concerns of this nature. If true as described, this would definitely be a "teachable moment" as you referenced. We do need to be careful in qualifying what you've described as "hate speech" given how young these children are and the definition of hate speech: "abusive or threatening speech or writing that expresses prejudice against a particular group, especially on the basis of race, religion, or sexual orientation." We are committed to ensuring that River
School is a physically and emotionally safe and welcoming environment for all of our students, and I can assure you we will continue to work toward that end.

Thanks,
Jay Marden

On Wed, Dec 15, 2021 at 8:54 PM Melissa Ullom wrote:

Dear Jay, Ted, and Michelle,

This evening my told me that as they were walking from class to the Santa event at school today and two children in front of him were speaking to each other, said “Hanukkah is bad,” and said “Hanukkah is stupid.” didn’t say anything to them says didn’t know what to do feels badly now.

Based on the class list, I believe this was . The class list doesn’t have any information about parents or contact information.

This evening I went to the CUSD board meeting to try to advocate for DEI education for teachers, staff, and students. However the meeting sat in recess until sheriffs arrived to take away anti maskers/anti vaccine protestors and then I left. I put this note at the desk of the record keeper.

I would like to arrange a meeting between the families so that we can set things right. I hope the kids can learn how hateful and dangerous this kind of speech is. We are not Jews, so perhaps there can be a facilitator to help the conversation.

I spoke to my children about anti semitism and the Holocaust. They have a plan of how they can react if they hear hate speech again.

This is one of several incidences with these two specific boys which Michelle has already addressed. Ted is the coordinator for non-discrimination, and I hope Jay can arrange a meeting to turn this into a teachable moment. Pleas help me accomplish this.

Sincerely,
Melissa
PUBLIC COMMENT

I would like to share the following comments:

Hello, I am Melissa Ullom. I would like the CUSD to implement diversity, equity, and inclusion training for Carmel River. Just today my [redacted] that “Hanukkah is bad.” “Hanukkah is stupid.” by two of their classmates. One of them is the child of your employee. This is a red flag. We need to educate about inclusivity to stop hate.

★ Please give your input card to Tricia Zarevich, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent prior to leaving the meeting.
On Friday, December 10, 2021, 4:22 PM, tmuir wrote:

I have attached the denial from the 9th District Court for those interested in reading how the court has interpreted things so far.

On Friday, December 10, 2021 at 11:00:33 AM UTC-8 wrote:

Nancy,

I appreciate your thoughtfulness about the issue in regards to religious representation in the schools. It is definitely an important topic to be discussed with all sensitivity. I’ve taught overseas in various educational systems, some of which allow for actual religious education courses in public schools. Said courses allowed for anyone from a specific religion to come into the classroom and teach about their religion with the purpose of exposing children to various faiths. In this same way, the tradition of Hanukkah was taught just last week in the River classrooms by one of the teacher’s aides, (sorry I forgot her name), which is a beautiful way to share both a culture and a religion in the classroom. That was a very special representation that I was particularly pleasantly surprised was allowed in school. I believe that allowance clearly shows that the the school and the district are very open and welcoming of various religious and cultural representations within our community. As a Christian myself I have never had the opportunity to come into a classroom and teach about the religious significance of Christmas and not just Santa and presents. In the same way welcoming all faiths to come in and teach about holidays and traditions serves to garner respect and understanding of the cultures and faiths around them.

As to a Christmas tree and it’s symbolism of Christianity, although its become a symbol of Christian celebration, please see this link from the History Channel regarding its various meanings and history. I totally understand your thoughtful consideration as to whether or not it is appropriate to hang a Menorah on a Christmas tree. You are not alone in this balance of faith and popular culture. All that to say, I do hope you find a way to participate in this event, and to feel welcomed by the community.

Sincerely,

Noelle Coetzee

On Fri, Dec 10, 2021 at 8:56 AM wrote:

All,

I just got the sad news from the PTA President that all menorahs (Kinara, Hanukkah, any other religious minority symbol) are banned from the PTA Christmas Tree Lighting unless it follows her parameters. Her parameters were that an item has to fit inside a lunch bag and decorate the tree.
I think everyone knows that menorahs just don't fit completely inside lunch paper bags. Maybe some people have smaller ones, but unlike Christmas tree ornaments, they aren't sold with the purpose of being small. So making that a parameter bans most or all menorahs.

More importantly, I think everyone knows that menorahs aren't used to decorate Christmas trees. It's not sharing culture to tell Jews to hang menorahs from Christmas trees. Indeed, it is demeaning to a Jew to tell them to use a 2000 year old symbol of their 4000 year old religion & culture as a mere tiny decoration of a huge Christmas tree. I understand that some interfaith families where at least one parent is Christian may use such Christmas ornaments as a token to their Jewish family members but the purpose of the tree is 100% Christian. For a Jewish family, directing them to hang a menorah on a Christmas tree is akin to telling them to endorse Christianity as the superior religion. I will not do it and am offended by even the suggestion of it. So making that one of the parameters is equivalent to banning all menorahs.

**If you want to include Jewish or other minorities, please do not hang a menorah or another minority's symbol on a Christmas tree.**

I had a lot of faith in our PTA President as a fellow religious minority, respected community member, and parent of my children's friends, who admitted that she understood my point when we talked last week and had previously given her unequivocal support and approval for the menorah. So her decision that I received this morning greatly disappointed me. If was 100% her own decision since Jay Marden and Ted Knight have since admitted that they have no authority at all in the PTA and that the PTA President could do whatever she wanted. She decided to exclude minorities from participating tonight. If fellow religious minorities won't stick up for each other, who will?

So do *not* being a menorah tonight. The superintendent said he can take legal or Board action against parents if they violate the PTA parameters above. The information that I had received last week from the PTA president, the principal, and the superintendent that menorahs are okay is completely different than the information that I received this morning.

That said, I haven't decided what to do tonight (or moving forward). I have been told that the public sidewalk is a public space for free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment where I could display a menorah, Kinara, or any other minority symbol to try to have something there to alert more families of this issue of discrimination. I guess that if I get enough community interest in that option (me and at least 4 other people who will walk with me), I'll come with other families at 4:15 and stay until 4:45 so we can alert the families who are coming to the Christmas Tree Lighting of this issue. We can each hold a menorah, Kinara, other minority symbol, or a sign to let people know. If I get enough interest from families who can guarantee that they will make it, I will post again just to let everyone else know. If not, I'm not sure that I have any other options. For the time being, a very sweet community family who lives across from the school on 15th is displaying a menorah in support all day today, so please show your support!

All the kindness that I've received in the past two weeks by community leaders, friends, fellow parents, and will never be forgotten! And I still believe that we can make a difference. So please reach out to Nancy Appel with the Anti-Defamation League. If you're unfamiliar with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), it is a century-old anti-hate organization with the founding mission to counter antisemitism and bigotry of all forms. Nancy’s email is NAp @adl.org. Please contact her Nancy i gathering a group of parents, community members, and leaders who can then together work to have more power in the PTA and will ensure that this discrimination never happens again to anyone. We can make a difference!

Please forward this email to let other families know. I don't want anyone getting in trouble for bringing a minority symbol that they don't want on the Christmas tree. The irony of it all is that today is Human Rights Day where all human rights are supposed to be respected. I was hoping for a multicultural and inclusive event today, but tonight's Christmas tree only event will be neither.

Warmest regards,

Shel Lyons
PTA member and River mom

RiverParent is an internal email group for sharing resources and information in the River School community. Neither CUSD nor the River School PTA endorses or promotes any activity or information presented in this email. You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Group "RiverParent" group.
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN JOSE DIVISION

MICHELE LYONS, on her own behalf, and on behalf of her minor children, C.L., M.L., S.L., and R.L.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT; TED KNIGHT, in his official capacity as Superintendent of Carmel Unified School District; and JAY MARDEN, in his official capacity as Principal of Carmel River Elementary School,

Defendants.

ORDER DENYING PLAINTIFFS’ APPLICATION FOR A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER

[Re: ECF 2]

Plaintiff Michele Lyons, acting on behalf of herself and her minor children, sues the Carmel Unified School District (“District”) and two of its officials, claiming that Defendants endorse Christian beliefs and traditions while disfavoring those of other religions. Ms. Lyons’ children allegedly have been made to feel like outsiders while attending school in the District, because they are Jewish rather than Christian. Plaintiffs assert claims for violations of their federal constitutional rights under the First and Fourteenth Amendments, seeking injunctive and declaratory relief only.

This order addresses Plaintiffs’ application for a temporary restraining order (“TRO”), which was filed in conjunction with the complaint on December 7, 2021. Plaintiffs seek injunctive relief that would allow Ms. Lyons to display a 6-foot inflatable menorah at an after-school tree lighting event scheduled for December 10, 2021. Defendants specially appeared and filed opposition on the morning of December 9, 2021. The Court held a hearing on December 9, 2021 at 12:30 p.m. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Court denied the TRO application on the record.

This order explains more fully why the TRO application is DENIED.
I. INTRODUCTION

Ms. Lyons enrolled her four children in the District in 2018. See Lyons Decl. ¶ 2, ECF 2-2. Three of the children have attended Carmel River Elementary School, also referred to in the papers as Carmel River School (“the School”), which is in the District. See id. In Ms. Lyons’ view, the School’s faculty shows a marked preference for Christianity over other religions, as classroom discussions and parties allegedly are limited to Christmas, Easter, and other Christian holidays, without similar discussions or celebrations of non-Christian holidays such as Hanukkah and Passover. See id. ¶¶ 3-8. Ms. Lyons asserts that when teachers do refer to Hanukkah, they characterize it as “an Israeli holiday,” whereas Christmas is characterized as “an American holiday.” Id. ¶ 6. At one School event, the music teacher allegedly introduced the song “I had a little dreidel” as “an Israeli song,” even though the song was in English. Id. ¶ 7. Ms. Lyons understands the teachers to be implying that Hanukkah is less American than Christmas, and that Ms. Lyons and her children are less American than others because they are Jewish. See id.

The School’s Parent Teacher Association (“PTA”) has scheduled a tree lighting event at the School for December 10, 2021. See Marden Decl. ¶¶ 5-6. The event will involve decorating an existing tree growing on School grounds. See id. ¶¶ 5-7. The PTA obtained approval for the event pursuant to written policies and regulations governing use of school facilities. See id. ¶ 6. The tree to be decorated has not previously been the used for a tree lighting ceremony. See id. ¶ 8. After the conclusion of the tree lighting event, all decorations will be removed from the tree before school begins on the following Monday. See id. ¶ 9.

Upon learning of the tree lighting, Ms. Lyons sought permission to display a 6-foot inflatable menorah at the event. Ms. Lyons says that the PTA President agreed to the display but indicated that the School Principal’s approval was required. See Lyons Decl. ¶ 16. Over the next few days, Ms. Lyons made several requests to the School Principal, Jay Marden, and the District Superintendent, Ted Knight, for permission to display a menorah at the tree lighting. See id. ¶ 19. She received numerous emails during that period, including a December 2 email from Principal Marden stating that he was “fully supportive of including a Menorah or any other secular or religious symbol at the tree lighting.” Id. ¶ 20 & Exh. C.
On December 3, 2021, Principal Marden sent out a schoolwide email with a link to a flyer for the “River School, PTA Tree Lighting.” Id. ¶ 27 & Exh. F. The flyer stated that, “We encourage students and their families to decorate the tree with an item that reflects their families values, heritage and/or faith. Please ensure, due to capacity limitations, that the item can fit inside a lunch, paper bag.” Id. Exh. F.

Ms. Lyons does not own a menorah that can fit inside a paper lunch bag and she does not believe that a menorah is an appropriate Christmas tree ornament. See Lyons Decl. ¶¶ 30-34. Based on Principal Marden’s earlier email that he was “fully supportive” of inclusion of menorahs in the tree lighting event, Ms. Lyons “deduce[d]” that menorahs did not fall within the size restriction on ornaments. See id. ¶ 35. Ms. Lyons created a flyer that is nearly identical in appearance to the original flyer for the tree lighting event, but she replaced the heading “River School, PTA Tree Lighting” with the heading “River Families Menorah Lighting.” Id. & Exh. I. In place of the language on the original flyer inviting students and families to decorate the tree, Ms. Lyons’ flyer contains the following language: “We encourage students and their families to bring menorahs that reflect their families values, heritage and/or faith. Students can also bring a drawing of a menorah, Kinara, Hanukkiah, or any multi-pronged candelabra.” Id. Ms. Lyons emailed her flyer to other School families on December 5, 2021. See id. ¶¶ 36-37.

Superintendent Knight emailed Ms. Lyons on December 5, 2021, stating that he expects her to comply with the PTA’s parameters for participation in the tree lighting event, those parameters do not include a large blowup menorah, his decision is final, and she should follow Principal Marden’s direction on the issue. See Lyons Decl. ¶ 40 & Exh. J. Principal Marden emailed Ms. Lyons on December 6, 2021, stating that there will be no menorah lighting and that the School’s families would be instructed to disregard the flyer advertising a menorah lighting. See Lyons Decl. ¶ 42 & Exh. K. Principal Marden sent an email to the entire school, stating that the PTA tree lighting will go forward as previously advertised, that the PTA is not hosting a menorah lighting, and that an “altered invitation” containing false information had been sent out without approval. Lyons Decl. ¶ 46 & Exh. L.

On December 7, 2021, Plaintiffs’ counsel emailed Superintendent Knight, asking for a
“yes” or “no” response to the question of whether Ms. Lyons may display the inflatable menorah at the tree lighting. See Compl. Exh. 1. Counsel for the District responded by email on the same date, stating that the tree lighting is being held by the PTA, not the District, and that it will take place on School grounds pursuant to the PTA’s request to utilize District facilities under the Civic Center Act. See id. The District’s counsel indicated that he interpreted Ms. Lyons’ request to display an inflatable menorah as a request for use of District facilities under the Civic Center Act. See id. Counsel stated that Ms. Lyons could submit a formal request for such use, but the District does not grant requests for multiple use of School facilities at the same time. See id.

Plaintiffs filed this lawsuit on December 7, 2021, asserting claims against the District, Superintendent Knight in his official capacity, and Principal Marden in his official capacity. See Compl., ECF 1. The complaint alleges the following claims: (1) Establishment Clause – First Amendment; (2) Freedom of Speech – First Amendment; (3) Free Exercise – First Amendment; (4) Equal Protection – Fourteenth Amendment; and (5) Retaliation – First Amendment. See id.

Plaintiffs also filed the present TRO application, seeking injunctive relief that will allow Ms. Lyons to display an inflatable menorah at the tree lighting on December 10, 2021.

II. LEGAL STANDARD

The standard for issuing a temporary restraining order is identical to the standard for issuing a preliminary injunction. Stuhlberg Int’l Sales Co., Inc. v. John D. Brush & Co., 240 F.3d 832, 839 n.7 (9th Cir. 2001); Lockheed Missile & Space Co. v. Hughes Aircraft, 887 F. Supp. 1320, 1323 (N.D. Cal. 1995). An injunction is a matter of equitable discretion and is “an extraordinary remedy that may only be awarded upon a clear showing that the plaintiff is entitled to such relief.” Winter v. Natural Resources Defense Council, Inc., 555 U.S. 7, 22 (2008).

A plaintiff seeking preliminary injunctive relief must establish “[1] that he is likely to succeed on the merits, [2] that he is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary relief, [3] that the balance of equities tips in his favor, and [4] that an injunction is in the public interest.” Winter, 555 U.S. at 20. “[I]f a plaintiff can only show that there are serious questions going to the merits – a lesser showing than likelihood of success on the merits – then a preliminary injunction may still issue if the balance of hardships tips sharply in the plaintiff’s favor, and the
other two Winter factors are satisfied.” *Friends of the Wild Swan v. Weber*, 767 F.3d 936, 942 (9th Cir. 2014) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted).

Where a party seeks mandatory injunctive relief, “she must establish that the law and facts clearly favor her position, not simply that she is likely to succeed.” *Garcia v. Google, Inc.*, 786 F.3d 733, 740 (9th Cir. 2015) (emphasis added). An injunction is mandatory if it “orders a responsible party to take action.” *Marlyn Nutraceuticals, Inc. v. Mucos Pharma GmbH & Co.*, 571 F.3d 873, 879 (9th Cir. 2009) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). Mandatory injunctive relief goes beyond prohibitory injunctive relief, which only “prohibits a party from taking action and preserve[s] the status quo pending a determination of the action on the merits.” Id. at 878 (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). “In general, mandatory injunctions are not granted unless extreme or very serious damage will result[,] and are not issued in doubtful cases.” *Park Vill. Apartment Tenants Ass’n v. Mortimer Howard Tr.*, 636 F.3d 1150, 1160 (9th Cir. 2011) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted).

III. DISCUSSION

Plaintiffs frame their TRO application as seeking prohibitory injunctive relief, asking that the Court enjoin Defendants from “[t]aking any action or applying any policy or procedure that discourages, intimidates, blocks, or prevents Plaintiffs from displaying a 6-foot, inflatable menorah at the Carmel River School tree lighting on December 10, 2021 within reasonable proximity of the tree that is going to be lit and decorated.” Prop. Order at 2, ECF 2-3. Defendants argue that the TRO application actually seeks mandatory injunctive relief, because Plaintiffs ask that Defendants be ordered to allow Ms. Lyons to display her menorah at the tree lighting. Defendants argue that such an order would not simply maintain the status quo. The Court agrees. The currently planned event is a tree lighting, with community participation limited to decorating the tree. An order requiring Defendants to modify the event to allow Ms. Lyons to participate in a different way, by displaying a 6-foot inflatable menorah, would be a mandatory injunction. Accordingly, to demonstrate entitlement to the requested relief, Plaintiffs must show not only that they are likely to succeed on the claims asserted in the complaint, but “that the law and facts clearly favor” their position. *Garcia*, 786 F.3d 740.
As discussed below, Plaintiffs have not satisfied this heavy burden as to any of the claims alleged in the complaint, and for that reason their TRO application must be denied. Having reached this conclusion, the Court need not discuss the remaining Winter factors. Before addressing each of Plaintiffs’ claims, the Court makes two observations that apply to the complaint as a whole.

First, Defendants have suggested their only role in the tree lighting event was to approve the PTA’s request to utilize District facilities under the Civic Center Act, Cal. Educ. Code § 38130 et seq. The Civil Center Act requires public school districts to grant use of public school facilities to citizens, parent teacher associations, scout troops, and other organizations for certain purposes, including recreational meetings and religious services. See Cal. Educ. Code § 38130. Defendants’ position appears to be that the PTA decided the parameters of the tree lighting event and made the decision not to grant Ms. Lyons’ request to display the inflatable menorah.

Plaintiffs have submitted Ms. Lyons’ declaration statement that the PTA President agreed to inclusion of the menorah but deferred to Principal Marden as the final authority on the subject. See Lyons Decl. ¶ 16, ECF 2-2. Ms. Lyons states in her declaration that it is her impression, based on her interactions with the PTA President, that Principal Marden controls the PTA. See id. ¶ 17. Plaintiffs also submit evidence that an email sent to Ms. Lyons from “The PTA Board,” stating that any items brought to the tree lighting must fit within a paper lunch bag, actually was sent by School staff. See id. ¶¶ 22-23. Finally, Plaintiffs submit emails sent to Ms. Lyons from Principal Marden and Superintendent Knight advising her that the menorah would not be included in the tree lighting event. See id. ¶¶ 40-43 & Exhs. J-K. The declaration of Principal Marden, submitted by Defendants, does not refute Plaintiffs’ assertion that he controls the PTA. No declaration of Superintendent Knight is submitted. On this record, the Court finds that Plaintiffs have submitted uncontroverted evidence that Defendants were involved in the decision to exclude her proposed menorah display from the tree lighting event.

Second, the Court notes that because the only named Defendants in this suit are the District and two of its officials sued in their official capacities, Plaintiffs’ alleged constitutional violations must be pleaded and proved under the standards set forth in Monell v. Dep’t of Soc. Servs. of the
United States District Court  
Northern District of California  

City of New York, 436 U.S. 658 (1978). “The Supreme Court in Monell held that municipalities may only be held liable under section 1983 for constitutional violations resulting from official county policy or custom.” Benavidez v. Cty. of San Diego, 993 F.3d 1134, 1153 (9th Cir. 2021) (citing Monell, 436 U.S. at 694). Monell has been extended to “municipalities and other local governing bodies such as school districts.” Lytle v. Carl, 382 F.3d 978, 982 (9th Cir. 2004). Finally, “[i]n an official-capacity suit, the government entity is the real party in interest and the plaintiff must show that the entity’s policy or custom played a part in the federal law violation.” Vance v. Cty. of Santa Clara, 928 F. Supp. 993, 996 (N.D. Cal. 1996).

Plaintiffs’ complaint does not expressly mention Monell. Claim 1, brought under the Establishment Clause, alleges that Defendants have a “custom, policy, and practice of promoting and inculcating Christian beliefs by effectively banning participation in school-sponsored events for non-Christian activities.” Compl. ¶ 53. The Court therefore construes Claim 1 as a Monell claim. The remaining claims in the complaint do not expressly refer to a custom, policy, or practice. However, those claims do incorporate by reference all previously stated paragraphs. See Compl. ¶¶ 54-57. Accordingly, the Court construes all of the claims in the complaint to be asserted under Monell.

The Court next addresses each of Plaintiffs’ claims in turn.

A. Claim 1 – First Amendment Establishment Clause

Claim 1 is asserted under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The Establishment Clause protects against the “sponsorship, financial support, and active involvement of the sovereign in religious activity.” Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602, 612 (1971) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted). In Lemon, the Supreme Court articulated a three-prong test for determining whether government activity is lawful under the Establishment Clause. See id.

To be lawful, the challenged action: (1) must have a valid secular purpose; (2) its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion; and (3) it must not foster an excessive government entanglement with religion. See id.

Plaintiffs contend that the tree lighting does not have a valid, secular purpose (prong 1), because it is intended to encourage the display of religious objects on a Christmas tree. Moreover,
Plaintiffs contend that the event advances Christian religions over other religious (prong 2) by allowing display of Christian holiday symbols – the tree and ornaments – but banning display of non-Christian holiday symbols such as a menorah. Third, Plaintiffs argue that Defendants have been sufficiently involved in the process of planning the tree lighting event that they are excessively entangled with the religious aspects of the event (prong 3).

Defendants argue that they have not referred to the tree lighting event as involving a “Christmas” tree. Even assuming that the event is viewed as involving the decoration and display of a Christmas tree, however, that would not implicate the Establishment Clause. The Supreme Court has held that “[t]he Christmas tree, unlike the menorah, is not itself a religious symbol.”


“Although Christmas trees once carried religious connotations, today they typify the secular celebration of Christmas.” *Id.*

In light of the Supreme Court’s definitive statement on the issue, Plaintiffs have not shown that the law and facts clearly favor their position on their Establishment Clause claim.

**B. Claim 2 – First Amendment Free Speech**

In Claim 2, Plaintiff alleges that Defendants have violated Ms. Lyons’ free speech rights under the First Amendment by denying her request to bring a menorah to the tree lighting event.

“The standards that we apply to determine whether a State has unconstitutionally excluded a private speaker from use of a public forum depend on the nature of the forum.” *Good News Club v. Milford Cent. Sch.*, 533 U.S. 98, 106 (2001). “When the State establishes a limited public forum, the State is not required to and does not allow persons to engage in every type of speech.” *Id.* “The State’s power to restrict speech, however, is not without limits,” as “[t]he restriction must not discriminate against speech on the basis of viewpoint, and the restriction must be reasonable in light of the purpose served by the forum.” *Id.* (internal quotation marks and citation omitted).

The parties dispute whether the tree on School grounds constitutes a limited public forum. Plaintiffs argue that the School is a limited public forum, and that Defendants unlawfully
discriminated against Ms. Lyons’ proposed expression on the basis of religion. Defendants argue that the tree site is a nonpublic forum. Even assuming that the tree site is a limited public forum, however, Plaintiffs have not demonstrated that the law and facts clearly favor their position that Defendants are discriminating against Ms. Lyons on the basis of viewpoint and that the preclusion of the inflatable menorah is unreasonable in light of the purpose served by the limited public forum. As discussed above, the purpose of inviting the community onto school grounds is to celebrate the holidays with a tree lighting ceremony. Defendants have imposed what they contend are reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions on the celebration. Plaintiffs have not cited any case establishing that they may insist on participation in the celebration in a different manner, i.e., by Ms. Lyons’ display of a 6-foot inflatable menorah.

*Lamb’s Chapel,* cited by Plaintiffs in their brief and at oral argument, does not support their position. *See Lamb’s Chapel v. Ctr. Moriches Union Free Sch. Dist.*, 508 U.S. 384 (1993). In that case, a school district opened its facilities for “social, civic, and recreational” purposes, but banned use of the facilities for religious purposes. The Supreme Court held that the denial of a church’s request to use the facilities to show films on family values and child-rearing because they were religion oriented, where such films otherwise would have been permitted, ran afoul of the First Amendment. *See id.* at 393-94. *Lamb* did not hold or even suggest that the church would have been permitted to show its films at the event of another group that had reserved the facilities for a particular date. Defendants point out that they have offered Ms. Lyons the opportunity to reserve School grounds for her own event, at which she may display the menorah. Ms. Lyons, however, wishes to participate in the tree lighting event by displaying her menorah.

Plaintiffs have not demonstrated that the law and facts clearly favor their position on the Free Speech claim.

### C. Claim 3 – First Amendment Free Exercise Clause

Claim 3 is asserted under the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment. “A person asserting a free exercise claim must show that the government action in question substantially burdens the person’s practice of her religion.” *Jones v. Williams*, 791 F.3d 1023, 1031 (9th Cir. 2015). Plaintiffs have not explained how disallowing Ms. Lyons’ display of an inflatable menorah
at a particular event, the tree lighting scheduled for December 10, 2021, substantially burdens
Plaintiffs’ ability exercise their faith. They certainly have not demonstrated that the law and facts
clearly favor their position on their Free Exercise Clause claim.

D. Claim 4 – Fourteenth Amendment Equal Protection Clause

Claim 4 is asserted under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
Plaintiffs’ TRO application does not address this claim.

E. Claim 5 – First Amendment Retaliation

In Claim 5, Plaintiffs allege that Defendants retaliated against Ms. Lyons for exercising her
First Amendment rights. “To state a First Amendment retaliation claim, a plaintiff must plausibly
allege that (1) he was engaged in a constitutionally protected activity, (2) the defendant’s actions
would chill a person of ordinary firmness from continuing to engage in the protected activity and
(3) the protected activity was a substantial or motivating factor in the defendant’s conduct.” Capp
v. Cty. of San Diego, 940 F.3d 1046, 1053 (9th Cir. 2019) (internal quotation marks and citation
omitted). Plaintiffs contend that Defendants have retaliated against her for constitutionally
protected conduct, including requesting to display a menorah at the tree lighting. Plaintiffs believe
that such retaliation included denying her request to display the menorah, humiliating her by
directing School families to disregard her flyer, and threatening her with discipline if she exercises
her First Amendment rights.

This record does not “clearly favor” Plaintiffs’ interpretation of events. The evidence
before the Court gives rise to an alternative inference that Defendants were simply enforcing what
they perceived to be reasonable time, place, and manner limitations on the tree lighting event.
Moreover, in order to prevail on this claim under Monell, Plaintiffs must show that the alleged
retaliatory conduct was pursuant to a custom, policy, or practice of the District. Plaintiff has not
identified a custom, policy, or practice with adequate specificity.

F. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiffs’ TRO application is DENIED. This ruling reflects
only the Court’s determination that at this stage of the proceedings, Plaintiffs have not met the
high standard required to obtain mandatory injunctive relief. The denial of the TRO application is
without prejudice to an application for a preliminary injunction, or to any future appropriate motion on a more developed record.

Plaintiffs’ allegations of Defendants’ systemic endorsement of Christian beliefs and traditions, while disfavoring those of other religions, are very serious. Plaintiffs’ allegations regarding the feelings of exclusion experienced by the minor children are particularly troubling. The Court has formed no opinion as to the potential merit of Plaintiffs’ broader claims, which go beyond their request for injunctive relief relating to the tree lighting.

IV. ORDER

The TRO application is DENIED.

Dated: December 10, 2021

[Signature]

BETH LABSON FREEMAN
United States District Judge
Fire truck Rides.

From: Majo Spencer  
To: Jay Marden <jmarden@carmelunified.org> 

Tue, Dec 7, 2021 at 11:27 AM PST (GMT-08:00)

Jay,
If you feel this is something people will enjoy please send it to the parents. If not no worries.
We thought at the pta board meeting that this will be fun but we have been swap by everything else.
Thanks for all you do.
Majo

Sent from my iPhone

Attachments

- Holiday Light Rides River.png
Dear River families,

Please see the attached flyer for more information about the River School Menorah Lighting this Friday at 4:30 PM on the lower playground (at the PTA lighting). Please come to the already existing PTA lighting and bring a menorah (or two!) of any size that represents your family’s culture, values, and/or faith. If you don’t have a menorah and want to participate, please just have your family make a menorah (or Kinara or Hanukkah) drawing for the menorah table and we will tape it to the edges of the table. It can be a multi-pronged candelabra with any number of candles (e.g., Kwanzaa Kinara has 7, Hanukkah has 9).

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1-yiOML2adjyrZsHB01N4kYqNixyjJbfTLhUmtxVMMI/edit?usp=drivesdk

Please forward this invitation to all other River families and staff who may not have access to this Google group so they know there will be a menorah lighting at the PTA lighting. If you received this invite as a forward from someone else and want to join the River Families Google Group, please go to:

https://groups.google.com/g/riverparents

Our family does not own Xmas ornaments, felt extremely uncomfortable with sacrilegiously changing a Hanukkah object into a Xmas ornament, and was offended that the only way to share a culture or heritage was Xmas tree decorating. So I decided to make a positive difference and make the PTA lighting also a Menorah Lighting so it’s more inclusive. If your child still feels excluded, please circulate another flyer (Diwali, Eid, etc) to add to the PTA lighting. It doesn’t need to be a December holiday. In fact, Hanukkah which is our family’s holiday, will be completely over by Friday. With both Kwanzaa and Hanukkah using multi-pronged candelabrum, though, I felt like it was the best one for our family to be inclusive. For families who don’t celebrate holidays, Human Rights Day is on the 10th so one family could do a Human Rights Day celebration. We can make a difference at River! There’s more than enough room at River lower playground for everyone to be included! Let’s make it beautiful for our kids!
Please come and support this menorah lighting at the Carmel River PTA event. If you want to do more, please email Nancy Appel, copied here, of the Anti-Defamation League and let her know that you want all kids to be and feel included at all River School events! Her email is NAppel@adl.org.

Thank you!

Warmest,

Shel Lyons
(River Parent and PTA member)

P.S. I 100% support our hard-working PTA! I just think they accidentally left out a bunch of other holidays except for Xmas so I'm just adding to it. I made the menorah lighting for 4:45 so it doesn't conflict with the tree still at 5:15. We hope families go to the ENTIRE event starting at 4:30 and get to see both lightings! Let's support River School!
Thank you for reaching out and sharing your thoughts. We have a new Director of Nutrition starting next month and I know she is passionate about student voice and working with students on meals. When she gets her, I will find a time to connect you with her as I know she will want to hear your feedback.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

On Sun, Feb 6, 2022 at 11:02 PM [redacted] wrote:
Hello Ted and Sara,
I am writing this email to inform you that over the past year, the food being served to us in the cafeteria at Carmel High School has gone from bad to worse. While some of the food is edible, we are only allowed one serving which often doesn't even get close to filling any of my friends or I up, and the normal lunches often sell out way too quickly. Time over time, we have had the same average cereal served to us; small, sense, wheat tasting bagels with watery cream cheese; one small muffin; crunchy rice with overcooked beef; gross, soggy, artificial grilled cheeses and burgers. We used to get breakfast sandwiches, pizza my heart, subway, and normal, good tasting bagels. The food, to say the least, is quite disgusting. Please, take a look at the photos attached below and get back to me on whether you would want to eat it, because we certainly don't. We hope you take this into consideration.

E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Thanks, Seaberry, I always love hearing student voices about their education.

Ted

On Wed, Feb 9, 2022 at 3:30 PM Seaberry Nachbar <snachbar@carmelunified.org> wrote:

FYI- just last night the LAUSD School Board passed a climate literacy resolution to ensure that climate literacy is taught across disciplines. Here's a short video with students and teachers talking about the importance of climate literacy.

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Hi Sara,

I am confused about this information and maybe something was mis-typed or I am misunderstanding, so I wanted to bring it to your attention.

It sounds as if children 12+ will be able to get the vaccine without the parents' permission or knowledge. It also says children 5-11 years need to be with parent, legal guardian or non-custodial adult (which is any adult) to witness.

I am NOT against the vaccine, but I am very alarmed by the removal of parental involvement. Even if California decided this is legal, I do not think CUSD should be involved in injecting children with an EUA vaccine without a parent/legal guardian's permission.

Just because the state CAN do something doesn't mean CUSD SHOULD do it. What if some kids decide to see how many shots they can get from various locations?

Thank you,
Sarah Norbraten
Dear Carmel Unified Family & Staff,

The Carmel Unified School District (CUSD), in partnership with Safeway/Albertsons Pharmacies, is pleased to provide a vaccination clinic for CUSD students and staff. This clinic will serve student from 5 year old (more information on the pediatric vaccine here) and older, as well as adult vaccination including boosters. This partnership and these clinics are an important COVID-19 mitigation strategy in our commitment to ensure that full in person learning remains in place. We are excited to partner with Safeway, Inc., who will oversee the clinic and provide the vaccination. The COVID 19 vaccine is not a requirement of in-person school attendance in California at this time, but it is recommended by our federal, state and local health offices for persons 5 and older under Emergency Use Authorization.

Details of the immunization clinic:
Feb. 4th 1st dose or booster - 3:30-6:30 pm (individuals 5yrs and older)
* The 2nd dose clinic will be held on Feb. 25th if there are enough 1st dose participants to warrant the 2nd dose clinic (our Safeway partner will make this decision after the Feb 4th clinic)

Location of the Clinic:
Carmel Middle School Cafeteria
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923

Eligible participants:
* Adults and Students 12 yrs and older
* Students 5-11 years of age (Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric vaccine). For all patients aged 5 -11 years old, signature of a parent or legal guardian is required on the consent form and a parent, guardian, or non-custodial adult must be present and witness the vaccination

Scheduling Link/QR Code (use one of these methods to register, provide consent, signup for an appointment):
CMS link or use the QR code below

Please bring the following to your appointment:
1. Filled out Consent form available for download via appointment link above. Consent form needs to be filled out and signed by a parent/guardian for 5-11 yr old participants
2. Medical and Prescription Card
3. CDC vaccine card (only need this if you’re looking to get a 2nd dose or a booster)

**5-11 yr old participants must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or non-custodial adult in addition to the legal guardian signing the consent form.**

**Billing Agreement:**

- Participants uninsured or not covered - COVID-19 Vaccine is **FREE** to all eligible participant regardless of insurance status
- Bill participants health plan for the vaccines
  - Participants - please bring your medical, prescription, and Medicare part B card to clinic

**Servicing Pharmacy/Clinic Lead Information:**

Lead Pharmacist: Bianca Khishaveh
E Bianca Khishaveh Bianca Khishaveh@alberton.com

**Linked Forms:**

- Consent & Release form English / Consent & Release form Spanish (this is mandatory for each participant)
- Notice of Privacy Practices (informational only)
- Pfizer EUA and Fact Sheet

**To ensure safety for everyone at clinic, we will do the following:**

- Our team is equipped in proper PPE gear for vaccination
- We sanitize all touch points in between patients

[Monday, Jan 31 at 119 PM]
Reminder -- Safeway Pharmacies in partnership with CUSD will be hosting a vaccination clinic this coming Friday (Feb. 4th) from 3:30-6:30 pm. at the Carmel Middle School Cafeteria If you would like to get vaccinated, receive your booster, or have your child vaccinated please sign up See information and link below

**View in ParentSquare**

*Please do not reply to this email.*
Re: ACT Rep on 1/26

From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  
Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 3:19 PM PST (GMT-08:00)  
To: Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>  
Cc: Bill Schrier <bschrier@carmelunified.org>; Cathy Truesdell <catruesdell@carmelunified.org>; Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>  

Sounds good Bill, thank you. Cathy, we will b excited to have you join us. See you soon, Ted

On Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 7:32 AM Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Thank you for the heads up Bill!
Happy Mocking!

Sara

> On Jan 24, 2022, at 6:39 AM, Bill Schrier <bschrier@carmelunified.org> wrote:
> Hi Sara and Ted,
> >
> > Just letting you know that ACT Treasurer Cathy Truesdell will appear at the upcoming board meeting. It’s high mock trial season, and I will be preparing with the team.
> >
> > Thank you,
> >
> > Bill
> >--
> >*The information contained in this email may be personal and confidential and is intended only for the recipients named above (and any of the recipient’s authorized designees). If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient of this message or of any attachments to the message, you are hereby notified that you have received this document in error and that any review, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this message, including any attachments, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original message. Thank you. **
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E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
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Hi! When do you have 30 minutes for this?

Begin forwarded message:

From: Hugo Ferlito
Date: January 19, 2022 at 9:36:55 AM PST
To: Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>
Subject: Our meeting

Hi Sara;
We are still very interested in
Meeting with you and the Superintendent.
As this has the potential to be a big event in the participation of students, we feel that your input would be important.
Regards
Hugo

Hugo J Ferlito, DDS
Chairman, Collaborations & Partnerships Committee
Awards Director
Big Sur International Marathon
From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  
To: Anne-Marie Rosen <arozen@carmelunified.org>; Karl Pallastrini <kpallastrini@carmelunified.org>; Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>; Seaberry Nachbar <snachbar@carmelunified.org>; Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org>

Sat, Jan 15, 2022 at 7:56 PM PST (GMT-08:00)

I understand some students, staff, and parents may be reaching out about [redacted]. As I shared earlier in the week, it is never a good idea to discuss personnel issues and your answer to anyone who reaches out should be that you cannot discuss personnel issues and that they need to contact staff.

Thanks, Ted

--

E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Hello Ted and Sara,...email from Stefan Meyer re [redacted]. I will get back to him. This is a personnel matter and out of the purview of the BOE.

Karl

Hi Karl!

I hope you're well. It's been way too long to not talk to you. I have seen you a few times around town driving by in your VW. It's sad not to see you around the campus. Miss you!

I'm contacting you because I do have a huge concern that affects many students and [redacted]

As you know, he teaches AP Calculus. With the AP exam right around the corner and the last portion of the course not having been taught yet, I feel like we're placing students in a very stressful situation with no announced solution. Of course, this stress is in addition to the stress of the pandemic and our current surge with Omicron.

Additionally, other parents and I haven't even been contacted by the administration about this situation and neither have the students, in any official capacity. I only know about this through my connections at the high school. I emailed Jon Lyons, but he has not responded.

This is a strange situation indeed. I don't need to know the details as to why [redacted] has been released, but other parents and I do need to know the solution to this very time sensitive matter. I hope that [redacted] could maybe even return, if possible, to maintain consistency in the curriculum. Hopefully, his infraction is not so serious as to take him out for the rest of the year. Can this maybe be resolved?

Thanks for anything you can do to help get the ball rolling with communication and a solution about this.

Again, all the best! I hope to see you in real life real soon.

Stefan

--
Mr. Mayer
Math Teacher
Carmel Middle School
smayer@carmelunified.org
831-624-2785 x3652
"I will get back to you within 24 hours of your message on Mondays through Thursdays. On the last day of a work week, expect a reply by the afternoon of the following week. Thank you! Have a great day!"

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Hi Stefan!
Good to hear from you! I hope you and yours are well! We are all good here, the [redacted] and math is going well for them with [redacted] - thank you for giving them a good foundation! [redacted] - I'll definitely let her know I heard from you.

As for Mr. Deckelman, your questions and concerns can be addressed by Dr. Knight. I'm copying him here so the two of you can connect.

Thank you for reaching out and I do hope you connect with Dr. Knight sooner than later.

Take good care and have a great long weekend,
Sara

On Jan 15, 2022, at 9:59 AM, Stefan Mayer <smayer@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Sara!

I hope you and your family are well. How are the boys doing? Is it a good year in math for them? I wonder. How's your Mom? Please, send my best wishes to her as well!

I'm contacting you because I do have a huge concern that affects many students and [redacted] and he teaches AP Calculus. With the AP exam right around the corner and the last portion of the course not having been taught yet, I feel like we're placing students in a very stressful situation with no announced solution. Of course, this stress is in addition to the stress of the pandemic and our current surge with Omicron.

Additionally, other parents and I haven't even been contacted by the administration about this situation and neither have the students, in any official capacity. I only know about this through my connections at the high school. I emailed Jon Lyons, but he has not responded.

This is a strange situation indeed. I don't need to know the details as to why Mr. Deckelman has been released, but other parents and I do need to know the solution to this very time sensitive matter. I hope that Mr. Deckelman could maybe even return, if possible, to maintain consistency in the curriculum. Hopefully, his infraction is not so serious as to take him out for the rest of the year.

Thanks for anything you can do to help get the ball rolling with communication and a solution about this. I also contacted Tess Arthur about this situation.

Again, all the best!
"I will get back to you within 24 hours of your message on Monday through Thursday. On the last day of a work week, expect a reply by the afternoon of the following week. Thanks! Have a great day!"
Hello Ted and Sara,

It looks like February 28th 12pm is what Ted has available for community meeting requests.

Let me know if that will work. I can block the entire hour if needed.

Thank you!

Tricia Zarevich (she/her/hers)
Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. Box 222700, Carmel, CA 93922
tzarevich@carmelunified.org
office (831) 624-1546 ext. 2021
Fax (831) 626-4052

On Sat, Dec 18, 2021 at 6:26 PM Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org> wrote:
When we get back, can you arrange a time. I know we are probably pushing into spring by now.

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>
Date: Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 7:34 PM
Subject: Re: Cross Country Course Palo Corona.
To: Hugo Ferlito [redacted] Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>

Hi Hugo,
I'm sorry for the lag here - we have had an abnormally busy week with 2 Board Meetings and have been wrapping things up for Winter Break.

I've added Ted to our thread here so we can look at dates in January. Ted is on Winter break until school resumes, which is January 4 so any dates we look at will be after that.

Ted, please let us know how your schedule looks for a walk through of the new cross country course.

Thank you Hugo for your patience while we get this meeting on the books.

I'm looking forward to this walk through!

Sara

> On Dec 16, 2021, at 4:19 PM, Hugo Ferlito [redacted] wrote:
> Helo Sara;
> Wanted to circle back.
> I totally understand how busy you are, but if possible, can you provide a few dates for our meeting so that I have time to give my team
> notice.
> Thank you and be well
> Hugo
On Dec 9, 2021, at 9:32 AM, Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Hugo,
Thank you for reaching out and bringing this wonderful partnership to my attention.
I'd love to meet with you and would like to include our Superintendent as well.

I received your voicemail and will call you today.

I'm looking forward to connecting and please say hi to [Redacted]! I hope you and your family are all well!

Talk soon,
Sara

On Dec 8, 2021, at 4:10 PM, Hugo Ferlito <Redacted> wrote:

Good afternoon Sara;

I trust you are well and enjoying the presidency of the board!
At your convenience, I would like to meet with you to update you on our plans to build a world class Cross Country Course in partnership with Monterey Regional Park at the old Palo Corona Golf Course.
The course will be suitable for all age groups and open to the community when not in use by the schools.

With regards, and please give [Redacted] a hug on my behalf.

Hugo

Hugo J Ferlito, DDS
Chairman, Collaborations & Partnerships Committee
Awards Director
Big Sur International Marathon

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E. Ted Knight, EdD  
he/him/his  
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District  
4380 Carmel Valley Road  
Carmel, CA 93923  
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Re: Cross Country Course Palo Corona.

From: Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>  Sat, Dec 18, 2021 at 8:02 PM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>
Cc: Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>

Sounds good!
And we can also do a Saturday or Sunday as well if that works for Ted! We will be in touch Hugo! I’ll speak with Ted upon our return to school.

Enjoy the holidays!
Sara

On Dec 18, 2021, at 6:26 PM, Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org> wrote:

When we get back, can you arrange a time. I know we are probably pushing into spring by now.

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>
Date: Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 7:34 PM
Subject: Re: Cross Country Course Palo Corona.
To: Hugo Ferlito <hferlito@bigsurmarathon.org>, Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>

Hi Hugo,
I’m sorry for the lag here - we have had an abnormally busy week with 2 Board Meetings and have been wrapping things up for Winter Break.

I’ve added Ted to our thread here so we can look at dates in January. Ted is on Winter break until school resumes, which is January 4 so any dates we look at will be after that.

Ted, please let us know how your schedule looks for a walk through of the new cross country course.

Thank you Hugo for your patience while we get this meeting on the books.

I’m looking forward to this walk through!

Sara

> On Dec 16, 2021, at 4:19 PM, Hugo Ferlito <hferlito@bigsurmarathon.org> wrote:
> >
> > Hello Sara;
> > Wanted to circle back.
> > I totally understand how busy you are, but if possible, can you provide a few dates for our meeting so that I have time to give my team
> > notice.
> > Thank you and be well
> > Hugo
> >
> > Hugo J Ferlito, DDS
> > Chairman, Collaborations & Partnerships Committee
> > Awards Director
> > Big Sur International Marathon
> >
On Dec 9, 2021, at 9:32 AM, Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi Hugo,
Thank you for reaching out and bringing this wonderful partnership to my attention.
I'd love to meet with you and would like to include our Superintendent as well.
I received your voicemail and will call you today.
I'm looking forward to connecting and please say hi to [redacted]! I hope you and your family are all well!
Talk soon,
Sara

On Dec 8, 2021, at 4:10 PM, Hugo Ferlito <[redacted]> wrote:

Good afternoon Sara;
I trust you are well and enjoying the presidency of the board!
At your convenience, I would like to meet with you to update you on our plans to build a world class Cross Country Course in partnership with Monterey Regional Park at the old Palo Corona Golf Course.
The course will be suitable for all age groups and open to the community when not in use by the schools.
Warm regards, and please give [redacted] a hug on my behalf.

Hugo

Hugo J Ferlito, DDS
Chairman, Collaborations & Partnerships Committee
Awards Director
Big Sur International Marathon

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--
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Re: Board Meeting Tonight

From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 8:32 PM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: P Cocker
Cc: <arosen@carmelunified.org>; <kpallastrini@carmelunified.org>; <shinds@carmelunified.org>; <snachbar@carmelunified.org>; <tarthur@carmelunified.org>

Phil,
Thank you for reaching out, we are in receipt of your email and attached information. Have a great weekend, Ted

On Wed, Dec 15, 2021 at 2:33 PM P Cocker wrote:
Carmel Unified School District Board Members,

I will be asking to speak to the Board tonight regarding the proposed State Child -Vaccination Mandate. Attached are my speaking points, a fact sheet and a proposed Board Resolution Template. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Phil Cocker
CUSD Parent

E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 15, 2021, at 1:16 PM, Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Good afternoon Board members,
I have been asked by more than one board member what your response should be if asked questions about the tree lighting at River School. My strong suggestion is to the always use the same language that we are using with the community and the media, which is the following:

It is Carmel Unified's practice to not comment on ongoing legal matters.

Thanks and see you tonight, Ted

--
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Re: Physical Education and Physical Fitness Testing for Carmel Unified School District

From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  Thu, Dec 9, 2021 at 10:42 AM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: John Martine <john.martine@salinasuhsd.org>
Cc: Tricia Zarevich <tarevich@carmelunified.org>; Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>; Seaberry Nachbar <snachbar@carmelunified.org>; Karl Pallastrini <kpallastrini@carmelunified.org>; Anne-Mario Rosen <arosen@carmelunified.org>

Thank you for your email, Mr. Martine. I am in receipt and will be in touch with you soon.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

On Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 10:13 PM John Martine <john.martine@salinasuhsd.org> wrote:

Good Evening,

My name is John Martine and I am the father [redacted] who are current students in the CUSD. I am an alumni from the district, and also have been a volunteer/paid coach for the CHS baseball program during the last 7 years. I did my student teaching at CHS in 2009 and was mentored by Coach J, who has since retired. I have been a Physical Education teacher at Everett Alvarez High School in Salinas the last 12 years, and have recently transferred to El Puente School in Salinas where I am now an Intervention Specialist. I served as the department chair for Physical Education, and have a ton of experience with Physical Fitness Testing for the State of California. Unfortunately, I am writing to tell you that the teachers in the CUSD are not properly testing students for their State mandated tests, and have not been doing this for some time.

We received a letter from Debbie French about the upcoming PFT which is to be administered in the Spring. Fitnessgram is used by CUSD, and has 6 components that the State requires each student to be tested on to measure their healthy physical fitness levels. I am sure you know about this already, but what you might not know is that they are testing the students incorrectly and leaving the school district wide open for lawsuits for improper education and being held liable for improper testing. I am sure WASC would love to hear about all these things and how insufficient things are done in the area of Physical Education.

As you know, there are 6 elements of testing, and the students are required to pass 5 of the 6 tests to achieve success. As long as 5 of the tests are passed, they can fail ANY ONE test and still pass. Each of the 6 elements have their own types of tests that are administered. My [redacted] has gone through River School, Middle School and is now [redacted] at CHS and has been tested on ONLY these 6 things:

1) Mile Run for Aerobic Capacity
2) Bioelectric Impedance Analyzer for Body Composition
3) Sit Ups for Abdominal Strength and Endurance
4) Trunk Lift for Trunk Extensor Strength and Flexibility
5) Push Ups for Upper Body Strength and Endurance
6) Sit and Reach for Flexibility

What you don’t probably know, is that none of the teachers are administering all the proper "Alternative tests" at any site. There are 2 other tests that must be offered for Aerobic Capacity, 2 other options to measure Body Composition, 2 other tests to offer for Upper Body Strength and Endurance and one other test for Flexibility. [redacted] has done NONE of these tests in his tenure in the district, and this is unacceptable. The State of California requires all PE teachers giving the tests to offer these to each student. Here are the ones that are NOT being administered by any school [redacted] have been at:

1) PACER test and Walk Test for Aerobic Capacity
2) Height and Weight BMI measurement for Body Composition
3) Modified Pull-Up and Flexed Arm Hang for Upper Body Strength and Endurance
4) Shoulder Stretch for Flexibility

The letter that Ms. French sent home to us about the upcoming testing for [redacted] class, is one of the worst pieces of paper I have ever laid my eyes on in education. Not only does it have a bunch of false statements in it, but Ms. French obviously doesn’t care to inform parents properly of each test administered.
She states that "The mile run is the one test that is mandatory to pass" which is such a lie.

She also states that "If your student does not pass 5 of the 6 tests, and definitely the mile run (VO2 Max), then they cannot exempt themselves from PE their sophomore year. This is also a horrible lie!

It also says "Fitnessgram consists of the mile run, sit & reach, push-ups, sit-ups, trunk lift and body fat composition". Obviously Ms. French is not educated on Fitnessgram and never has been. This is also a false statement by her.

I seriously doubt Ms. French even knows how to calculate the proper testing scores, and is most likely not even administering them properly. I asked [redacted] had done any of the other "Alternative Tests" and even showed [redacted] videos on how they are supposed to be done. [redacted] had NEVER done any of them in any school at any time. River, CMS or CHS. Ms. French also stated in the letter that below are the following things that your child has NOT performed in the "healthy fitness" zone and it is blank. She didn't even write anything to say if [redacted] had passed practice tests or not. This is also unacceptable and very unprofessional. I also have first hand experience with Ms. French when I was a student teacher, and they are not very pleasant. I would be happy to share her crappy performance with you if necessary.

How sad that a school district that receives such high marks from the state has a weak spot that has been overlooked for years. Obviously none of the teachers have been trained on administering these tests, and nobody is holding them accountable at the Administrative level for their actions. Oh, and by the way....having to pass a swim test to graduate from any school in the State of California is not anywhere near a requirement and it is being told by the teachers to the students in PE at CHS. Totally illegal and totally unacceptable.

I interviewed for the CHS PE job last year when Coach J retired, and obviously I didn't get the position. I thought I was a great candidate for the position, and interviewed very well. I sent an email to Mr. Lyons about the interview and asked him what I was lacking to not obtain the position. I figured he would have enough respect to at least tell me since I had helped coach the baseball team the last 7 years, but he didn't even have the balls to answer me and I was one of his coaches! How sad that a leader of such a fine school likes to run and hide from people. I would have been a great leader for the school and definitely would have changed the way that physical fitness testing is done and help make the school and district better, but I guess there were other cards at play.

I would be happy to meet with any of you about this subject and would most definitely love to show you this unprofessional letter that was sent by the PE department Chairperson that is totally illegal. I hope that this opens up your eyes to a problem in the district, and at the end of the day I just want my sons to have the best education possible, that also includes Physical Education....... which is obviously overlooked by many. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns, and I would be happy to talk to you about this matter. I will not be returning to coach baseball this year unfortunately, and I am saddened by the way things are being done at my Alma Mater.

Respectfully,
John Martine

---
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Ms. Hamilton,

Thank you for your correspondence. We appreciate hearing from our community and will take your suggestions under advisement. Have a great day, Ted Knight.

On Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 10:37 PM Hilary Hamilton wrote:

Dear Board Members and Superintendent,

As you all know, LA Unified School District is requiring vaccines which their school board voted on. In light of the recent outbreak, it seems like a very viable option for CUSD to implement. I'm concerned as well as many other parents of our kid's safety for those who are unvaccinated and how this impacts the likelihood of school closure. I'm also concerned for all the families ours included those who have children under 12 who can't get vaccinated.

Is this a topic we can add to the agenda at the Board meeting or something that you all discuss amongst yourselves? I understand this is a lightning rod topic, however, the messaging from LA Unified was clear and treating this vaccine like the other required vaccines for children to attend school.
All,

I understand that there have been numerous conversations, and dozens of emails surrounding the upcoming River Tree Lighting. In an effort to clarify statements and bring this issue to resolution, I am emailing everyone, in lieu of a meeting. I want to first clearly state the position of myself and the “district” in this matter. I strongly believe that this is a local issue and one that should be rectified at the site level with the principal, PTA, and River community. I have stated, on numerous occasions, that my role as the superintendent is not to interject my personal beliefs, make local decisions broadly, or strong arm staff and community members. In instances such as this, I have been consistent that I will step in and give a directive if board policy or law is violated, if it hasn’t been violated, then I won’t. I have received legal advice that the PTA event of a River Tree Lighting does not violate board policy or law, nor does the invitation to bring an item that represents family values, heritage, or faith. Additionally, I have received legal guidance that the addition of a large, blowup menorah to this event does not violate board policy or the law. Therefore, as I have maintained all along, this is a decision to be made by the principal, PTA, and the River community. I have received conflicting information about who has agreed to what and have been misquoted several times in emails that are being sent and received. Therefore, I will clarify here exactly what I have said, and what I have heard from others. Again, I have clearly stated that my role in this situation is to ensure that no board policy or laws are broken and I have not and will not interject with my personal opinions or what I do or do not support. If you have heard anything different, I can assure you that it is not accurate. Additionally, I have received emails that suggest that the River PTA is moving forward with the event as originally planned. However, I have also received correspondence that claims that the principal and PTA are supportive of including a large, blow-up menorah to be included in this event. Again, I am not stating my support or opposition for either event and either event is legal and within board policy. I have received emails that claim that the principal has approved an additional menorah at the event, I have received emails that claim that the PTA has approved the same, and I have also received emails that claim that these statements are false. At this point, I believe that the school, PTA, and community need a formal decision that is communicated out from the school and at that point it would be my expectation that all community members abide by that decision and follow the parameters that are decided upon. My suggestion continues to be that all involved in this situation get in a room together and have an honest and open, transparent discussion since there appears to be several versions being communicated, and each seems to state what others have agreed to.

I am including a screenshot of two separate invitations that I have received, and am assuming the community has received. I am concerned about the message this is giving our community and the possibility of a lack of trust in messages coming from their child’s school.
As you can see from these two messages, community members are most likely confused as am I. Again, I am supportive of whatever is decided, given that both are legal and within board policy, but we need to be clear with our community what the school and or PTA has decided. Please work together to rectify this situation and provide clear guidance to the community that falls within the legal boundaries.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

---
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020
Re: River PTA Tree Lighting

From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  
To: [Redacted]  
Cc: Appel, Nancy <NAppel@adl.org>; Bill Schrier <bschrier@carmelunified.org>; Kali Pallasstrini <kpallasstrini@carmelunified.org>; Anne Marie Rosen <arosen@carmelunified.org>; Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>; Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org>; Seaberry Nachbar <snachbar@carmelunified.org>

Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 8:25 AM PST (GMT-08:00)

Ms. Lyons,
I want to attempt to be as clear as possible in this email. I am not making or advocating for any decision in relation to this event. I am simply saying, as I have during my tenure in this district, that I will not overrule a school principal or their PTA unless they are violating district policy or law. In addition, I am not threatening you, I am simply saying that it is my expectation that as a parent and community member that you would follow the rules imposed by the principal, as they are lawful. I received legal advice that the plan that was communicated by the principal was legal and did not violate policy. If you and the PTA, or principal, have a different arrangement that I am not aware of, then similarly I will not be involved unless it violates district policy or law. I have not been told, by anyone other than you, that the Principal and PTA have agreed to your proposal, in fact I have heard the opposite. In that spirit, I believe that this situation is best handled by you, the principal, and the PTA. I would suggest, as I often do when conflict arises, that all of you get in a room together and have this conversation so there is no confusion.  
Sincerely, Ted Knight

On Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 8:14 AM [Redacted] wrote:

Hi Ted,

I'm so confused. Can you call me?

Are you saying that even though both the school principal and the PTA president said that I can bring a menorah, you are deciding unilaterally that I cannot being a menorah? Or are you just saying not a blow-up menorah? (No menorah fits in a paper lunch bag. A menorah is not the same thing as a Christmas ornament. It's offensive to make a menorah into a Christmas ornament anyway. The flyer limits it to items that will be used as Christmas ornaments only so in any case, then no menorah would be allowed if that's the rule.)

Also, what do you mean that I have to follow the PTA parameters because it's against district policy and the law to violate the school/principal's direction? Is the PTA and the school/principal now the same thing? What law are you citing to get to that conclusion? I think you are trying to bully me not to bring a menorah to an after school PTA event when the campus is open and I can legally bring a menorah. I think I'm exercising my first amendment rights and you are trying to quash them illegally and against the clear district policy to be objective and inclusive. You are not being objective or inclusive, and I am allowed to exercise my 1st amendment rights on an after school campus event. It's not during school, campus is open, the PTA is not the school nor the principal, and a menorah is not religious. If you really don't want me to bring the menorah (which is sounds is your issues), you need to tell me what law or policy I'm breaking and the actual consequences. If you'll have me arrested, obviously I don't want that, but if you are just going to write me an email after that says that I violated some imaginary policy in your head that every parent has to follow PTA directives even though that policy doesn't actually exist, that's okay with me.

Just as a heads up, I'm sure many people will be bringing purses and backpacks and other items that won't fit inside a paper bag, and it's after school when campus is open to the public. No one else knows your draconian decision so you'd need to make it known to the public and also make it viewpoint neutral to make sure no one brings anything larger than a lunch size paper bag and only brings things that they will use to decorate the tree (there's going to be a lot of car keys and wallets hanging from that tree!). Obviously that's not your decision so obviously I can bring a menorah.

Sadly, your email came after I already told everyone I know on campus that I am bringing a menorah to the PTA event. At that time, it had already been okayed by the principal and the PTA, I told you that I would be bringing one and telling others if you didn't reply by Friday like you said all last week that you would, and I waited until Sunday afternoon. Since telling others, I got dozens of emails, phones calls, and text messages that applaud it and are so incredibly grateful for inclusion! [Redacted] knows and is finally happy that [Redacted] is being included! [Redacted] jumping for joy after being heartbroken that [Redacted] wasn't going to be included with any chance to share [Redacted] culture, values, or faith (we would not let [Redacted] decorate a Christmas tree). I already spent last week crying for [Redacted]. I'm not going to renege on this -- it would kill me. So I guess I'm going to have to disappoint you and bring the menorah. I don't have a choice.
What discipline are you planning? How about if others bring one too? Are you going to discipline anyone who brings a menorah to the PTA event? Are you going to discipline anyone who brings anything larger than a paper bag size to the event? Will staff be disciplined if they bring a menorah? Does Bill Schrier know this decision of yours to discipline staff (some parents are also staff and some staff are separately coming) for bringing a menorah to campus? Bill is a lawyer and the union representative -- shouldn't you have at least have included him in your decision that changes the reasons for discipline in the union contract to include randomly violating any PTA directives without negotiation? I think the union does have a right for additional compensation if CUSD is now having additional requirements for teachers, even though I don't think those requirements are legal since they violate the First Amendment rights of those teachers.

I guess the bottom line is that I'd appreciate a phone call. You kept saying that you would call but you never did. I think it could have been resolved a lot quicker if you have called.

Thanks!

Shel

On Sun, Dec 5, 2021, 10:58 PM Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Ms. Lyons,

I am writing to you this evening to share with you the legal advice that I have received in reference to your complaint about the River PTA tree lighting. I have been informed that the River tree lighting, and the decision to include items that reflect family values, heritage, and/or faith, does not violate district policy or law. Additionally, the PTA's decision to limit the size of the item to something that fits into a paper bag does not violate district policy or law, this includes not allowing the large blowup menorah that you are requesting to be included. Therefore, as we have discussed before, I will not intervene on this issue as it does not violate district policy or the law. It is, however, my expectation that you follow the parameters that the River PTA has set forth as not following a school/principals direction could be a violation of district policy and law. Additionally, I have spoken with school board leadership and we will not be granting your requested board agenda item as your request does not fall within the purview of the school board. I will be following up on your formal complaint but please consider this email as my final decision on this matter and a formal directive to follow all applicable requests from the principal at River Elementary.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Hi Seaberry, I had a chance to briefly talk with Sara and Tess about this. I would like to discuss when we have our time on Monday. Hope you are well, Ted

On Thu, Nov 18, 2021 at 10:47 AM Seaberry Nachbar <snachbar@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hello Ted and Sara,

On the heels of last night's presentation from the environmental clubs, I would like to request a special board meeting on the environmental/sustainability efforts of CUSD. This would be an opportunity to ask questions of our District staff on what we can and can't do. For example, water reclamation, solar, native plants, and reducing waste.

I believe CUSD can be leaders in this effort. MPUSD many years back established an energy and water reduction plan that is working well. And they hired a Coordinator of Renewable Energy and Conservation. Can CUSD consider doing this as well? Can we create a position for a Sustainability Coordinator?

Please let me know if this can be arranged sometime soon.
Thank you,
Seaberry

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Thank you for sharing, Seaberry. Maybe we can talk through this when we meet next Monday.

Ted

On Wed, Dec 1, 2021 at 3:03 PM Seaberry Nachbar <snachbar@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hello all,

Much of my work focuses on equity and in the process of learning more about this, I came across this great article focused on our educational system. It's good food for thought!

Seaberry

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Ted Knight, EdD
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624 1546 ext 2020

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Shel,

I am in receipt of your complaint. I believe that I have read through all of the emails on this topic and will be requesting a legal opinion on any board or legal violations. I can understand the timing of this request and will work to get an answer as soon as possible. With that being said, many of us, including most legal firms, are at a state level conference and I cannot guarantee that we will have an answer back from legal in the time period that you are requesting. As with past situations, I understand that you may want the board or me to make a decision, but we will be waiting for legal guidance on this issue as we have in the past.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

On Tue, Nov 30, 2021 at 10:26 AM [redacted] wrote:
I apologize. This attachment is right and completed and signed.

On Tue, Nov 30, 2021 at 10:29 AM [redacted] wrote:
Adding the right attachment.

On Tue, Nov 30, 2021 at 10:08 AM [redacted] wrote:
Dear Ms. Medina,

Attached please find a formal complaint against CUSD. It states that it should be filed with the CTO, Paul Behan, who is retired, so I have no idea who I am supposed to send it to.

I would like it resolved as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Warmest regards,

Shel Lyons

E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Hello Shel,

Just reading your email sent this morning. I thought we were making progress regarding this issue. I see that you have filed an official complaint with CUSD. Board members are not permitted to engage in conversations regarding this, or any issue that may come before them in a scheduled meeting of the Board of Education. Having said that...happy holidays to you and yours.

Best Always,

Karl

On Tue, Nov 30, 2021 at 9:15 AM [REDACTED] wrote:

Karl,

Will you read the below and call me at [REDACTED] if you have a chance?

Thanks,

Shel

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

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Tue, Nov 30, 2021 at 9:18 AM
Subject: Attorney Review ASAP
To: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>
Cc: Professor Scott R. Woodruff Lyons

Ted,

Please have the CUSD attorney review this legal opinion from the U.S. Department of Justice immediately:

https://www.justice.gov/olc/file/1355846/download

It establishes quite clearly that a Christmas tree and a Hanukkah menorah are both secular objects of holidays from different religious groups -- one is a Christian holiday (Christmas) and one is a Jewish holiday. You already have acknowledged and admitted that a menorah is secular so that is not disputable. It therefore establishes that there is no basis to deny one over the other.

The U.S. Department of Justice opinion goes into further analysis, however, and establishes quite clearly using binding law that that promotion or preference for one holiday for one group (here, Christmas) over another is illegal discrimination.

As you know, I have requested a menorah for years at River and have been systematically and continuously denied a menorah, most recently by Jay Marden and you just this August, even though there has been Santa Claus/St. Nicolaus, elves, reindeer, and candy canes as part of a "holiday" parade at the school every year -- all secular symbols of the Christian holiday of Christmas. The school board then refused to put this item on the agenda just this year when I requested it in a denial by your attorney in September 2021. Yet, now River school is having a Christmas tree which it is decorating in a schoolwide event/program where every student was directed by the school principal over the loudspeaker to bring Christmas ornaments to decorate it. There is also going to be a Christmas tree lighting at River.

Despite the fact that a menorah has been denied by the same school for multiple years, the school is now allowing a new addition of a Christmas tree, Christmas tree decorating events, Christmas tree promotion by the principal, and a Christmas tree lighting. These are all clear signs of preference for the Christmas holiday.
I am once again respectfully requesting a menorah at a schoolwide assembly. As Hanukkah ends this Sunday, I am requesting to do the menorah no later than this Friday, December 3rd at a Friday morning assembly at River School. **Please let me know today if I will be allowed to present a menorah this Friday no later than 5 PM today, November 30, 2021.**

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Warmest,

Shel Lyons

---

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[Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice](#)
Good evening,

Thank you for your email and for reaching out to me on the topic of stadium lights. The Board of Education will vote on the stadium lights during our December meeting. During tomorrow's Board meeting Mr. Knight will be providing the Board and our community with an update on any recent developments on this project. At this point in the process he is the best person to speak with on Thursday or Friday.

I'm copying Mr. Knight here so the two of you can connect.

Thanks again for reaching out.

Take care,
Sara

> On Nov 16, 2021, at 7:43 PM, [Name] wrote:
> Good evening Mrs. Hinds,
> I am a staff writer for the Carmel Sandpiper and I'm writing an article about the petition for stadium lights and the school board's decision. I was hoping to arrange a meeting to discuss this development, preferably after the board meeting this week, so maybe Thursday or Friday.
> Please let me know what works best for you and we can go from there. Thank you so much.
Hi,
For the environmental presentation:
Who collected the date presented?
How do these numbers compare to other districts?
Are there waste standards? If so how do our numbers compare to what the standards are?
How long will we be serving lunch to ALL students?
Do you believe this has contributed to the waste numbers?
Have out waste and scraps numbers increased since the decision to feed all students?
What have previous years data concluded? And how does it compare/contrast to what is presented?
What is the meaning and/or context of the word “belief” in quotations in regards to what what the board believes on the mission and values slide? Is there a perspective that the previous board did not believe in responsibility to the environment?
How do our environmental awards compare to other schools or our size or of those in the state?

For the cms perspectives are there proposed solutions to things like “people throw their lunches away?”

Overall I feel like I need far more details included for this presentation….

Thank you,
Sara
Re: Masking kids at school has some downsides

From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  
To: Steve Henderson  
Cc: Karl Pallas-trini <kpallas-trini@carmelunified.org>; Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>; <arosen@carmelunified.org>; <snachbar@carmelunified.org>; <tarthur@carmelunified.org>  

Mon, Nov 15, 2021 at 5:34 AM PST (GMT-08:00)

Mr. Henderson,
Thank you for reaching out and sharing this article and your thoughts. As always, please let me know if you want to discuss further.
Hope you are well, Ted

On Thu, Nov 11, 2021 at 6:11 PM Steve Henderson wrote:
Hello CUSD Leaders!

Here is an article from a left of center magazine talking about needing to start creating some "off ramps" for masking of students. It cites several other credible sources including the New York Times and the Washington Post. It seems like the "smart" people are starting to talk about this issue and I thought I'd bring it to your attention. I think there is an opportunity for leadership on your part by starting a discussion at your meetings about what an "off ramp" may look like. As you know, as we teach our students, our system of government works best when it is not just "top down" leadership, but "bottom up" leadership as well. The County government and CDPH would benefit from other voices in leadership positions like yours.

Monterey County is out of step with the thinking of other Bay Area counties with the recently instituted a mask order based on the number of cases per population. Marin County, the land of the really smart people, has just switched to the number of hospitalizations instead of cases. See this article in SF Gate, the relevant paragraph I quote below:

Marin County, which is now back in the substantial tier, met all three requirements last week and dropped its mask mandate Monday. **County Health Officer Dr. Matt Willis has said that a case increase alone will not bring back the mandate, and county officials will watch hospitalization numbers instead...** After the highly vaccinated region saw a backslide on the CDC map, **UCSF's Dr. Monica Gandhi, a leading expert on the pandemic, took to Twitter to deride the CDC framework, which she characterized as "outdated."** "A highly vaccinated place will always be at risk of being in these "tiers" due to the outdated definition of the CDC’s metrics of community spread," she wrote. She notes that the map is based on case rates and test positivity, but writes, "those metrics only made sense when mass asymptomatic testing was occurring prior to vaccination." "After vaccination, per the CDC guidance, only those with exposures or symptoms should test so tests are likely to reveal positive cases, which is not a good measure of community transmission or spread," Gandhi said. **"So, if CDC doesn't change this definition of community spread after vax, highly vax'd places (most likely to follow CDC) will be masking forever with this artificial metric," she concluded.**

Thank you,
Steve Henderson

---

E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Thank you Graeme, it was great speaking with you and I am eager to join you at these upcoming meetings. I have them on my calendar, please let me know if anything changes and thank you again for your time, yesterday.

Ted

On Tue, Nov 2, 2021 at 11:08 AM, [email protected] wrote:

Ted,

It was a pleasure meeting you yesterday. Per our conversation, we were hoping you might be available to attend our Carmel Chamber of Commerce Business Roundtable meeting on Wednesday, November 17, from 8:30 to 9:30 am in Il Fornaio at the Pine Inn?

In addition, the Carmel Residents Association Board of Directors would be delighted to have you attend our Board meeting on Monday, January 3, at 3:00 at All Saints Church on Dolores Street in Carmel.

Hoping that these dates are available on your calendar.

Again, thank you for your time and welcome to our community.

Graeme

--
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
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Register for in-person and virtual AEC

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Experience AEC YOUR way! Whether you’re ready to head to San Diego in person or prefer the comfort of your home office, AEC 2021 offers amazing speakers, enriched learning opportunities, and a variety of networking opportunities.

In-Person: Dec. 2-4
San Diego Convention Center
Register for in-person

Virtual: Dec. 9-10
At your home or office
Register for virtual

Check out our 2021 Speakers:

Dr. Victor Rios
Associate Dean of Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Author of Six Books, Subject of "The Pushouts" Documentary

First General Session
Thursday, Dec. 2
6:30 – 10:00 a.m.
Book signing immediately following General Session

Learn more
Elaine Welteroth  
Co-host of CBS "The Talk," NYT Bestselling Author, Award-Winning Journalist, Former Editor-in-Chief of Teen Vogue

Third General Session  
Saturday, Dec. 4  
10:30 a.m. - Noon  
Book signing immediately following  
General Session

---

Cancellation and Health & Safety updates

CSBA reserves the right to cancel in-person attendance at any time for health and/or safety of attendees or its employees. If CSBA cancels in-person attendance, CSBA will automatically transfer all in-person attendees to virtual registration and refund the difference in registration fees. All participants, including attendees, speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, and volunteers, are expected to comply with masking, social distancing, and other health and safety protocols and/or guidelines of San Diego County Public Health Officer, San Diego Convention Center and CSBA.

Please visit our Health and Safety page for more information on this policy.

---

Questions?

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If you have any questions related to the registration process, please call 866-641-6338 (toll free), or email csba@maritz.com.

For other inquiries, visit the AEC website or email aec@csba.org.

---

California School Boards Association | 3231 Beacon Blvd., West Sacramento, CA 95691  
Phone: (800) 266-3382 | Fax: (916) 371-3401  
Website | Privacy Policy | Unsubscribe
FYI

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>
Date: Thu, Dec 9, 2021 at 10:24 AM
Subject: Presentation from Dec 8th Town Hall
To: JoAnn Holbrook
Frances Dillard
Noel McNamee
Jim Suchan
Lynn Berardo
Allen Miller
Lindsay Ann
Darrah Blanton
Alexis Delehanty
Cc: Dan Paul <dpaul@carmelunified.org>, Jon Lyons <jlyons@carmelunified.org>, Jessica Hull <jhull@carmelunified.org>

Good morning neighbors,

Thank you all again for meeting with us last night to continue the collaboration on issues surrounding the high school and the possibility of stadium lights. I am attaching a copy of the presentation that I used to open the meeting. Again, please feel free to forward to those who we may not have email addresses for.

Sincerely, Ted Knight

---
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

---
E. Ted Knight, EdD
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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Attachments

- Dec 8th TownHall Meeting.pdf
Hello All,

If you would like to get reimbursed for any itemized receipts you have from the conference please fill out this form and submit with all your itemized receipts to me asap. Or sign the document and submit everything to me and I will get it completed and turned in for you all. I have attached the document that will require your signature (and it has the details if you complete it directly). If you have mileage, please let me know and I will do a mileage form for you as well.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you!
Tricia Zarevich (she/her/hers)
Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. Box 222700, Carmel, CA 93922
tzarevich@carmelunified.org
office (831) 624-1546 ext. 2021
Fax (831) 626-4052

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Attachments

- Travel_Reimbursement_Claim_-_CUSD_405_JAN_2020.pdf
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 10, 2021

Contact: Esmeralda M. Owen
Communications and Public Relations Officer
eowen@montereycoe.org
(213) 220-1174 cell

MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION BOARD APPOINTS ANNETTE YEE STECK AS AREA ONE TRUSTEE

Salinas, Calif. – At its regular meeting today, November 10, the Monterey County Board of Education voted unanimously 6-0 in favor of Annette Yee Steck as the new Trustee representing Area One - a seat vacated by the passing of the incumbent, Harvey Kuffner, whose term was to expire in November 2022.

The County Board publicly interviewed two candidates, read letters of support, and heard from members of the public on the eligibility of the candidates.

“We are cited to welcome Annette Yee Steck to the County Board of Education to fill the seat that our treasured Harvey Kuffner had occupied for 25 years. Harvey served with great commitment, and left a legacy of profound insight and knowledge,” said Dr. Deneen Guss, County Superintendent of Schools and Secretary to the County Board.

“Like Harvey, Annette is a recognized and esteemed leader in the Trustee Area One community and has deep experience in school governance. She has dedicated her life to ensuring all students are well prepared for their futures, and she has a true heart for public service.”

Yee Steck resides in Carmel and has lived in Monterey County for 31 years. She is a Financial Advisor to California School Districts and an instructor for the California School Boards Association’s Masters in Governance Program. For 27 years, she served as a school board member for the Carmel Unified School District and was voted board president six times. She is married to Loren Steck and they are proud parents to Jonathan, 31.

“I have dedicated much of my life to achieve the goals of helping ensure that our students are optimally prepared for their future lives and careers, and that opportunity is equally available to all of the students in our schools,” Yee Steck said. “Given the wide discrepancy in privilege and preparation among students in our County, I understand that there is much to be done to help Monterey County schools achieve those goals, and I want to continue to help.”

Trustee Area One consists mainly of New Monterey, Pacific Grove, Del Monte Forest, Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley, and Big Sur.

Trustee Yee Steck will serve until November 2022, when the provisional term for this seat will expire. The seat will then be open for a four-year term at the general election to be held in November 2022.

###
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Esmeralda M. Owen
Communications and Public Relations Officer

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###
Fwd: Carmel Unified School District Credit Card Charge Update

From: Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>                      Fri, Dec 10, 2021 at 3:18 PM PST (GMT-08:00)  
To: Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org>; Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>

Please let me know if you do not see the credits on your cards.

Thank you!

Tricia Zarevich (she/her/hers)
Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. Box 222700, Carmel, CA 93922
tzarevich@carmelunified.org
office (831) 624-1546 ext. 2021
Fax (831) 626-4052

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Ginnie Pettiford
Date: Fri, Dec 10, 2021 at 3:15 PM
Subject: RE: Carmel Unified School District Credit Card Charge Update
To: Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>

Hi Tricia,

I apologize. I took care of it on the 7th scanned the folios and then forgot to send them to you. Here they are and you should see the charges on your card and the refunds would show up 3-5 business days after the 7th.

Have a wonderful weekend

Ginnie Pettiford
Accounts Receivable
San Diego Marriott Gaslamp Quarter
660 K Street
San Diego, Ca 92101

From: Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>
Sent: Friday, December 10, 2021 2:14 PM
Hi Ginnie,

I am following up again to see where we are with making sure that you have charged the district and reversed the charges on Tess Arthur and Sara Hinds personal cards. If you can send me a folio for my records and any documentation to show that it has been reversed that would be appreciated.

Thank you.

Tricia Zarevich (she/her/hers)  
Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent  
CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
P.O. Box 222700, Carmel, CA 93922  
tzarevich@carmelunified.org  
office (831) 624-1546 ext. 2021  
Fax (831) 626-4052

-------- Forwarded message --------
From: Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>  
Date: Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 9:17 AM  
Subject: Re: Tess Arthur  
To: Ginnie Pettiford

Yes, please and thank you. I think what is confusing is that Tess added 1 extra night that she was paying for (so Saturday to Sunday is on her personal card, not the districts).

Tricia Zarevich (she/her/hers)  
Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent  
CARMEL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
P.O. Box 222700, Carmel, CA 93922  
tzarevich@carmelunified.org  
office (831) 624-1546 ext. 2021  
Fax (831) 626-4052

On Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 9:09 AM Ginnie Pettiford wrote:

Good Morning Tricia,

I see that you filled out a cc authorization for Tess Arthur but it looks like this was not done. Tess’s cc was charged instead of the one you put on the form. Did you want this changed to charge the cc you filled out on the form?
Thank You

Ginnie Pettiford
Accounts Receivable
San Diego Marriott Gaslamp Quarter
660 K Street
San Diego, Ca 92101

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Attachments

- arthur hines.pdf
### Guest Folio

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Signature X
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Now that we are back in the swing of things for this new school year, I felt it was important to circle back to our summer programming and provide some information to the board. I reached out to the key players (Leigh Cambra, Caton Avilla, Elisa Taconni, Debbi Puente, and Jon Lyons) who made our summer programming happen and asked them to give me some general information as well as ideas around what worked well, what should be celebrated, what did they learn, and how will that learning influence future planning. I received quite a bit of feedback from them, so I will try my best to summarize it here for you.

The district had four different programs take place across the summer.

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<th>Dates</th>
<th># of Students</th>
<th># of Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>6/14 - 7/2</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cachagua</td>
<td>7/12 - 7/30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain Cooper</td>
<td>6/8 - 6/18</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHS</td>
<td>6/7 - 7/2</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CMS:**
The theme at CMS was “Blast Off to Summer”. The students who attended were identified at their sites as in need of continued learning. Along with daily instruction in Language Arts and Math, students also had PE and STEM lessons each day. Leigh said the students were excited to be there and the staff was outstanding. She stated, “I couldn’t have asked for a better summer experience for my first time working summer school.” Leigh wanted to celebrate the students and summer staff for an amazing three weeks of k-8 summer school. She also sent thank you’s to transportation for providing a bus from Cachagua and Food Service for providing meals everyday. She also wanted to thank the Carmel Youth Center for providing afternoon enrichment.

Although much of the intended focus was on academics, it became clear that the students needed to focus on connections and on their social emotional well being. The staff worked to balance those needs. One of the big takeaways was the need to plan further in advance. Identifying students earlier will help with staffing and program needs. Using the same date range next year would be ideal, especially when coordinating with the Cachagua Program.

**Cachagua:**
This was a great enrichment opportunity for the kids. The communities of Cachagua, Friends of Cachagua, Carmel Valley Community Youth Center, & CUSD came together to provide a three week program for K-8 students. Students not only got to enjoy the resources in their own area, they got to venture from Big Sur to Salinas on a treasure hunt of what our peninsula has to offer.
The students enjoyed four days at the C.V.C.Y.C. pool learning from professionally trained CHS students about proper stroke mechanics and basic water safety. Local community members, including Cachagua Fire’s Chief Jesse Reimer, pilates instructor Leah Goldberg, and Tularcitos Librarian Claire Cocchi provided enriching activities throughout the weeks. Alumni helped and thirteen local high school students volunteered for community service. The students also visited the Hastings National History Reservation and the Monterey Zoo. They attended a private movie screening and for some that was their first time at the movies! Caton Avila said, “Between the families, staff, and community coming together for our students, I would challenge anyone to find a better summer program on the entire peninsula.” The staff also wanted to thank CUSD food services for providing breakfast, lunch, and snacks everyday.

Many organizations have been involved in the evolution of a summer program at Cachagua. With the participation of CUSD, fine tuning of the procedures and specifics will create a more efficient process from a logistical standpoint moving forward.

The model should be repeated next summer using the same timing and more advance planning to get all the logistics in place. With this opportunity being held at the end of the summer, it allowed these students to participate in the other more academic summer programming early in the summer.

Cooper:
The summer program at Captain Cooper was an art and garden themed program, integrated with language arts activities and math games. The students also participated in outdoor games, as well as reading, writing and math activities. Students had so much fun that they hardly realized they were learning. The program was modeled after a program implemented two years ago, with some modifications. The majority of the families want a summer program for their children and there aren’t many/if any options in Big Sur. The staff split the days of teaching and supervising with one teacher each week and two aides supporting each week. By sharing the planning, teaching, leading and supervising, the task was manageable and enjoyable for staff at the end of the year.

The summer program staff would like to once again replicate the program and hold it after school is out in June. They learned that they need a bit more planning time prior to starting the program, so they want to get out in front of things this year. Cooper would also like to add some field trips and bus access to their program so the kids can have additional experiences similar to the Cachagua program.

CHS:
Carmel High had a record number of students for Summer School this year. Participation remained strong until students completed what they needed to do to accrue the credits needed and/or became A-G eligible. 65 students completed coursework for 90 classes. Freshman & Sophomore CORE classes were taught by teachers who taught that discipline. Those teachers did really fun things with their students as they learned the content they needed to gain. Engaging activities took place. In Biology students explored and studied the natural
surroundings of campus building connections and doing labs. History sought to engage students through authentic projects, and English tried to inspire a love of reading. Other courses were offered through the Edmentum credit recovery platform with a CUSD teacher providing tutoring support and guidance as students needed.

CHS found it very difficult to run summer school without a consistent administrator. The prep ahead of time was done by one administrator who began preparing shortly after the 3rd quarter ended. All three CHS admin then split the 4 weeks of actual summer school which led to some inconsistencies. They also had two different models running due to teacher availability. Math ran full days for two weeks while the rest of the courses ran half days for four weeks. This limited students’ ability on what they could take.

Moving forward CHS would like to make it work so one administrator handled the whole program. They also see the need to go with a four week half day program for all content areas. A semester will last two weeks. This model with a shorter day will foster more engagement, gives students more flexibility on course retakes, and still allows them to have time to enjoy summer in the afternoons. CHS would like to push back the start date by one day, finding that launching the Monday after a Friday graduation is not ideal. They also want to continue to find ways to promote more fun during the program in order to foster further engagement and buy-in.

Thank you for taking the time to read this summary of our summer school programming, Blaise
Phil,
Thank you for reaching out, we are in receipt of your email and attached information. Have a great weekend, Ted

On Wed, Dec 15, 2021 at 2:33 PM P Cocker wrote:
Carmel Unified School District Board Members,

I will be asking to speak to the Board tonight regarding the proposed State Child -Vaccination Mandate. Attached are my speaking points, a fact sheet and a proposed Board Resolution Template. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Phil Cocker
CUSD Parent

E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Re: response to community members

From: Anne-Marie Rosen <arosen@carmelunified.org>  Wed, Dec 15, 2021 at 1:28 PM PST (GMT-08:00)
To: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>
Cc: Sara Hinds <shinds@carmelunified.org>; Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org>; Seaberry Nachbar <snachbar@carmelunified.org>; Karl Pallastrini <kpallastrini@carmelunified.org>

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 15, 2021, at 1:16 PM, Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Good afternoon Board members,
I have been asked by more than one board member what your response should be if asked questions about the tree lighting at River School. My strong suggestion is to the always use the same language that we are using with the community and the media, which is the following:

It is Carmel Unified's practice to not comment on ongoing legal matters.

Thanks and see you tonight, Ted

--
E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
4380 Carmel Valley Road
Carmel, CA 93923
(831) 624-1546 ext. 2020

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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Hi Tess,
I ran into Sara a few days ago and she said it was a good conference. I'm glad that you guys were able to attend. Thank you for providing me with the notes, I look forward to looking at them.
See ya tonight!
Seaberry

On Tue, Dec 14, 2021 at 10:13 AM Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org> wrote:
Good morning!
I wanted to share some of my notes with you on the conference. As always, it was extremely informative and validating for all we are doing for our students and staff. Many reminders of what Boards have undergone in the past two years and the importance of Board governance.
Hope you are well…
Tess
Re: Board Meeting Questions

From: Tricia Zarevich <tzarevich@carmelunified.org>  
To: Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org>  
Cc: Ted Knight <tknight@carmelunified.org>  

Thank you! I will start a spreadsheet tomorrow and be in touch.

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 13, 2021, at 5:26 PM, Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Hi there, here are more questions for the Board meeting...

1. Do we have a district wide nepotism policy, if so, what is the degree of separation required?
2. Please explain the independent education evaluation services for a student for $12,090?
3. Do we, as a district, have a cap for outside use of CUSD facilities? Or does the Civic Center Act forbid us from doing so?
4. Have we, as a district, researched opportunities for donations of our recycled materials that are outdated for us, but could be beneficial for someone else? Repurposing?
5. How are additional monies from both state and federal sources reflected in the interim financial report? Are they accounted for under the federal and state revenue in the general fund?
6. Under multi-year budget assumptions, why are STRS and PRS looking to increase over 3%?
7. What percentage increase have we already assigned to ACT for health and welfare benefits? What is the percentage of increase?
8. To what extent are we utilizing the Monterey County Office of Education’s resources for Professional Development?
9. Does the effectiveness block grant pay for coaching staff salaries, where are these funds reflected in the general budget?
10. Is there any concern for pushback from the CA Coastal Commission or neighbors on the purchase and placement locations for two modular classrooms at River?

Thank you!!!
of the recipient’s authorized designees). If the reader of this message is not the intended recipient of this message or of any attachments to the message, you are hereby notified that you have received this document in error and that any review, dissemination, distribution, or copying of this message, including any attachments, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original message. Thank you.

Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
I have the hard copy of this that he wanted given to the board, we have those copies for everyone on Wednesday. He also reached out for me to meet after break and sent me the same thing, specifically after I met with staff this week on zoom and mentioned some thoughts about where we should go in the future. I would simply thank him for the information and tell him to make sure that he shares it with me.

Hope you had a great weekend, those Chiefs are looking great, Ted

On Sun, Dec 12, 2021 at 9:32 PM Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org> wrote:

Good evening Ted,

How would you like me to respond? These are clearly long term C&I issues, of which the Board has no business in dabbling. My bigger concern is where is this coming from? I assume some of these issues will be addressed with a teachers advisory committee, which is the place for this dialog to occur. Hope you are well.

Tess

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: William Bans <wbans@carmelunified.org>
Date: Sat, Dec 11, 2021 at 5:01 PM
Subject: letter
To: Tess Arthur <tarthur@carmelunified.org>

Dear Tess,

First and foremost, I hope you are doing well. I am looking forward to enjoying the last week of school with my students and then the winter break. We all deserve it.

I sent the letter below and the attached chapter excerpt through interdistrict mail, but I thought I would email it now in case you would like to receive it electronically and have any questions or want to have a conversation.

I think it's important, as educators and decision makers, to have an understanding of important, applicable cognitive science. I find it to be not only very interesting but a good lens through which to view any educational initiative, reform, curriculum, lesson, flavor-of-the-month trend, etc.

Why did I send this particular letter and excerpt? To start with, my colleagues and I obviously don't want our students to simply memorize lists of facts in preparation for tests; we want them to think deeply and analytically and critically. I hear that a lot. And then, sometimes, the conversations I hear unfortunately steer toward an underemphasis of academic content -- of learning -- which doesn't follow the cognitive science and will lead to an increase of the achievement gap (a gap that is stubbornly a longstanding fact of our disadvantaged student populations at CUSD).

But I don't hear much of the related scientific facts related to the importance of knowledge, and that is the main reason I am sending all of this.

So here are some, as written by cognitive scientist Daniel Willingham: “The ability to think critically depends on having adequate content knowledge; you can’t think critically about topics you know little about or solve problems that you don’t know well enough to recognize and execute the type of solutions they call for. ... Can critical thinking actually be taught? Decades of cognitive research point to a disappointing answer: not really. People who have sought to teach critical thinking have assumed that it is a skill, like riding a bicycle, and that, like other skills, once you learn it, you can apply it in any situation. Research from cognitive science shows that thinking is not that sort of skill. The processes of thinking are intertwined with the content of thought (that is, domain knowledge) Thus, if you remind a student to 'look at an issue from multiple perspectives' often enough, he will learn that he ought to do so, but if he doesn’t know much about an issue, he can’t think about it from multiple perspectives. You can teach students maxims about how they ought to think, but without background knowledge and practice, they probably will not be able to implement the advice they memorize. Just as it makes no sense to try to teach factual content without giving students opportunities to practice using it, it also makes no sense to try to teach critical thinking devoid of factual content ”

My original letter is below and the chapter excerpt is attached. Thank you for your time and dedication to our students.
November 19, 2021

Dear school board,

I hope this letter finds you well. Last summer I read a good number of quality education books. I’ve been wanting to share my favorite chapter of all the books I read, but the start of the school year was so busy and thus I waited.

At the risk of waiting forever --- will it ever not be busy? --- I am attaching the chapter here.

The chapter is from the book “Why Don’t Students Like School?” by cognitive scientist Daniel Willingham. The title is a little misleading; the book succinctly explains to educators how people learn.

I hope you enjoy it. The cognitive principles in each chapter have classroom implications. The principle from the attached chapter, is “factual knowledge precedes skill.” Basically, it's not possible to think well on a topic in the absence of factual knowledge about the topic.

It’s my favorite chapter partly because I see a direct connection between the core idea and my @carmelunified.org email signature, which is simply an excerpt from the Common Core English Language Arts Anchor Standards in Reading:

“... By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades.”

Also, knowledge fuels curiosity, which leads to more learning; it's a virtuous cycle.

I hope after reading this chapter your new or resurrected knowledge will spark your curiosity!

Sincerely,

Will Bans
Teacher
Carmel River Elementary School

... By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students can only gain this foundation when the curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades. ...

--ELA CCSS note on range and content of student reading

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Ms. Hamilton,

Thank you for your correspondence. We appreciate hearing from our community and will take your suggestions under advisement. Have a great day, Ted Knight.

On Mon, Dec 6, 2021 at 10:37 PM Hilary Hamilton wrote:

Dear Board Members and Superintendent,

As you all know, LA Unified School District is requiring vaccines which their school board voted on. In light of the recent outbreak, it seems like a very viable option for CUSD to implement. I'm concerned as well as many other parents of our kid's safety for those who are unvaccinated and how this impacts the likelihood of school closure. I'm also concerned for all the families ours included those who have children under 12 who can't get vaccinated.

Is this a topic we can add to the agenda at the Board meeting or something that you all discuss amongst yourselves? I understand this is a lightning rod topic, however, the messaging from LA Unified was clear and treating this vaccine like the other required vaccines for children to attend school.
Cristina,
Thank you for reaching out and sharing your history and kind words. This is a great community and great school district and I am so excited to be here. Thank you for your warm welcome and please reach out if you need anything.

Sincerely, Ted

On Wed, Nov 17, 2021 at 5:22 PM Cristina Kochevar wrote:

Hello Mr. Knight,

My name is Cristina Kochevar and I am a parent in the CUSD with [redacted]. I have wanted to reach out since you started your post to officially welcome you to our amazing school district but life has been full on our side so please accept my apologies for being so late. [redacted] went from Carmelo to Tularcitos to Carmel Middle and are graduates of Carmel High on a journey that has set all of them up for great success as adults. To say we are fans of this school district would be a HUGE understatement! So much so that we attended our first board meetings through the pandemic to show support for the incredible faculty, administration and school board as they were, quite frankly, under attack from a small group of parents.

In addition to advocating for our school staff, I became involved with raising concerns regarding accusations of sexual misconduct that unfolded over social media the week of March 14th this year. [redacted] were both following and messaging with great emotion as things unfolded and were looping me as well. This was a very upsetting situation for so many of our students and it was important to me to push for resources, support, transparency (to the extent possible), accountability and action within our district. I am pleased to hear that resources have been added and would be happy to meet and share more/listen/support however it would be most helpful to the district.

Finally, I want to let you know how impressed my husband and I have been with your communication to the community. There have been many hard topics for you to tackle in real time since you began and we have read and appreciated all of your letters—thank you! It is clear that you were the right person to come into our district.

I included Tess Arthur on this note as she and I have had many conversations over the last several months and she could vouch for my passion for the district and desire to help!

All the best to you,

Cristina Kochevar

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E. Ted Knight, EdD
he/him/his
Superintendent Carmel Unified School District
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Link to CUSD Nondiscrimination Notice
Hi there,
Here are my Board Meeting questions...in regards to the environmental responsibility presentation.

1. Is there a current composting program with MEarth and the school gardens at each site? Has there been a decrease in food waste due to this program?
2. How are we irrigating the landscape and turf areas at CMS and the DO? Are we using well water or Cal Am? If it's Cal Am, what's the annual cost?

Thank you...
Tess
Good morning!
I wanted to share some of my notes with you on the conference. As always, it was extremely informative and validating for all we are doing for our students and staff. Many reminders of what Boards have undergone in the past two years and the importance of Board governance.
Hope you are well...
Tess

Attachments

- CSBA Conference pdf