

Date : 9/27/2017 2:02:11 PM

From : "Shaunda Sandford"

To : "Joyce Brown" , "Martha Geitner" , "Patricia Griffin" , "James Lee"

Cc : "Denise Patterson"

Subject : Updates

Good afternoon,

I just wanted to let you know that we've not heard anything different from last night regarding Ms. Landreth or her sons condition. If Dr. Patterson or I hear anything we will let you know asap. I was at AMS at 7:30 this morning and everyone did a great job executing the crisis plan for students and staff. ACS counselors, social workers and therapist from across the district were outstanding in their efforts to support students, staff and families. Our central office staff also came out and assisted wherever there was a need. We will also be sure to send a thank you card to Buncombe County Schools for sending members of their crisis team to assist in this time of sorrow.

Below is the statement our attorney prepared to address the situation regarding Bree Newsome. I will copy you all on my response to the series of emails we've received. If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to give me a call. Thanks.

As part of its collaboration with Asheville Middle School (â€œAMSâ€), Americans Who Tell the Truth (â€œAWTTâ€), a project that, through portraits and narratives, highlights citizens who address issues of social, environmental and economic fairness, informed AMS that the author of *Hidden Figures*, Margot Lee Shetterly, would be available to speak with the eighth-grade class on September 29, 2017. *Hidden Figures* is the non-fiction, biographical novel and recent motion picture which chronicles the lives of three African American women working at NASA during the space race in the early 1960s.

Â

In preparation for Ms. Shetterly's visit to AMS, eighth graders attended a screening of *Hidden Figures* and copies of the novel were purchased for eighth graders to read. In addition, using *Hidden Figures* as its primary text, AMS aligned its curriculum with AWTT to implement a Paideia project. The project resulted in students learning about active citizenship and their future selves. Additionally, several students created portraits of local heroes that will be displayed at the YMI Cultural Center in Asheville.

Â

Late this summer, AWTT notified AMS that Ms. Shetterly had a scheduling conflict and would not be available to speak at AMS on September 29th. As an alternative to Ms. Shetterly, AWTT invited Bree Newsome; she was not invited by Asheville City Schools. Ms. Newsome is a filmmaker, speaker and activist from Charlotte, North Carolina. In July 2015, Ms. Newsome was arrested in Columbia, South Carolina for removing the Confederate battle flag that was on display on the grounds of the South Carolina State House.

Â

School Board Policy 3535 states that the involvement of any visiting speaker regarding citizenship issues must be "correctly structured" by the school's professional staff. The policy also states that the advocacy of illegal acts by a speaker is not permitted. This Paideia project was specifically based upon Ms. Shetterly's novel and its themes regarding citizenship. The policy strikes a balance between the vital role of our schools in exposing students to differing viewpoints with the need to present those viewpoints within the school curriculum. Given these considerations, the Asheville City Schools declined the offer of Ms. Newsome to participate as an alternative to Ms. Shetterly.

--

Shaunda Sandford

Board Chair

Asheville City Schools

cell: 828-273-9445

"We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today."

