Note: redactions to this record are pursuant to FERPA, 20 U.S.C. 1232g - personally identifiable student information.

Date : 9/30/2017 5:19:19 AM
From : "Ann Skinner"
To : "April Dockery"
Subject : Fwd: On Behalf of Asheville City Schools and the Board of Education

Dear April,

I just read your letter. I am so proud to part of this community. I'm so thrilled that [redacted] has had and will continue to have such an amazing teacher as Miss Landreth. I'm so delighted that [redacted] had the opportunity to study alongside such a fine young man as [redacted]

I had no idea that Bree Newsome almost came to speak to Asheville Middle School's 8th grade students. I'm sad she didn't come to speak with them. I'm sure our bright beautiful black students, female and male, would have been greatly inspired by her presence. I am confident our male and female white students also would have been inspired by her to consider effecting positive change in this world. They all would've had the privilege to be cultured by her bravery, her academic success, her excellence in the film arts that she has produced and her dedication to positive change in this world.

I must live under a rock that I had no idea about any of this but I still think it was a privilege that she offered to come speak with our students.

Did you know that there is a play called The Best of Enemies put on at Asheville High School this summer for our community and for some of the AHS students during the school year. It was produced by Different Strokes, a theater group in Asheville that strives to speak to difficult subjects, like segregation in this particular drama. It was about Ann Atwood, a female black community leader and a man named CP Ellis, who was a Klu Klux Klan Cyclops during the time of segregation (in Durham, North Carolina) and integration of black and white students. With the help of a productive, educated, black mediator they eventually came to work together to create positive change for the students in their community. In the end they became friends and helped each other throughout their lives in times of need.

Different Strokes is based in Asheville. I wonder if our students would be interested in watching this play. It is productive, provocative and great things are yielded in the end that benefit the Durham student community. It speaks powerfully to illuminate the human capacity to work through great obstacles when there's an auspicious common goal, even when both parties can't see it too clearly.

I know you have a lot on your plate... This is a thought I had when I watched the play at Asheville High with [redacted] my boyfriend and his two sons, whom I thought it would benefit tremendously from seeing these two people work out their difficulties to serve their community's best and common interest: the education of their children.

Thank you for all that you do including take the time to read this email. I'm so glad [redacted] is at Asheville Middle School for so many reasons. You are one of them.

I hope you enjoy your children this weekend. Thank you for supporting mine and so many others' this week and the weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

Ann

Ann Skinner
828 318 3889

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

> **From:** Ashley-Michelle Thublin <ashley.thublin@acsgmail.net>
> **Date:** September 29, 2017 at 6:13:07 PM EDT
> **To:** Asheville City Schools Recipients <recipients@ashevillecityschools.parentlink.net>
> **Subject: On Behalf of Asheville City Schools and the Board of Education**
>
> Two events within the last week have reminded us how important the community is to our schools and how important the schools are to our community.
>
> Last week, the principal of Asheville Middle School was unable to allow a guest speaker's offer to meet with 8th grade students. The principal made that decision based on the curriculum activities previously planned and a review of the policy again. We were later informed that the original speaker could not attend and another speaker would instead be available. After reviewing the policy again, we determined that the new speaker did not align with our policy currently in place.
>
> Aided by social media, the community's response was swift. By the day of our School Board Meeting this week, the administration and board members were hearing about the community concerns.

In an ideal world, that issue of the guest speaker would have been the only news to rally our community this week. In an ideal world, within this past week we could have deliberated on the topic, and either reaffirmed the decision and the interpretations of policy, or revisited the decision and extended an invitation to reschedule with Bree Newsome during her visit to Asheville.

It is with deep sadness that our community suffered a great loss

We are forever indebted to the community for its show of support to the family and the students, faculty, and staff of the Asheville community.

With regard to policy and public engagement, the school board stands committed to collaborating with the public and to working with our administration, faculty, staff, students, and the stakeholders to revisit decisions and policies in a timely manner. Our first priority is meeting the needs of the students, and this week their well-being in the aftermath of tragedy really needed our focus and attention.

Moving forward, we ask that the community continue being engaged and passionate about their dedication and interest in our school district.

We will be revisiting the policies regarding the actions and message of guest speakers on an upcoming board agenda for board review. The public notices will be sent so that the community can participate.

Thank you, again, for your continued dedication to Asheville City Schools.

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As ev e C ty Sc oo s 85 Mo ta St , As ev e, NC 28801 828-350-7000