From:	Eli Oldfield on behalf of Eli Oldfield <eli@qyouthresources.org>
To:	ErinP@ckschools.org
Cc:	director1@ckschools.org; director2@ckschools.org; director3@ckschools.org; director4@ckschools.org; director5@ckschools.org
Subject:	[EXTERNAL] QYR Response to meeting with Director Jeni Zapatka
Date:	Friday, October 15, 2021 2:16:43 PM

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Superintendent Prince and CKSD School Board Members,

This email is in regards to the meeting Q Youth Resources (QYR) had yesterday with CKSD's Interim Director of Equity Jeni Zapatka. QYR is a local LGBTQ+ youth and family service non-profit. This meeting was in regards to CKSD's decision to remove a "Love Has No Gender" poster from an elementary school music classroom, citing the LGBTQ+ identity words on the poster as "inappropriate" for K-5 students.

QYR board members left this meeting **extremely troubled by CKSD's clear lack of process and care for a decision that has wide ranging implications for their LGBTQ+ students, families, and staff well beyond one poster's removal.** Not only was it explained to QYR's board that CKSD used no formal process nor metric to make this decision, QYR's board was also informed of harmful unofficial policies as a result of this informal decision making process. **At no point during this process was the Equity Lens Tool used in spite of this decision and its resulting policies having significant impact on LGBTQ+ students, staff, and families.**

We share our specific concerns below:

- The decision making process was described to QYR as "informal discussions" between Superintendent Prince, The Superintendent of Human Resources, and Executive Director of Elementary Instruction, and Director Zapatka. When QYR inquired what formal process was used to reach a decision, we were explicitly told **no formal process was used**. Further, when QYR inquired what research was done to reach the conclusion that LGBTQ+ identity words are inappropriate for K-5 classroom walls, we were informed that the decision makers **"felt the words were inappropriate"** despite no specific source cited demonstrating their inappropriateness on K-5 classroom walls. Director Zapatka informed QYR's board that CKSD's school board was emailed about this informal decision, and that the CKSD's school board agreed with the decision. **We are deeply concerned that the Equity Lens Tool was not used to make this decision, and instead CKSD administrators relied on personal bias and belief to make this critical decision.**

- When QYR asked if LGBTQ+ people were included in the decision making process, we were simply informed "no, they were not." It is our understanding that the Equity Lens Tool was designed to specifically address issues that will impact marginalized communities, and call on CKSD to use the tool's process to ensure impacted communities are involved in the decision making process.

> QYR is troubled that this informal process involving no impacted community members **has not only resulted in a poster's removal without formal process, but has also resulted in an informal discriminatory policy specifically targeting LGBTQ+ students, staff, and families.** When QYR asked what CKSD's official stance is on LGBTQ+ identity words (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) being visible on CKSD's k-5 classroom walls, **we were told by Director Zapatka that CKSD's stance is that no LGBTQ+ identity words can be visible on K-5 classroom walls.** When QYR asked if any other protected class is similarly banned from being visible on CKSD K-5 walls, Director Zapatka replied "None." **It is urgently troubling to QYR that CKSD now has a formal position resulting from an informal decision making process that effectively erases all developmentally appropriate references to LGBTQ+ people and families from K-5 classroom walls.**

QYR finds it unacceptable that not only was no formal process used to make this decision, but that the Equity Lens Tool was not at all referenced nor utilized. This important decision was made based on personal feeling and bias while excluding any impacted community members. We remain deeply troubled by the resulting stance that no LGBTQ+ identity words can be visible on K-5 classroom walls, and maintain that these words themselves are not inherently inappropriate and are instead reflective of many of your district's students and staff's family and lives.

QYR is urgently concerned about CKSD's climate for LGBTQ+ students, families, and staff given the disregard for a formal and culturally responsive process displayed by several CKSD administrators.

QYR expects an elevated and accelerated process to address these concerns involving additional CKSD leadership that includes LGBTQ+ community members, students, staff, and other stakeholders.

Best,
Eli Oldfield
Board Chair
Q Youth Resources

Anna Cesa
Treasurer
Q Youth Resources

Jill Davidson
Secretary
Q Youth Resources

M Rich
Board Member
Q Youth Resources

Kayla Potts
Board Member

Q Youth Resources

Tom Bowen
Board Member
Q Youth Resources

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Eli Oldfield
Board Chair
Q Youth Resources
eli@qyouthresources.org
(903)253-6788