

The Anderson News

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Sept. 3, 2021

To: Superintendent Sheila Mitchell

From: Ben Carlson and Christian Marnon
The Anderson News

This is a modification of the letter you received Aug. 18, 2021, your response to which was received.

That letter did not serve as a request for public records. In fact, we simply asked for supporting materials to be provided and, if records requests were required, that we'd gladly provide those requests separately.

Further, please note that nothing in the Aug. 18 letter included any references to critical race theory or social emotional learning. These are direct questions based solely on information provided by KDE.

Note, too, we are not asking for a "holistic" response to these questions; simply a response to each, as asked. In this modified version of the original letter, a simple yes will do if this KDE guidance has been adopted into the school district, although you are welcome to expand on that answer if you so choose. If no, please explain why that's the case.

The reference documents are the same in this letter as in the first, and are attached.

Because it's clear that members of the site-based councils and school board are not able to respond, we are submitting this only to you, Sheila Mitchell.

Questions

Document one, page four

The final bullet point says "Educators, schools and districts must commit to listening to those seeking to be heard and to ensure that young people of color feel valued and safe in school and the community."

What specific steps has the district or its site-based councils made to ensure young people of color feel valued and safe in school? If those steps have not been taken, why not?

Document one, page 10

Under subheading for inclusivity, the page mentions critical pedagogy.

Has critical pedagogy or any of its elements been incorporated in any curriculum by the district or any of its site-based councils? If not, why not?

Document one, page 15

This page asks if the district has an Equality and Inclusion Action Plan or is equity included in your district's strategic plan?

Does the district have either? If not, why not?

Document one, page 18

The first bullet point says "Most of our students are Caucasian and need exposure to more diversity and assistance with unintentional biases." Do you think that applies to the Anderson County school district? If so, why? If not, why not?

Document 2, page one

The third paragraph says KDE believes that conversations about racial trauma and implicit bias are needed across Kentucky regardless of the racial makeup in our schools.

Has the district, its site-based councils or staff initiated those types of conversations? If not, why not?

Document 2, page one

The sixth bullet point on that page calls for the creation of a "safe space" for dialogue. Has the district or any of its site-based councils created such a space? If not, why not?

The seventh bullet point calls for students and staff to "learn about and acknowledge our own biases and seek to grow by participating in training in equity and diversity, implicit bias, cultural responsiveness, cultural humility and anti-racism."

Has the district, any of its site-based councils put in place programs, literature, videos or any other means to have staff and students acknowledge their own biases? If not, why not?

The 10th bullet point calls for the district to "teach how to be an upstander when racism is witnessed." Has that teaching been done? If not, why not?

The 12th bullet point calls for schools to "Begin efforts to implement an anti-racism framework in your school or classroom." Has the district or its site-based councils taken any steps to implement this? If not, why not?

