

Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)



**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD**

Litchfield, New Hampshire 03052  
**Draft Minutes for July 28, 2021**  
Location: CHS Auditorium

**C. Harrison, Chair**  
**B. Bourque, Vice Chair**

**In Attendance:**

- C Harrison, Chair
- B Bourque , Vice Chair
- E MacDonald, Board Member
- H Ames, Board Member
- T Hershberger, Board Member
- Dr. Michael Jette, Superintendent
- Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator (*remote*)
- Mary Widman, Director of CIA
- Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

*(Agenda items may not be in the order in which they were addressed.)*

**I. COMMUNITY FORM**

**5:00 p.m.**

**A. Call to Order**

Mrs. Harrison called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

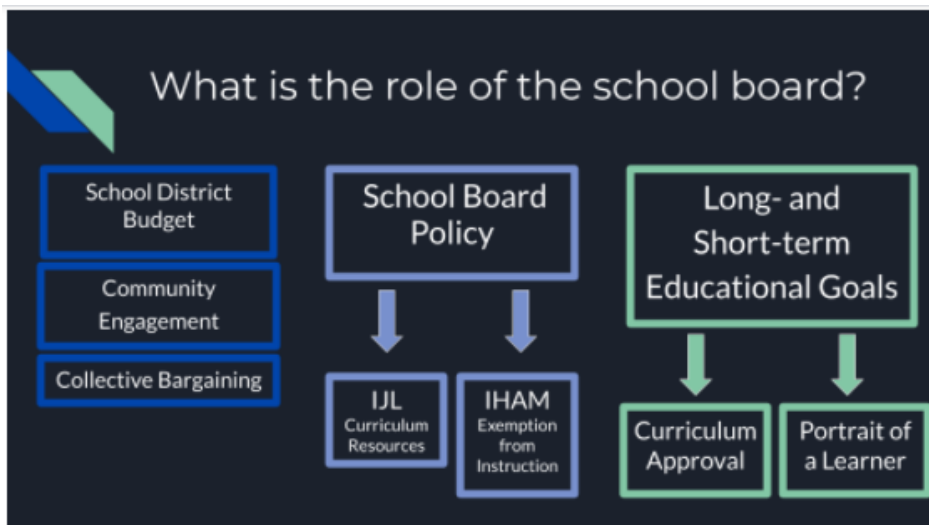
**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

**C. Overview: Why Are We Here?**

Mrs. Harrison welcomed those in attendance for coming out for the special meeting. She made the following statements: We came together tonight over concerns of things we were teaching our students and the School Board and School District are responding to those concerns. The last meeting was packed with a full agenda of items as our only meeting in July and we thought it would be a better opportunity to engage with the community through a public forum. There will be presentations from myself, Dr. Jette, Superintendent; Ms. Widman, Director of CIA; Mr. Perez, CHS Assistant Principal; and Mr. Gaumont, LMS Social Studies teacher. We hear a lot of things across the nation and the world and we are confident in what we have created in Litchfield. It is important to see what we are teaching our students in school, the way we develop curriculum and train our teachers and what we are doing.

**D. Presentations:**

- **Role of the School Board - School Board Chair**



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Mrs. Harrison began by stating that the School Board has several roles, such as setting the rules governing the school district through policy, setting long and short term goals, and developing curriculum. The Board does not conduct business without a quorum of the Board. The focus tonight is on the Board’s roles in curriculum development, creation of policy and vetting long and short term education goals.

Policy Creation

School Board Policies are based on NH State RSAs (Revised Statutes Annotated - laws with notes, history, context and clarification) and Education statutes and requirements provided by the Department of Education. As state laws and Education rules are enacted, we receive guidance documents from NH DOE, NH Department of Justice and NH School Board Association on required and recommended policies. Our policies are available on our website. Policies are reviewed, amended, approved and reapproved at Public school board meetings. The policies that are approved by the School Board are created with transparency to students, teachers and staff, families and the community in mind. They maintain our local control and the process of adopting policy allows for input from our community.

**Controversial Materials/Topics**

<u>Policy IJL</u> <i>Selection of Educational Resources</i>	<u>Policy IHAM</u> <i>Exemption from Instruction</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Board Responsibility</li> <li>• CIA Director and PERC</li> <li>• Accessibility and Transparency</li> <li>• Approval Process and Procedures</li> </ul> <p>Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contact the classroom teacher or media specialist</li> <li>2. Discussion with Principal</li> <li>3. Fill out Form IJL-2</li> <li>4. Media Review Committee</li> <li>5. Appeal to School Board</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May opt student out of topics or units of instruction</li> <li>• Right to inspect any/all instructional materials</li> </ul> <p>Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet with classroom teacher</li> <li>2. Fill out Form IHAM-R, submit to principal</li> <li>3. An alternative assignment will be provided</li> </ol>

Policy IJL, Selection of Educational Resources, was last approved in 2014. That policy outlines the responsibilities of the Board for all matters relating to selection of learning materials which have been delegated to professional personnel, including PERC. According to the policy, all parents and citizens are invited to participate in the development process. Curriculum guides, outlines and descriptions are available to students on the website, in student handbooks and programs of study, and any parent has the right to review materials teachers use in class by initiating a conversation with the teacher. Policy IJL outlines the objectives and process for approving curriculum. All materials need to go through a vetting process before approval by the Board. If any parent, guardian or citizen finds material objectionable, there is a process in place for reconsideration of its inclusion in instruction. The process includes: contacting the teacher or media specialist, discuss the issue with the building principal, completed Form IJL-2 to request the material be reviewed by the Media Review Committee. The decision or outcome of the process, if not agreed upon by the parent, guardian or citizen submitting the request, can be appealed to the Board through the Superintendent. This is the proper process and the way to proceed.

Policy IHAM, Exemption from Instruction, was last approved in 2010. Parents, guardians, and students 18 years or older have the opportunity to opt out of specific materials that are taught in the classroom. The process is outlined in the policy, which includes a form to be completed by the objecting parent, guardian or student 18 years or older.

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- **The Message of Unity - Superintendent**

How did we get here?

- Message of Unity
- District Leadership
- Words Matter
- Consensus
- Resources

Dr. Jette outlined information regarding the Message of Unity previously posted on the District website. He explained that the Message of Unity was issued in June 2020 and the document was developed by building a consensus of the leadership team district-wide, while also involving faculty and students to ensure our message was inclusive. The intent was to make sure the community knew we are a caring school community and to put words out to help pull people together in our community as a whole. He indicated that we felt words really mattered and we were concerned that making no statement would not build togetherness. We provided resources for parents, faculty and the community with items to use as they chose. We trust our faculty and community members to make the right decisions and we felt we were providing a wealth of information for them to use if they chose to do so. There was one resource that was a page of links, with several links that linked to other links, for which we had no control. When it was brought to our attention that some links directed the user to inappropriate information, we promptly removed the message from the website and sent a message to parents with an apology from the district.

Guide us on next steps:

Should we...

1. Carry forward without a published Message of Unity?
2. Reissue the Message of Unity without the one controversial resource?
3. Reissue just the Message of Unity with none of the resources?

Dr. Jette indicated that one of the things we need at this time is guidance from the community regarding what we should do going forward. Should we carry forward without a published Message of Unity? Should we re-issue the Message of Unity without the one controversial resource? Should we re-issue the Message of Unity with none of the resources? Dr. Jette commented that we are hoping for feedback from the community. He noted the district had the best intentions when issuing the Message of Unity, but things got out of hand. He asked community members to consider helping to guide the district on that question.

- **The Curriculum Process - Director of CIA**

Ms. Widman, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment presented the curriculum process. She commented that she would speak to the curriculum approval process, what has been done since she arrived in 2018 and how the passing of HB2 and the guidance from the Department of Justice will impact our instruction.

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### The Curriculum Process

- Curriculum revision [“cycle”](#)
- Curriculum is a living document
- Based on State of NH DOE standards or national standards as appropriate.
- Collaboration across the district K-12
- Documents go to PERC
- Documents go to Board for approval (2 reads).
- All approved documents are available on the [district website](#).

#### The Curriculum Process

Ms. Widman indicated that curriculum approval follows a long process. She noted that there is a curriculum revision cycle that is followed and that curriculum is a living document that is subject to changes. All curriculum documents are published on the district website. All curriculum is open to change as new standards or laws are changed. All documents were written by predecessors and based on the NH DOE standards or national standards as appropriate. The state standards for social studies have not been updated since 2006. K-12 teams meet to discuss and work on the curriculum, including all content area teachers and specialists. Ms. Widman indicated her goal is to collaborate in K-12 and identify where the gaps and overlaps are.

Curriculum documents are received, reviewed by the Curriculum Team, Principals and then to the Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment for review, formatting and double checking. The curriculum (documents) then go to the PERC Committee (PERC = Program Evaluation & Review Committee) to be vetted thoroughly and approved by the Committee before going before the School Board. It is not a rubber stamp approval. The School Board has a two reading process when reviewing curriculum to provide an opportunity for the community to give feedback. All approved documents are available on the website and up to date.

### Social Studies Revision Process

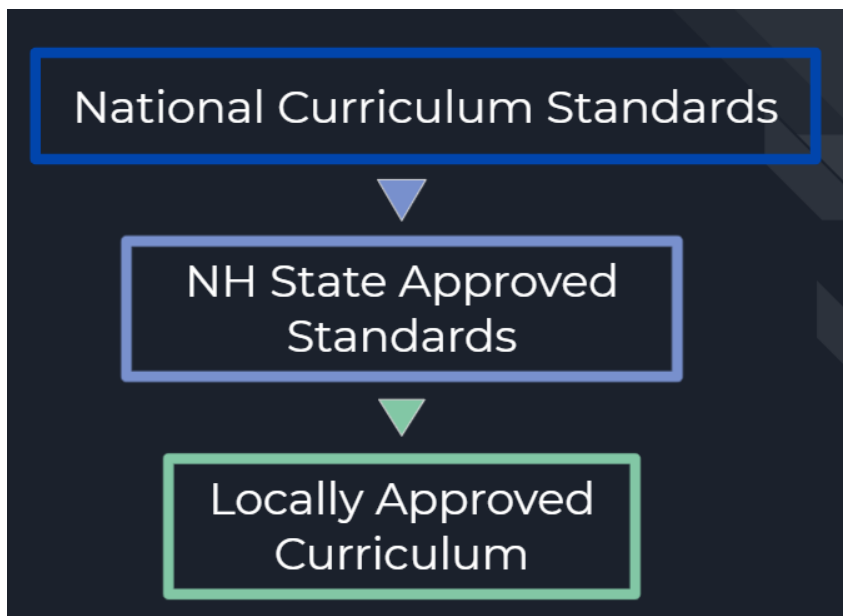
- The Curriculum K-12 was slated for revision in 2019-2020.
- We began the process but ran into obstacles.
  - Lack of updated standards at the state level.
    - Current standards were last updated in [2006](#).
    - 2016 framework was written off of the [C3 framework](#).
      - No changes in standards since publication.
      - Published by NCSS but written in collaboration with 15 professional organizations.
      - NCSS updates and stances do not reflect the local beliefs.
  - Covid.
- We took some time this year to work on our topic alignment and consistent competencies.
- The only piece that has gone through an approval process are the [competencies](#).

#### Social Studies Curriculum

Ms. Widman indicated that the social studies curriculum revision process began at the beginning of 2019 and we ran into obstacles as the state was in the process of revising social studies standards and it was tabled. The state approved standards are from 2006 and the former Curriculum Director wrote them off what was being recommended by the NH DOE.

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The 2016 curriculum is written off the C3 (College, Career, Civil Life) framework and has not changed since it was published. The NCSS does publish the standards, but they are written in collaboration with 15 professional organizations. NCSS updates and stances **do not** reflect our local belief and will not be included in our curriculum. The other obstacle we faced was COVID-19, which disrupted the work being done on the curriculum. This year we took some time to work on our topic alignment and consistent competencies and we discovered with the topic alignment that there was a lot of overlap with the content in grade levels and we aligned it to the appropriate levels. The only piece that has gone through the approval process are the new competencies that were approved by PERC and the School Board.



Ms. Widman used an ‘upside-down wedding cake’ chart illustration to explain how standards are applied and used in the curriculum process. She indicated that there are National Curriculum Standards that filter down to NH State Approved Standards that filter down to Locally Approved Curriculum. The curriculum documents go through a rigorous process to determine what is appropriate and right for our community. That is why we have policies that provide opportunities and avenues for families to come forward with their concerns regarding what is taught in our schools.

## Guidance on HB2 for Schools

[Guidance](#) from NH DOE and NH DOJ was received on Thursday July 22, 2021.

### Some major highlights-

*Does the law prohibit teachers from teaching U.S. history?*

No. Nothing prohibits the teaching of historical subjects including, but not limited to: slavery, treatment of the Native American population, Jim Crow laws, segregation, treatment of women, treatment of LGBTQ+ people, treatment of people with disabilities, treatment of people based on their religion, or the Civil Rights movement. Nor does anything prohibit discussions related to current events including, but not limited to: the Black Lives Matter movement, efforts to promote equality and inclusion, or other contemporary events that impact certain identified groups.

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#### Guidance on HB2 for Schools

Ms. Widman indicated with the passage of HB2, there was language that changes our instructional practices. We received guidance from the Department of Justice, but have not yet fully digested it. Some of the language is aggressive and includes consequences for violating the law. Ms. Widman noted that we have addressed concerns raised at the July 14, 2021 School Board meeting and provided major highlights from the HB2 Guidance documentation received from the State. According to the guidance, the district is not violating the law.

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## Guidance on HB2 for Schools

*Are schools allowed to teach students historical concepts related to discrimination?*

Yes. Schools are allowed to discuss “as part of a larger course of academic instruction, the historical existence of ideas and subjects “identified” in the new law. Nothing prohibits schools from teaching about discrimination, including the historical existence of these ideas.

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## Guidance on HB2 for Schools

*A parent or student has complained that certain lessons, subjects, or areas of discussion related to racism have made them uncomfortable. Has the school district violated the Prohibition on Teaching Discrimination?*

No. It is important to note that education related to racism, sexism, and other practices or beliefs that have harmed or continue to harm certain identified groups may make students, faculty, or parents uncomfortable. These lessons may encourage or prompt students to reflect upon whether and how racism, sexism, or other practices have or have not affected their lives. Even discussion of historical practices and their lingering impact upon different identified groups can cause this discomfort.

**The mere fact that a lesson may make students, faculty or parents uncomfortable does not mean that the school has violated the Prohibition on Teaching Discrimination.**

Ms. Widman indicated if there is concern about a class lesson or discussion, there is a path to resolve it. but if we do not know about the concern we cannot address it. She urged parents to talk to their child's or childrens' teacher and get clarification; if not satisfied, talk to the building administrator; if not satisfied, talk to the Curriculum Director, who will involve the Superintendent and other Directors as needed to understand and to resolve the concerns.

## Concerned about a class lesson or discussion?

If you have questions and/or concerns about instructional practice, materials or content:

- Talk to the Teacher for clarification. If there is no resolution....
- Talk to the School Administration. If there is no resolution....
- Talk to the Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. She will involve the Superintendent and other Directors as needed to understand and resolve the concerns.

We are confident that issues will be resolved by following these steps.

### ● Portrait of a Learner

Mr. Perez, CHS Assistant Principal, spoke to the Portrait of a Learner. He indicated The Portrait of a Learner is a document that a school or district uses to specify the cognitive, personal and interpersonal competencies that students should have when they graduate. He commented that we want this to be a community based initiative by placing the document at town hall, at the farm stand, etc. He noted that in December 2019, a group went to the workshop to learn how to develop this. In January/February 2020, it was presented to the School Board and they provided approval to move forward.

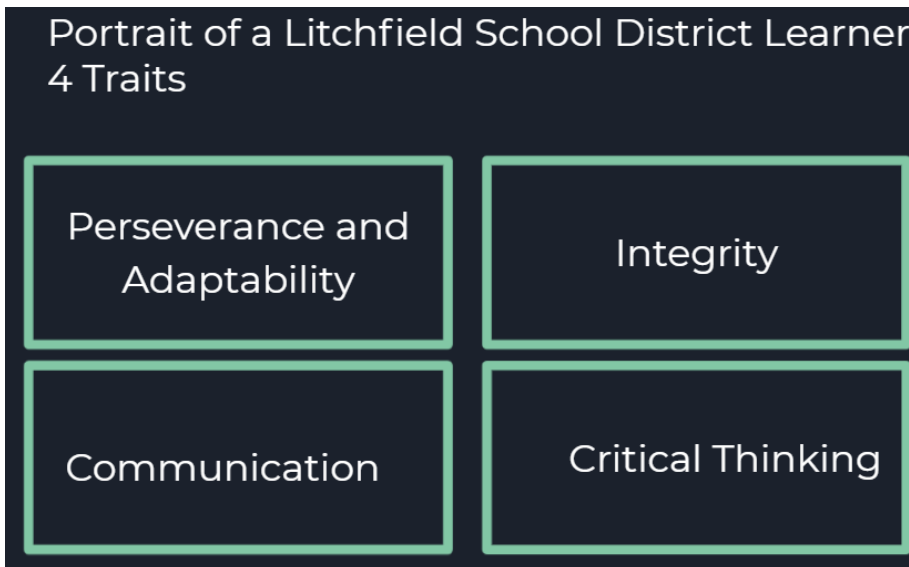
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The *Portrait of a Learner* is a document that a school or district uses to specify the cognitive, personal, and interpersonal competencies that students should have when they graduate.

Mr. Perez indicated that we met with parents, students, business owners, and community members to discuss the Portrait of a Learner and we came up with a list of 30 traits, which we narrowed to 15. He noted in March 2020, COVID-19 hit and we had to work on this virtually. We sent out a survey to the committee and we narrowed the traits down to 4 traits that we want students to have when they graduate:

- Perseverance & Adaptability, Integrity, Communication and Critical Thinking.

Mr. Perez indicated this is not a mission statement, but it is linked to the mission and will be linked to the building missions, but it is really those traits that we want our students to have as they leave our community.



- **Instructional Practices**

Michael Gaumont, LMS Social Studies teacher, spoke to instructional practices.

One of the positive outcomes of teaching during the pandemic is that it enabled time for collaboration across grade levels. It allowed my colleagues and I who teach Social Studies to have meaningful discussions about the skills and content we teach at various levels and how they relate to expected course outcomes and competencies. I regularly check to ensure what I am teaching aligns with the district approved curriculum and the values of our schools. In grade 8, we teach US History, beginning with the Colonial period through the Civil War, with an emphasis on the war for Independence, the framing of Constitution, the growth of a new nation, and the causes of the Civil War. The units of study are included in the syllabus and presented to students at the start of the school year, as well as published on Google Classroom. Emphasis is placed on the use of primary source documents. In order to develop a deeper understanding of the content, I tie historical topics to contemporary issues via debates and socratic discussions.



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In line with the Do Your Best code, students are encouraged to be open minded about topics and be respectful of peers who may have different opinions. We often talk about bias and how our biases might impact how we view certain issues. By fostering a classroom climate that is tolerant and open minded, students feel much more confident and safe about expressing their claims and viewpoints. Given the current climate of the country, there are some particularly sensitive topics, which are part of the course content. I do not shy away from covering those topics, for example, the treatment of indigenous peoples by settlers as well as the institution of slavery. Students are exposed to multiple primary and secondary source materials on their topics and are charged with drawing their own conclusions. For example, during the fourth quarter last spring, students wrote essays on Abraham Lincoln that counted as summative assessment when it came to the mastery of several course competencies. Students were required to make a claim as to how Lincoln should be remembered by historians in issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. The assignment included a set of primary source documents from the time period, some praising Lincoln, some critiquing him and some from him explaining or justifying his actions.

I am proud of the work the students produced. Their claims were varied and they did a solid job of substantiating their statements with sound reasoning and historical evidence. It made me feel what we are doing and what I am doing is working. Students are learning problem solving, critical thinking and the importance of using examples and evidence to back up their assertions. Students will often ask where I stand in a particular issue or topic. I did not enter this field to indoctrinate students in a particular field of ideology. It is something I take seriously in my profession. As educators we must hold ourselves to a higher level of professionalism at all times. As stated in my class, I do not teach that founding fathers were angelic figures, nor do I skip over the parts of American history that do not align with our country's stated values and goals. I do teach that America has a unique and important place in the world due to the principles on which it was founded and has traditionally stood for

.Lincoln stated in his Gettysburg Address that we must be dedicated to our unfinished work as a nation. While we have not yet achieved all the great ideals and purposes stated in our founding documents by learning our true American history, the good and not so good, we are preparing the next generation of civic leaders to continue that unfinished work. At the end of the last school year, students completed reflections on the coursework we completed together. I received positive feedback about how the content was approached and how my class empowered students to delve into some important historical, anti-contemporary topics to draw their own conclusions. I look forward to continue dialogue and collaboration with my fellow staff, Ms. Widman and building administrators as I grow as a teacher and someone who greatly values working in the Litchfield community both as a teacher and coach. My door is always open to any parents or students with questions or concerns.

Mrs. Harrison indicated that the presentations have concluded.

**[Resource: NH DOJ Guidance: Right to Freedom from Discrimination in Public Workplaces and Education/Divisive Concepts](#)**

#### **E. Community Questions & Discussion**

Steve Perry, Moderator, introduced himself and noted that he is here to steer the discussion and ensure that public input stays on topic. He presented some procedural rules for public input.

He asked that parents of current students or students present their comments first.

Jeff Avitable, 126 Pinecrest Road: I have a quick question. The presentation talked about what HB2 does not do. What does HB2 do? And thank you for this meeting, by the way, everyone.

Dr. Jette: Jeff, thank you for the question. I would direct everybody to take a look at the guidance. We made copies of this on the table outside, so if you did not receive it. We did excerpts of 3 out of 13 questions and answers, so there were three that were on the screen, but there's a lot more information that is in here. I think the best answer is actually in this document, which is Question #1: What are schools prohibited from teaching students? And the answer to that is schools are prohibited from teaching that one identified group, a group based upon: age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, marital status, familial status, mental or physical disability, religion or national origin is:

- Inherently superior or inferior to people of another identified group;

So, we cannot teach that aspect.

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- Inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously;

So we cannot say that one group is inherently racist or sexist.

- Should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment; or
- Should not treat members of other identified groups equally.

So, in other words, I interpret it to be a reaffirmation of many of the notions that are embedded in our Constitution and embedded in many of our laws already. This is just explicitly calling out that we cannot teach those aspects, and I'll also point out, we have never taught those aspects.

Chris Lafleur, 35 Burgess Drive, I am glad to see a lot of what I've seen here. I think it lines up with what I had prepared to say. After the last school board meeting I felt compelled to weigh in on this issue. I am a parent of two children currently enrolled in the Litchfield school district. I would like to express my thanks to the staff involved in their education. I have seen my children's teachers act professionally and show genuine concern for their educational success. My gratitude is only magnified given the difficulties we've all faced over the last year. Over the last year of remote lessons, I've been more closely involved with the school's curriculum and content than I have been in many years. I have not seen any content, in my opinion, that is indoctrination, brainwashing or abusive. I did not see any lessons or assignments that seemed to teach my Caucasian children that they should dislike or demean themselves. I did see lessons that were intended to teach compassion and understanding, not only of themselves, but of their fellow human beings. The recently discussed terms Critical Race Theory or the 1619 Project were new to me. I found that there was a very large amount of information regarding these subjects; however, I did not see anything offensive in the Message of Unity. I interpreted the links at the bottom of the Message of Unity as optional resources and not mandatory assignments. I feel I decide whether to present this information to my children or to discard it. However, I would suggest that future information recommendations be kept on school district pages so there's not a third party page to lose control. I want my children to be exposed to all aspects of history. I want them to learn about the past events and people from our country. I also want my kids to know about the mistakes and missteps made in the past so they don't repeat them. I want them to see that figures like Thomas Jefferson were not perfect. He was important to the founding of our country, but he was also a slave owner. I want my kids to understand the effects of legislation that prevented women from voting prior to the 19th amendment in 1920. In closing, I hope that the school district is not pressured to omit historical topics. It looks to me that items three and four on this guidance (DOJ Guidance) seems to indicate that. I want both sides of history presented to my children - the good and the bad. I don't want historical dirty laundry swept under the rug because those that do not study history are doomed to repeat it. Thank you for your time.

Amber Flindt, 123 Hillcrest Road: I just wanted to put my input in on what the school district can do from here on out. I agree with everything the gentleman just said. It's the links that was the problem. I never received that email, though, for the apology. I'm not sure where that was, so maybe I just missed it. But from here on out I would like the Message of Unity to just be there without the links. I think that was very appropriate for the time; it still is appropriate for this time, and that is just what I have to say. I wrote an email earlier to you guys. I appreciate your feedback on everything and all that you've done for this year. It's been incredibly hard on everyone. Thank you for continuing to just teach our children. Thank you so much.

Tara Coakley, 2 Waterview Circle: I agree with everything that has been said and I am not going to rehash all of that, but I do want to say I have three children in the school district - two at GMS, one at LMS - her first year, which is very exciting. I felt it would be remiss for me not to show up today to say thank you to the school board for an incredibly difficult year. You guys volunteer your time and we parents know that and we recognize that and we thank you. I want to thank the teachers, the administration, the faculty. I have not had one phone call not returned, one email not returned, but I think understanding our teachers are professionals, our faculty are professionals, they are trained to do this job and I'm really happy to see this presentation. I'm very happy that you came and responded to the residents. I think that's very important. Like I said, communication, those four things you had up about students (Portrait of a Learner), I think as parents we need to remember that. We need to do the same thing - we are the model for our kids. So please, keep doing what you're doing. Please keep teaching my kids. The good, the bad, the ugly - I want them to hear it all. I want them to be smart enough to know YouTube isn't a valid source. I'm going to go to those primary sources; I'm going to read what Abe Lincoln said - and that's where I'm going to go for my information, so that when I make my own decision, it's my decision and I can back it up. And in my house that's what we do. My kids come home from school and they'll be like 'hey mommy, I just learned about the slaves. Why did people do that?' and I'm like 'that's a really good question. Let's go find out.'

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I think our teachers do a fabulous job of that. I subbed this year just to be able to come into the schools to be able to help out when needed. I have another job, but I thought our teachers are stepping up, as a parent I need to step up and I can tell you what I saw in those schools, despite the fact that teachers had to completely change what they did. They couldn't put kids into little groups anymore so they can talk to each other and learn to each other, but they adapted and they did it. And I want to see that continue. I want our teachers to be able to teach. I want them to be able to do their jobs. They spend a lot of time and a lot of money to learn how to do it. They know how kids learn; they know child development. We know our kids too, but I think we need to work together. It's a team effort. So just know that I respect you, my kids respect you, we respect what you do. Thank you and keep it up.

Susan Carty, 32 Greenwich Road: I have a couple of questions. Do we have a DEI committee here in the school district? Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?

Dr. Jette: Not a district-wide committee but there are some (inaudible) in the schools that (inaudible).

Susan Carty: Okay, so are we able to access anything that is said during those meetings?

Mr. Perez: We have an Alliance Club, which is a group of kids with an Advisor and they discuss a particular topic and the Advisor is there as needed.

Susan Carty: Okay. Is there an approved list of educational websites that the teachers are able to access if they need additional resources?

Ms. Widman responded but was inaudible.

Susan Carty: We have access to that if we want it, right?

Mrs. Flynn responded, it is online.

Susan Carty: All right. Thank you.

Brandon Lefebvre, 43 Brickyard Drive: The Message of Unity, I agree with several others. I believe that the links, all the different resources should be removed for slightly different purposes. When you read the Message of Unity in its entirety, right above those links, which are specifically labeled as anti-racism links and resources for children, more specifically our children in the community, right above it is the quote from Nelson Mandela, which I will paraphrase, says 'children or persons, people, cannot be born with hate; they are taught hate and just as they can be taught hate they can be taught love'. To put a quote like that right above an anti-racism training for children creates an implication that these children are being taught hate, and it would seem to me that the implication is they're being taught hate by their parents. Perhaps I'm alone in that interpretation. I'm happy to see the content regarding the NCSS, the National Council of the Social Studies. I think it's important for all parents of the community to understand what this organization is. This is a nationwide organization. It is the largest association in America for producing Social Studies content and it's heavily relied upon for drafting curriculum. The NCSS makes their position clear in their about position statements on their website, [www.socialstudies.org](http://www.socialstudies.org). This includes emphasizing to educators the moral and ethical imperatives of providing education of LGBTQ plus history in pre-k through 12th grade classrooms. That same publication refers to the concept of white male privilege several times. In addition, their position statement entitled 'early childhood in the social studies context', the very first sentence states 'early childhood educators may capitalize on the interests of children in the world around them to carefully plan a variety of experiences cultivating young children's abilities to perceive diversity and inequality'. It's for these reasons I believe that the NCSS is espousing extremist partisan ideology and it only serves to create division and perpetuate racism. They're guiding educators to kindle embers of victimhood and guilt in our children's psyche, starting at kindergarten levels all the way through the 12th grade. There's talk of things being national level, state level, local level, and we are not doing it here. I believe that there's an obligation that more than words are occurring. I think we need firm commitments. I will backtrack slightly here: the NCSS is referenced in the existing curriculum, in the 2016 curriculum, that's published on the Litchfield district website. I think it needs to be researched what that curriculum is. If any sort of content like this is involved in the existing curriculum, it needs to be made known what exactly the Litchfield school system and school board is doing to ensure that this content doesn't make its way into the curriculum in the future.

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With that, the last thing I'd like to say is in regard to the term critical thinking, I think we all want our children to be strong, independent thinkers and to be able to form their own opinion and work their way through problems. That used to be a natural byproduct of going to school. It didn't need to be part of a mission statement or linked to it in any way. Critical thinking means different things to different people, and I believe that the school district has a responsibility to ensure that they are achieving that byproduct through the nature of teaching our children how to think and not what to think. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Widman: I referenced it on my slides, but I don't think I did a very good job of really delving into it. Our current curriculum documents, which predate me, do have the reference to NCSS. The C3 frameworks were actually physically published by NCSS, but they were not written by them. They were written by, and if you actually, it's in the presentation which will be made available, in the second page of the C3 frameworks it lists the 15 different groups connected to Civics, Economics, all the different realms throughout the country that were engaged in writing of the C3 frameworks. So it is referenced there and I did see Mike share with me your communication and I saw that reference. It is in there, but it is in there, I can say wholeheartedly, it is in there referencing and quoting the C3 framework, which is published by NCSS. Again, we do not go there, what we use for the C3, what we use to write our curriculum comes just from that one document, which is not directly from, although published, by them. There's 15 different groups that have contributed to it and it has not changed since it was published. We do not condone, just like we talked about at the board meeting last time, the NEA and our LEA having different stances. It's the same. We do not follow the NCSS as to what we need to be teaching our kids. We follow the standards and develop our own homegrown curriculum to ensure that we are teaching what is important for our kids.

Mike Breton, 2 Hamel Circle: I follow up with what he said quite a bit. Critical thinking is very important for our kids and teachers have a very powerful role, where they're giving out their grades; they're always the strongest voice in the class. So when they voice their views and have very strong opinions, a lot of the kids are very impressionable. It doesn't matter what age, even the high school kids are very impressionable; they're very uneducated on a lot of the viewpoints. My daughter is very conservative and she was, whether it's in her classes in Litchfield or Hudson, she's very outspoken with her views, but very outnumbered, and it's a growing problem in schools in general that, just like he said, they are being told what to think and not how to critically think, okay? And that's no good for anyone. I also find that tolerance is work that, it's great, you know, people should be tolerant, but it's kind of a [I hate this word but] it's kind of like a bully's way to get a dissenting view to shut up. The word tolerance kind of makes you feel like you should just stop talking because you're intolerant, whereas some people have views that are very biased, but they're pushing those views onto the kids. And lastly, I haven't really heard anything, even though we've talked about the subject in general, about Critical Race Theory. The Unity Message, is the School Board, in the unity message, willing to denounce critical race theory publicly?

Dr. Jette: We really have not had a discussion as a board and in order to make any denouncement of something the board is going to have to have a discussion and take a vote on that. So, to answer that tonight is not something that the board is capable of doing because there hasn't been a stance taken. But your point's been heard and if it's raised at the next board meeting and then there's a stance, we'll certainly get that out, but right now that has not been done. I will tell you this, a month ago I didn't even know what critical race theory was. I had to Google it. So the first time it got raised I was like, 'what are we talking about - I don't even know what that is'. And then people are saying, 'here it is in the curriculum' and I'm like 'I don't even know what those terms mean'. And in talking with people I am finding a vast array of definitions of what it means to each individual. And so, I really think we have to understand when we look at what guidance has come out relative to the law, I think it's really framing for us. We can commit to following that guidance. We can commit that we haven't done anything against what that guidance says, I believe. And if all of this strengthens our ability as a school and as a community to better ensure that we are teaching critical thinking - again, not what to think, but how to think - aren't we going to be better off as a result of all of this? So I really think there is a very positive aspect that can come from the dialogue that we're having tonight and the work that we're engaged in relative to this law and we'll be a better, stronger community as a result of that.

Meredith Spotts, 47 Century Lane: I am a student at CHS. I'm a rising senior. I'm here to speak on behalf of my peers because there seems to be incredibly little attention paid to what we actually think of these issues and critical race theory and all of that sort of stuff. First of all, I would like to make myself completely clear - I am entirely in favor of learning how something like critical race theory couldn't be incorporated into the curriculum. I will refer to that in similar schools of thought as critical race theory for clarity, but it might not be that necessarily by name. It's just shorthand.

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I have done my research. I have spoken to my peers, mentors and elders. I have attended everything from world affairs meetings to republican town halls to liberal arts college courses. I have lived in nearly every corner of this country. I have learned about cultures that exist outside of rural New England, and I pride myself on my empathy, compassion and willingness to learn from others and to actively grow as a human being. Secondly, I would like to explain the school of thought behind critical race theory. The school of thought is not the degradation of white people now, but it is the willingness to learn from our ancestors' mistakes and to grow as a society. There is nothing that would be taught that would lead your children to be ashamed of who they are. There is only the acknowledgement of our privilege. Somehow I have learned about the dynamics of oppression of white privilege, and I am still confident, self-assured and understand that the fragility of white identity not only can, but should be challenged. For every person in power that denies the simple facts of American history, there are more well-respected, well educated and ultimately good people that are in favor of this being taught. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Milley, who does happen to be white, said that it was important for the military and at military academies, and this is the people that everyone talks about respecting, to be well educated, widely read and to understand the dynamics of white rage, of oppression, privilege, and why there's even space for hatred perpetrated by the crowds at white supremacists rallies and the attempted coup on the Capitol. Third, I want to know exactly how people think that banning any kind of discussion on race would change the curriculum. The extent of what I would consider even vaguely similar to critical race theory so far in my educational career has been 'please don't use racially derogatory language towards the historical figures of color that we learn about'. Yes, the main cause of the Civil War was slavery, and yes colonization was awful and killed a lot of indigenous people. I know this presentation has an allowance for teaching about history and current events and stuff, but the vast majority of parents that I've heard about are completely against that. None of this stuff that I was taught was even particularly in-depth. I can't remember if we learned anything like the disease blankets used by settlers used to spread the smallpox throughout native populations to intentionally kill them and I certainly don't remember being instructed to feel guilty of my heritage. My brother, a 7th grader, spent the entire year being told to take notes about, at about 3.5 words per minute, about ancient Mesopotamia, with very little critical thinking involved. I can assure you that white people are all bad, or whatever, is not being taught. I will emphasize again that critical race theory will not teach your children shame. It will teach them how race influences individual experiences, how privilege can be used for good and for bad, how to approach certain political issues, how to empathize with and be compassionate towards our peers, how racial relations influence historical events, and above all, how to be kinder, better humans. And that's the whole point of school. Maybe we don't need to know how to calculate the vertex of a sine wave, or identify figurative language when working at an office job filing paperwork, or analyze exactly why the wallpaper is yellow and curtains are blue, but we are being taught to think critically and question everything to inform ourselves and to build a better, kinder future. Thank you for your time and understanding and I hope this was informational. I am completely open to questions and will explain to the best of my abilities.

Tiffany McKinnon, 9 Firefly Way: I just want to say thank you, Mr. Gaumont especially, your speech I think was spot on. I think I need to go back and talk to my daughter about what she thinks of Abraham Lincoln now. I apologize for missing it when it happened. I have two kids as of this fall that will be in the high school. We've been in the district their entire scholastic career so far. I substituted in the district for about 7 years until I finished my degree and now teach somewhere else. Please continue to challenge my students. My biological ones and then the rest from the town. We need to be able to talk about difficult subjects. I asked my children point blank, were you ever told because of a certain color of any person they were right, wrong or indifferent, and both of them emphatically said no. So we can talk about these issues and this is what we need to do. We need to talk about it. Our history is not pretty, nor is anybody's history. We're human - we make mistakes - it's what we do. So the best way to learn about it is to talk about it. This is how we learn to talk to people who have a different opinion, who have a different view on it, who have a different culture, and this is how we learn to talk about them politely. This is how we learn to research our sources. If somebody tells you the sky is blue, you can't just take their word on it. Why is the sky blue? Where do they get that information from? This is what we need to continue to teach them. This is how we teach them to learn to be properly functioning adults when their career comes and as they get older these topics naturally get deeper. Obviously you should not be talking about abortion or something like that with your kindergartners. This is something that grows as your student grows, but you can talk to every grade about these touchy subjects at an age appropriate level. So, from what I saw when I worked here, what I've talked with my kids, I have not seen any inappropriateness from our schools. Thank you very much. Please continue to help them carry the torch forward.

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Mike Breton, 2 Hamel Circle: Given the last couple of speakers, I just want to reassess the need for the school to speak out at the next board meeting to have that discussion of whether you will publicly denounce CRT because despite what is being said, CRT is not learning about our past, learning about our history, learning about slavery, learning about the indigenous, it's not about any of that. It's about learning that every context of current civilization is racist and oppressed. You're seeing videos of college professors talking about 'oh, you're white and you're breathing? That means you oppressed someone today.' That just happened, okay? So, CRT is not about history. It's about changing how we view today, okay? Racism, horrible. Everyone knows that. There are some racist people in this country still, we get that. But CRT has nothing to do with that. CRT is about changing the shape of how everything is construed, okay? You have schools in Virginia that are eliminating advanced math for below juniors, okay? Students that are excelling in freshman and sophomore year are not able to take advanced classes anymore in Virginia, in this particular school district, because too many white students are in the advanced math classes. So math is now racist, okay? We need to put an end to that and the school board should be looking at that and having a public opinion on that in my opinion.

Dr. Jette: Mike, I appreciate that. I just want to emphasize again this is New Hampshire, not Virginia. We can look on a national level. So think of that upside down wedding cake [in the presentation] for a second. We can find a range of instructional practices that are taking place in the nation that are not going to fly in Litchfield. We can find extremes on both sides of that range that are not going to fly in Litchfield and I think we just have to acknowledge that. That we're in control at the local level of what we teach in our community. We do that through community input. As a principal, I can remember seeing on the national news the kindergartner who got suspended from school for kissing another kid. And I'm like, 'what is the matter with principals in other places. There are other ways to deal with this.' You don't take the extreme scenarios and then apply them and say now it's broad strokes across the country. You can absolutely find that. I had a conversation with Representative Lascelles who said there were kindergartners being taught that they were oppressors because they were white, and they were oppressed because they were black kindergartners. And I said, 'Rich, did that take place in Litchfield?' No, it didn't take place in Litchfield. Our kindergarten teachers live in Litchfield. They're part of our community. That is not going to occur here and we will stand strong to make sure that we have community schools that are responsive to community values. So, as much as you have that example of a professor, and again I would argue that CRT is really a college level, advanced concept, teaching about racism at the level that we do it is important so that if somebody goes into the social sciences, into the more legal fields, then they are going to advance and receive more advanced theory at that point in time, but they're also college students, they're not youngsters. So I think that's just important for us to keep in mind. We are not teaching CRT. I don't think there is any intention to do it. I know there's not any intention on my part or our curriculum director. The board will certainly have a discussion and take a stance on it so that we have a formal stance that's been made on it, but we need to be careful not to take the most extreme, radical examples of what's happening on a national level in that broad stroke and apply it down to the smaller cake at the bottom, which is what we're capable of doing in our community in the 180 days that we're blessed with your children.

Megan Reed, 2 Oak Drive: I have a lot of questions. I guess I'm a little confused by the packet [handout]. It says on the first page this HB2, you know, making people feel oppressed in item #1, but then it also says that it's okay to talk about beliefs and ideas for those who have been harmed pertaining to a certain identified group. I think there's a lot of big words in regards to CRT. You know, the diversity, equity and inclusion. There's a lot of different words that people can use for CRT. So I guess the Message of Unity that was sent out, and I know everyone keeps bringing it up, so I do apologize, the website where the Google doc link is, that page was put on there, right? Someone had to physically put that little paragraph on the website, right?

Confusion from the district and board staff.

Megan Reed: You know, the subject line 'we must simply do more'; on page 2 it says list of resources for staff, parents and students; here's some reading you can do over the summer. So in that there's five bullet points, those were placed there, right? So the Google doc with all those links was placed there as well, correct?

Dr. Jette: Yeah, the key thing is that we did not own that Google doc. We made the link and at the time that we made the link the Google doc looked one way, and as you know with Google, it can be adjusted overnight. It can be adjusted every second. So when the link was made to that Google doc it looked one way and a year later it looked another way.

Megan Reed: though in June of last year ...

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Dr. Jette: Great question. I can't answer it. I know that we looked at it, but when I look at it now I know it didn't look like that. I know that things have been changed and added to, but when we made the link I can't tell you exactly what it looked like at that point in time because it's a year later and it's been modified several ways. And that Google doc has like 50 links in it.

Megan Reed: I think like 92.

Dr. Jette: Okay, 92. I just knew there were a bunch and if you click on those they all go to Facebook pages and other websites and so forth. Every one of those has changed in infinite ways. The problem is that somebody said to us, I mean, I had a conversation with Chief Sargent who said one of those links says you should be defunding the police. Is that what the Litchfield School District endorses? And my answer was no, that wasn't even there when we linked it. So over time, we lost control of what we linked to because it was links to links to links and so that's when we said, shut it down. As soon as the concern was brought forward I called up Michele, who is the one who physically posted on the website, and I said take the links down; I want them off and they were removed that day.

Megan Reed: So my question is, and I work a lot like everybody else, just for my knowledge, should I as a parent be constantly checking the school district website for updates like this because I had no idea it existed. I don't know if I'm supposed to be checking weekly, daily, monthly because had I not gone on Facebook I would have no idea that any of this was going on or that something was posted a year ago with all of those mistaken links, but you don't know what the link was originally supposed to put out.

Dr. Jette: So a year ago, June 10 of 2020, an email was sent to all parents in our system with the Message of Unity and the links. It was emailed out to everybody at that point in time.

Megan Reed: But parents as well? Dr. Jette: Yes.

Megan Reed: Okay, that I did not get into so.....

Dr. Jette: And I appreciate it because I don't honestly read everything that comes from my own children in school. At times it's like I'm busy and it's like I bury it in my Inbox and I'll try to get back to it later, so I get that.

Megan Reed: I mean I read everything that comes through my email and I absolutely would have read something, especially during that time. I would have read the Message of Unity, the topics that were brought up. I guess to that gentleman's point, CRT may not be taught, but there are other words that people are using to teach this topic and I have a feeling that one way or another these beliefs and ideas will eventually be put in the curriculum. We just don't know it yet. It's coming. Bedford is going to teach it. They have a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee that they've been working on it all summer and they're right next door. So I just wanted to ask, you know, to what he just said, you know, it may not be called CRT, but you can't confirm that these ideas aren't going to be taught?

Dr. Jette: Again, I just come back to exactly what defines CRT. I mean, you've looked at the document, so what would be your suggestion to the board? Do we keep the Message of Unity minus the resources?

Megan Reed: Yeah, I think Litchfield is a community of unity already. I think it was great to put out there, but I'm not against teaching history; history is history, right or wrong. It's the gray area a lot of people, you know, different ideas and why something happened because of someone's color, sex, gender, whatever, history is history. And history was 150 years ago, 200 years ago. Our current present is very different than 200 years ago and to put those ideas and beliefs, the teachers' ideas and beliefs, onto these students so that they can then come home and tell me what they now believe, which is very different than what I teach in my home, that's kind of where we have a problem, I think. I don't know if any of this is making any sense.

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Dr. Jette: It really does. I'll say just one last thing and then we'll turn it over to a few other people, but what Mike Gaumont, our 8th grade Social Studies teacher, summarized is exactly what I see when I walk in the classrooms. I see teachers - in fact, one of the highest compliments that gets paid to a teacher is I don't know where you personally stand because you do such a good job of hitting the breadth of the topic.

Megan Reed: Oh no, he's an amazing coach.

Dr. Jette: But he's one of the many teachers you know and trust who are with your kids, who are really making sure that the full range is being taught and explored and I hang my hat. I can't be in every classroom, the principals can't be in every classroom, we can't be part of every lesson, but we know and are confident in our staff's ability to be broad in the way that they approach things, to be able to flip and take the alternative viewpoint. I mean, that's one of the greatest aspects of being a critical thinker is that you understand the opposing arguments so deeply and so well that you can then form your opinion and you can rest confidently in where you personally stand because you've understood it at a deeper level. So, I have confidence that that is what our staff does on a daily basis in the schools, but I'll let Mary and Tina just answer it a little bit further.

Ms. Widman: I just wanted to kind of echo and say that our curriculum is written and will always be written straight from a historical perspective. It should be from primary and secondary sources, not from YouTube or Tic Tok or anything else that kids are looking at. And our teachers know that they have to leave their bias at the door, especially when presenting anything that is controversial. So, it kind of goes back to my presentation, in that if you feel that there is only one side of an argument or controversial issue being brought or being taught then we need to know that because that will never be as long as I am here and overseeing curriculum, that will not be how we do business.

Megan Reed: All right. Thank you.

Jeff Avitable, 126 Pinecrest Road: I'll be quick. I just want to tie in the last two discussions and this previous discussion and your questions about what we should do with the statement of unity. The first bullet on the statement of unity says updating our history curriculum and the content we teach. Well, that statement is unclear. It doesn't provide guidance and direction. And you've all talked about the confidence that you've had in your teachers, and you've stated (pointed to Mr. Gaumont) how you teach history and what you've been doing in the past. This statement implies an inflection point - something different. So this statement needs to be more clear, please.

Ms. Widman: I'll also just speak to the fact that part of the reason that was put in was because we were in the process of a Social Studies curriculum that predated all of this craziness that has now come up. So, I think it was just meant to be a point of reference that we are in the process of looking at our curriculum and making sure that we are teaching our kids what we should be teaching them. I understand your point though.

Moderator: So, at this time I'd say we've been over a half hour or so. Let's open the floor to any questions or comments, as long as they are Litchfield residents and from there parents and students can also ask questions after for about another half hour.

Maureen Halligan, 11 Center Street: I had a question regarding part of the presentation, Mary, I think it was a part that you were presenting, and it talked about that upside down wedding cake. There was specific language in that presentation that talked about community values. I wish I had written down what the statement was. I think the point was that you can adapt some of the guidance that you're given at a federal state level, but also take into account community values. I hope I am getting that correct. My question is how do you determine what the community values are? How do you make that distinction with what you're going to include in the curriculum or not include in the curriculum?

Ms. Widman: That's a good question, thank you. I think it comes down to our process. The curriculum is written with teachers K-12. It's written with experts in the content area field, but then it does go through the process of being vetted by the building administration, by myself, then by our PERC Committee, which are teachers that are in many different content areas.



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We have a lot of teachers in Litchfield that live in town, so they have a pretty good pulse on this isn't going to fly or we should reword this because it doesn't make sense. But then it goes to the board for that set of two readings, specifically so that if we miss the mark somewhere, that's the opportunity for the public to weigh in and say no, that doesn't meet the criteria of what we expect in Litchfield and then we can address it.

Dr. Jette: Keep in mind that it is approved by the school board - an elected school board that you voted (inaudible). So, if we get it wrong, they get it right.

Maureen Halligan: I appreciate that. Thank you. Just to follow up, as someone who doesn't have a child in the schools, I do try to keep abreast of what's happening, just because I'm a taxpayer and I want my taxes to be well spent, so I do keep track of what's happening in the schools, even though I'm not a parent of a student. And I appreciate the ability to have access to the school board meetings even on television because I don't always get to the meetings. And I do try to keep abreast of what's happening. I think the only question I have is, keeping a pulse on what the community's missing or whether it's missed the mark, it's still subjective, right, so I know the position you folks are in. You can't have it both ways sometimes and you're not going to please everybody, but that's why I asked the question because I don't know how you get the pulse. I don't get the emails that parents get all the time. So, I'd like to request anything that is - whether you consider it to be controversial or not - the more information that even just a regular community member and not a parent has access to, it's really appreciated. Because I won't get an email that a parent would, but I'm still interested to know what's happening in the town. So, thank you.

Christine Tremblay, 15 Naumkeag Court: First of all, I want to say thank you to everyone. I have raised two kids that have graduated. Excellent school system, excellent teachers, excellent faculty and thank you to everyone, including the school board, for donating your time. And in all of that I know it's not an easy job. Probably 99% of the time I never had any issues and my kids weren't always perfect angels, so thank you again. I don't repeat what everyone is saying, but I think one of the main things that everyone is nervous about because you're seeing across the country in every state and every city, are including the CRT and it's a little nerve-wracking worrying what's going to happen. I understand it's not curriculum, but as everyone was saying it can make its way through some of those links and so forth. I agree that the Message of Unity is fine, but having the links is a little problematic when it starts out anti-racist resources for white people and keeps going. So, I think the more we - I think everyone wants to add more information to our history curriculum. We want to teach the good, bad and ugly, absolutely. I've heard go into more detail about the Tulsa massacre. Whatever it may be it's vetted and I trust that it's going through the appropriate resources to make sure it's approved. With our kids seeing so much negative on media, social media, and focusing on the ugly, I think everyone wants to make sure we don't lose sight of the good that has happened in this country. And it seems like that's kind of the focus a lot lately and we just don't want it to be the only part of history. Slavery isn't the only thing that happened in this country. It was a horrible thing and we should talk about it, but it's not the only history. I think if we add this type of thing to US History we should also make sure we cover in the World History that slavery was elsewhere as well. It's just one of those things where it's so much focus - if you focus so much on diversity and equity, that's all that you talk about and it can actually backfire. So, I think having the right balance is important. And I had two questions actually because I've seen in some other towns that they're having Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training for faculty, as well as sometimes students. It could be just a consultant that comes in. I was just wondering if we've had that here for our faculty? Has that been a program here that has had consulting come in?

Ms. Widman: No.

Christine Tremblay: I've also seen some other towns that are hiring Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, I don't know what you call them, program directors to the staff and it's not always noticeable of course because you have a school board that gets voted in - some of it actually gets funded through the covid funds. So I was just wondering if that was a position that was thought about for Litchfield.

Dr. Jette: No. We have not had a discussion and honestly, we're watching class sizes at GMS - we're bellying right up to class size caps for positions that we didn't budget for, so we've got far greater needs at this point in time for classroom teachers that takes priority over anything like that in the district.

Christine Tremblay: Excellent. Thank you.

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Tim Finnegan, 147 Talent Road: I don't have a prepared presentation, but the one thing that the school board asked of us today was to give them their input on the Message of Unity. It's been removed from the - I think it should disappear. And we should not have a Message of Unity. And I'm taking Dr. Jette's guidance in that this is local, this is Litchfield, we don't care what's happening out here; we don't here, we care what's happening in Litchfield. And so, unless you have specific instances here in Litchfield that prompted you and the school board to say we need a Message of Unity, everything I'm hearing says we don't need it. We are united, we are together, we don't treat people badly. I think the Message of Unity may have backfired a little bit, so if there are specific instances of why we need a Message of Unity here in Litchfield, we should hear those before we ever issue another message. I say throw it away. I'm going to refer to the specific changes when you say because of this message we've got to change our curriculum, specifically our history curriculum, that needs explanation or we'll throw it away and forget it never it happened and go on the way you say we have been. I was glad to hear as a parent that did have a child here in the system that there was a process if you were uncomfortable with the curriculum - not objected to it - I just didn't like some of the things that were in it. I was never aware that the process existed. I would make an effort to make sure the parents know that that is there. You talked about C3 as if we should know what it is. I don't know what C3 is or what it stands for, and the one thing - you've been very careful not to do it, Dr. Jette - but when you gave your explanation on four traits - let's just keep in mind, they are not your kids, when you talk about we want our kids to do or we want our kids to be able to - no, they're not your kids - they're our kids. And the fact that they are in a government school doesn't mean you own them. You should always keep in mind that they're not your kids. Thank you.

Ms. Widman: I would just like to let you know that C3 stands for College, Career and Civic Life. It's a framework.

Chuck Alessi, 17 Nesenkeag Drive: I think I would like you to not take a stance on critical race theory. If it's not something that is taught in the school and I don't see a need for you to comment on it. I've got a kid coming up who's going to be in kindergarten in the fall and we're very excited about it - he's very excited about it. I hope that when he comes home one day from school he'll tell me that he's learned something that is totally different than what I've taught him and I want him to tell me why that is. I'm not raising a kid who's going to live in Litchfield. I'm raising a kid who's going to live somewhere in the world. I want him to have a core that - the beliefs that were put out in that Message of Unity. It's great if Litchfield is united. He's not going to live in Litchfield for his entire life. Litchfield is not a closed ecosystem. So, bring back the Message of Unity. I hope that we can all agree that what's in there is something we should all believe in. So, that's my input on the Message of Unity. I was going to bring something else up and I cannot remember what it was, so I'm going to call it there. Thank you.

Kathy Grondine, 20 White Street: I, too, have had two children, both of whom have gone through 18 years of education here in Litchfield. I'm not currently a parent of a Litchfield school student, but only by a month and a half, as my son just graduated. I want to start by saying I agree with the Message of Unity. If people are having a problem with the links then take the links off. I actually really appreciated it at the time. I do believe that what happens in our world impacts us here in Litchfield and it was impacting me. I believe that it could have been impacting my children. We had conversations about that and in different ways I think that was a nice message to hear that the school had taken that step to do that. I also just want to thank all you and respectfully disagree with the gentleman who spoke a couple before me. I actually appreciate when you say 'our kids' because I entrusted all of you with my kids for 18 years and the fact that you are that invested in them, I really appreciate that. So thank you for that. I've actually appreciated all of the education that they've gotten and I know that they've gotten critical thinking skills, both of my children. And both of my children are very, very different and both have come out of the same Litchfield school education with two very different frames of thought.

I am extremely proud of my daughter. She thinks very much like me. I am just as proud of my son who thinks very differently than me. I am absolutely alright with him coming up with facts, being able to support his own thinking and being able to say what he says. That does not mean I agree with him, but I respect it and I think that is a very important thing for our kids to learn and I appreciate that the school district has helped to do that for him. So, please keep sharing the facts and not necessarily getting caught up in feeling like we can't express and share and teach all sides of the situation. I did have a question and because I have gone through the Litchfield School District without any complaints and I know there has been the ability to do that, and some people didn't know that there was the ability to make complaints, which may mean that they didn't also have to make complaints, I am wondering how many complaints to date?

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I know that CRT right now is the big thing; it's what we're talking about; it's one of the big issues bringing us here today. And I don't want to just guess, you know, 'well, they will get it in here', but I want to see what has happened to date; what do we know? What have people had? What kinds of complaints? What are the complaints, the numbers of complaints that you've had in terms of people having issues with any discussions around the type of content for Social Studies and around any of these inclusion pieces?

Dr. Jette: Thank you for that question. So, I can tell you a couple of things. First of all, Litchfield schools in the middle of the pandemic were open for in-person learning. So, we did something that not a lot of districts did. We had our doors open to those who wanted to come and about, depending on the school, 75% to 85% of the families chose to have their students in person learning. 180 days were just completed. I received exactly zero complaints at my level about content in Social Studies. There were a few minor complaints that were resolved at the teacher level and at the principal level, but they were not about Social Studies and that level of content. They were more about 'is this course of instruction appropriate for this course' and we were able to work all those things out using the process that we outlined, at the lowest level possible you resolve the problem. So, 180 days, zero complaints.

Kathy Grondine: I really appreciate that because we're having a huge conversation about something with zero complaints to date. So thank you for that. I'll also just leave and respectfully again - and I know people have said you should make a statement around CRT. I don't know that there is a definition of CRT that in this community that we will agree on, therefore, I don't think it would be fair to say we are going to agree or not agree with CRT. So, I say let's take the facts, what we're going to teach, and go into the details there. I also just want to thank everybody here and I really want all of you to know that I trust the educators in this town, I trust the administrators, and I trust the school board to make the decisions about what the content should be for our curriculum and I really do not want them to be worried about what they might see or hear on Facebook or other social media about what they're teaching in their schools. I really don't want them to spend a lot of time on these complaints when they haven't had a lot of them so far and I certainly don't want them to be worried as they do their jobs that they could be losing their certification. So I hope we can resolve this as a community. Thank you.

Dr. Jette: Kathy, I want to thank you for that and also just respond to your comment about our kids, and Tim to respond also. So, I'm a father. I have a 9 year old and a 10 year old at home. I send them off to school. I've been involved in public education for 31 years and, I'm sorry, but they are our kids, and that's the way I look at it. When I go into a school I think is this what I would want for my children? Is this what I want to do as an educator, relative to the way I expect my children to be raised and taught. I do bring that lens to it. I will always be a father first and an educator second. And I'm sorry - they're our kids.

Keri Douglas, 9 Pheasant Street: I first have a question, or maybe a couple of questions, depending on how the first answer goes. So, the curriculum that is being developed, will it be electronic or will there actually be a physical book?

Ms. Widman: It depends on the grade level.

Keri Douglas: I ask because I like to read my kids books so I know what they read. If it's electronic, how will the parent have access to that? How will I know what my child is being taught if I don't have access unless the district makes sure that the access is provided to those electronic documents? That's actually one of the concerns I have with a lot of the Social Studies teachers using articles and handouts because I can't read it in advance to know what's coming. I can't say 'I'm going to have to have a discussion with my child about this topic because we think about this a little differently. So, I'm not a huge fan of that. I get why it's done. I think we need to include parents more in that discussion because my students are no longer in this district, but they were here during the pandemic and I think I had a math book, but no Social Studies book. My older son is a very deep thinker in that he takes time to process. So, a lot of times, months later, I'll get a question like 'why did this happen? Why did somebody say this?' And I would be like, 'where'd you hear that? We don't think that.' 'I learned it in Social Studies'. Now by the time I find out about it, it's too late to make a complaint. It's not really a complaint because it's just a biased presentation of the view, but it's not really wrong. It's a different interpretation. So, do I file a complaint because I think - I loved your perspective that a student should never know your position. I wholeheartedly agree with that and I think that is an excellent indicator of an educator. A student should be able to walk in your classroom and not know your position because you present it so well on both sides. That is where the critical thinking comes from because they learn it and they can make a decision. When my child walks out and knows how a teacher voted for the Presidential election and thinks how it should turn out with the different disputes, but I don't know about it until long after the fact after I've withdrawn my kid? So, if there are no complaints, here's one now.

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I think you need to take a look at your professional development. Remind your teachers that the goal is critical thinking; the goal is both sides of the argument. My student should not walk out of there asking me why would the teacher say this about the President. So, I apologize for not filing the form, but I didn't know about it until long after the fact because I didn't have a book. The syllabus is fine. It tells you exactly what it is, but it doesn't give me the day-to-day lesson plan; it doesn't tell me what the discussions are in the classroom. So, referring parents to the syllabus is only half the thing because that's not all the information. There's so much room outside of that and that's great because teachers need the flexibility to have those conversations and follow the students where they're going, but if I don't know about it because I don't have a book or I don't have the handouts - everybody's using these quizlet things that I don't necessarily have the ability to review, then I can't tell you that I have a problem with it because I don't know that I have a problem until it's long passed. Thank you.

Mrs. Harrison: Keri, I just wanted to say that you and I, we're both moms, and I know as in my role as mom I don't always hear conversations at school or lessons that happened until long after the fact, if ever. My kids are very tight-lipped about what goes on at school. I trust our teachers. I understand that not every parent - there are different degrees of skepticism and trust, I mean that's certainly personalized to you and your kids. I think, though, that the materials and the tools that teachers use may not always give the full picture, but a conversation with that teacher will. A conversation with that teacher will say, listen I'm concerned that you guys are talking about politics in class and you shouldn't be. And you're right, they shouldn't be. Students should not know where their teachers stand on any of these issues. And you're right and I agree with you. That angers me that was said in class.

Keri Douglas: But again, a young child not knowing exactly the conversation, but it's enough that it made an impression and it's enough that it occurred after the fact. I can't even go to the teacher because it's so far past. So, my thing is if we're having updated information, do everything you can to get as much of it to the parents as possible so we can flag it in advance.

Mrs. Harrison: I agree that maybe we need to remind our teachers the place for politics is not in the classroom. If you're presenting historical material or current events as a topic, your personal views don't come into play and I agree with you. And I also encourage you to remember that when you do entrust the district with your students, you are a partner in that, too.

Keri Douglas: And I would have been happy to do it, had I known about the conversation at the time. So there's a lag time.

Mrs. Harrison: It's a catch-22, but again, we can't do anything about it if we don't know about it happening.

Keri Douglas: Exactly, which is why I'd like to bring your attention that there are no complaints and no concerns. Well, some of us may have them, but we didn't know about them in time to approach them through the process.

Mrs. Harrison: You can still complain about things that happened in the past.

Keri Douglas: I'm not going to hesitate to complain.

Mrs. Harrison: Keri, I know you. I know that as a fact.

Dr. Jette: You need to let us know because if it's happened once, it'll happen again, unless we have the opportunity to address it. Send it my way or the principals' way and we will have that conversation.

Keri Douglas: Absolutely. Thank you. Mrs. Harrison: Thank you.

Rich Lascelles, 236 Charles Bancroft Highway: I currently serve as a State Representative and Selectman, and I'm very proud to say that I've been a substitute teacher here at CHS for 11 years and I hope to until all my grandchildren are out of school. I don't know if that'll happen now, but we'll see. Critical Race Theory is something that started in the colleges, many years ago, but it started in the colleges and it's gradually seeping down to even preschool. Don't make any mistake about it. What you got is Critical Race Theory. The attachments that went out under the guise of a Message of Unity - anti-racism resources for white people - that is Critical Race Theory. Make no mistake about it, okay?

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I'm very concerned that this went out with virtually no vetting on the part of the school board. I guess there's a credit there because if they vetted it they would not have sent it out. I don't think they vetted it at all. I think the school board was pretty okay with the letter, but not the resources and we'll get to the bottom of that. The minutes of the school board meetings are very unclear. Your school board are your elected representatives; they represent you and they need to make the decision and they need to stand behind those decisions. I don't think that happened here, alright? We've talked about we don't deal with national issues; we deal with local issues. Look at who put this together. Who put this together? They didn't live on Brickyard Drive. They didn't live on Charles Bancroft Highway. They are a couple of people from New York and New Jersey and it went out all across the country. Look at the bottom of it and you will see that. My life, since I've been 20 years old, has been one of service to my country, my state and my town. This room was built at the time when I was Chairman of the School Board and we passed the bond issue through my work and a lot of other volunteers in the Town of Litchfield. I love this town and the school, but I wouldn't be here if I wasn't afraid of what this says. I don't have anything to gain by making an issue of this. I didn't really know about it until about a month ago. In the Legislature, we passed that HB2 to prohibit this. I was in a meeting and the run up to the vote on the budget and our town was used as an example of why we needed that. Our town, Litchfield. If you go through some of these things in here they talk about police brutality and defund the police. Don't we know that there's like 60 or 70 households in Litchfield that are police households. What do you think students that read that - what do you think they think when their father or mother is a cop? People call Litchfield 'cop town'. Is that representative of Litchfield? Absolutely not. So, I don't know the process that the school board went through. I don't know what was in our mind. Was this a way of being woke or an attempt to show how virtuous we are? I don't know because I don't see anything good coming out of that. I'll leave you with one more thing - everything in Critical Race Theory is looked through a prism of race. And I'll leave you with Martin Luther King. Martin Luther King is not quoted here. Martin Luther King said he wanted his kids to be judged by the content of their character and not by the color of their skin. When you look through this stuff, you're looking through a prism of race. Make no mistake about it - that's what it is. So, I'll say it again, we made a big mistake by doing that. Over my dead body.

Dr. Jette: If I can just respond quickly. Rich, again, the resource that you're looking at and the information that is there is not what we originally linked to. I completely agree with you, as I said earlier. The comments about defunding the police - we did not put a stance out there that we're in favor of defunding the police or that we favor those movements. I personally don't agree with that. We have had a great history working with the police department here in Litchfield. You've been in the training with us as a substitute relative to ALICE drills and making sure that we know how to respond if there were to be a bad actor who were to come along. We appreciate and value that relationship, so, we're not going to make a link to a document that is taking a stance that is in the antithesis of what we believe as a school system. You're seeing that now, well you're not seeing it now because we took it down. But when it was raised that that was something that was on there, that's why we removed it from our website and it was no longer available to folks. Again, I share your concern about that. It's not something that I support. I don't think it's anything that the board supports, although again, we haven't taken a vote on it, but I think we could take one pretty quickly and have a stance on it. So, I guess it's unfortunate that that was used in the Legislature without being brought to our attention. I received, as I said, a phone call from Mr. Nordyke, or an email from Mr. Nordyke about it and I received a call from the Commissioner and we immediately responded to it. When that resource was sent out in June of 2020, it did not look like what it did in June of 2021. It evolved over the year. You're right, we linked to a resource that had been pulled, but I want to tell you the origin of that resource. So, yes, it was not written by folks who do not live on Brickyard or anywhere else in Litchfield; however, the resource was available through the New Hampshire Juneteenth Facebook page - that's where we got it from. It was a New Hampshire based resource that we drew upon and linked. So, that's how we found it. So, again, that's the link to a link to a link scenario, but we viewed it as a local resource at the time we linked to it because it was something that we found on a locally sourced Facebook page. Just to be clear, I share your outrage about that stance because that's not where we are as a community.

Rich Lascelles: You say as soon as you got complaints you took it down. There were complaints when you first put it up a year ago, but it stayed up. It stayed up for a whole year, Mr. Nordyke complained, very articulately, it stayed up, and then finally it went down after a whole year of being up. At some times, the school board seems to be proud of it. Sometimes it was a mistake. Sometimes they're proud of part of it, sometimes they're not proud of part it, but to say as soon as we got complaints, that's factually incorrect because you got complaints when it first came out and it stayed up for a whole year.

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Dr. Jette: Rich, when it first came out there were a couple of complaints or concerns, I guess - I don't want to call the complaints - there were concerns that were raised, a couple of them; we responded to those and did not hear back from anybody on the responses. And again, nobody brought up defunding the police or other things that were on there because they didn't exist at that point in time. So, a year later, as soon as we got the communication from Mr. Nordyke and I had the conversation with the Commissioner, I immediately contacted Michele and it was removed from our website that day. Now there were some people apparently who could still access it through Google archiving services. You can't just (snap of fingers) make stuff appear off the web. So, even though it's removed from our website and not there, it takes a while for the Google crawlers, I guess, to remove stuff from the archives. So, yes, people were able to find it - not on our website - in Google archive format. It was immediately removed and put in a trash can by Michele. I have tried to find it since and I cannot right now. I'm pretty sure that it's been recrawled and removed at this point in time. But that's the history and the story as to what has happened with that message. Rich, can I ask you a question? What's your advice to us? Remove it completely and move on; to keep the message and remove the links? I mean, if you have a thought or an input, I would appreciate hearing that.

Rich Lascelles: Well, in many ways the damage has been done. I think a statement opposing Critical Race Theory is in order. I think that you need to establish a program where people can complain about things in a way that they feel comfortable in doing them. I hear complaints, but they never get to anybody or they're not acknowledged or no one takes action against those. So, in answer to your question, I don't know if there's anything that can be done other than denouncing Critical Race Theory.

Cecile Bonvouloir, 1 Tamarack Lane: I just want to say that recently I shared with Representative Lascelles - without a doubt, this man is the biggest cheerleader of our Litchfield students. And when he posts about our kids' successes, he doesn't stop and think, well wait a minute, is that mother or father a Democrat or a Republican? That's not where Rich goes. And in this climate that is amazing because we have experienced that with other people. And Rich has posted about all of our children's success and it just warms my heart and I can never take that away from you, and I thank you. I have also been honest with him that I disagree. The division in our community, the divisiveness, it breaks my heart. We're a small community and when I see on the What's Up Facebook people taking sides, that's like the only time I comment. Please shut this post down - I beg you because we start hating each other and that's not what this small community is about. Last July, there were 37 pages of public input and letters from the community members and parents that were attached to our school board minutes. 37 pages! Not one was about this issue - not one. Further, there were hundreds - hundreds of emails - I read them every month. It's the only way I can stay kind of plugged in. I don't have time to watch school board meetings or attend them, but I want to know what's going on. I've had 3 kids graduate in the past 3 years. Hundreds of letters and emails because of the COVID submitted to our school board - not one about the letter of unity; not one about the link; and not one about Critical Race Theory. I personally have been hearing about CRT in the news; hearing it on podcasts, portions on NPR for over a year. They've been taking a national issue to our school board's front doorstep across the country. This is not new news. Anybody who's a little bit, kind of a news junkie, knows this. And the tactics used, making time consuming record requests to our school boards, giving public input utilizing scripts that I heard from our own community at the last month school board meeting, having long, drawn out meetings. There was one meeting that I read about - 11 hours - calling school board members and superintendents Marxists, racists and abusers, teaching CRT in the classroom, and the goal: to try to convince the community that the children are being indoctrinated by CRT. I just can't support that, Rich. This is not right and it's dividing our community. So yes, please put that letter of unity back up. Be careful what you're posting as a link, but as a mother who raised 3 children - we are a multicultural family - I have 2 latino children; I have a child with special needs; and we are an LGBTQ family, and that was painful in this district. We had to go other places. Our child hid it from everyone - afraid - and it wrecked his college career. So, yes, put the letter of unity up, but no extremism. I don't support that. I think our cops are very different people, but there is a margin, of course, in every group that is reckless and as a public official in an elective position, you gotta know, you gotta write, you gotta call us, you gotta tell us - we can't be sideswiped by a mob. And I can say that I've experienced this over the last year and it's been painful. So, that's my rant.

Laura Gandia, 3 Chamberlin Drive: I spoke at the last school board meeting and expressed my concerns regarding the Message of Unity and I just wanted to go over some facts because I think some facts are not clear or misunderstood. That Message of Unity came out in June as Dr. Jette said, and I received that message. My boys did not attend the high school here in Litchfield, but they did go up through LMS. But I did receive that Message of Unity from some, actually several people, and then I did send that Message of Unity with many of like-minded people that I know in town, and that email that I sent out to folks was on June 11.

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In that email that I sent to folks, just because there's questions about the link, and my email of June 11, 2020 talked about some of those links. And I said at that point in time, June 2020, also some of the reading suggestions, which are titled 'anti-racism for white people' screams racism to me. I did peek at some of the resources that they are requesting that we read - 'so where should I donate' blames the police and national guard for instigating and initiating violence. This is a link at the time that Message of Unity was first put out. The book, 'Me and White Supremacy', teaches one how to recognize white privilege. So, this was at the time in June 2020 when this was put out, so those links were bad at the very first instance. They didn't evolve until now where they're bad and they should have been removed. That "I donate" site, that was one of the links, says, 'first and foremost, the police and the national guard are initiating violence'. So, when Ben Sargent made that comment, for my own records, he's 100% correct. The links that were put out by the school board were insulting and derogatory towards our police department. That is unacceptable. Then the book, 'Me and White', some of that says, 'White supremacy is a system that you have been born into. Whether or not you have known it, it's a system that has granted you unearned privileges, protection and power, and it's a system that has been designed to keep you asleep and unaware of having that privilege, protection and power has meant for people who do not hold white privilege. What you receive from your whiteness comes at a steep cost for those who are not white.' Again, an original link from back in 2020. And then after my email went out June 11, June 17 there was a school board meeting where I believe Dr. Jette commented about how he received concerns and complaints because I was told by people after I sent my email that they were responding to the school district. So, they did reach out to the school district, whether or not those emails became part of a permanent record, I don't know. And they received an answer, which I then responded, in turn, to Christina Harrison that I thought those were canned responses on a Facebook post. So, this issue has not just come to light now. It's been in existence for over a year. So, we had these links and this message up promoting racism in our district for over a year. So the fact that now it's being said that these links have evolved, they may have evolved into something worse than what I originally found in June 2020, but the links that were first put out were horrible - insulting to every single member of this community. And I think it was negligent on the part of the school board, especially the June 17 comments from you, Dr. Jette, where you said it's not your job to vet those resources - I disagree. If you and the school board are putting out resources for the community to look at, you need to vet those. What if there was something really, really bad on a different topic? Do you take no responsibility for that? You and the school board have a duty when you put links on them to vet those and say, like you did at your June 17 meeting that wasn't part of your duty or responsibility. That's not right - it is. It's part of you and the school board to make sure that our kids are being properly taught. That they are receiving healthy information. Information that helps them grow into healthy individuals. Not information that divides us, that promotes information that's negative. That's not what we want. And I do have one thing that I did mention at the last meeting, was the NEA stance on Business Item #39, where the union is going to be promoting CRT and the 1619 Project. I know it's been said - I know Patrick Keefe has said that's not happening in Litchfield, but he's part of that bigger picture, and I want to know what is the school board going to do to ensure that that type of message from a group that our teachers are part of doesn't permeate into our district. Critical Race Theory - thank you very much for saying it's not taught in our schools. That's not my concern. It's the ideology behind Critical Race Theory that permeates. So, you can say all day long that Critical Race Theory isn't being taught; you can say all day long - you can issue a message saying we're not going to promote it, you know, we are against it, but the concern is the ideology behind that. That's what permeates into the classroom. That's what permeates when you have teachers' expressions of political affiliation. That's what permeates when you have teachers saying something about the current President, or any President, that is going to sway kids one way or the other. It's that type of ideology that I don't expect you to micromanage, but what assurances do we have as parents, as rights as residents of Litchfield that the school board is going to do everything in its power to ensure that that type of ideology does not permeate into our students and into their way of thinking.

Dr. Jette: Laura, if I can just clarify. So you said you sent an email on June 11. That was to me?

Laura Gandia: I said I sent an email to people in town when I received your message of unity from somebody in town. I got it and I'm like, oh my goodness, what is this, so then I sent it to a group of people that I'm in frequent contact with, saying, 'hey, look, here's a thing that was sent out from the school board', and I read to you from email here are some of the links. And those links were really, really bad at that point in time. That's why I sent that email and I received responses back from people saying we sent a letter and I saw that letter and it was a response and then, I went ahead and had an interaction with Tina Harrison and I get the same response from her, and I think she'll recall that I said that's a canned response because it felt like everybody that had a concern at that point in time was getting the same type of canned response. And canned may not be the choice word, I will say the same response, but I thought that it was canned because it really wasn't addressing the issues that were bothering the residents of Litchfield.

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Dr. Jette: I appreciate that clarity because I don't see that or hearing that. And again, I did respond to a few parents. So, a few people reached out to me and I did have a response to them and obviously each individual board member does their own response if they received that. I appreciate hearing that. The other thing is that you commented that 'it wasn't my job to vet'. I don't know exactly what was said, but I will say this - this is where I stand today; it's probably where I stood a year ago; and it's probably where I'm going to stand tomorrow, and that is that I trust the parents of Litchfield to vet those resources and determine on their spectrum what they're going to do in their household. If I was handed a list of resources by anybody I would then decide what it is that I as a father am going to engage with my children over and what's the appropriate level. So, to me, at the time we put that out we were providing a vast array of options for families to make those individual choices and to have that personal responsibility. And I believe in that. I trust our parents to decide and I know that some families are going to say 'I'm going to do all of this' and some are going to say 'I'm going to do none of this' and some are going to pick and choose in the middle. That's all we did. Those are not curriculum materials. They were not given to children directly. They were resources for parents; for parents to pick and choose what was available to them. I know as a father we're watching what's unfolding on the news. We're watching this sort of national crisis that's occurring and trying to decide how do I have a conversation with, at the time an 8 and a 9 year old, about that. So, some of those resources I would not have introduced to an 8 or 9 year old, but if I had a 16 or 17 year old I might have been in a different spot about that. That's all we were trying to do is to be part of the community and to provide options and resources for families. Remember, too, we were all in lock down. We were all sitting, I mean, I was doing this sitting in my home toy room, converted into a home office because that was the scenario that we were in. We were isolated; we were away from each other, and we were trying our best to keep everything plugging ahead. So, it was really done with the best of intent and again just providing people with those options and opportunities. I just wanted to clarify that point.

Laura Gandia: I appreciate your response, but I would counter it by saying I trust in you and the school board to put forth appropriate resources and I feel that those resources if you're denigrating the police ...

Dr. Jette: We didn't do that.

Laura Gandia: But it was in the resources that were there that you put forward.

Dr. Jette: I didn't do that. I would not have put forward something denigrating ....

Laura Gandia: But I have it. It was. So I'm going to say that I trusted and I think all or any resident in Litchfield puts the trust in you and the school board when you're putting out resources, to be thoughtful, to be mindful, to be considerate of what is being put forward. All of those things were not done and the resource links that were put out by you and the school board; therefore, I feel, and I know many other people in town, feel like your trust, the trust that we have given to you, was betrayed.

Dr. Jette: I take your trust very seriously. I stand on it when I make decisions, all the way from 'is it safe to have school today'; the pandemic presented us with a wealth of challenges to try to figure out how to best proceed and I have really appreciated the trust that the community has put in me and I've taken that incredibly seriously. Again, providing the resources so that families can make those individual choices. There's still national issues. There's still stances that people are making, communities are making. We're not going to make those decisions in Litchfield, right? But where I live, the community next to me eliminated the police department. They made a decision in Salisbury, NH to not have a police department anymore and to rely on sheriffs who, frankly, are overworked and unavailable and the state police, who are overworked and unavailable, to be their sole source of policing. You know what I say? I'm glad I don't live in Salisbury. That's not a choice I would make in my community. So, again, for people to understand why that community would make that stance, we have to understand it to make sure that doesn't happen here or somewhere else. And that's all we were attempting to do is provide ranges and opportunities. It's unfortunate that it's caused this level and I can tell you what's there today - do you agree with me that what was there in June of 2021 is not the same as what was there in June of 2020?



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Laura Gandia: I didn't do a comparison. I was just looking at my original email where those things were there. Like I said, you know, you and I can go back and forth, and I don't want to do that with you. It's just what I wanted to be sure is that people know that those original links were really, really bad and they were insulting to police officers; they were insulting to me; they were insulting to my family; it was insulting to a lot of people in the community, and I really think it was misguided of how the whole process went. And that has led me to file my right to know request that I know other people think it is a lengthy thing, but really just so people can understand. Like really, what happened Dr. Jette? Those links were not good.

Dr. Jette: We're going to answer that question for you, Laura. We're going to get that to you.

Laura Gandia: And I appreciate that.

Dr. Jette: I can tell you what I saw when I got the phone call is not what we saw when we put it out. It definitely evolved and it definitely changed.

Laura Gandia: And I'm not challenging that at all, but I'm just saying that those initial things from you, you know, what the police department has brought forth - he's correct - those links did speak ill of the police department.

Dr. Jette: Yeah - the only thing is I wish you had raised it with me at that point in time. I didn't have that. If somebody had said 'why does it say this?', I would have responded to that. I guarantee you I would have responded to it because I take that trust seriously.

Laura Gandia: I appreciate that. For me, I am more of an in-person type, so it was COVID and I can't go to a meeting like that. So, that's why I didn't do that and then it just kind of fell back down the wayside until it was brought up again by - and I'm like, wait a minute, there's a whole backstory to this message of unity. So, I know you've asked other people. You may not want to ask me, but I'm going to answer. What do I want done...

Dr. Jette: Actually, I was just about to ask you where you want to go...

Laura Gandia: Well, good. I would like the original message of unity gone and I would like for the school board to reissue something that speaks of what happened and kind of explains the situation; kind of trying to put everything in the right perspective of what we're trying to do as a community; what we're not trying to do as a community; I would incorporate Rich's concerns about CRT and really have a comprehensive thing that kind of just tells people our story of who we are; what happened with the original message of unity and those links, and just be transparent.

Dr. Jette: Great. Thank you.

Laura Gandia: Thank you, Mike, but could somebody just respond to my question about the NEA Business Item 39?

Dr. Jette: Oh, you know what, I really can't and I'll tell you why, I'm not a member of the NEA or the organization. I'll attempt to frame it. I'm going to use the upside down wedding cake again. In 1998, I represented the New Hampshire NEA at the delegate assembly in New Orleans. I stood on the floor in front of 10,000 people and I spoke out against two position statements that the NEA, the national organization, was making because they were wrong. The first thing I spoke against was that the NEA stance was that a family who chooses to home school shall have no access to the public schools. And I stood up and said, 'You're wrong. How can the National Education Association take a position statement that shuts the door in the face of a child? This is wrong for us to do and this needs to be voted down.' Well, I was largely outvoted, to be honest with you, and the stance was taken that that's the official stance of the NEA. So, there's your national ridiculousness; you bring it down to the state level, the NEA NH, and you engage in dialogue about it; and then it's up to each individual local school to decide, are you going to shut the doors in the face of a child? And the answer in the school districts I've been a part of has been "no". Of course they're going to have access. If a homeschooling family outgrows chemistry, come and take chemistry with us, you are welcome to do that. That should be our stance. So, I don't care what that national thing says. I don't care what the state thing says. I care what happens at the local level and what the right decision is for individual children. I've stood on that. I believe the LEA will do the same thing with NEA NH an NEA national in terms of making those stances, but again, I'm not the LEA; I can't speak for the LEA; but we have to trust that when it's brought down to that level that they're going to make the right decision for Litchfield.

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Laura Gandia: And I will just implore you do the school board to enact whatever policies, to enter whatever sidebar agreement you can for collective bargaining agreements, to ensure that that type of ideology, that Critical Race Theory, that 1619 Project that's being promoted by the NEA does not reach our students.

Dr. Jette: Thank you.

Laura Gandia: Thank you.

Moderator: We are at 20 minutes to go in the meeting. The meeting will end at 8:00 pm sharp. The floor is now open to anyone that wants to ask a question now - parent, resident, student - as long as you're a Litchfield resident. If you are reasking a question or coming up for a multiple time, please keep it very short and brief.

Tara Coakley, 2 Waterview Circle: I want to ask the school board, please do not take that vote on Critical Race Theory, because there is no way in our community we are going to have a definition that is going to appease a majority of the people, because there are so many deviations on that. What I implore you to continue to do, which is what I saw presented tonight, is to put our curriculum together for our community based on our teachers, our curriculum director, our guidance from the state, our guidance from the federal government. My understanding, and you can correct me if I'm wrong, is that curriculum is available, and it goes before the school board twice. I look at it as my job as a parent is to know what's in front of my child; my job as a resident is to know what's taught in my schools if that's where my money is going (and as a parent, also). As long as I have access to that information and I know this is what's going to be taught in my schools, and I'm going to follow that up because when my kids come home I look at their papers. I just want to say I think you guys are doing a good job. I think you guys need to continue to do what you are doing. That, the two readings before the school board, we elect our school board, they listen to us. I've sent every one of them emails and messages when I've heard about issues coming up. I get responses. We live in a small community. Most of us, I'm assuming, go to the variety store, we all meet at McQuestens. I want my kids to grow up not being nervous about who they're going to run into and is this somebody that isn't going to agree with my mom or is this somebody that's not, you know. I just want us to remember we model for our children who we want them to be and we do that by being involved, by calling our teachers. Use the hierarchy, please. Teachers get back to us, principals certainly get back to us, administrators get back to us. If you have questions that's where you go. My kids have come home and say 'this happened' and then I'll call the school and say 'this happened', and they were like, 'oh that was in September', mind you it's May, and they've addressed it. They need to know what's happening, so if you have a concern I would say go through what's there. And don't vote on something that we don't have a clear definition of. I want to know what our curriculum is. I, honestly, respect all of you, but I don't personally care what your opinion is on CRT. If it's not in my school and not going to be taught in my school, my thoughts on it and what your personal beliefs are doesn't apply. So, let's stick to the topic, let's talk about our curriculum and let's vote on that. Let's all be heard on that. I can't really make that any more clear.

Betty Vaughn, 19 Stark Lane: I just wanted to say I think you should keep your letter of unity - maybe change it a bit, I'm not really sure - but when Cecile talked about her kids and they're LGBTQ and they don't have the support here in Litchfield, that kind of broke my heart. So, I think a letter of unity says everybody's included. People who are African-American are included, people who are LGBTQ are included, everybody's included and we're stating that through our letter of unity. You know, this is how it all started as George Floyd got killed and that sort of sparked all of us to be concerned about race and racism and I just think it's important for us to remember that - that we want to make it clear to everyone that everybody is included and that we're all community.

Harry Nordyke, 8 Rocky Hill Road: First of all, thank you very much - really appreciate it. I had 2 kids go from soup to nuts through the school system and I personally couldn't vouch for a better school system. In my growing up, I moved around a lot and I saw a lot of different school systems. I just want that on the record that Litchfield is a great school system. I personally would hope it stays that way. So, one rhetorical question, why don't next time when you put something like this out, you make it a matter of record, that way there's no back and forth on what was the original document and what is now the present document. The proof is in the record. That's a rhetorical question, why don't you do that next time. And why don't next time if you have a meeting and you take votes on these things, you make it a record. You hold minutes to those meetings so it's transparent because this has caused quite an uproar. I think you're feeling it. I feel for you. You're under the gun - I get that, okay? Two thoughts: 1) when my kids went to CHS there were four core values, as I recall. I think it was character, courage, respect and responsibility. I don't think there were any courses taught on that. It may have been in the handbook. I'll bet there were things posted on the walls, but it was taught.

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It was taught through discipline funneling through the vice principal's, through lunch monitors, through hall monitors, teachers in classrooms taught that, on the playing fields, on the stages, in school assemblies. It was taught. And when I think back on my career as a student, which was unremarkable in public schools, the teachers I remember taught me things - I always remember Mrs. McLaughlin, my first grade teacher, that's where I learned to read, but I learned other things from my teachers. I had a teacher in fifth grade, Mr. Sheets, he had cerebral palsy, the entire right side of his body was withered, he had the strongest left arm that you've ever seen in your life, and he taught me what it meant to be bullied by people because you're different. That wasn't in the curriculum. The best football coach I ever had was Lou Harrigan. He was a black man in the deep South in 1975, coaching me as a 9th grade, junior varsity school student. I'm here to tell you, that was a groundbreaker and one of the things he taught me was don't be too sure about who you are or where you come from. I called him one day and said, 'oh, coach, you're being a turkey'. Well, he let me know that somehow that was an inappropriate remark to make to an African-American. He said, 'you don't know where you came from; you don't know who you are', and he's right because I had Cajun blood in me, so I really don't know. You never can tell, but that wasn't part of the curriculum; that wasn't part of the playbook; that was him teaching me something. And I could go on with Dr. Pisano in high school where I took a comparative religion course. He was an ex-jesuit brother who left to marry a nun. He taught me things, too, about the differences people have in their religious beliefs. That was part of the course, but he taught something deeper than that. He taught about a unified theory of most faiths and faith traditions. That was not part of the curriculum. So make no mistake about it - teachers teach things other than what's in the curriculum. I think that's what you're hearing here is a concern about something that is not in the curriculum getting taught. Be careful. Be careful. Yes, they're your kids - they're our kids - be careful, please. Thank you.

Rich Lascelles: I'd just like to say that we live in the greatest country that's ever been on Earth. I look through this and all I see is America being bashed. Why is it that we have people that are walking a thousand miles to get to our southern border? Why is it if you go to any place in the world and you ask them, where would you like to live, they say America. I go up to BJs and there are people that are pushing carts, about half of them are immigrants. They're living the American dream because they have a little store somewhere, alright? It pains me when I see my country that I defended for so long to be bashed. And if we're going to put something out, it better be balanced. If we're teaching, we need to teach that, yes, we have wars and, yes we have races in our background, and yes, every profession has some bad apples. But if we're going to have a good society we need to live by American values and that includes all the good stuff and, yes, some bad stuff. We'll learn along the way, but we're still the best country that's ever been on Earth.

Brandon Lefebvre, 43 Brickyard Drive: A lot of what I've been hearing is to bring to the school board's attention the issues. And I really think the heart of what I was trying to convey earlier is I think the community needs action - proactive action - from the school board and from the school system to put into place policies and procedures, hard items of action that aim to avoid extremist views, ideas, topics, all of that regardless of if it's left wing, right wing - it doesn't matter. Those need to be prevented from becoming part of discourse outside of curriculum and in making their way into the classrooms. Whatever mechanisms are available, I think that needs to become transparent to the community. Whatever policies might already exist should be highlighted as well. And we talk a lot about the upside down cake - if we're picking and choosing up the ladder, we can't say there's no way it could happen here because of the state law. We know that there's loopholes. There's the spirit of the law and there's bad actors. What is the local community doing, beyond that state or national level, what are we as a community doing to be sure that that doesn't poison the environment for an student? Thank you.

Megan Reed, 2 Oak Drive: My question is, I realize I never answered about the message of unity - I think it's great for us to be a great community - can you send out what you originally approved to be on that?

Mrs. Harrison: The original message?

Megan Reed: The original Google doc that you approved.

Dr. Jette: We can't. We do not have a hard copy.

Megan Reed: Do you have a pdf of your message of unity?

Dr. Jette: We have the message of unity; we have the resources in terms of here's the link.

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Megan Reed: So nothing else was saved.

Dr. Jette: So what that link goes to is not what it was. We can't even do a revision history.

Megan Reed: I guess I'm just confused. If you approve something, like you felt like it was okay to be put on there - and when I asked before you had said it evolved, but apparently originally it was bad to begin with. I guess I'm just confused what was actually approved, what material was, if you can remember, put out to parents, students and staff to read. I'm just confused.

Mrs. Harrison: No, I hear where you're coming from and this is certainly something that I have learned a lot about what not to do. When we shared that message of unity, district leadership weighed in. We did not have a meeting of the school board to vote on it and approve it. It was a document that we all contributed to, we made notes, we made comments (I like this, I don't like this). So that it kind of organically evolved, not just on behalf of the school board, but district leadership as well that was signed onto that document. The resources on the bottom: I clicked on the Black Heritage Trail link, I clicked on the NH Juneteenth link, I clicked on the Google doc, which was literally a list of other links and that's as far as I went. So that's on me as a school board member that I didn't look through and vet every single one of those resources. I didn't jump the link to the link. I didn't jump the link to the link to the link. So, that's my lesson now as a school board member that I'm responsible for what we put out no matter who owns it. Like Mike said we were offering these resources to people who might want to partake in them and use them to talk to their kids about it. That was the intent. There was no 'hey listen, these guys are talking about anti-racism for white people and CRT and all of these other things'. That's not what happened and that was never the intent. So, what we've learned is that we vet the resources; we only link to resources that are static or that we take ownership of so that we have a hard copy that's available; we vet it and we stand by what we put out.

Megan Reed: I appreciate that, I really do and I appreciate having this night to ask questions. My questions is, though, when you click on the Google doc, and I was able to find it 2 weeks ago, in the search bar....

Mrs. Harrison: On the website?

Megan Reed: On the school district website because I had no idea what anyone was talking about. I clicked into the little search magnifying glass and I typed in anti-racism and it popped up. So I have it saved on my phone so I could read everything. Now it might be gone now, but what was the original information that you viewed clicking on the original Google doc? If it evolved into this anti-racism for white people, what was the thing that popped up first when you clicked on that a year ago?

Mrs. Harrison: There was a link that said anti-racism resources for white people. That was the intent - it was one of the links. I didn't go down and look at all of the resources. I didn't watch all the videos. I didn't listen to the podcast, I didn't read it.

Megan Reed: I didn't either.

Mrs. Harrison: Right. My feeling at the time, in this world of 'the world is on fire and the nation is divided' was if we can't get past the word 'white' then how do we have this conversation?

Megan Reed: I think having this conversation is great, but it said resources for students, staff and parents. So anti-racism resources specifically for white people is inappropriate.

Mrs. Harrison: I accept that.

Megan Reed: So when I originally asked my question you said it evolved and what it is now wasn't what it was before, but now we find out it was that way the whole time.

Dr. Jette: No it was not.

Megan Reed: But it was. I just want to know the truth.

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Dr. Jette: We're being completely transparent. We wouldn't be here having a forum tonight if we weren't willing to answer the questions and be transparent about it. So did it say anti-racism resources for white people? You just asked me that for the first time. The answer is, yes it did say that.

Megan Reed: I asked you before the information and you said it's not what it was before.

Dr. Jette: What I said is that the links have evolved.

Megan Reed: I'm not talking about the links. I'm just talking about that original Google doc link you click on that everything pops up.

Mrs. Harrison: But that Google doc did not say anti-racism for white people.

Megan Reed: You just said that.

Mrs. Harrison: No, no, no, I'm sorry. The Google doc that we linked to was just a list of links that was New Hampshire based and was circulating in other school districts. One of the links that was on that Google doc.....

Megan Reed: Oh no, it's the original one. It's the first thing that pops up. It's like 5 bullets, it's on page 2 under your message of unity: it says black heritage trail, it says juneteenth - (she was handed a copy on paper by Rich Lascelles) - holding it up she continued to say: This is the first thing that pops up when you click Google doc.

Dr. Jette: Google doc. When you click .....

Megan Reed: I'm not talking about these little links...

Dr. Jette: Right. What I'm saying is when you click the words Google doc on our message it brings you to that document.

Megan Reed: So this was the intent, this topic - that says anti-racism resources.

From somewhere in the audience: for white people.

Dr. Jette: No it does not.

Megan Reed: Well it says resources for white parents to raise anti-racist children.

Dr. Jette: Yes, that is accurate and what I'm saying is the 92 links, I think we established there are 92 links that are underneath, those have evolved. You know, the very first thing that's on there is something about Brianna Taylor - that was not there when we linked to it.

Megan Reed: Well, George Floyd is in the top of your message of unity.

Mrs. Harrison: Yes.

Dr. Jette: But the resource - what I'm telling you is the resource has changed and evolved; however, to echo what Tina is saying, I bristled at it and then I thought, well maybe I'm supposed to bristle at it. Isn't this about invoking a dialogue? And so, I said, to me, I don't care who you label the resources for, it's resources that should be accessible to anybody.

Megan Reed: Right, so, resources for Litchfield community. It might just want a better choice of words.

Dr. Jette: All members of our community, yeah. So, that is accurate and that is how I felt at that time in providing it.

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Megan Reed: Yeah, I just feel like at this point there's a lot of backtracking; a lot different stories; a lot of here ... and it's really frustrating as a parent that I looked in my phone, I don't have any emails from June of last year, so I must not be on a list or something to get emails. But it's frustrating to, you know, I watched the board meeting on the 14th and there was apologies that you weren't sure of what was on the website, but I feel like that's unacceptable.

Mrs. Harrison: I feel like the - and maybe it was changed - I don't know - when I looked at the original resources, the Google docs, you saw that it said anti-racism for white people - I saw that it said anti-racism resources and then one of the links in that doc went to the anti-racism resources for white people. So, as I said before, and I stand by it, I'm being completely honest with you, I went to the Google doc and I looked at the links and I didn't go any further.

Dr. Jette: I also did not click on every single link in there. I saw, oh here's an interesting movie, I might decide to watch it.

Megan Reed: And when did that happen, though, was that last year?

Dr. Jette: Yeah, 2020. I agree with Tina, I did not vet every single link that was in there.

Mrs. Harrison: I own that.

Dr. Jette: And what do I regret today? I regret that we didn't make a copy of that and vet it out and eliminate links that, you know, we, you know, I regret that we didn't do that - that we didn't take that extra time.

Megan Reed: I just feel that it's really odd that you don't have saved copies of what you would have wanted to send out to the community, and staff members, and students, which it's on there, and parents. You don't have any copy of that. You don't have any record of what you wanted to put out as your message of unity.

Dr. Jette: We have the message of unity clear, but the resources.....

Megan Reed: I'm talking about everything else though.....

Dr. Jette: Can I just say one thing? I'm working at home. I don't have a printer at home. I don't print anything any longer.

Mrs. Harrison: But I hear your concerns and I hear what you're saying - that was a mistake on our part. I own it and I'll take responsibility for that. The fact that we didn't vet those resources; we didn't read every link, listen to every podcast and vet them as something we stand by as a district - I'll own it. I wasn't Chair at the time, but I'll own it.

Dr. Jette: And if I may, I'm pretty good about keeping records, but working at home is a whole different beast. Not having it, you know, I regret I didn't hit save as a pdf because then I would have had it on my computer. I didn't - I just didn't do that. We created the document, we emailed it out, we used the listservs we had last year relative to Infinite Campus. It went to every parent, every staff member ...

Megan Reed: I've been here for four years and I get every other email you send out.

Dr. Jette: I wish I could answer it because it was sent. It was absolutely sent.

Megan Reed: Yeah, I mean, I don't want to beat a dead horse or anything like that. I'm so frustrated that only an apology can be made, but we have no idea what's going to happen moving forward. There's all these different stories and explanations that aren't really answering any questions like about what's moving forward. You can't really comment on it because.....

Mrs. Harrison: What's moving forward is we've removed the resources. I mean, we've established that those resources, most of them, now don't align with our mission as a school district. They don't align with our message of unity and they don't align with what the town of Litchfield wants for our students or what we want for our students - what I want for my kids. I mean, I can apologize for what we've done in the past and moving forward we, as a board, need to discuss what we do and take all this input here, but personally, I won't advocate for keeping those resources and next time we provide resources on any topic they will be in-house, they will be created by our people, and they will be suitably vetted.

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Megan Reed: I just feel like the apologies are now because more people are realizing what was actually put out there when it was a year ago. If nobody had said anything it would still be on the district website. And I don't want to beat a dead horse or argue or anything like that. I'm just so frustrated.

Mrs. Harrison: We don't mean to argue this.

Dr. Jette: Honestly, when it got raised it was on the district website, but I had forgotten about it. We had moved on. We had gone on to other things.

Megan Reed: Well, that's the problem.

Dr. Jette: But I think what we're trying to do is explain tonight that we have these processes in place; I appreciate that it got forward and raised; and you have assurances tonight about procedures and processes that we have in place. And I can't do anything other than that. We can't step in the wayback machine and change June of 2020, but we can certainly pay attention going forward and it's been a great lesson. So, thank you.

Megan Reed: Thanks, Mike.

Elizabeth MacDonald, 46 Naticook Avenue: I would just like to recap as a parent, as a school board member and a taxpayer. We need to discuss CRT, what you would like to see the school board discuss CRT, whether we want it approved, not approved, don't go there. We sent out a letter of unity, which it sounds like most of you agreed with, we sent out resources that people are having problems with, most specifically because of what some of you are calling reverse racism because it was directed towards white parents - am I getting this right? Okay - racism in general. What else do we have to go over? Curriculum - we see everything. Mary's on the case, I promise you. Covid screwed everything up. I promise you. Everything was going along and then Covid hit. I'm getting ready for the mask situation in a couple of months. I'd like to put this to rest because I know there's going to be a whole other forum whether we're wearing masks or not. So, I just want to make sure where everyone feels like they got their voice heard. I've listened. We've all listened. We've all learned from our experiences. We've apologized. We've pled our cases. We want accountability for teachers. Is that what I'm hearing, that they're not going to be walking a fine line? I think Mr. Lonergan, his first week here, I said I'm going to tell you about 2 men in your school that I've been in their classrooms and I don't know whether they're Democrats or Republicans. As a paraprofessional, there are 2 teachers in this school - I haven't been in the other classes - that I can tell you I don't know whether they were Democrat or Republican. And it is a compliment and I told Dr. Jette that when he first started. I have faith that I've raised my children to be critical thinkers - think like we do, have faith in God - I'm going there - and to be nice to other people. I'm just so over this. Look at my face - I have high blood pressure now, people - major high blood pressure. We're on the case. If your son comes home and says they've talked about this subject and was really uncomfortable, you tell the teacher, you tell Mr. Lonergan. No one else needs to know. Things that make me uncomfortable - abortion makes me uncomfortable - I don't want him talking about it in school. I'll talk to the teacher, I'll copy Mr. Lonergan and Dr. Jette, and probably Tina because I copy her on everything because she's the Chair. Please talk to your kids. Lizzy's uncomfortable - no needs to know. No one deserves to be uncomfortable when they're speaking their truth. Sorry, it sounds so woke, Rich.

Inaudible from audience.

Mrs. MacDonald: My kids have been told if they're uncomfortable, you can ask Mr. Perez, if they're uncomfortable they're free to leave the classroom, No one deserves to be uncomfortable in a public school. Nobody. And it breaks my heart hearing about Cecile's son. And I'm sorry to go on and on, but I'm a parent, a taxpayer, and as much as some of you don't like it I am also an educator and I walk a line every single day and I pray that our teachers do, and I pray that my kids will let me know when they are not. And I hope you'll all go home and talk to your kids, what made them comfortable, what didn't make them comfortable, and let us know. We can't fix what we don't know, just like Tina said. Okay - that's it.

Moderator: Okay, thank you. So, at this time questions and answers are done. I want to thank everybody for coming out. I want to personally thank everybody for having input and being brave enough to come down to a microphone and actually speak your thoughts and your minds because if people don't do it, how are they ever going to know. This educates everybody and that's exactly what we needed, no matter which side of the coin we stand on.

*Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)*

Mrs. Harrison: Well, Steve kind of stole my thunder. I was also going to thank everyone for coming. I think having these kinds of community forums are good for us as a district. I think they're great for us as a community and our kids win out when we all pull together in the same direction. Please expect more of these. I love a good community forum. I hear all of your thoughts and concerns and I appreciate how deeply and passionately everyone here cares about our kids. So, thank you again. Thanks for coming and keep in touch.

**Attachments to Public Input: Correspondence regarding Curriculum and the Message of Unity/CRT**

Todd and Nicola Beauregard, 21 Corning Road

This letter is sent with the intent to be submitted to the Litchfield, NH School Board regarding the special session being held on July 28, and for it to be submitted to the record.

I am not able to attend the special session, so I am writing to provide my support and appreciation of the Litchfield School Board, the educators/teachers of Litchfield and to all those responsible for the school curriculum. I believe an educated society benefits the community, and we are all responsible for what is being taught in our schools.

Even though all three of my children are now grown, they all spent 12 years in the Litchfield school system. During their time there, I witnessed our teaching staff using their critical thinking, judgement and knowledge to guide and teach in a positive manner. I never found anything objectionable in the content of the classes or the curriculum. All three of my children benefited from their time there, had positive experiences and have grown into amazing adults.

I heard of the recent events in town that led to others questioning the curriculum and the competence of our teachers and school board. This piqued my interest, so I went online to read through the curriculum set out for the Litchfield School district. I found nothing biased or divisive. It saddens me to hear there are those in this town that would take up an artificial cause and attack those who have been looking out for our children and helping prepare them for the future. If there were an egregious diversion from this curriculum by an individual, then I would expect that would be dealt with as a one-off; but in general we are so lucky to have the talented team of school workers and teachers guiding our children with the unbiased curriculum that has been set out.

Please know that there are citizens of this town that continue to support your hard work and the work of our educators and school employees. Thank you for hearing my opinion and please reach out to me for clarification or questions.

Sincerely, Nicola Beauregard

John Croes, Litchfield Resident

My wife and I moved to Litchfield in 2010 from Tyngsborough, MA. We have no children in Litchfield schools, but as lifelong teachers, we are quite attuned to and passionate about education. The divisive issues legislation that was attached to the budget and that is spurring discussion in several states and localities is designed to stop discussion about racism and sexism. It would prevent even considerations of white privilege, discrimination, segregation, and the undeniable violence against minorities historically and today. I fear that this bill and the attendant efforts to limit teachers are an unintended if not veiled attempt to prevent open and honest consideration of controversial "divisive" matters. As the Black Heritage Trail in Portsmouth wrote in opposition, this effort "will make it difficult to have honest conversations about both the good and bad of NH history. It will impede our ability to discuss how racism affects the lives of Granite Staters, and how we can work together to make NH a more just and inclusive state."

Not only the museum but schools would be precluded from considering the possibility that racism and sexism are institutional and systematic. For example, the famous simulation in a small Iowa town in 1969 in the wake of the MLK assassination would be precluded. In that class, a teacher told her students that blue-eyed people are superior to brown-eyed people, and within 15 minutes these formerly friendly classmates were discriminating against each other. The blue-eyed children immediately saw themselves as superior, and the brown/hazel-eyed children were ostracized and felt demeaned, dehumanized, and inferior. The purpose and effect of the lesson was to illustrate that prejudice occurs, can be easily manipulated, and is senseless. Later, the teacher told the children that blue-eyed children were obviously inferior, and the effect on the children was instantaneous. A follow-up video of those children as adults watching the video of those lessons and discussing the effect it had on them illustrates how powerful education can be when unfettered and imaginatively and thoughtfully employed.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/.../lesson-of-a-lifetime.../>



***Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)***

The lesson was a masterpiece in education. A discussion of race history is useful but FAR less effective than what this teacher was able to accomplish. But the kind of restraints being demanded by some out of their sense of patriotism and American exceptionalism would make that teacher’s brilliant methodology illegal under the guise of “Race or sex stereotyping.” It is one thing to read about stereotyping and discrimination; it is, however, completely another thing to feel the hate, belittlement, and pain that victims suffer.

It may be painful to accept that racism and sexism not only exist but are systemic, that throughout history our leaders have made and continue to make concerted decisions to keep whites on top, and that many whites have bought into it and have perpetuated it by modeling and teaching it to our children. It is necessary to right this wrong through consideration and discussion--through education. Don't suppress it. Hold teachers to the curriculum, let them foster critical thinking, which is the ability to distinguish opinion from facts and to dig into topics in their search for perspective and truth.

Patricia Owens, Litchfield Resident

I am requesting this email be formally submitted to the meeting record for this evening. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend due to work commitments. As a relatively new resident to Litchfield and a small business owner in Nashua I feel it is my obligation to voice my opinion and concerns when necessary. This is a necessary time and a serious issue being discussed tonight. The discussion of and concern regarding Critical Race Theory (CRT) being taught in our schools seems to be an opportunity for some to engage in a political battle. CRT is not being taught in the Litchfield schools and is not under discussion to be added to the curriculum. As we have fairly elected the members of this board it is incumbent upon us to allow them to perform their duties without pressured interference nor distraction from their agenda. It is the responsibility of OUR elected SCHOOL BOARD to determine the curriculum for the school system. If individuals are unhappy with the decisions that are made by them, then it is their right/ responsibility to make their wishes known through the vote at the ballot box. I respect the expertise and judgement of our current School Board and teachers to make decisions that will promote excellent education and learning in Litchfield.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts,  
Respectfully,

Patricia Owens  
Litchfield Resident

**II. ADJOURN**

***Mrs. MacDonald made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m. Mr. Bourque seconded. The motion carried 5-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn  
Executive Assistant to the School Board

**Litchfield School District**  
**Proposed Tuition Rates for 2021-2022**

	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Daily Rate</u>
<b>Elementary:</b>	<b>\$16,058</b>	<b>\$89.21</b>
<b>Middle:</b>	<b>\$16,940</b>	<b>\$94.11</b>
<b>High:</b>	<b>\$16,183</b>	<b>\$89.91</b>
 <b>District Average:</b>	 <b>\$16,376</b>	 <b>\$90.98</b>

Prior to acceptance of a non-resident student on a tuition basis, the student’s sending district of residence must agree that the sending district will be responsible for any extraordinary expenses as a result of the student attending a Litchfield school including, but not limited to, special education and section 504 accommodation costs.

Formula is based on Form DOE-25

2021 Actual Expenditures

- Less:
- Food Service Revenue
- Transportation Expenditures
- Supplemental Expenditures
- Divided by Average Daily Membership

<b>Approved</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>High</b>
<b>2020-2021</b>	\$15,290	\$15,761	\$16,082
<b>2019-2020</b>	\$16,728	\$16,214	\$16,885



# LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Administrative Unit #27

One Highlander Court

Litchfield, NH 03052

Phone: (603) 578-3570 & Fax: (603) 578-1267

Equal Opportunity Employer

Michael Jette, Ph.D.

- *Superintendent of Schools*

Cory Izbicki

- *Business Services*

Mary Widman

- *Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment*

Hollie Falzone

- *Human Resources*

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August 13, 2021

**To: The Members of the Litchfield School Board  
Superintendent Mike Jette**

**From: Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator**

**Subject: BA Operational and Financial Update for August 18, 2021 School Board Meeting**

The purpose of this monthly report is to update the School Board regarding day to day and ongoing operations that would be of particular note.

**Fiscal Year 2021 Financial Statements:**

- The BA report and financials from the August 4 School Board meeting have been included for the August 18 meeting. As I was away for the August 4 meeting, I've asked that these be included in the case that any Board members have questions regarding these materials.

**Litchfield Middle School Project Update:**

- Based on the August 12 Construction Management meeting with North Branch Construction:
  - Many of the items to be completed are tracking on time or ahead of schedule:
    - Window installation completion is expected by August 13;
    - New rooftop (ERV) unit to service the admin / guidance area of the building has been installed and expected to be started up and calibrated the week of August 16;
    - Flooring is expected to be installed the week of August 16.
  - Phase I of the project is anticipated to be completed with time to spare for the facilities crew to set up classrooms.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### SECOND READING

**POLICY CODE: JIC**

**APPROVAL:**

#### STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

##### **A. General Policy**

The Litchfield School Board is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, orderly and supportive school and learning environment. To that end, it is important for students to conduct themselves in a manner fitting to their age level and maturity, and with respect and consideration of other students, District personnel and other members of the community. Students are expected and required to maintain appropriate behavior that allows teachers and staff to perform their professional duties effectively and without disruption while on School District property or on property within the jurisdiction of the School District (including vehicles); and/or while attending or engaged in school activities.

Expectations for student conduct and standards of behavior shall be communicated through written Board policies, as well as District and/or school rules. Those policies and rules should be included in a Student Code of Conduct for each school.

Student conduct that causes material or substantial disruption to the school environment, interferes with the rights of others, presents a threat to the health and safety of students, employees, or visitors, and/or violates the Student Code of Conduct, or classroom rules is prohibited. Response to violations of the Student Student Code of Conduct, however, should be designed to maximize student academic, emotional and social success, while at the same time assuring safety of all students, staff and school visitors. With this objective, the Board endorses adoption of a Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavioral Health and Wellness ("MTSS-B") as the framework for the Student Code of Conduct.

District personnel who interact with students are expected to utilize progressive disciplinary measures, and to place emphasis on educating students so they may grow in self-discipline. Suspensions and expulsions shall be administered consistent with the applicable Student Student Code of Conduct and Board policy JICD.

##### **B. Student Code of Conduct**

The School Board delegates to the Superintendent, in consultation with the appropriate building Principal and counselors, the responsibility of adopting and implementing a Student Code of Conduct with such age-appropriate rules and regulations for each school as he/she deems necessary to implement the objectives of this policy, and reflects the three-tiered support prevention of framework of MTSS-B: school-wide approaches; targeted supports for at-risk students; and individualized services for highest-needs students.

The Student Code of Conduct for each school shall be submitted to the School Board for review each year with the student handbook. Consistent with the Board's statutory authority, and other Board policies regarding review of administrative rules, regulations and procedures, the School Board retains the authority to modify, supersede, or suspend any provision of the Student Code of Conduct.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### SECOND READING

**POLICY CODE: JIC**

**APPROVAL:**

The Student Code of Conduct shall include:

1. A graduated and age-appropriate system of supports and intervention strategies, such as:
  - parent conferences,
  - counseling,
  - peer mediation,
  - instruction in conflict resolution and anger management,
  - provide parents with counseling, support & resources,
  - community service, and
  - rearranging class schedules.
2. Graduated and age-appropriate disciplinary consequences such as:
  - restriction from co-curricular activities,
  - temporary (same day) removal from class or activity,
  - detention,
  - temporary reassignment/in-school suspension,
  - out-of-school suspension, and
  - expulsion.
3. Provisions describing how and when short term suspensions of up to 5 days, short term suspensions up to 10 days, long term suspensions up to 20 days, and/or expulsion should be imposed. These standards shall make reference to and reflect:
  - the nature and degree of disruption caused to the school environment;
  - the threat to the health and safety of pupils and school personnel, volunteers or visitors;
  - whether the conduct or behavior is isolated or repeated.

All temporary (same day) removal from classrooms or activities, restriction from activities, detentions, suspensions and expulsions shall comport with applicable laws, regulations and Board policy JICD.

4. Information regarding RSA 193:13, 193-D, this policy, Board policy JICD, and other Board policies or District/school rules regulating student conduct on and off-campus. Except where the complete text of a statute, regulation or policy is required, the Student Code of Conduct should include age appropriate language.

#### **C. Implementation and Notice**

The Superintendent shall assure that the Student Code of Conduct, complete with the information set out in section B.4, shall be printed in full in each student handbook, made available to parents at the beginning of the school year, publicly available on the school or District website. Additionally, building Principals shall assure student awareness of the Student Code of Conduct and other District policies and building rules through print, postings and periodic announcements.

The Superintendent may also designate personnel to explore the availability of and pursue any State or Federal grants, technical assistance and professional development opportunities available to facilitate implementation of MTSS-B per RSA 135-F:5, I(c) and (d).



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### SECOND READING

**POLICY CODE: JIC**

**APPROVAL:**

#### **D. Parental Notification of Simple Assaults**

Pursuant to RSA 193-D:4, I (b), the Superintendent is directed to adopt and implement procedures requiring parents/guardians of each student involved in a simple assault (victim and perpetrator) occurring during the school day to be notified, when such assault causes: any form of bodily injury, including bruising or discoloration, or would otherwise constitute a disciplinable offense under the Student Code of Conduct.

For purposes of this policy, "simple assault" shall have the same meaning as that provided in RSA 631:2-a: a simple assault occurs when one purposefully or knowingly causes bodily injury or unprivileged physical contact to another; or recklessly causes bodily injury to another or negligently causes bodily injury to another by means of a deadly weapon.

#### **E. Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities**

If a student is disabled under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), the New Hampshire RSA 186-C, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or any other law providing special rights to disabled students, those laws shall govern and shall supersede these local policies to the extent these local policies are inconsistent with those laws. Accordingly, any class or activity removal, suspension or expulsion of a child with a disability as defined in Ed 1102.01(t) shall be in accordance with Ed 1124.01.

#### **Legal References:**

*RSA 135-F:5, System of Care for Children/Duties of Commissioner of Dept. of Education*

*RSA 193:13, Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils*

*RSA 193-D:4, Written Report Required*

*RSA 631:2-a, Simple Assault*

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.04(f)(4), Student Discipline*

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.04(g), Suspension & Expulsion*

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.06, Culture and Climate*

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 317.04(b), Disciplinary Procedures*

Approval:

Reviewed: 1st Reading, August 4, 2021



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICD**

**APPROVAL:**

### STUDENT CONDUCT, DISCIPLINE & DUE PROCESS

#### A. Policy Statement

The Litchfield School Board believes that the school is a community with rules and regulations, and those who enjoy the rights and privileges it provides must also accept the responsibilities that membership demands, including respect for and obedience to school rules. This policy establishes the substantive parameters, procedures and due process that shall apply before a student may be subject to temporary (same day) removal from classrooms or activities, restriction from activities, detentions, suspensions and/or expulsions. Disciplinary actions should be measured responses and established at a level of severity which corresponds to the level of the offense, while maximizing student academic, emotional and social success and assuring the safety of all students, staff and school visitors.

Members of the Litchfield School Board expect student conduct to contribute to a productive learning climate and to abide by the following principles:

1. All student behavior must be based on respect and consideration for the rights of others.
2. Respect for law and those given authority to administer it is expected of all students, including conformity to school rules as well as to general provisions of the law regarding minors.
3. A responsibility to know and respect the rules and regulations of the school. Students have the further responsibility to behave in a manner appropriate to good citizenship everywhere.
4. Respect for the real and personal property, pride in one's work, and exemplary personal standards of courtesy, decency, honesty, and wholesome attitudes.

Individual rights are to be honored and protected in all instances; however, the rights of one individual shall not take precedence over those of another individual or of the group itself, and all students shall have equal rights and equal responsibilities in the classroom or at any school-sponsored activity.

#### B. Standards & Procedures Relative to Disciplinary Consequences

- I. **"Removal from the classroom"** means a student is sent to the building Principal's office or other designated area during the same school day.

Students may be removed from the classroom at the classroom teacher's discretion if the student refuses to obey the teacher's directives, becomes disruptive, fails to abide by school or District rules (see Code of Conduct) or otherwise impedes the educational purpose of the class after warning the student of the infraction and allowing the student to respond.

- II. **"Restriction from school activities"** means a student will attend school, classes, but will not participate in other school ~~extra~~-co-curricular activities, including such things as competitions, field trips, and performances. A student who has been restricted from school activities may participate in practices at the discretion of the person imposing the restriction.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICD**

**APPROVAL:**

The student shall first be given a warning of the infraction and provided an opportunity to respond. If the restriction is immediate and outside of school hours, provision must be made to assure the student is not left unsupervised. The terms of the restriction shall be communicated to the Principal and the student's parent/guardian. Restrictions under this policy are not appealable.

- III. **"Detention"** means the student's presence is required for disciplinary purposes before or after the hours when the student is assigned to be in class, and may occur on one or more Saturdays.

Students may be assigned classroom detention at the classroom teacher's discretion, and building detention at the Principal's discretion, if the student refuses to obey the teacher/employee's directives, becomes disruptive, fails to abide by printed classroom, school or District rules (see Code of Conduct), or otherwise impedes the educational purpose of the class, after warning the student of the infraction and allowing the student to respond. Parents/guardians shall be notified at least 24 hours prior to a student serving detention.

Detentions before or after school shall not exceed one hour, and Saturday detentions shall not exceed three hours. The building Principal is authorized to establish, announce and post additional guidelines and rules regarding detention, supervision, building access, etc.. The length and timing of the detention, is within the discretion of the licensed employee disciplining the student or the building Principal, pursuant to the posted rules of the school. Detentions are not appealable.

- IV. **"Temporary Reassignment" or "in-school suspension"** means the student will attend school but will be temporarily isolated from one or more classes while under supervision. A temporary reassignment should not exceed five consecutive school days. Parents/guardians shall be notified at least 24 hours prior to the administration of a temporary reassignment.

The building Principal is authorized to issue reassignment, restrictions from activities, or place a student on probation for repeated failure to conform to the rules and regulations of the school (see Code of Conduct), classroom rules, or for any conduct that causes material or substantial disruption to the school/class environment, interferes with the rights of others, presents a threat to the health and safety of students, employees, and visitors, is otherwise inappropriate, or is prohibited by law.

- V. **"Probation"** means a student is given a conditional suspension of a penalty for a definite period of time in addition to being reprimanded. The conditional suspension will mean the student must meet the conditions and terms for the suspension of the penalty. Failure of the student to meet these conditions and terms will result in reinstatement of the penalty. Notwithstanding the assignment of probation, no imposition of the suspended consequence may be administered unless and until all of the provisions of this policy applicable to the suspended consequence are satisfied.

- VI. **"Out-of-school suspension"** means the temporary denial of a student's attendance at school for a specific period of time. It includes short-term and long-term out of school suspensions.

- a. **Short-term suspension.** A "short-term suspension" means an out-of-school suspension of ten (10) consecutive school days or less. RSA 193:13, I (a).
- The Superintendent or his/her written designees (principals, assistant principals) are authorized to suspend a student for ten (10) school days or less.





## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICD**

**APPROVAL:**

- A short term suspension may be imposed only for:
  - Behavior that is detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of pupils or school personnel (including, but not limited to, and act of theft, destruction or violence, as defined in RSA 193-D:1); or
  - Repeated and willful disregard of the reasonable rules of the school that is not remediated through imposition of the district's graduated sanctions described in Policy JIC and Student Code of Conduct.

Before any short-term suspension may be imposed, a student is entitled to the minimum due process (notice before meeting of the charge and explanation of evidence, notice of the possibility of suspension, opportunity for the student to respond, and a written decision explaining the disciplinary action taken). See New Hampshire Department of Education Rule Ed 317.04(f)(1).

The District shall comply with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) when disciplining students.

- b. Long-term suspension.** A “long-term suspension” is the extension or continuation of a short-term suspension for a period not to exceed an additional 10 days beyond the duration of the short-term suspension.
  - The Superintendent is authorized to continue the suspension and issue a long-term suspension of a pupil for a period in excess of ten (10) school days, provided only that if the Superintendent issued the original short-term suspension, then the School Board may designate another person to continue the short-term suspension and issue the long-term suspension.
  - A long-term suspension may only be imposed for:
    - an act that constitutes an act of theft, destruction or violence, as defined in RSA 193-D ;
    - bullying pursuant to Board policy JICK when the pupil has not responded to targeted interventions and poses an ongoing threat to the safety or welfare of another student; or
    - possession of a firearm, BB gun, or paintball gun.

Prior to a long-term suspension, the student will be afforded a hearing on the matter. The informal hearing need not rise to the level and protocol of a formal hearing, but the process must comply with the requirements of Ed 317.04 (f)(2), and (f)(3)(g), including, without limitation, the requirements for advance notice and a written decision.

- c. Appeal of long-term suspension.** Any long-term suspension issued other than by the School Board under this policy, is appealable to the School Board, provided the Superintendent or School Board chair receives the appeal in writing within ten (10) days after the issuance of the Superintendent's hearing and written decision required under N.H. Dept. of Education Rule Ed. 317.04 (f)(2)c, and section B, 6, b. The Board shall hold a hearing on the appeal, but will rely upon the record of the decision being appealed from.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICD**

**APPROVAL:**

Any suspension in excess of ten (10) school days shall remain in effect while this appeal is pending unless the School Board stays the suspension while the appeal is pending. Any request to stay a long-term suspension should be included in the original appeal.

- d. Educational Assignments.** As required by RSA 193:13, V, educational assignments shall be made available to students during both short and long term suspensions.
- e. Alternative Educational Services.** The school shall provide alternative educational services to a suspended pupil whenever the pupil is suspended in excess of 20 cumulative days within any school year. The alternative educational services shall be designed to enable the pupil to advance from grade to grade.
- f. Re-entry Meetings and Intervention Plans.** Prior to returning to regular classes, a suspended student, and parent/guardian (when available) shall meet with the building Principal or his/her designee to assist the student in smoothly returning to the school setting.

Any time a pupil is suspended more than 10 school days in any school year, upon the pupil's return to school the school district shall develop an intervention plan designed to proactively address the pupil's problematic behaviors by reviewing the problem behavior, re-teaching expectations, and identifying any necessary supports.

- g. Attendance Safe Harbor.** A student may not be penalized academically solely by virtue of missing class due to a suspension.

**VII. "Expulsion"** means the complete denial of a pupil's attendance at school for any of the reasons listed in RSA 193:13, II and IV. An expulsion may be for either a stated duration or permanent.

- a. Grounds for Expulsion.** Any pupil may only be expelled by the School Board, and only for the following grounds:
  - i.** A repetition of an act that warranted long term suspension under B, 6, b;
  - ii.** Any act of physical or sexual assault that would be a felony if committed by an adult;
  - iii.** Any act of violence pursuant to RSA 651:5, XIII ;
  - iv.** Criminal threatening pursuant to RSA 631:4, II(a) ; or
  - v.** For bringing or possessing a firearm as defined in Section 921 U.S.C. Title 18 within a safe school zone as prohibited under RSA 193-D:1 , or under the Gun Free School Zones Act, unless such pupil has written authorization from the Superintendent.

Before expelling a pupil, the Board shall consider each of the following factors:

- The pupil's age.
- The pupil's disciplinary history.
- Whether the pupil is a student with a disability.
- The seriousness of the violation or behavior committed by the pupil.
- Whether the school district has implemented positive behavioral interventions under paragraph V.
- Whether a lesser intervention would properly address the violation or behavior committed by the pupil.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICD**

**APPROVAL:**

- b. Due Process to Be Afforded Prior to Expulsion.** Prior to any expulsion, the District will ensure that the due process standards set forth in Ed 317.04(f)(3) through 317.04 (m) are followed.
- c. Duration of Expulsion.** An expulsion will run for the duration stated in the written decision or until the School Board or Superintendent restores the student's permission to attend school as provided in this policy. An expulsion relating to a firearm in a safe school zone per B.7.a.v, shall be for a period of not less than 12 months.
- d. Educational Services.** The Superintendent is authorized, but not required, to arrange for educational services to be provided to any student residing in the District who has been expelled by the District or by any other school.

#### **C. Modification or Reinstatement After Suspension or Expulsion.**

Expelled or suspended students may request a modification of, or reinstatement from, an expulsion or suspension as provided below. Except for students establishing residency from out-of-state, requests for modification or reinstatement from expulsion/suspension shall be submitted in writing to the Superintendent no later than August 15. The request should set forth the reasons for the request, and include additional information to establish that it is in the best interest of the student and school community to reinstate the student. Such additional information may include such things as work history, letters of reference, medical information, etc. All reinstatements shall include an Intervention Plan as described in paragraph B.6.f, including such conditions as the reinstating authority (Superintendent or Board) deem appropriate.

- 1. Modification by Superintendent.** Subject to all other applicable laws, regulations and Board policies, and paragraph C.3, below (relating to firearms), the Superintendent is authorized to reinstate any student who has been suspended or expelled from a school in this District, and or enroll a student suspended or expelled from another school or district, on a case-by-case basis.
- 2. Review and reinstatement by Board.** A student may request the School Board (of the district of attendance) to review an expulsion decision prior to the start of each school year by filing a written request with the Superintendent detailing the basis of the request. The Board will determine whether and in what manner it will consider any such request after consultation with the Superintendent.
- 3. Modification of Expulsion for Firearms.** A student who has been expelled from this District or any other public or private school for bringing or possessing a firearm in a safe school zone as prohibited under RSA 193-D1, or under the Gun Free Schools Act, may only be reinstated or enrolled if the Superintendent first determines: possession of the firearm was inadvertent and unknowing; the firearm was for sporting purposes and the student did not intend to display the firearm to any other person while within the safe schools zone; the student is/was in the fifth or lower grade when the incident occurred; or the Superintendent determines that the firearm was not loaded; and that no ammunition was reasonably available; and that the pupil had no intention to display the firearm to other students.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICD**

**APPROVAL:**

Additionally, the School Board may enroll a student expelled from a school outside of New Hampshire for a violation of the Gun Free Schools Act upon the student establishing residency.

**D. Appeals to State Board of Education.**

Any decision by the Board (i) to expel a student, (ii) not to reinstate a student upon request, or (iii) enroll a student from another state who had been expelled for a violation of the Gun Free Schools Act, may be appealed to the State Board of Education at any time that the expulsion remains in effect, subject to the rules of the State Board of Education.

**E. Sub-committee of Board.**

For purposes of sections B.6 and B.7 of this policy, "Board" or "School Board" may either be a quorum of the full Board, or a subcommittee of the Board duly authorized by the School Board.

**F. Superintendent and Principal Designees.**

Except where otherwise stated in this policy, the Superintendent may delegate any authority s/he has under this policy, and a principal may delegate any authority s/he has under this policy, to other appropriate personnel.

**G. Disciplinary Removal of Students with Disabilities.**

If a student is disabled under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), the New Hampshire RSA 186-C, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act, or any other law providing special rights to disabled students, those laws shall govern and shall supersede these local policies to the extent these local policies are inconsistent with those laws. Accordingly, any suspension or expulsion of a child with a disability as defined in Ed 1102.01(t) shall be in accordance with Ed 1124.01.

**H. Notice and Dissemination.**

This policy shall be made available to families, students and staff as provided in Board policy JIC.

**I. Conflict in Law or State Regulation.**

If any provision of this policy shall conflict with State or Federal law, or regulation of the New Hampshire Department of Education, then such law or regulation shall apply, and the remainder of the policy shall be read and interpreted to be consistent with the law or regulation. School administrators and families are strongly encouraged to review the links for pertinent statutes and laws as referenced in this policy.

**Statutory Reference:**

*18 U.S.C. § 921, Et seq., Firearms*

*20 U.S.C. § 7151, Gun-Free Schools Act*

*RSA 189:15, Regulations*

*RSA 193:13, Suspension & Expulsion of Pupils*

*RSA Chapter 193-D, Safe Schools Zones*

*RSA 631:4, Criminal Threatening*

*RSA 651:5, XIII "Act of Violence"*



LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

**2ND READING**

**POLICY CODE: JICD**

**APPROVAL:**

**Legal Reference:**

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(3), Discipline*

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(f), Student Discipline Policy*

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.04(g), Suspension & Expulsion*

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 317.04, Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils Assuring Due Process*

*Disciplinary Procedures In re Keelin B., 162 N.H. 38, 27 A.3d 689 (2011)*

Approved:

Reviewed: 1st Reading, August 4, 2021

Approved: January 31, 2007 (original policy JICD/JICD-R)



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICDD**

**APPROVAL:**

#### **STUDENT DISCIPLINE: OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIONS**

The Litchfield School Board recognizes that out-of-school and off-campus student conduct is not normally the concern of the Board. However, the Board also recognizes that some out-of-school and off-campus conduct may have an adverse effect upon the schools, school property, school staff, or school district.

Therefore, it shall be the policy of this Board that the Board or school administrators shall impose disciplinary measures against students for some out-of-school or off-campus conduct.

Discipline shall be imposed if the Principal determines such out-of-school conduct causes a significant disruption or substantial interference with the school's educational mission, purpose, or objectives. Additionally, any off-campus or out-of-school behavior that has a strong potential to disrupt normal school operations shall also be met with appropriate disciplinary actions by the Board, Superintendent, or school administrators.

Out-of-school and off-campus student conduct that may subject a student to discipline includes, but is not limited to:

1. Damaging school property;
2. Violence at or near the school's bus stop, either before or after the school day;
3. Drinking alcohol, using tobacco products, or using illegal drugs at or near the school bus stop, either before or after the school day;
4. Damaging the private property of school staff or employees; or
5. Any other activity the Board or administration determines impedes the general welfare of scholastic activities.

#### **Cyber-bullying and Internet Threats**

Reports and/or allegations of cyberbullying will be addressed in accordance with the provisions of Board policy JICK.

Consistent with applicable law, the District will not require or request that a student disclose or provide to the District the student's username, password or other authenticating information to a student's personal social media account.

However, the District may request to a student or a student's parent/guardian that the student voluntarily share printed copies of specific information from a student's personal social media account if such information is relevant to an ongoing District investigation.

#### **Legal References:**

*RSA 189:70, Educational Institution Policies on Social Media*

Approved:

Reviewed: 1st Reading, August 4, 2021

Approved: September 10, 2008



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICK**

**APPROVAL:**

### **PUPIL SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY - Bullying**

#### **Statement of Purpose, Intent and Scope**

It is the intent of this policy to protect all children on district grounds, regardless of their enrollment status in the District, from physical, emotional and psychological harm by addressing bullying and cyberbullying of any kind in our district/school, and to prevent the creation of a hostile educational environment. All pupils are protected under this policy, regardless of their legal status. The district will not tolerate unlawful harassment of any type and conduct that constitutes bullying and cyberbullying as defined herein is prohibited by this Policy, in accordance with RSA 193-F.

Further, in accordance with RSA 193-F:4, the District reserves the right to address bullying and, if necessary, impose discipline for bullying that:

- (1) Occurs on, or is delivered to, school property or a school-sponsored activity or event on or off school property; or
- (2) Occurs off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity or event, if the conduct interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operations of the school or school-sponsored activity or event.

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

#### **I. Definitions: RSA 193-F:3**

**Bullying:** Bullying is hereby defined as a single significant incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another pupil which:

- Physically harms a pupil or damages the pupil's property;
- Causes emotional distress to a pupil;
- Interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities;
- Creates a hostile educational environment; or
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying shall also include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on a pupil's actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs, or motivated by the pupil's association with another person and based on the other person's characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.

**Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is defined as any conduct defined as "bullying" in this policy that is undertaken through the use of electronic devices. For purposes of this policy, any references to the term bullying shall include cyberbullying.

**Electronic devices:** Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones, computers, pagers, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and websites.

**Perpetrator:** Perpetrator means a pupil who engages in bullying or cyberbullying.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE:** JICK

**APPROVAL:**

**School property:** School property means all real property and all physical plant and equipment used for school purposes, including public or private school buses or vans.

**Victim:** Victim means a pupil against whom bullying or cyberbullying has been perpetrated.

**Parent:** Any reference in this policy to “parent” shall include parents or legal guardians.

#### **II. Statement Prohibiting Retaliation or False Accusations (RSA 193-F:4, II(b))**

##### **False Reporting**

A student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of bullying may face discipline or other consequences, ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

A school employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused a student of bullying shall face discipline or other consequences to be determined in accordance with applicable law, District policies, procedures and collective bargaining agreements.

##### **Reprisal or Retaliation**

The District will discipline and take appropriate action against any student, teacher, administrator, volunteer, or other employee who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying.:

The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student, teacher, school administrator/staff, volunteer or other employee, who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Principal or designee after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, in accordance with law, Board policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Any student found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion.

##### **Process To Protect Pupils From Retaliation**

If the alleged victim or any witness expresses to the Principal, designee, or other staff member that he/she believes he/she may be retaliated against, the Principal or designee shall develop a process or plan to protect that student from possible retaliation.

Any school volunteer found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, exclusion from school grounds.

Each process or plan shall be developed on a case-by-case basis. Suggestions include, but are not limited to, re-arranging student class schedules to minimize their contact, severe warnings to alleged perpetrators, temporary removal of privileges, or other means necessary to protect against possible retaliation.





## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICK**

**APPROVAL:**

#### **III. Protection of all Pupils (RSA 193-F:4, II(c))**

This policy shall apply to all pupils and school-aged persons on school district grounds and participating in school district functions, regardless of whether or not such pupil or school-aged person is a student within the District.

#### **IV. Disciplinary Consequences For Violations of This Policy**

The District reserves the right to impose disciplinary measures and apply corrective measures against any student who commits an act of bullying, falsely accuses another student of bullying, or who retaliates against any student or witness who provides information about an act of bullying.

In addition to imposing discipline under such circumstances, the board encourages the administration and school district staff to seek alternatives to traditional discipline, including but not limited to early intervention measures, alternative dispute resolution, conflict resolution and other similar measures.

#### **V. Distribution and Notice of This Policy (RSA 193-F:4, II(e))**

##### **Staff and Volunteers**

All staff will be provided with a copy of this policy annually. The Superintendent may determine the method of providing the policy (employee handbook, hard copy, etc.)

The Superintendent will ensure that all school employees and volunteers receive annual training on bullying and related district's policies.

##### **Students**

All students will be provided with a copy of this policy annually. The Superintendent may determine the method of providing the policy (student handbook, mailing, hard copy, etc.)

Students will participate in an annual education program which sets out expectations for student behavior and emphasizes an understanding of harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students, the District's prohibition of such conduct and the reasons why the conduct is destructive, unacceptable, and will lead to discipline. Students shall also be informed of the consequences of bullying conduct toward their peers.

The Superintendent, in consultation with staff, may incorporate student anti-bullying training and education into the district's curriculum, but shall not be required to do so.

##### **Parents**

All parents will be provided with a copy of this policy annually. The Superintendent may determine the method of providing the policy (parent handbook, mailing, etc.). Parents will be informed of the program and the means for students to report bullying acts toward them or other students. They will also be told that to help prevent bullying at school they should encourage their children to:

1. Report bullying when it occurs;
2. Take advantage of opportunities to talk to their children about bullying;
3. Inform the school immediately if they think their child is being bullied or is bullying other students;
4. Cooperate fully with school personnel in identifying and resolving incidents.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICK**

**APPROVAL:**

#### **Additional Notice and School District Programs**

The Board may, from time to time, host or schedule public forums in which it will address the anti-bullying policy, discuss bullying in the schools, and consult with a variety of individuals including teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, school psychologists and other interested persons.

#### **VI. Procedure for Reporting Bullying (RSA 193-F:4, II(f))**

At each school, the Principal or other designee shall be responsible for receiving complaints of alleged violations of this policy.

#### **Student Reporting**

Any student who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying should report the alleged acts immediately to the Principal or designee. If the student is more comfortable reporting the alleged act to a person other than the Principal or designee, the student may tell any school district employee or volunteer about the alleged bullying.

Any school employee or volunteers who witnesses, receives a report of, or has knowledge or belief that bullying may have occurred shall inform the Principal as soon as possible, but no later than the end of that school day.

Although students, parents, volunteers and visitors may report anonymously, formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report. Independent verification of the anonymous report shall be necessary in order for any disciplinary action to be applied.

The administration may develop student reporting forms to assist students and staff in filing such reports. An investigation shall still proceed even if a student is reluctant to fill out the designated form and chooses not to do so.

Upon receipt of a report of bullying, the Principal shall commence an investigation consistent with the provisions of this policy.

#### **Parent Reporting**

Any parent or other individual who has witnessed or has reliable information that a student has been the victim of bullying should report the incident to the student's principal or a designee.

#### **Staff Reporting**

An important duty of the staff is to report acts or behavior that they witness that appears to constitute bullying.

Any school employee or volunteers who witnesses, receives a report of, or has knowledge or belief that bullying may have occurred shall inform the Principal or designee as soon as possible, but no later than the end of that school day.

Upon receipt of a report of bullying, the Principal or designee shall commence an investigation consistent with the provisions of this policy.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICK**

**APPROVAL:**

#### **VII. Procedure for Internal Reporting Requirements (RSA 193-F:4, II(g))**

The Principal shall promptly report all substantiated incidents of bullying or cyberbullying to the Superintendent.

The Principal shall be responsible for completing all New Hampshire Department of Education forms and reporting documents of substantiated incidents of bullying. The forms shall be completed within 10 school days of any substantiated incident. Upon completion of such forms, the Principal shall retain a copy for himself/herself and shall forward one copy to the Superintendent.

#### **VIII. Notifying Parents of Alleged Bullying (RSA 193-F:4, II(h))**

The Principal shall, by telephone and in writing, or by conference, report the occurrence of any incident of bullying as defined by this policy to the parent or legal guardian of all pupils involved within 48 hours of the occurrence of receiving such report. All notifications must be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

#### **IX. Waiver of Notification Requirement (RSA 193-F:4, II(i))**

The Superintendent may, within a 48 hour time period, grant the Principal a waiver from the requirement that the parents of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator be notified of the filing of a report. A waiver may only be granted if the Superintendent deems such a waiver to be in the best interest of the victim or perpetrator. Any waiver granted shall be in writing.

#### **X. Investigative Procedures (RSA 193-F:4, II(j))**

Upon receipt of a report of bullying or cyberbullying, the Principal shall initiate an investigation of the alleged act within five (5) school days. If the Principal is directly and personally involved with a complaint or is closely related to a party to the complaint, then the Superintendent shall direct another district employee to conduct the investigation.

The investigation shall be completed within ten (10) school days of the reported incident, and may include documented interviews with the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator, and any witnesses. All interviews shall be conducted privately, separately and shall be confidential. At no time will the alleged victim and perpetrator be interviewed together during the investigation.

If the alleged bullying was in whole or in part cyberbullying, the Principal may ask students and/or parents to provide the District with printed copies of emails, text messages, website pages, or other similar electronic communications.

The Superintendent may grant in writing an extension of the time period for the investigation and documentation of reports for up to an additional seven (7) school days, if necessary. The Principal shall notify in writing all parties involved of the granting of an extension.

Students who are found to have violated this policy may face discipline in accordance with other applicable board policies, up to and including suspension. Students facing discipline will be afforded all due process required by law.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICK**

**APPROVAL:**

Consistent with applicable law, the District will not require or request that a student disclose or provide to the District the student's user name, password or other authenticating information to a student's personal social media account. However, the District may request to a student or a student's parent/guardian that the student voluntarily share printed copies of specific information from a student's personal social media account if such information is relevant to an ongoing District investigation.

#### **XI. Response to Remediate Substantiated Instances of Bullying (RSA 193-F:4, II(k))**

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of bullying or retaliation may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion of students and dismissal from employment for staff members.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying or retaliation shall be varied according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Remedial measures shall be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the problem, protect and provide support for the victim, and take corrective action for documented systematic problems related to bullying.

Any such disciplinary action shall be taken in accord with applicable School Board policy and legal requirements. However, in support of this policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of aggressive behavior, including bullying. The Board encourages the Superintendent to work collaboratively with all staff members to develop responses other than traditional discipline as a way to remediate substantiated instances of bullying.

#### **XII. Reporting of Substantiated Incidents to the Superintendent (RSA 193-F:4, II(l))**

The Principal shall forward all substantiated reports of bullying to the Superintendent or designee upon completion of the Principal's investigation.

#### **XIII. Communication With Students & Parents Upon Completion of Investigation (RSA 193-F:4, II(m))**

Within two (2) school days of completing an investigation, the Principal shall notify the students involved in person of his/her findings and the result of the investigation.

The Principal will notify via telephone the parents of the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator of the results of the investigation. The Principal will also send a letter to the parents within 24 hours again notifying them of the results of the investigation. If the parents request, the Principal shall schedule a meeting with them to further explain his/her findings and reasons for his/her actions.

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and other law concerning student privacy, the District will not disclose educational records of students including the discipline and remedial action assigned to those students and the parents of other students involved in a bullying incident.



## LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

### 2ND READING

**POLICY CODE: JICK**

**APPROVAL:**

#### **XIV. Appeal**

A parent or legal guardian who is aggrieved by the investigative determination letter of the Principal may appeal the determination to the Superintendent within 10 days of notification. The appeal shall be in writing, addressed to the Superintendent, state the reason(s) for the appeal and the nature of the relief sought. (The Superintendent shall not be required to re-investigate the matter and shall conduct such review as he/she deems appropriate.) The Superintendent shall issue his/her decision in writing.

If the parent or legal guardian is not satisfied with the Superintendent's decision, they may appeal in writing within 10 days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision to the School Board. An appeal to the Superintendent shall be a prerequisite to any appeal to the School Board.

If the parent or legal guardian is not satisfied with the local school board's decision, they may appeal to the State Board of Education within 30 calendar days of receipt of the written decision of the local School Board in accordance with RSA 541-A and State of New Hampshire Department of Education Regulations set for in ED 200. The State Board may waive the 30 day requirement for good cause shown, including, but not limited to, illness, accident or death of a family member.

#### **XV. Capture of Audio Recordings on School Buses**

Pursuant to RSA 570-A:2, notice is hereby given that the Board authorizes audio recordings to be made in conjunction with video recordings of the interior of school buses while students are being transported to and from school or school activities. The Superintendent shall ensure that there is a sign informing the occupants of school buses that such recordings are occurring.

#### **XVI. Use of Video or Audio Recordings in Student Discipline Matters**

The District reserves the right to use audio and/or video recording devices on District property (including school buses) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, students and visitors. Placement and location of such devices will be established in accordance with the provisions of related Board policies.

In the event an audio or video recording is used as part of a student discipline proceeding, such video may become part of a student's education record. If an audio or video recording does become part of a student's education record, the provisions of Policy JRA shall apply.

The Superintendent is authorized to contact the District's attorney for a full legal opinion relative in the event of such an occurrence.

#### **Legal References:**

*RSA 189:70, Educational Institution Policies on Social Media*

*RSA 193-F:3, Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Act*

*RSA 570-A:2, Capture of Audio Recordings on School Buses Allowed*

*NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(8), Student Harassment*

Approved:

Reviewed: 1st Reading, August 4, 2021

Approved: December 1, 2010