

PORT ORFORD



LANGLOIS 2CJ
SCHOOL DISTRICT

PORT ORFORD-LANGLOIS SCHOOL DISTRICT 2CJ

Steve Perkins, Superintendent

District Office
45525 Highway 101
Sixes, OR 97476
Tel: (541) 348-2455

District mailing address:
P.O. Box 8
Port Orford, OR 97465
Fax: (541) 348-2228

October 26, 2020

To: Port Orford-Langlois School Community

Re: All Students Belong in Port Orford-Langlois School District

This year, amidst a series of crises, the health and well-being of our staff, students, and communities has been our highest priority. We know that Oregon's youth and their families rely on their schools to take care of students and keep them safe, and depend on school communities to be welcoming and inclusive. We are deeply grateful for all that you do to support this school community during difficult times. Once again, we are calling on your partnership, leadership, and spirit of community to make sure that all students and staff feel as though they belong in our schools.

Our district recognizes that student health and safety are the cornerstone of education and that all students are entitled to educational environments that are free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, and without fear or hatred, racism or violence. All staff and leaders are also entitled to workplaces that are free from discrimination and harassment, and visitors should be able to participate in their school communities without fearing for their well-being.

Unfortunately, an increasing number of students in Oregon are reporting concerns for their safety and their ability to access their education. This prompted Governor Brown to instruct the Oregon School Board of Education to adopt the **All Students Belong** rule, which prohibits the display of three of the most recognizable symbols of hate—the swastika, the Confederate flag, and the noose at all school events and activities including online and distance learning. It will require districts to adopt and implement policies and procedures for addressing all in-person and remote (distance learning) school events and activities where these symbols are present.

As you are aware, our youth and communities of color, members of Tribal communities, and LGBTQ2SIA+ students across Oregon are experiencing growing levels of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and hate, both through words, actions or symbols, and via exclusion or inequitable access to resources. No student is immune from being a target of these harmful acts or exclusion, and no member of our school community should ever be in fear of physical, mental, or emotional injury. In our district, when one person is harmed, it affects us all. As adults, we are responsible for making sure that our children are safe, and that they receive the education that they are entitled to.

To keep all members of our school community safe, administrators will develop and implement policies and procedures for addressing incidents where these hate symbols are present in in-person or remote school events and activities. These responses will not focus on disciplinary strategies like suspensions, expulsions, or similar punitive measures. Instead, we will work to educate our communities and those displaying hateful symbols about the impact of their actions with non-punitive remedial measures unless there is a risk to health or safety. The Oregon Department of Education is providing us with guidance, resources, and educational materials that will help us to implement policies consistently, fairly and effectively.

Ultimately, it will take all of us to transform the conditions that lead to hate entering into schools. This policy isn't just about the impacts on students being harmed by hate symbols—it is about creating a safe learning environment for all students and staff. One that allows for exploration, and open, respectful, conversation.

Through our unity and your vocal support, we can ensure that schools are a place where we learn and engage in meaningful dialogue to more deeply understand and respect differences between people, where *all* students benefit from a safe and healthy environment, and where all can be free to receive their education without fear of hatred, racism, or violence.

If you have feedback for the Oregon Department of Education please direct your questions and comments to AllStudentsBelong@state.or.us.

Steve Perkins
Port Orford-Langlois School District Superintendent

Port Orford-Langlois School District Board of Directors