

**Date: September 13, 2021**

**Presenter: Lori Gimelshteyn**

**Presented to: Cherry Creek School District Board of Education**

**RE: Reevaluation of the Professional Development Curriculum titled Beyond Diversity & Courageous Conversations to question if it is truly "culturally responsive"**

I would like to request that the District reevaluate the Professional Development Curriculum titled Beyond Diversity & Courageous Conversations to question if it is truly "culturally responsive". After I reviewed the course materials, I questioned what was meant by culturally responsive. The curriculum is overwhelmingly focused on the white race which in itself causes concern because it is an individual's ethnicity that underlies their "cultural characteristics that define them as being a part of specific group" whereas "race" is simply physical characteristics. Terms like white culture, white privilege, white oppressors, etc...dominate the course and portray people who are white in a negative fashion.

While I think the vote to approve this curriculum came from a place of compassion, I cannot reasonably understand why the curriculum was allowed to continue for the past several years. I have spoken with numerous Cherry Creek educators privately who have shared in whispered voices "that something needs to change" and that they are scared to say anything to their coworkers or administration because they are AFRAID they will lose their jobs. I have heard these same sentiments shared by students in the district whose teachers are bringing the concepts learned from this course into the classroom and students feel obligated to agree with this information in order to not be ridiculed, bullied or given a poor grade.

So, either you did not review the actual curriculum and voted on the premise that it was culturally responsive and would meet district goals or you did read the curriculum and agreed that treating people differently because of their race, specifically the white skin tone, is culturally responsive.

I hope that as our elected officials you take your responsibility to support the Constitutions of the United States and Colorado seriously. You are charged with bringing solutions to the table and recognizing when there is a problem. Ignoring the issue is not performing your duties to the best of your ability as you solemnly swore to do when you took the oath of office for this position.

Again, I am requesting that this professional development curriculum be reevaluated. If we are to be truly culturally responsive we should be learning about ethnicity, traditions, similarities and celebrations bringing our diverse country together with pride as we are all Americans with a constitutional right to equal opportunity.

Lori Gimelshteyn to the CCSD Board of Education  
September 13, 2001

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