

Michelle Baumstark

From: Chuck Basye <Chuck.Basye@house.mo.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 2:29 PM
To: Brian Yearwood
Cc: Helen Wade; Della Streaty-Wilhoit; David Seamon; Chris Horn; Katherine Sasser; Blake Willoughby; Jeanne Snodgrass; Tracy Davenport; Michelle Baumstark
Subject: [External] Follow up from Oct. 15, 2021 meeting
Attachments: Dr. Yearwood Letter-Updated.pdf

Good Afternoon Dr. Yearwood,

As discussed at the Friday meeting, I would appreciate consideration of the written request attached as soon as possible. A press release from my office is being issued soon.

Thank you very much.

Chuck Basye



Missouri State Representative, District 47
201 West Capitol Ave., Room 401-A
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101
Office Phone: 573-751-1501

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CAPITOL OFFICE
State Capitol
201 West Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, MO 65101 6806
Tele: (573) 751-1501
E-Mail:
Chuck.Basye@house.mo.gov



COMMITTEES:
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Rules-Legislative Oversight
Joint Committee on Education
Special Committee on Redistricting

MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Chuck Basye

State Representative
District 47

October 15, 2021

Dr. Brian Yearwood
Superintendent
Columbia Public Schools
1818 West Worley Street
Columbia, MO 65203

Dear Dr. Yearwood,

Over the past few weeks several parents of Columbia Public Schools (CPS) students have complained about issues facing their child/children in schools. As you are very aware, I have addressed some of these concerns through school channels and the media. I strongly believe CPS isn't taking these matters seriously. The most prominent example is the YouTube video "This is America" by the actor Donald Glover, also known as Childish Gambino, which is being used by teachers in CPS.

With all due respect, I find this type of instruction to be harmful and inappropriate. Dr. Gragnani stated in an email communication that the teacher of the AP U. S. Studies course at Hickman High School said children were given an opt out. Dr. Gragnani also said "no student is ever forced to watch material they find troubling or disturbing", however, parents and students have told me privately that no opt out was offered or given.

I respectfully request that you as CPS Superintendent place as an action item the showing of "This is America by Childish Gambino" onto the meeting agenda of the November 8, 2021 CPS Board of Education Regular Session for public viewing and comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles K. Basye".

State Representative
Chuck Basye
District 47

Michelle Baumstark

From: Michelle Baumstark
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 4:53 PM
To: Chuck Basye
Cc: Helen Wade; Della Streaty-Wilhoit; David Seamon; Chris Horn; Katherine Sasser; Blake Willoughby; Jeanne Snodgrass; Tracy Davenport; Brian Yearwood
Subject: RE: [External] Follow up from Oct. 15, 2021 meeting
Attachments: Dr. Yearwood Letter-Updated.pdf; SKM_658e21092015250.pdf

Representative Basye,

Thank you for your email and a copy of your letter. I have attached Principal Gragnani's original email response to your questions about the video. He does not mention an opt out nor an opt out process in his response to you. In the email, Dr. Gragnani explains that students had a choice between multiple artifacts to use for the assignment. Students were to choose one of the four artifacts. They were not forced to watch the video in question, nor were they forced to choose the video as their artifact to complete the non-graded assignment.

As a reminder the four artifacts students could choose from included:

"This is America" – a Grammy award-winning video directed by Hiro Murai

"I Hear America Singing" – by Walt Whitman

"Let America Be America Again" – by Langston Hughes

"This Land is Your Land" – by Woody Guthrie

Michelle Baumstark
Chief Communications Officer
Columbia Public Schools
1818 W. Worley Street
Columbia, MO 65203
(573) 214-3960
www.cpsk12.org



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Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 2:29 PM
To: Brian Yearwood <BYearwood@cpsk12.org>
Cc: Helen Wade <HWade@cpsk12.org>; Della Streaty-Wilhoit <DWilhoit@cpsk12.org>; David Seamon <DSeamon@cpsk12.org>; Chris Horn <CHorn@cpsk12.org>; Katherine Sasser <KSasser@cpsk12.org>; Blake Willoughby <BWilloughby@cpsk12.org>; Jeanne Snodgrass <JSnodgrass@cpsk12.org>; Tracy Davenport <TDavenport@cpsk12.org>; Michelle Baumstark <MBaumstark@cpsk12.org>
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Michelle Baumstark

From: Tony Gragnani
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 6:14 PM
To: Chuck Basye
Cc: Dylan Robinson
Subject: RE: [External] Complaint from Hickman Parents

Representative Basye,

Thank you for your patience. I have investigated your concern and have confirmed the video was made available to students during their junior level AP U.S. Studies class.

The video was part of a larger lesson connected to the following learning standards:

English Language Arts Speaking & Listening Priority Standard 11-12.SL.1.C

Viewpoints of Others-Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives including those presented in diverse media; synthesize claims made on all sides of an issue, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented

Social Studies Priority Standard 9-12.AH.1.PC.B

People, Groups and Cultures- Using a United States' historical lens, describe how peoples' perspectives shaped the sources/artifacts they created.

The lesson asked students to pick from one of four artifacts from history and analyze the author's perspective. One artifact was the Grammy Award winning video directed by Hiro Murai titled "This is America", the others were; "I Hear America Singing" by Walt Whitman, "Let America Be America Again" by Langston Hughes, and "This Land is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie. Students were not forced to watch or read any particular text and were encouraged to think critically of their selected piece. This was not taken for a grade and was used for the purpose of discussion.

The teacher did have a warning by the linked video indicating the video did contain violence. While this is consistent with similar messages we have used for other material containing gun violence (i.e. written text like "The Things They Carried" and "The Crucible"), I did inform the teacher a more descriptive warning is needed. Again, this is consistent with regard to any material we use containing gun violence. In addition, no student is ever forced to watch material they find troubling or disturbing. Again, this procedure was followed by the teacher.

I want to again state I appreciate you bringing this to my attention. Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Tony Gragnani
Principal
Hickman High School

From: Chuck Basye <Chuck.Basye@house.mo.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 1:15 PM
To: Tony Gragnani <TGragnani@cpsk12.org>
Cc: Dylan Robinson <Dylan.Robinson@house.mo.gov>
Subject: [External] Complaint from Hickman Parents

Good Afternoon Sir,

I'm sure you are aware of many upset parents across the Columbia Public Schools district that are concerned about radical content in curriculum.

This YouTube video was allegedly shown in a U. S. Studies AP class yesterday at Hickman High School.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=VYOjWnS4cMY>

I am concerned as a grandparent of CPS students, a taxpayer and a state legislator that this is considered appropriate. Especially the graphic content highlighting murder, inappropriate use of firearms and gun violence!

Depending on your answer, I am considering contacting media outlets, legislative colleagues, the Missouri Governor's office and the Missouri Attorney General's office.

I am disgusted that my tax dollars are paying for this despicable "instruction"!

Chuck Basye
State Representative, District 47

Sent from my iPhone

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Michelle Baumstark

From: Michelle Baumstark
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2021 9:42 AM
To: 'Chuck Basye'
Cc: Helen Wade; Della Streaty-Wilhoit; David Seamon; Chris Horn; Katherine Sasser; Blake Willoughby; Jeanne Snodgrass; Tracy Davenport; Brian Yearwood
Subject: RE: [External] Follow up from Oct. 15, 2021 meeting

Rep. Basye,

Dr. Yearwood asked that I follow up and share with you that the administration will not be recommending placing the lesson or the video onto the Board's agenda at the November 8 meeting.

Sincerely,

Michelle Baumstark
Chief Communications Officer
Columbia Public Schools
1818 W. Worley Street
Columbia, MO 65203
(573) 214-3960
www.cpsk12.org



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Michelle Baumstark

From: Chuck Basye <Chuck.Basye@house.mo.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 2, 2021 10:19 PM
To: Brian Yearwood
Cc: Michelle Baumstark; Tracy Davenport; David Seamon; Chris Horn; Helen Wade; Della Streaty-Wilhoit; Katherine Sasser; Blake Willoughby; Jeanne Snodgrass; Dylan Robinson; Chuck Basye
Subject: [External] Agenda Request, November 8, 2021 Board of Education meeting

Good Evening Dr. Yearwood,

I respectfully request adding Critical Race Theory, The 1619 Project, The Pulitzer Center and Curriculum issues in Columbia Public Schools to the November 8, 2021 board of education meeting agenda.

I am attending the meeting and plan on addressing some or all of these items.

Thank you for your consideration.

Representative Chuck Basye

Sent from my iPhone

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From: Brian Yearwood
Sent: Monday, November 8, 2021 4:57 PM
To: Michelle Baumstark
Subject: FW: [External] Agenda Request, November 8, 2021 Board of Education meeting

From: Brian Yearwood <BYearwood@cpsk12.org>
Date: Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 11:35 AM
To: Chuck Basye <Chuck.Basye@house.mo.gov>
Subject: Re: [External] Agenda Request, November 8, 2021 Board of Education meeting

Hello Representative Basye,

In October, the district administration responded to your request to add the showing of the Childish Gambino video to the Board of Education's agenda. The district responded that it would not be recommending the item to the Board of Education to be included on its agenda. We are in receipt of your additional request, to add Critical Race Theory, The 1619 Project, The Pulitzer Center and Curriculum issues to the agenda. The Board of Education is not considering the adoption of Critical Race Theory, the 1619 Project and has no new business related to these items. The district administration will therefore not be recommending that these items be placed on a Board agenda for discussion or consideration. Additionally, this subsequent request was not received in accordance with Board of Education Policy BDDH-1, which requires individuals to submit their request for consideration of additional items to be placed on the Board of Education's agenda at least one week in advance of the meeting.

I would be glad to meet with you again regarding your concerns related to the topics referenced above. I respectfully ask for a date and time that would be convenient for the two of us to meet. Thanks.

From: Chuck Basye <Chuck.Basye@house.mo.gov>
Date: Tuesday, November 2, 2021 at 10:19 PM
To: Brian Yearwood <BYearwood@cpsk12.org>
Cc: Michelle Baumstark <MBaumstark@cpsk12.org>, Tracy Davenport <TDavenport@cpsk12.org>, David Seamon <DSeamon@cpsk12.org>, Chris Horn <CHorn@cpsk12.org>, Helen Wade <HWade@cpsk12.org>, Della Streaty-Wilhoit <DWilhoit@cpsk12.org>, Katherine Sasser <KSasser@cpsk12.org>, Blake Willoughby <BWilloughby@cpsk12.org>, Jeanne Snodgrass <JSnodgrass@cpsk12.org>, Dylan Robinson <Dylan.Robinson@house.mo.gov>, Chuck Basye <Chuck.Basye@house.mo.gov>
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