

Template Letter to Lake Oswego School Board

[To email all LOSD School Board Directors: losdschoolboard@loswego.k12.or.us]

[Date]

Dear Lake Oswego School Board:

I write to support the school district in its commitment to the work of inclusivity, equity, diversity, access, and belonging. As a _____ in the district, I am concerned about the recent rise in attacks against this work, including any teaching about systemic racism, antiracism, homophobia, transphobia, bias awareness, cultural awareness, restorative practices, social emotional learning, and more.

[Insert additional narrative -- ideas below.]

For these reasons, I support historically accurate, anti-racist, and culturally responsive initiatives in our schools that strengthen our community and give our children the tools to make meaningful and transformative contributions to society. I urge you to continue making the values of inclusivity, equity, diversity, access, and belonging a priority in this district. Your efforts in championing these initiatives and values will ensure all children in Lake Oswego have the education and resources they need to learn, grow, and thrive.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Parent of _____ / Resident of Lake Oswego]



Ideas and List of Sample Narratives

- Theme: Make It Personal

- Discuss how the topics of race/racism/homophobia/transphobia impact your child and their ability to learn.
- Discuss how school culture or the values of inclusivity, equity, diversity, access and belonging directly impact your child and their ability to learn.
- Discuss why you believe discussions about the topics of race/racism/homophobia/transphobia or the values of inclusivity, equity, diversity, access and belonging are important to your child's education and preparation for the future.
- Discuss why you believe symbols, such as BLM and Pride flags, create a safe and welcoming learning environment, allowing your child to thrive and learn.

- Theme: Recommit to LOSD Goals

- Teaching and promoting the values of inclusivity, equity, diversity, access, and belonging directly support the LOSD's Strategic Plan Goal of creating a "culture of belonging" and "a diverse learning community where each and every individual feels supported, connected, and valued."
- As former LOSD Superintendent Dr. Lora de la Cruz said, "the work of inclusivity, equity, diversity, access and belonging [is] the most important work we are doing in LOSD."

- Theme: Honesty in Education

- Our children deserve an honest education about race/racism/homophobia/transphobia in this country.
- We solve problems by having honest and courageous conversations about them. - We should all seek to foster robust classroom conversations and debate about

structural inequalities.

- It may be easier to deny or avoid our challenges, but that is never how we overcome them.
- We want our kids to have an education that imparts honesty about who we are, integrity in how we treat others, and courage to do what's right.
 - What a good teacher knows is we can't just avoid or lie our way through our challenges--we must find age-appropriate ways to tell hard truths about our country's past and present in order to prepare our kids to create a better future.
- We must ensure that our schools have the resources to meet every child's needs with well-trained and supported teachers and a curriculum that helps them reckon with and reshape our world.
- We want our kids to have an education that encourages them to dig deeper into who we are, where we came from and what we're capable of being.
- Teaching truth and having honest, courageous conversations about race/racism/homophobia/transphobia -- how it shows up in our past and informs



our present -- is the key to building the promise of a just, multiracial, democratic society.

- Theme: Age-Appropriate, Accurate History and Preparing Our Children for the Future -
 - We must support our teachers' freedom to teach truth through age-appropriate, accurate history.
 - Learning about accurate history and world cultures prepares our children to compete in a global, multiracial economy and solve society's greatest challenges. - The crackdown on teaching and discussions around systemic racism, homophobia, and transphobia deprive students of the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills, rendering them less prepared for college and career development.
 - Learning about the history of race and how it informs our present helps us all become wiser and stronger and will help our children become the critical thinkers we need to make society more just, prosperous, and equitable for all.
 - As parents, we know that our children must have the tools and guidance to honestly face and understand our past and present in order to create a better future.
 - No matter our color or background, most of us believe in handling challenges with integrity, focusing on solutions, and reckoning with our past so we can create a better future.
- Theme: Unity Building
 - Teaching about systemic racism provides a bridge to unite us--not divide. - We must not be "colorblind" to the reality of systemic racism. Instead, we must be "race-conscious" in our efforts to understand and fix society's problems. - Teaching about race and racism is not about labeling individual people "racist." - Systemic racism is real and a major problem. Learning about systemic racism -- within our

neighborhoods, in our schools, in our workplaces, and in our world -- is the first step in healing our divisions so that we can solve societal problems that harm us all.

- As any teacher or parent knows, school is a place where children develop their understanding of the world and their ability to make meaningful change in it. By joining together we can reject the current divisive climate and make schools a place where every child, Black, white, brown, or LGBTQIA+ can learn, grow, and thrive.

Content for sample narratives adapted from:

- Education Justice Research and Organizing Collaborative (EJ-ROC), "Winning Racial Justice in Our Schools," available at:
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc5da7c3560c36b7dab1922/t/6126241c56874d4314876f6a/1629889575567/CRT+Toolkit+FINAL+August+2021.pdf>.



- African American Policy Forum, #TruthBeTold Messaging Guide, available at:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WY1vpYmQhHMzYtxK29vfKbn1tNk96HHV/view>. - ASO Communications, "Messaging Guidance: Honesty in Education," available at:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sx80hc-tL7enAuvQp-urmrADNvL1aKnBJ5C6NPEO6o/edit>.
- Race Forward, "Guide: Counter-Narrating the Attacks on Critical Race Theory, available at:
https://www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/Guide%20to%20Counter-Narrating%20the%20Attacks%20on%20Critical%20Race%20Theory%20-%20Race%20Forward_2021-06-14.pdf.

