

Singh: So, I did speak with the person above me and I showed her the picture of the picture of the painting in the room –

Teacher: Mhm, and the index cards outside, right?

Singh: Correct. And then basically the thing is that putting that picture in the room with the wording on it, that imposes one preference over other students' opinions, therefore that can't be there, but at the same time, she also indicated that if we want to support our children and their preferences, we are all about supporting them and their individuality, therefore if **[the child]** wants to decorate – **[they]** would decorate the desk or binder or express in clothing [? 2:09], that totally was supported [? 2:11] [inaudible 2:13] if you feel strongly that you know what, I want to give this child space in my room, you could definitely put it in your desk area, but the position was everybody has to constantly see this does put us in that predicament where certain children are going home and asking questions to parents and parents are not ready to have that conversation at this age, at this time, that does bring the conversation back [? 2:35] that right now we are kind of okaying one sexual preference and then causing others to have this dialogue right now.

Teacher: Okay. The picture in the room, I understand that, that's fine. I will tell that student to put somewhere in **[their]** – on **[their]** desk, a notebook, a folder, whatever. That's fine. The index cards on the outside of my room that display a very diverse amount of different sexual identities, that is – I mean, it shares almost all of them, so that's not putting one preference over the other, if not – you know, I have asexual there, I have – I have it all. So I don't think that that proposes one side of thinking versus the other side of thinking, so I'm assuming the index cards will not come down, right?

Dr. Singh: I am going to say that because there's no wording outside the classroom, I will leave it alone.

Teacher: Right, it's just colors. And if you really look at them –

Dr. Singh: Yeah, I will leave it alone. That's why it didn't even catch my attention.

Teacher: Okay, so the one inside, I will tell that student that **[they]** could put it on somewhere else. Now my question is, if **[they are]** putting it – you know, because my kids share desks, right. So if **[they are]** putting it somewhere where other students can still see, or even better yet, could I give the other student the opportunity to display **[their]** own artwork with **[them]** – with whatever **[they]** –

Dr. Singh: Let me say this. And I want to be candid that it's great that this child wants to express **[themselves]**.

Teacher: Right, but it's not just one. Like this was like between a group of kids, this wasn't just one student. This was a very large portion of my students –

Dr. Singh: I wonder what is going on in the classroom that is triggering that conversation with a large group of students.

Teacher: I mean, we have several parents that are trans, we have several students – I mean, in 5th grade –

Dr. Singh: So what is causing that conversation in the classroom?

Teacher: Well, it's not a conversation in the classroom. This is a conversation they're having at home, this is a conversation they're having between their friends when they're not with me. I – again, and I want to make sure I keep this very, very clear, I did not create a dialogue. There has never been a time in my room where – during morning meeting, during any given time where my students are allowed to express themselves, where that conversation has come up in a whole classroom setting. Now, if a student has come to me and says oh I'm this, you know, I'm like okay, that's great. There's not – we're not like oh my god, look, so-and-so is this. It's not a conversation that is happening, it's a conversation that's happening by themselves. The same conversation that we just had a group of 5th graders talk to Miss Mathis and Miss Scott about news. Like this is – they're 10 and 11, yes, they're extremely young, but in their community, this is what is – this is what they see at home, so it makes sense that they come and they bring it here. And I just want to keep that – I just want to make sure that that's – I'm very just forward with that, because I don't want you to think I'm trying to impose anything. Again, if that – if the student from the **[parent]** that complained, if **[they want]** to say something and **[they want]** to make an artwork that supports **[their]** ideologies, I will never tell **[them]** no, unless it's suggesting hate upon another community, like if it was like the gay flag and then a red slash. If **[that parent's child]** wants to do like a straight thing, I would completely support **[them]**, as long as my students are not expressing hate – and again, in the policy, it says we need to have support and encouragement and make sure we are not disrespecting other communities or other ideologies. I get that the picture in the room – I understand why that is – I mean, I don't, but I guess whatever.

Dr. Singh: You know, we are operating in a common space and that itself is – that is a right thing, that is keeping harmony thing, you know, and in elementary school where sexuality related conversations are still remote **[? 6:49]** conversation, I understand why parents will get uncomfortable. I have middle school age boys **[? 6:55]** and having that conversation is difficult and I'm not ready for it, so –

Teacher: Right. But I also think that just because somebody's uncomfortable doesn't mean that you need to hide who you are.

Dr. Singh: I get it **[? 7:07]**.

Teacher: Again, this is a community space, so I understand – I'm not talking about – I get it, I get the picture.

Dr. Singh: So who they are, they have not spoken with their parents yet.

Teacher: They have. Regardless, even if they have or they haven't, it's not a conversation that really is – it matters. Like this is who they are, if they feel comfortable enough, if they are not ready to speak to their parents about whatever it is they want to talk about, like that is – that's not my place to talk to the parent about it.

Dr. Singh: You know that will become your place very quickly if the parent find out that you have had this information about his child or a child has come to you and you have not informed the parent. Elementary kids [inaudible 7:47] –

Teacher: I disagree.

Dr. Singh: [inaudible 7:49] very intense – very intentionally designed [? 7:51] [inaudible 7:53] so I want you to know that –

Teacher: Well, with this specific student, that wouldn't be an issue. Like I know – I know the family, I know **[the child]** –

Dr. Singh: Who is the child [? 7:59]?

Teacher: I mean, well it doesn't matter. Like are you going to talk to **[them]** about it?

Scott: [inaudible 8:04]

Teacher: Okay, because I just want to make sure that –

Dr. Singh: I'm just curious [? 8:05] because it is becoming a school – now this matter has come to me, so now it has slipped away from your hands [inaudible 8:11] –

Teacher: Right, but I want **[their]** privacy to maintain private and whatever **[they are]** dealing with in **[their]** individuality, that is **[their]** – that is **[them]**. That is a **[them]**-thing. If **[they were]** going to speak to **[their]** parents about it, I'm sure they've had that discourse, but I don't – I don't think knowing **[their identity]** matters. I don't think – it doesn't change anything. I get the picture. I will tell **[them]**, because **[they're]** the one who drew it, to take it down, that **[they]** can put it on anywhere else, but I just wanted to make sure that if somebody else sees it, because if – now this becomes the issue with the whole folder thing. **[They]** takes **[their]** folder somewhere in recess. The picture falls. Now a first grader has seen it. Like it's traveling.

Dr. Singh: But that picture with the words, I would encourage you to just tell **[them]** to put it in a private place, you know. The flag on the index card at the door which does not have any words, I will leave that alone. But the other one, encourage **[them]** to put in a place where it's not being displayed multiple locations and this conversation starts to surface from multiple locations now.

Teacher: Okay. And I'm going to be very clear with **[them]** on why that is. I'm going to explain the discourse between we're going to put it in a private place because the wording can be – make other people uncomfortable or be misconstrued. Because I want – if **[they]** tell **[their]** parents that and **[their]** parent is upset about it, I want you to make sure – I will tell **[them]** why, because I support **[them]**, I don't care about the picture. For the four [? 9:37] months that it's been in my room, nobody else has cared about the picture. I've had – I've had you and Miss Scott and other people from the district in my room while the picture has been up, and nothing has ever happened.

Dr. Singh: Which one, the inside?

Teacher: Yes.

Dr. Singh: Interesting that that didn't catch my attention. So I must be so focused on learning. Okay.

Teacher: Like it's been up for a while. And the **[parent]** is not even concerned about that picture, because that's not what **[the parent is]** talking about. **[The parent has been]** talking about the one outside the door, which **[the parent]** thinks is inside – whatever. **[The parent is]** not even talking about that. But I get it, I get the picture. But I will be clear in the conversation with **[the child]** and I'm sure **[they're]** going to tell **[their]** parents about it, because **[they're]** just a very open child with **[their]** family. And **[their]** family –

Dr. Singh: So **[the child]** will talk to the parent about that.

Teacher: **[The child]** will tell the parent –

Dr. Singh: But the parent is aware of this –

Teacher: Yes. But even if they weren't and **[they weren't]** going to say anything, I'm still going to be clear and very concise about the discourse that we've had about this picture and why **[they need]** to have it private. So I just want to make that clear, because I want you to know that I will tell **[them]**. So if **[they]** parent – I just don't want you to be blindsided and be like oh wow, **[teacher]** didn't tell me that **[teacher]** was going to say that. I just want to be very clear about that.

Dr. Singh: Okay.

Teacher: Okay, perfect. [inaudible 10:42] I will tell **[them]** to put that in a place that's private –

Dr. Singh: And again, I was stuck on the inside picture when I was calling the district.

Teacher: Right.

Dr. Singh: So I didn't mention the flag outside but we were still deep into that conversation.

Teacher: Right.

Dr. Singh: So I think the index card will be okay. Any other directive, I will definitely share that with you.

Teacher: Okay. And then is there like a policy or something in writing that says you can't have that type of wording, because I would love to have that in an email, if you can send me like why we have to take this down in an email, I would really, really appreciate that.

Dr. Singh: I don't have it here, but I will definitely go back to the district leaders and let them know and if you have any question, I can give you the phone number of the person –

Teacher: Okay, perfect. I would take that.

Dr. Singh: And then you can call her and then you can talk to her.

Teacher: Right. And then I'm going to send you an email just to – so we have a record that you told me to take it down, because I want to make sure I have that. So I will email you just a summary of this conversation, that I can keep the index cards up, as of right now. If you hear another directive, you will tell me otherwise. And I do want to apologize for yesterday. I think I was very emotionally charged about the situation. I don't want to come off as disrespectful. I don't want this to be an overarching thing. I don't know, I just don't want any like bad blood I guess. I was very emotional about the situation because I feel very strongly about it, because they're my kids and I see them every day and I know the conversation that they're having and I know sometimes that with me, with me or with Miss *****, in between both classrooms, with their friends, it's the one place where they feel like they can be who they are. So I do want to apologize if I disrespected you, if you felt like I was being a little bit too strong. I just want to apologize.

Dr. Singh: See, I don't even care about people being strong because that's who I am, but with this grey hair comes wisdom enough not to express it at the wrong place. And that was the case yesterday. I can't even sugarcoat that.

Teacher: Right. Well, I don't think that I was in the wrong, and I don't think that being emotional was the wrong way of doing – I mean, I'm an emotional person and I don't think that there's a time and a place to hide that. So I don't – I agree to disagree on that. I don't think it was wrong. I was only particular [? 12:50] in the wording, if I worded anything in a way that was disrespectful, then I apologize for that. But I don't apologize for being emotional because I mean, it's who I am. I'm going to be emotional. Somebody like yells at me the wrong way, I will just start crying. It's just who I am, it's who I've always been since I was very little. So if I was disrespectful, I apologize.

Dr. Singh: Okay.

Teacher: Great.

Dr. Singh: I will definitely understand your point of view in this place [? 13:18] and I know that you're using the wordings very wisely or calculated, but if I was – and I know that I give that apology every day to people – if this hurt your feeling, if this –

Teacher: Right, because I can't –

Dr. Singh: I don't care [? 13:33] –

Teacher: I can't assume if I hurt it – yeah, and I say it just because I can't assume that you – I don't want to assume how you felt, so.

Dr. Singh: Yesterday's conversation was very unpleasant.

Teacher: Right.

Dr. Singh: [inaudible 13:44] even though you are making a good point, you are raising an issue for a child which you are caring for –

Teacher: Right, and children. I want to make that clear – children. It's a variety.

Dr. Singh: But at the same time, you know, we can have same conversation with similar outcome in a very different way.

Teacher: Okay. Yes. And I just want to make it a point, I wish Miss Scott was here, that the comparison between the flags and the swastika I think was extremely an ignorant comment, because they are just very widely different. And I did want to talk to her about that, because I – I just thought that that was a very wrong comment.

Dr. Singh: Let me share this with you. This is just such a coincidence that I had a conversation with Miss Scott about swastika two hours before our conversation.

Teacher: Right.

Dr. Singh: And (pauses) the history of swastika is different than the history most people know.

Teacher: Right. But I mean, at the end of the day, you think of swastika and that's what you think of. Like not to be – and genocide [? 14:54] –

Dr. Singh: Again, we have to agree to disagree.

Teacher: Well, I know –

Dr. Singh: History is different.

Teacher: Right. I know. Well, it was the national symbol for a country that committed genocide. Like yes, I know that at the beginning, it wasn't that, it was just a symbol of a political party and like those things weren't tied to it –

Dr. Singh: Before that.

Teacher: Okay, well before that. Regardless, at the end of the day, like what is tied to that is disgusting. Nobody ever thinks of a swastika in any way, shape or form and thinks that's like oh, before the Nazis committed genocide, that's what it was. That's not the first thing, when we're talking about a rainbow flag or a flag of colors that just represents who somebody has a crush on – I just want to make sure that that – those things are not misconstrued or that they're not ever remotely in the same conversation, because they shouldn't be. I just want to make that clear. That was just – that comment, I slept on it, and it just really, really bothered me, so I just want to make sure. I just want share that.

Dr. Singh: Okay. And – yeah. I'll tell you this, that I am glad you are reflecting.

Teacher: Okay, great. Yeah.

Dr. Singh: How far in your reflecting is still the question of the situation [? 16:04], but I'm glad you're reflecting. And I am glad that you are (pauses) thinking for your students and standing up for them. That's good. That is something we can always admire, you know? And as a professional, I would advise you to just have this conversation in a more eloquent way, you know, and emotionality is none of my concern, because I am so happy that you are passionate about something which bothers you to the degree that you get emotional and that is admirable, 100%. But in spite of all that, we can always have a very civil conversation with each other, you

know, and especially when you're talking to a superior who is not just one step or two step above you, that is also important to keep – that's something we need to keep in mind when we're talking to superiors. But yes. And as far as the interesting conversation about swastikas, I guess, research that.

Teacher: Okay, great. I will send [inaudible 17:08] in.

Dr. Singh: [inaudible 17:12]