

Member of the Board and staff, community members; I am Rev. Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan and I am the senior minister for Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Chandler, AZ. Unitarian Universalists are not bound by creeds but rather an understanding of covenant or relationship—what it means to build communities and institutions where equity, access, and accountability are core values that guide us. In this way, we work to dismantle many forms of systemic oppression and support the dignity and worth of all people. I am here as a minister who also believes strongly in the separation of church and state, because I believe that public schools must meet the needs of all youth whom they serve, regardless of their cultural and religious background or any other identity they hold. I don't think public schools can meet the needs of all students when they allow any religious organization to bring their values into the classroom or other spaces students are being served in. I support your decision to end a contractual relationship with a religious organization that does share the core values of this district and its mission to serve without discrimination all students. Public institutions are necessarily pluralistic and should be careful to ensure that they serve all equitably. For the community gathered here, I hope that we can build the kind of support in our communities that our youth need to insure their well being and their success as students and as people.