

**From:** [Cohn, Gary](#)  
**To:** [EPS.Maillist](#)  
**Subject:** Not in Our House  
**Date:** Thursday, August 31, 2017 10:12:15 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Everett Public Schools Board Resolution 1158.pdf](#)

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Dear Colleague:

Usually, the month of August catapults me from the relaxation and rejuvenation of July into the exciting rhythm of the back-to-school run-up. Our annual August commencement is a wonderful summer affirmation of the fruits of our teamwork and is a much-anticipated kick-starter for the school year just around the corner. This year, though, we all know that our August back-to-school excitement was rocked by the violent outbreak of hate and death on the streets of Charlottesville.

On Tuesday evening, our board of directors joined many in our city, our state, and our nation by their adoption of Resolution 1158, reaffirming our district's values, our policies, our procedures and practices, and the board's directions to the superintendent to maintain safe and inclusive, indeed *welcoming*, schools for each student. That resolution is attached for your reference.

You may have watched the news coverage of the events in Charlottesville as I did. Charlottesville was overrun by groups espousing hate-filled messages. These groups' words and actions runs counter to everything I believe and everything I'm committed to in our work on behalf of our students. I believe what they stand for and how they behave runs counter to your values as well, and is abhorrent to anyone who works in schools and believes in the value and potential of our students, each person we encounter in this work, and each family that entrusts a child to us.

The horrific displays of hate in Charlottesville are so opposite to why our nation was founded, the meaning of our nation's and state's constitutions, the expectations and standards of this community, and indeed the [core values](#) adopted by our board of directors for this school district –values by which we strive to live and work every day.

This is not the American Way, the Everett Way, nor the way responsible adults in this community model and teach civility, responsibility, and acceptance for students in schools. Hate groups, hate speech, segregation, racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, violence, intolerance, bigotry, Nazi symbols and salutes, and symbols of the Ku Klux Klan have no place in our streets and will not be tolerated in our schools. Our parents' generation fought a World War to roll back the onslaught of Nazism, fascism, and genocide; we have both the responsibility to teach that history and to model the defense of the values that opposed those evils.

Yes, I am incensed – and at the same time, I am also encouraged and hopeful. While there is still evidence of discord in our nation, the overwhelming response to unleashing or tolerating hate has been an outpouring of responsible people and organizations denouncing it.

This resolution –a mechanism some may see as a dry, legal document of record– is backed our board's unwavering determination that our students, our staff, and families are learning, working and growing together in safe schools. And that all of us share the responsibility for proclaiming and



maintaining the safety of all who enter our schools in support of learning. Each director's immediate response upon learning of the events in Charlottesville was concern about its impact in our schools and a desire that you, our students, and our community know this district has absolutely no tolerance for hatred and discrimination.

If your observations are similar to mine, we would agree that our schools have seen very little of the brand of nastiness and disruption that others have experienced over the past year or so. This does not occur just because we have a solid set of core values and policies. I am convinced this has a great deal to do with the convictions and the skills of our school leaders and our teachers and our support staff. You've been doing a tremendous job maintaining that culture of calm for which our schools have become known. Please know the board and I are grateful for your steady leadership and example every day.

Typically, my message to you at this time of the summer --this hectic week before kids return to us-- would be a brief one; hoping you've enjoyed the summer, appreciating the incredible work everyone is doing to get schools ready to open, all of our professional development delivered, and wishing you a safe and relaxing Labor Day Holiday in anticipation of another stellar school year. Of course, I still do have those wishes for you --especially that your upcoming holiday is safe and relaxing-- just as I believe the school year will be a good one. But I also believe it's vitally important that you know our board of director's and our leadership's commitment to ensuring where children learn and where you work is safe for learning, working, and growing.

I look forward to seeing you on September 6 and throughout 2017-18!



**Dr. Gary Cohn**

**Superintendent**

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**EVERETT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2**  
**RESOLUTION NO. 1158**

**Affirming our Commitment to  
Safe and Inclusive Schools for Each Student**

**A RESOLUTION** that affirms the Board of Directors of Everett Public Schools' commitment to providing safe and inclusive schools for all students without regard to race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, marital status, age, military status, disability, or immigration status.

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors has sworn to uphold the Constitutions and laws of the United States and of the State of Washington, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors recognizes that our nation's and district's diversity is one of our greatest strengths and celebrates over 90 languages and dialects spoken by the families of the 20,000 students served by our schools, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors has heard reports of higher levels of student anxiety and fear due to the current national political climate, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors recognizes that our history teaches us our citizenry can overcome fear that begets hate, can uphold the rights and dignity of all members of our communities, and that we must never enable those who would act otherwise, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors recognizes this statement encompasses a body of work and philosophy developed over a century and a quarter by those who have built the Everett Public Schools, and asserts that we are a stronger, more humane and successful organization because of this work over time, and that we are steadfast and clear in our purpose and determination to defend our values and thus our students' safe access to education and educational facilities free of prejudice, hate, or violence;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Directors holds as inviolable the highest calling threaded through our nation's Declaration of Independence and Constitution that all people are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Directors, having adopted clear statements of mission, vision, and a set of core values for Everett Public Schools, which were created in partnership with this community and steeped in steadfast commitment to each student's success, hereby reaffirms the prominence and significance of these core values in guiding our conduct:

- *Equity*: We honor and support each student's right to learn and achieve;
- *Diversity*: We embrace diversity as an essential asset; we are inclusive and treat our differences as a core strength;
- *Collaboration*: We believe in learning and working together, the values of diverse views and the power of collective wisdom;
- *Respect*: We value differences among people and treat each other with respect;



- *Integrity:* We act in good faith, serving others with honesty and dignity. We serve as steward of the public trust;
- *Passion:* We are passionate about teaching and learning;
- *Learning:* We believe each student has the ability to learn and achieve to high standards; and

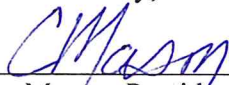
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Directors reemphasizes the importance of its board policies and the associated administrative procedures focused on safe schools and each student's equitable access to education, and that the Board reaffirms each and every policy aimed at establishing a safe, an inclusive, and a welcoming school environment, including the:

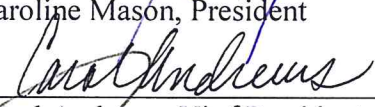
- Absolute prohibition of harassment, intimidation and bullying of students and staff;
- Absolute prohibition of discrimination of students and staff;
- Absolute commitment to nondiscrimination on the basis of sex in education and activities;
- Expectation that all staff, students, and visitors will maintain a civil environment of mutual respect and orderly conduct free of uncivil conduct and like forms of disruptive behavior;
- Maintenance of an environment to explore controversial issues that ensures students' right to study free of prejudice and discrimination;
- Maintenance of working relationships with law enforcement and child protective agencies aimed at protecting the safety of students in Policy 4411.
- Preservation of student rights to pursue lawful religious-based activities and practices;
- Assurance that each student has equitable access to education established in its policies;
- Assurance that students have freedom of expression while maintaining orderly school conduct;

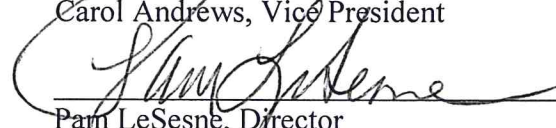
And does hereby charge the superintendent and call upon all staff, students, and visitors to ensure that values and practices embodied in this resolution be carried out in service of our community.

**ADOPTED** this 29th day of August, 2017, and authenticated by the signatures affixed below.

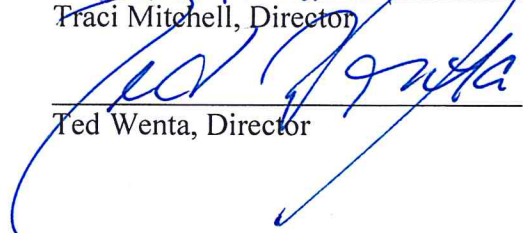
EVERETT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 2  
Snohomish County, Washington

  
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Caroline Mason, President

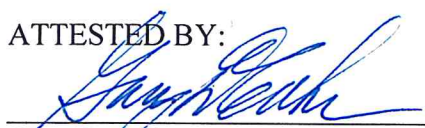
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carol Andrews, Vice President

  
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Pam LeSesne, Director

  
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Traci Mitchell, Director

  
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Ted Wenta, Director

ATTESTED BY:

  
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Gary D. Cohn  
Secretary, Board of Directors