

Public Comments received by 2:30 p.m. on December 15, 2020:

Listening Tour Comments:

Comment 1:

I wanted to take a minute to thank you for your service as Board members, because I really believe that how we educate our children will make a significant difference in the world we are creating for the coming generations. You all are a part of that, through the decisions you make as a board.

I also wanted to share with you something that has become very important to me, particularly this year as I've grown in my awareness of the problem of racism that still exists in this country after the death of George Floyd this past May. It meant a lot to me to hear the district address this tragedy, and it meant even more to hear that a Listening Tour was being undertaken by the district this fall, to improve our schools' ability to prepare our children to engage in a transformative way with a world in which that could still happen. I was very glad to be invited to participate in the Listening Tour as a parent.

However, I was disappointed to discover that the actual questions on the Listening Tour revealed an understanding of racism that I find sorely lacking and misguided. The questions implied that racism is only an individual problem, rather than a systemic one. Individual hurt feelings are far from the most significant problems that stem from racism. We must teach our children about the reality of the problem of racism and social injustice--both in our nation's history and in the present day--so that when they are confronted with it in the world, they will know how to effectively respond to it. Therefore, the problem of racism is not being disrupted by FSD right now in the way it must be disrupted, because FSD curricula do not do an adequate job of teaching children about the diverse perspectives and voices that make up America.

I understand that the Board will be discussing a Task Force at tonight's meeting. I am thrilled that the board is taking steps in this direction, and I would like to request that that task force include experts in ethnic studies and anti-racist/multicultural curriculum and policy from outside our district, as well as community leaders with experience and expertise regarding racial equity, justice, and anti-racist teaching, alongside leaders from within the school system, to make sure that the steps the district takes will really succeed at fulfilling the intention of the Board's June 25 resolution, "to improve the understanding of biases and anti-Black racism and to proclaim the lives of Black students matter."

Thank you again, so much, for your time and effort in support of our children.

Katie Peckham

Comment 2:

Dear FSD Board Members,

I'm writing to you in reference to the results of the FSD Listening Tour recommendations related to responding to the BLM movement. I appreciate and am so thankful for the board's willingness to address this issue and eagerly look forward to implementation of equality and anti-bias related education for our students.

As a FSD, I recently became aware of and had to opportunity to review the CA state curriculum standards related to History and Social studies. After becoming aware of this curriculum, it has come to my attention that our students are really missing out on learning about important concepts such as the history of systemic racism in our country. It is my hope that FSD can take bold steps and implement teaching that more closely mirrors the CA HSS curriculum content, teaching our kids to recognize and dismantle racist systems and grow up to be advocates for social justice in our community.

Our city is so fortunate to have Cal State Fullerton as part of our community, with faculty who are researchers, teacher trainers, and experts in the fields of multicultural curriculum and policy, ethnic studies and anti-racist education. This seem the perfect opportunity for FSD to partner with these CSUF faculty experts on the task force being developed. Partnering with these local experts will not only benefit our kids, but will continue to put FSD on the map as the innovative district it is! By including these community stakeholders along with parents, teachers, and school administrators, I eagerly anticipate that FSD can develop an effective, evidence-based anti-racist educational program that addresses these important topics to our kids. This is something I feel, as a FSD parent, is a vital and necessary part of our children's education.

Thank you so much for your support and willingness to listen to the community regarding this matter. Stay safe and healthy, and I wish you all wonderful holiday season!

Stephanie Valdes

Comment 3:

Dear FSD Trustees and District Leaders,

I want to express my support for the June 2020 Resolution #19 "Supporting Our Black Community and Standing Against Racial Injustice" and ask that you continue to boldly pursue anti-racist and social justice policies, curricula, and training for all FSD staff, teachers and board members.

Just as good people, who are not fundamentally racist, can unintentionally reinforce racists ideas and systems, in the same way, FSD school system and culture can replicate white supremacy and injustice without meaning to, if not examined. The recently completed listening tour and parent survey exposed tragic examples of ways that our children have suffered because systems and individuals continue to perpetuate racist ideas. Whether it happens at school or in the community, our children need to be

empowered with the language, training, and tools to recognize and confront inequality when they see it, standing up for themselves or others.

Our schools should be a place where children learn, not only the good and bad of our history, but the wisdom earned in the fight towards justice, and the methods needed to build a more just society.

Therefore, I want to encourage you to regard teaching anti-racism and social justice as benign and necessary, rather than polarizing and political. It is critical that whatever task force or working group is formed in response to carry this work forward, 'has teeth.' It must include cabinet/VP level district administrators, teachers, and principals, as well as experts in ethnic studies and anti-racist/multicultural curriculum and policy, to ensure strong implementation plans and accountability for success. And its effectiveness should be measured not just by activities or numbers of trainings, but through assessment of student outcomes.

We need bold leaders who will not shirk the challenge and necessary actions needed to eliminate racial inequality in our society, but will instead do the right thing and ensure our students are equipped to make our society a more loving and just place for all.

Sincerely,
Ruthi Hanchett
Parent at Raymond Elementary
Fullerton Resident

Comment 4:

First of all, thank you to all of you on the FSD Board. My wife and I moved to Fullerton specifically because of the great schools. Our two kids are attending Rolling Hills in the multi-age classrooms. We are incredibly grateful for the amazing teachers and staff at Rolling Hills.

I understand that the Board will be voting on a Task Force Tuesday to better address racism, which is great news, as this is a topic I care about deeply. My request to you is that this task force re-evaluate the curriculum used in FSD to insure that the 2016 History–Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools (HSS Standards) are being met. I believe it's critical for our kids to be taught from curricula that honestly examines the history of systemic racism in our country. I don't believe it's enough for us to celebrate cultural diversity (though that is certainly great). Systemic racism is upheld if the status quo is maintained. We need to move beyond that to an anti-racist stance, especially as we teach the next generation of citizens. Please consider this as you participate with this new task force.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Daniel Peckham

Comment 5:

As an early childhood education professional, I am used to following the high standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Their standards include:

- Classroom materials show persons with differing abilities engaged in activities that counteract stereotypical limitations.
- Classroom materials show persons of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds engaged in activities that counteract stereotypical limitations.
- Children have chances to appreciate culturally diverse visual arts in their learning environment.
- Children have chances to appreciate culturally diverse dramatic arts in their learning environment.
- Children have chances to learn that families have a variety of family structures.
- Children have chances to learn specific details about the actual community in which they live.

I support the FSD taking initiative to be more inclusive and to add educational and enriching materials that is ethnically diverse, to provide enrichment trainings for staff, and to work with the community to ensure that all students feel acknowledged and represented. To quote the NAEYC, "Children who see themselves as highly valued are more likely to feel secure, thrive physically, get along with others, learn well, and feel part of a community." Equity oriented education creates an environment where all students in the FSD can thrive with critical thinking skills through curricula that is inclusive and diverse and that works towards a more just society by addressing inequalities.

References:

NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards Position Statement. <https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/Position%20Statement%20EC%20Standards.pdf>

NAEYC Site Visit Class Observation

Tool. https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/user-72/co_sv_itpks_-_2019.pdf

Darlene Rosete