


From: David Fleishman noreply@newton.k12.ma.us 
Subject: NPS Response to Recent Events
Date: December 3, 2021 at 5:22 PM
To: bobvonrekowsky@me.com

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Dear North Families,

As you may or may not be aware, there has been a bit of online media attention surrounding an email messages sent by Henry to North faculty and staff following the verdict in the Kyle Rittenhouse case. To summarize, the messages acknowledged the decision, its likely negative impact on members of our community, and the role of race in the event. Henry, along with all of our secondary principals, encouraged discussion of the topic if students were interested in doing so and provided resources for faculty and staff. While reaction has mostly occurred on social media among individuals outside of Newton, I wanted to make sure you had the full context for the issue, as well as the district's perspective.

Henry's communication with the Newton North staff, as well as his social media messages, were consistent with the work we have taken on as a district and were reflective of his personal and professional experience. When these types of national events occur, we provide our staff with the support they need to navigate these challenging conversations, as well as the space they may need to process the event themselves. We fully support our schools' efforts to create space and support for all of our students and staff members and are grateful that we have school leaders who are committed to engaging in this important work.

The reality is that this verdict had a significant impact on many members of our Newton Public Schools community. It is because of this impact that all of our secondary schools, both high school and middle school, created opportunities for students to learn more about the facts of the case and to share their thoughts about the decision, if they desired to do so.

As a district, and as stated in our [Statement of Values and Commitment to Equity](#), "we have a responsibility to ensure that our students, staff and families of color feel seen and heard." As district and building leaders, we seek to acknowledge societal inequities and work toward more inclusive school communities. We know that students experience events differently and it is our responsibility to not overlook the impact and harm on all community members, including those who are traditionally marginalized, such as people of color. In this particular case, we acknowledge the need for students to learn more about the context of the case and to provide space for them to process and discuss it.

We also remain committed to supporting our staff by providing them with the tools to hold these challenging conversations with students. Henry's recognition of this need, and the support he provided to staff and students in the wake of the verdict, is a powerful example of how we can embrace our district values and achieve our goals. I look forward to

or how we can embrace our district values and achieve our goals. I look forward to continuing to partner with Henry and the entire North community on this important work.

Sincerely,

David Fleishman

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