

Subject: Re: AAPS Statement on Terrorist Attacks in Israel EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
From: "Baskett, Susan" <baskett@aaps.k12.mi.us>
Date: 10/15/2023, 8:44 PM
To: "Schmidt, Susan" <schmidts@aaps.k12.mi.us>

She does not care! Her world is all about her world. Not anyone else.

S

On Sun, Oct 15, 2023 at 1:12 PM Schmidt, Susan <schmidts@aaps.k12.mi.us> wrote:

She does not get it.
S.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Mohammad, Rima <mohammadr@aaps.k12.mi.us>
Date: Sun, Oct 15, 2023 at 12:16 PM
Subject: Re: AAPS Statement on Terrorist Attacks in Israel EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
To: Schmidt, Susan <schmidts@aaps.k12.mi.us>
CC: BOE <boardofed@a2schools.org>, Jazz Parks <parks@aaps.k12.mi.us>

Trustee Schmidt and Trustees,

I want to just clarify, I asked all Board members to review and support a Board Statement, and based on the responses from the Trustees (one was very concerned about being "Political") and due to the sensitivity of this situation, I decided to move forward to send a Statement from Trustee Gaynor (a Jew) and myself (a Palestinian) about the situation in Gaza and Israel. I did not want to send a Board Statement that is not strongly supported by all Trustees. I did not want anyone to feel pressured or uncomfortable to join the Board statement and you are all welcome to provide your own statement if preferred. As for Dr. Swift's statement, I will be honest, it has significantly upset many from the Arab, Muslim and Palestinian community. I have already discussed these concerns with Dr. Swift, and she fixed the statement on the website. Unfortunately, the damage has been done and I know this was not done intentionally by Dr. Swift as she tried to balance the message. I have shared with her that it is important for these messages to be reviewed by all parties, including Palestinian and Jewish perspectives and those deeply involved in their communities, prior to sending these emails. We can all learn from this situation and I ask that we all be understanding and kind to each other.

Thank you again for sharing all your concerns and words.
Best,
Rima

Rima Mohammad
Trustee and President
Ann Arbor Public Schools
Board of Education
Cell: [REDACTED] . | . mohammadr@aaps.k12.mi.us . | . www.a2schools.org

On Sun, Oct 15, 2023 at 11:59 AM Schmidt, Susan <schmidts@aaps.k12.mi.us> wrote:

Hello, colleagues,
I thought it might be helpful to reach out to you all to clarify a few things. For the record, I am not aware that President Mohammad offered other trustees an 'opportunity' to sign on to her statement. I was only made aware that she was going to share a statement. These issues are very personal to all of us and

how we respond in public is also very personal. Having lived in Israel and having friends both Israeli and Palestinian, I am extremely sensitive to how the best intentions of communication during times like these can be misinterpreted and can cause distress when not intended.

For full disclosure here is an excerpt from my text to Pres. Mohammad when she shared a statement with me that she was originally going to read from the board.

..."Perhaps, if our superintendent, who is the leader of the school district, wants to make a statement about how the schools are safe and we care for all, that's appropriate. I just have concerns about, as school board members, weighing in on political situation's, etc. Will there be an expectation from the public that we will comment on other political unrest or tragedies locally, statewide, or nationally? Will it be expected that we will comment on other world events, such as natural disasters, or other conflicts that involve people in other continents? The horrific things happening everyday never seem to end.

I think it's important that whenever we make comments we need to give serious thought about if it's contributing to the business at hand, which is our responsibility for oversight of the school district. we need to stay focused on what we were elected to do."

She then responded in a text to me:

" BTW I will be making my own statement and not from the board. Both members of the community are looking for me to make a statement. Dr. Swift will be making a district wide statement."

I appreciated that Pres. Mohammad let Dr. Swift give the official statement from the district and chose to make the statement she read from her personally. The result, however, is that since all board members did not join in on the statement, we do not have as much concern. This is the unintended consequences of individual board statements, especially at the onset of the meeting and when read by our President. It might help if such statements are made at the end of our meetings in the section on "Items from board members'."

In the spirit of good boardsmanship,
Susan Schmidt

On Sat, Oct 14, 2023 at 9:40 AM Gaynor, Jeff <gaynor@aaps.k12.mi.us> wrote:

There was louder opposition to U-M President Santa Ono's statement:

<https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2023/10/pro-palestinian-demonstrators-protest-outside-university-of-michigan-presidents-house.html>

Dr. Swift, thank you for modifying your original statement to recognize that actions from both Hamas and the Israelis resulted in the senseless deaths of so many innocent people. We all must remind ourselves and others of our common humanity.

And also thanks to President Muhammad for drafting a statement which did just this, and offering other trustees the opportunity to sign on.

In Peace,
Jeff

Jeff Gaynor
Trustee, Ann Arbor Board of Education
gaynor@aaps.k12.mi.us

On Fri, Oct 13, 2023 at 7:56 PM Swift, Jeanice <swift@aaps.k12.mi.us> wrote:

Hello Trustees,

Note: this is the first of several messages I will forward to you this evening.

I am following up this evening to forward a few of the responses I have offered to those who have written regarding the message sent out on Wednesday.

Overall, the number of responses to the email was lighter than sometimes, yet I have worked to respond to all that are deserving of a response (all but 1 or 2).

I am not sharing all of the messages received or responded to, yet sharing enough so that you are aware of the spectrum and variety of messages we received.

This information is shared only for your awareness, and I am sorry that it loads up your inbox.

Sincerely,

Jeanice

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Swift, Jeanice <swift@aaps.k12.mi.us>

Date: Fri, Oct 13, 2023 at 6:54 PM

Subject: Re: AAPS Statement on Terrorist Attacks in Israel EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@aaps.k12.mi.us>

Hello [REDACTED]

Thank you very much for taking the time to share your thoughts with me regarding my choice of words in the email shared on Wednesday.

I take your message very seriously, and am deeply sorry for sharing words that made you feel disrespected and disappointed.

Following the feedback you shared with me on Wednesday, I amended the Superintendent Statement to omit the use of the word 'terrorist,' both in the title and in the opening sentence of the message. You can see the amended message at the link listed below.

I am grateful for your outreach to me, and will take more care with the choice of words in any future messages.

I truly never want to cause you, or any of our students, to feel diminished by the messages shared.

Again, my deepest apologies,

Jeanice

<https://www.a2schools.org/site/default.aspx?>

PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=17841&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=26581&PageID=11460

On Wed, Oct 11, 2023 at 4:39 PM [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@aaps.k12.mi.us> wrote:

Good afternoon Jeanice

As a Palestinian student in AAPS, I am deeply disappointed and disrespected by your use of words regarding this email. You claim that 'Israel' is under "terrorist attacks" while Palestinians have endured decades of killings from these people. I feel offended by the word choice that you used especially because you are inferring that Palestinians are the "terrorists." I would like to ask, why didn't you ever mention the several major attacks that Israel has enforced on the Gaza territory in the past decade but you have the audacity to mention this incident other the others? For example, last year during the Holy month of Ramadan, Israeli forces violently entered Al Aqsa mosque and blatantly used excessive and unjustified forces against peaceful worshipers. At least 450 men were injured and many others died, according to the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner article. This is only one of thousands of other unjustified attacks that they have made onto innocent Palestinians. I believe that all students of Arab heritage, especially Palestinian students deserve a sincere apology from you regarding your words.

On Wed, Oct 11, 2023 at 3:32 PM Jeanice Swift <swift@aaps.k12.mi.us> wrote:

Ann Arbor Public Schools Statement on Terrorist Attacks in Israel
aaps lead, care, inspire logo

October 11, 2023

Hello AAPS Community,

We are devastated by the terrorist attacks in Israel, and we are heartbroken to hear of the loss of life occurring over recent days in both Israel and Gaza. Our thoughts are with staff, students, families and community members who have been impacted by the crisis that has unfolded. These attacks come at a time of increased antisemitism in the U.S. and around the world. In the Ann Arbor Public Schools community, we believe strongly that there is no place for hate -- whether antisemitism, Islamophobia or xenophobia.

As this situation continues to evolve, it may be especially difficult for our Jewish and Palestinian students, their families and staff members, and it negatively affects us all. Remember that, even if there aren't direct connections to the attacks, this news is alarming for anyone and violence shown in the media can impact our children. In How to talk to children about the violence in Israel and Gaza, National Public Radio has shared expert advice on how to talk with children who may have questions about the conflict, wonder why other children are among those affected, or even question whether they are safe.

Please take care of yourself and those around you. These are challenging times in our world. We know that it is more important than ever for us to come together, to care for ourselves and each other, and to reach out to those who are hurting.

If you or your child needs support, please reach out to a staff member at your school. If you or someone you know needs assistance, it is important to let an adult at school know.

Let's commit to remaining close in our communication, connection and care as we deepen our commitment to the core values of respect for all, so that all in the AAPS feel the support of being united

against hate, intolerance or violence of any kind. We are all engaged in the embrace and support of all our students, staff and families in this AAPS community we share together.

We are a stronger community as we honor, embrace and celebrate our diversity, work together to continually create a culture of belonging for all and value the connections that unite us as an inclusive Ann Arbor community.

Jeanice Kerr Swift

Superintendent of Schools

Ann Arbor Public Schools

www.A2Schools.org

Keep up with the AAPS News!

Online: news.a2schools.org | Twitter: @A2schools

Facebook: search for "Ann Arbor Public Schools"

ANN ARBOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION: No person shall be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any educational program or activity available in any school on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, creed, political belief, age, national origin, linguistic and language differences, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, socioeconomic status, height, weight, marital or familial status, disability or veteran status.

Ann Arbor Public Schools would like to continue connecting with you via email. If you prefer to be removed from our list, please contact Ann Arbor Public Schools directly. To stop receiving all email messages distributed through our SchoolMessenger service, follow this link and confirm: [Unsubscribe](#)

SchoolMessenger is a notification service used by the nation's leading school systems to connect with parents, students and staff through voice, SMS text, email, and social media.

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Susan W. Schmidt
Treasurer, Trustee
Ann Arbor Board of Education

Certified teacher - Michigan
Elementary Education K-8
Special Education, Learning Disabilities K-12
Special area: reading/dyslexia

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All the best,
Susan Baskett
Trustee, Ann Arbor Board of Education