



June 4, 2020

Dear DCS Families, Students, and Staff,

It has come to our attention that significant misinformation has been spread via social media that is not factual and, as a result, is creating a narrative that is not reflective of the truth in the situation.

For at least 40 years, the rock for Dexter High School has provided opportunities for students to express their feelings in a safe manner. The rock is painted at least once per day, on average, and is generally filled with Happy Birthday messages, supportive messages, etc. Occasionally, messages are placed on the rock that reflect notable discussion points or thoughts regarding situations we are working through as a state, country or world. At other times, offensive items are painted on the rock. This usually occurs overnight and we will plan to paint over the offensive item when our staff reports and has the opportunity.

The facts: Tuesday, during the day, someone painted a “Black lives matter” message on the rock. Later that evening or overnight, someone else painted over this message with something offensive. When we became aware of the offensive message, our maintenance department was asked to paint over the offensive writing. Unknowingly, we painted over a fresh message someone else had already painted. **We did not intentionally paint over a message.** We used white paint because that paint was being used in the building at the moment the staff member was asked to go outside to paint over the offensive message. Since then, the rock has been painted at least one more time.

To be clear: We do not find Black Lives Matter offensive and would not purposefully paint over an important message like Black Lives Matter on the rock.

In fact, around the same time the rock was being repainted, we sent out a message that stated, “Now more than ever there is an urgency to act. The superintendents of Washtenaw County stand with our black and brown students and families. We see you. We hear you. We know we have been part of the problem by perpetuating a system of inequity and injustice, and we pledge ourselves to dismantling and disrupting the unjust systems so that each person may live freely and without fear.”

In short, if you hear that the District has done something that sounds ridiculous, please don’t assume the worst.



DEXTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

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Next steps: Prior to closing school in mid-March, we were poised to release our **Diversity Belonging Inclusion and Equity plan**. The plan was put on hold as a result of the COVID-19 closure. An updated plan will be shared in the next several weeks with updated data and opportunities for community engagement to best support ALL of our students. The plan includes training for the DCS Board of Education, staff, community workgroups, community book studies and forums, and creation of a 3-5 year strategic vision for DCS to support ongoing DBIE work.

All of our students will be asked to be competitive workers in a society that assumes an ability to work in a diverse world. However, our students do not live in a multicultural setting in their daily educational environments. This requires an increased focus from DCS to help prepare our students and to best educate ALL of our students.

Thank you for your continued support of DCS.

Sincerely,

Christopher Timmis, EdD

Superintendent