

Last month, Spokane Public Schools asked a third-party investigator to follow up on a complaint related to a U.S. History lesson that took place at Sacajawea Middle School in early May. The [resulting report](#) is attached, and we encourage everyone to thoroughly read it. The family's identifiable information has been redacted.

Our students are our most important community members, and our top priority is making sure every child feels cared for and cared about. We regret any time someone is hurt while in our schools and apologize for a situation that made students feel emotionally unsafe. Our goal now is to deeply learn and understand the source of harm and prevent it from happening in the future.

We invite our SPS community to go on this learning journey with us. Along the way, we will need to be willing to engage in conversations that may be uncomfortable at times but are necessary to reach our mission of "excellence for everyone." The United States' history regarding race is a difficult subject and a divisive issue in our country. Over the past few years our district has made strides toward making sure SPS families of all backgrounds feel seen and respected, but we know there is more to be done. Here's how we've been working – and will continue to work – to fulfill our promise of "excellence for everyone":

- In 2020, informed by considerable input by educators, parents, students, and other stakeholders, the SPS Board of Directors passed a [Resolution on Equity](#) intended to create policies that improve the educational experience for *all* our students.
- We are continuing to provide culturally responsive and/or anti-racism trainings with staff at all SPS schools. Our in-service summer training also allows time for educators to review their lessons and practices through this lens. The approach we are taking does not involve Critical Race Theory.
- Our Department of Family and Community Engagement (DFCE) has worked with leaders across the community and SPS to develop staff trainings and professional development modules that emphasize anti-racism and cultural awareness in the classroom.
- DFCE will continue partnering with schools and organizations on listening sessions and focus groups to engage our students and families about their experiences and to provide feedback on culturally sensitive lessons.

In August, Spokane Public Schools will host a discussion led by a panel of local leaders in collaboration with the employees, students, families, and communities we serve that will look at where we've been, improvements we've made, and how our district can continue moving forward with this vitally important equity work. We look forward to sharing more details about this opportunity in the coming weeks.

The journey to cultural competency is not easy, and there are many nuances to reaching this destination. We will not always get it right, but we remain committed to providing avenues for feedback and learning as we continue building relationships and trust with our learning community. Our best chance to create true excellence for everyone is for all of us to take part in these important conversations and create action steps together that can lead us to systemic change.