

January 12, 2020

Dear South Whidbey School District Board Members,

Thank you for taking the time to listen to and recognize the concerns brought to you by students over the last few months.

For those who don't know us, we are USL (United Student Leaders), a coalition of students from across Whidbey Island. We have taken on different projects around the community to bring awareness to the climate crisis and its threat to our generation. Recently, we have been diving deeper into the importance of transforming education.

We are taking action to reboot our educational system with a more robust curriculum and practices that better reflect the world we are living in today. Over the past few months, we have joined the conversation with SWSD around the curriculum for the new classes as well as other issues. We are currently dealing with three pandemics: COVID-19, racism (and other forms of oppression, discrimination, and bullying), and the climate crisis. These issues require us to consider gaps in our educational system and find ways to close those gaps.

We, as students, need to have continued involvement in our education in order to tackle these pandemics. We are in full support of implementing the Ethnic Studies and the Environmental Science classes and are asking for the SWSD Board to approve them. Both are essential to our education and are long overdue.

Ethnic Studies Class

We support the Ethnic Studies class because there have been many examples of racism and other forms of oppression, discrimination, and bullying within our district and our community. In this increasingly polarized country, we must work together to understand each other and our world. This starts with education.

To be clear, the revision of the equity policy at the beginning of the year and the creation of the ethnic studies class are *not* in response to the Black Lives Matter movement and current events. Instead, they are a timely response to the problems our district has faced for years. The Ethnic Studies class is critical to eradicating racism. First of all, it is crucial for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students to see their history represented.

Secondly, it is even more important for White students to take this class. White people have treated racism as the BIPOC community's problem even though they have both created and perpetuated it. White students need to understand their privilege and that it is not enough to *not* be racist—they have to be anti-racist in order to avoid complicity in racism. Most importantly, they have to understand that racism still exists and that BIPOC people are still being harassed and killed over the color of their skin.

In addition, South Whidbey has been an unsafe and harmful learning environment for youth in
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the LGBTQIA+ community. Because of this, LGBTQIA+ history and current events should be included in the new Ethnic Studies curriculum. LGBTQIA+ topics are continually changing and evolving, and students must learn about the current fight for the rights of the LGBTQIA+ community.

We want to acknowledge that while this class is a good first step, the school is not going above and beyond by adding this class. We must all continue to fight for our schools to teach BIPOC history and not just White history. We hope that the content of this class will become a natural part of the curriculum, and Ethnic Studies themes will be incorporated into other classes that they influence.

Environmental Science Class

This brings us to our support of the Environmental Science class. We believe the Environmental Science class is crucial for developing climate-literate individuals and critical thinkers.

Climate change needs to be presented as fact and taught as modern history and science. This class will teach students the effects of the climate crisis as they also learn the root causes behind it. It will also provide a space where students can openly discuss the climate crisis and its impacts on their future. Students need to recognize the difference between political topics and science. One essential way that can happen is through education.

While we support the Environmental Science class, climate change is a topic that affects all subjects within our school. It is essential to include it in all education levels and needs to be included in other courses and curriculums. The climate crisis is the biggest threat to the human race. If students don't have the knowledge they need to tackle this crisis, then there is no hope for the future.

Conclusion

In the words of South Whidbey School District's mission statement—we need to prepare students to “be resilient, innovative, compassionate, and productive graduates prepared for a diverse and dynamic world.”

We can no longer teach a White-centric view of the world, its many places, and peoples. Nor can we ignore the climate crisis and its threat to our collective futures. If we aren't adequately educated on these critical topics, then we run the risk of repeating the actions of historical oppressors.

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We hope that SWSD will honor its duty to its students and its community and add these classes

in order to continue bringing education into the 21st century.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

—Jackson Murphy, Maggie Nattress, Annie Philp, Claire Philp, Eva Wirth, and Maddy Racicot
on behalf of United Student Leaders

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED 480 students; teachers and educators; organizations; alumni; elected officials; parents, relatives, and caregivers of students; community members and supporters, agree with this letter. We support the letter written by the USL youth and are asking that the South Whidbey School District accepts the addition of both the Ethnic Studies and Environmental Science classes and continues to work towards a more inclusive, equitable, safe, and relevant school system.

Students

Naomi Atwood
Langley, WA

Joseph Busig
Oak Harbor, WA

Emma Callahan
Clinton, WA

Shelby Campbell
Langley, WA

Lilah Chappelle
Freeland, WA

Daniel
Cheuvront
Clinton, WA

Emilia Deal
Clinton, WA

Rowan Dickerson
Clinton, WA

Edythe Donham
Clinton, WA

Lily Farnham
Langley, WA
Jayna Fink

Seattle, WA

Parker Forsyth
Langley, WA

Audrey Gmerek
Clinton, WA

Chloe Gossler
Langley, WA

Aiden Haines
Langley, WA

Taryn Henny
Langley, WA

Grace Huffman
Greenbank, WA

Abigail Ireland
Freeland, WA

Alexa Johnson
Clinton, WA

Alicia Johnson
Freeland, WA

Robin Jones
Clinton, WA

Dylann Jones
Clinton, WA

Netty Jurriaans
Langley, WA

Katie Kerley
Langley, WA

Sophia Kinata
Langley, WA

Ashley Lynch Langley, WA

Julia Maher
Freeland, WA

Aidan Martin
Freeland, WA

Amoraea Martin Freeland, WA	Clinton, WA Annie Philp Langley, WA	Langley, WA Eva Wirth Clinton, WA
Alexis Mburu Seattle, WA	Claire Philp Langley, WA	Ella Wood Langley, WA
Adeline McCleary Langley, WA	Lucy Ploof Langley, WA	Jordan Wu Freeland, WA
Romy McKey Seattle, WA	Maddy Racicot Langley, WA	Solaris Zourzouvilly Langley, WA
Mary Moss Clinton, WA	Lilja Ringsrud Langley, WA	Katherine Zundel Clinton, WA
Kelly Murnane Clinton, WA	Katya Schiavone Freeland, WA	Sarah Zundel Clinton, WA
Nikki Murnane Clinton, WA	Savannah Simmons Freeland, WA	
Jackson Murphy Clinton, WA		
Ada Murray Clinton, WA		

Teachers and educators

Sharon Abreu Eastsound, WA	Emmy Atwood Langley, WA United Student Leaders 4	Susan Blythe-Goodman Seattle, WA
Maggie Nattress Langley, WA	Indigo Solis Clinton, WA	Charlene Brown Freeland, WA
Molly Nattress Langley, WA	Christina Sousa Langley, WA	Colleen Chan Anacortes, WA
Magnus Nyberg Freeland, WA	Niki Taylor Freeland, WA	Ellen Christensen Coupeville, WA
Sarah O'Neill Langley, WA	Cece Velasquez Freeland, WA	
Sophia Patrin	Simone White	Dominique

Davis
Seattle, WA

Lindsey
DeMots
Langley,
WA

Melissa Duffy
Oak Harbor, WA

Philippa
Gordon
Freeland,
WA

Marguerite
Greening
Eastsound, WA

Shelley Hartle
Langley, WA

Janet Holland
Coupeville, WA

Derek Hoshiko
Clinton, WA

Lori Jackintell
Clinton, WA

Pam Jenkins
Olga, WA

David Jones
Edmonds, WA

Judy Kaplan

Freeland, WA

Sharon Karafelis
Clinton, WA

William Keepin
Clinton, WA

Maya Kilmer
Freeland, WA

Ana Kinkaid
Issaquah, WA

Lisa Kois
Freeland, WA

Diane Leganza
Greenbank, WA

David Locke
Langley, WA

Corinne
Lombino
Tacoma, WA

Claudia Losada
Oak Harbor, WA

Tari Lowery
Colorado Springs, CO

Mary Mantei
Traverse City, MI

Dana Moffett
Langley, WA

Gretchen

Murphy
Bothell, WA
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Kathryn O'Brien
Clinton, WA

Nadine Oliver
Olga, WA

Madelaine
Pinkerton
Langley, WA

Brian Reid
Coupeville, WA

Louise Richardson
Langley, WA

Joann Roomes
Coupeville, WA

Ronlyn Schwartz
Langley, WA

Bridgit Sims
Coupeville, WA

James Sutter
Seattle, WA

David Turnoy
Eastsound, WA

Mike Walker
Oak Harbor, WA

Rebecca Wolfe
Edmonds, WA

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Organizations

Sno-Isle Sierra Club Whidbey Environmental Action Network **Alumni**

Mimosa Collins Seattle, WA	Richard Grubb Coupeville, WA	Langley, WA
Michael Davidson Langley, WA	Michael Harwell Freeland, WA	Helen Price Johnson Clinton, WA
Mallory Drye Langley, WA	Libby Hawkins Greenbank, WA	Alea Robertson Clinton, WA
Elli Dubendorf Langley, WA	Kristin Hoelting Loveland, CO	Seth Sobottka Freeland, WA
Natasha Dworkin Seattle, WA	Gavin Imes Tucson, AZ	Solina Sotelo Everett, WA
Chloeastyr Edwards Lynnwood, WA	Kate Johnson Clinton, WA	Skye Telleen Langley, WA
Lydia Farrel Langley, WA	Marla Kelly Langley, WA	Margaret Timms Burlington, WA
	Anna McLeod	Sayaka Yokota Hawaii City, HI

Parents, relatives, and caregivers of students

Shannon Arndt Langley, WA	Clinton, WA	Patricia Coffey Langley, WA
Nydia Blood Langley, WA	Cait Cassee Freeland, WA	
Virginia Bloom Freeland, WA	Sarah Chappelle Freeland, WA	Britt Conn Clinton, WA
Enid Braun	Jessica Chevront Clinton, WA	John Cook Seattle, WA

Martin Coombe Langley, WA	Laura Hudson Clinton, WA	Elise Miller Freeland, WA
Sasha Cranch Freeland, WA	Jim Hyde Langley, WA	Mj Miller Langley, WA
Margaret Delp Clinton, WA	Kathy Ireland Freeland, WA	Judith Moore Coupeville, WA
Lynne Donnelly Freeland, WA	Susan Janow Langley, WA	Christine Mulcahy Langley, WA
Hillary Edwards Langley, WA	Jeanne Juneau Langley, WA	Amanda Murphy Clinton, WA
Martin Fernandez Langley, WA	Jennifer Jurriaans Langley, WA	Cailyn Murray Clinton, WA
Mary Fisher Clinton, WA	Kenleigh Kelly Langley, WA	Tyla Nattress Langley, WA
Rhiannon Fisher Freeland, WA	Frances Kenney Langley, WA	Karyle Kramer Clinton, WA United Student Leaders 7
Teresa Forsyth Langley, WA	Karyle Kramer Clinton, WA United Student Leaders 7	Andrew Neff Clinton, WA
Regina Foucht Seattle, WA	Janice Laursen Clinton, WA	Teresa Nero-Wirth Clinton, WA
Meg Gluckman Langley, WA	Molly Layman Clinton, WA	Julie O'Brien Clinton, WA
Elizabeth Gmerek Clinton, WA	Meredith Macharia Langley, WA	Jodie Philp Langley, WA
Emi Gunn Langley, WA	Catherine Marshall Freeland, WA	Kenneth Philp Langley, WA
Susan Hamilton Snohomish, WA	Alison McManus Clinton, WA	Teresa Pope Freeland, WA
Kristina Harris Clinton, WA	Reed McNeil Langley, WA	Simona Prael Freeland, WA
Valerie Heggenes Langley, WA	Kiley Meszaros Clinton, WA	Gail Ptacek Clinton, WA
Tonya Henny Langley, WA		

Kaulani Raabe Langley,
WA

Heather Racicot Langley,
WA

Megan Dunn
Everett, WA

Amy Reynolds
Freeland, WA

Ursula Roosen-Runge
Freeland, WA

Valerie Roseberry
Oak Harbor, WA

Annie Rundberg
Langley, WA

Stephanie Ryan
Clinton, WA

Sara Saltee
Freeland, WA

Ansel Santosa
Clinton, WA

Peter Schlagel
Coupeville, WA

Brooke Schroeder
Clinton, WA

Paul Schuller
Clinton, WA

Krista Loercher
Langley, WA
United Student Leaders 8

Dierdre Sherman
Clinton, WA

Jenny Staats
Clinton, WA

Dede Strawn- Dona

Portland, WA

Kimberly Taksony
Clinton, WA

Caysie Tolbert
Langley, WA

Karen Vanderbilt
Langley, WA

Katie Watkins
Langley, WA

Sheila Weidendorf
Langley, WA

Carrie Whitney
Clinton, WA

Peter Morton
Langley, WA

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Community members and supporters

Shelly Ackerman
Langley, WA

Kitty Adams
Langley, WA

Carol Anderson
Eastsound, WA

Terra Anderson
Freeland, WA

Bob Arndt
Langley, WA

Bonnie Arndt
Langley, WA

Gayle Austin
Langley, WA

Cynthia Babcock
Clinton, WA

Linda Bainbridge
Greenbank, WA

Christina Baldwin Freeland, WA	Langley, WA	Freeland, WA
Betty Bartleson Olga, WA	Karen Carbone Freeland, WA	Sylvian Colley Freeland, WA
Larry Behrendt Coupeville, WA	Carrie Carpenter Langley, WA	Kristine Collins Langley, WA
Ella Bennett Langley, WA	Kevin Carrabine Langley, WA	Wilfred Collins Langley, WA
Shirley A Bennett Coupeville, WA	David Castor Olga, WA	Carmen Cook Clinton, WA
Gene Berg Freeland, WA	Tracy Castro-Gill Seattle, WA	M Leslie Cotter Langley, WA
Paul Bigelow Coupeville, WA	Cortez Charles Puyallup, WA	Sheri Croll Greenbank, WA
Candace Blaclwell Mount Vernon, WA	Emily Childs Seattle, WA	Malcolm Cumming Clinton, WA
Harolynne Bobis Langley, WA	Emily Childs Seattle, WA	Gretchen Darmand Langley, WA
Denice Bochantin Freeland, WA	Alex Chuang Seattle, WA	Dianne Deseck-Piazzon Coupeville, WA
Penelope Cabot Langley, WA	Aaron Coates Clinton, WA	Naomi Dietrich Everett, WA
Robert Cabot Langley, WA	Estlin Coates Clinton, WA	Grace Diliberto Freeland, WA
Debra Calkins Freeland, WA	Hillel Coates Clinton, WA	Wendy Dion Langley, WA
Ann Campbell Langley, WA	Miriam Coates Clinton, WA	Carol Doering Clinton, WA
Tom Campbell	Stacey Coleman Olga, WA	Kim Drury Langley, WA
	Bruce Colley	

	Freeland, WA	
Claire Duncan Lubbock, TX	Thomas Fox Langley, WA	Alice Goodman Langley, WA
Marcia Dunigan Langley, WA	Alina Frank Langley, WA	Tina Goodrich Langley, WA
Robb Eagle Olga, WA	Maureen Freehill Langley, WA	Sally Goodwin Langley, WA
Marianne Edain Langley, WA	Robert French Langley, WA	Mary Goolsby Clinton, WA
Erica Eden Freeland, WA	Elicia Fritsch Coupeville, WA	Rita Green Lynnwood, WA
Deborah Eimers Langley, WA	Richard Gammon Langley, WA	Bob Grossman Langley, WA
Jack Fackerell Greenbank, WA	Maya Garber-Yonts Langley, WA	Karen Grossman Langley, WA
Suzanne Fageol Langley, WA	Alexandra Gayek Olga, WA	Werner Gruenert Greenbank, WA
Adriane Fain Coupeville, WA	Hugh Gerrard Freeland, WA	Elizabeth Guss Langley, WA
John Ficalora Langley, WA	Laurie Gerrard Freeland, WA	Elshadai Hailu Freeland, WA
Pamela Fick Oak Harbor, WA	John Giamberso Greenbank, WA	Vicki Halbakken Langley, WA
Laural Fishet Freeland, WA	K Gilliam Coupeville, WA	Dick Hall Coupeville, WA
Craig Fleck Clinton, WA	Julie Glover Clinton, WA	Dorothy Hallberg Clinton, WA
Kelly Ford Langley, WA United Student Leaders 10	Marshall Goldberg Oak Harbor, WA	Stephanie Hammer Coupeville, WA
Shelli Foster Clinton, WA		Janet Harris Langley, WA
Larry Fox		Marci Hastings Coupeville, WA

Lynn Hays Langley, WA	Oak Harbor, WA Lee James Greenbank, WA	Cynthia King Greenbank, WA
Don Hedstrom Oak Harbor, WA	Leila Jerene Langley, WA	Robert King Orcas, WA
Janice Hedstrom Oak Harbor, WA	Grier Jewell Olympia, WA	Sarah King Greenbank, WA
Paula Hewett Freeland, WA	Molly Johnson Freeland, WA	Fran Koehler Coupeville, WA
Jeanette Heyneman Oak Harbor, WA	Nancy Johnson Edmonds, WA	Martha Koester Seattle, WA
Sandra Hoffelt Olson Langley, WA	Beth Johnson Freeland, WA	Keeva Kroll Langley, WA
Chris Holder Langley, WA	Phillip Jones Clinton, WA	Bob Kuehn Langley, WA
Carla Holderman-Sharpe Coupeville, WA	Michele Kahrs Freeland, WA	Larry Kwarsick Langley, WA
Nancy Horan Langley, WA	Lori Kane Langley, WA	Carolyn Lancet Oak Harbor, WA
Art Huffine Oak Harbor, WA		Diane Lantz Langley, WA
United Student Leaders 11	Cynthia Kaul Langley, WA	Barbara Lavaty Langley, WA
Michael Hurwicz Eastsound, WA	Colleen Keefe Clinton, WA Josnne Keefe Langley, WA	Jaci Leavitt Blaine, WA
Helen and Jack Hustad Mukilteo, WA	Aubrie Keegan Clinton, WA	Caitlin Leck Eastsound, WA
Richard Ingrasci Langley, WA	Sandy Kennedy Coupeville, WA	Bill Leeds Freeland, WA
Dianne Iverson Langley, WA	Paula Kerby Langley, WA Shelley Kimball Olga, WA	Mark Leganza Greenbank, WA
Jane Jaehning		Jess Leon

Clinton, WA		Oak Harbor, WA
	Cassie Martin	
Jeanne Lepisto Langley, WA	Coupeville, WA	Byron Moffett Langley, WA
Noel Lerner Coupeville, WA	Jane Martin Langley, WA	Anthony Molinero Clinton, WA
Diana Lindsay Freeland, WA	Rachel Martinez Clinton, WA	
Linda Lindsay Langley, WA	Steven Matthias Freeland, WA	Clyde Monma Clinton, WA
Ann Linnea Freeland, WA United Student Leaders 12	Suzy McDowell Clinton, WA	Sharon Moon Renton, WA
Becky Livingston Greenbank, WA	Susan McKinney Freeland, WA	Gloria Moore Langley, WA
Connie & Jerry Lloyd Greenbank, WA	Kathryn McLean Clinton, WA	Katrina Morse Freeland, WA
John Lovie Clinton, WA	Carol McNeil Langley, WA	Eric Mulholland Langley, WA
Lynnaea Lumbard Freeland, WA	Nicole McNeil Langley, WA	Marti Murphy Langley, WA
Kim Lundstrom Kent, WA	Emily Melcher Freeland, WA	Maureen Murphy Langley, WA
Sarah MacDougall Freeland, WA	Natalie Menacho Eastsound, WA	Deborah Nedelman Langley, WA
Jacqueline Mach Clinton, WA	Pamela Merrill Oak Harbor, WA	Rebecca Nerison Port Townsend, WA
Patricia Mack Freeland, WA	Marcia Merryman Freeland, WA	Dawna Nolan Coupeville, WA
John T MacNamee Coupeville, WA	Donald Miller Clinton, WA	Linda Nordberg Coupeville, WA
David Malony Langley, WA	Susan Miller Clinton, WA	Nancy Nordhoff Langley, WA
	Fe Mischo	

Lenore Norrgard Freeland, WA	Coupeville, WA	Harbor, WA
DeAnn Olson Freeland, WA United Student Leaders 13	Patricia Rohan Clinton, WA	Dianne Shiner Freeland, WA
Preston Ossman Freeland, WA	Karen Rothboeck Coupeville, WA	Sandra Shipley Langley, WA
Richard Paine Freeland, WA	Kathy Rothschild Freeland, WA	Christina Shoemaker Coupeville, WA
Mark Paschal Seattle, WA	Gregory Routt Freeland, WA	Jim Short Coupeville, WA
Cedtrechia Passian Kent, WA	Rhonda Salerno Langley, WA	Rainy Simpson Coupeville, WA
Michael Payne Langley, WA	Diana Sandoval Freeland, WA	Neal Sims Coupeville, WA
Patricia Perkins Tacoma, WA	Cris Sanguino Greenbank, WA	Greg Sivertsen Coupeville, WA
Gary Piazzon Coupeville, WA	Bernita Sanstad Langley, WA	Katrina Skarsvog Clinton, WA
Susan Prescott Greenbank, WA	Victoria Santos Langley, WA	Janet Staub Clinton, WA
Miriam Raabe Langley, WA	Micky Sarkis Langley, WA	Emily Steelquist Portland, WA
Roxanne Ray Seattle, WA	Karen Savage Langley, WA	Pam Stein Oak Harbor, WA
Judyth Reichenberg Langley, WA	Barbara Schaetti Clinton, WA	Mary Stewart Langley, WA
Vicki Robin Langley, WA	Margaret Schultz Freeland, WA	Shannon Stone Oak Harbor, WA
Vivian Rogers Decker	Stephan Schwartz Langley, WA	Fritha Strand Clinton, WA
	Laura Jo Severson Friday	United Student Leaders 14

Laura Strehlau Langley, WA	Langley, WA	Erin Waterman Langley, WA
Danette Sulgrove Langley, WA	Cynthia Trowbridge Greenbank, WA	Linda Wehrman Coupeville, WA United Student Leaders 15
Linda Talley Greenbank, WA	Clovy Tsuchiya Freeland, WA	Marcia Wesley Clinton, WA
Carolyn Tamler Freeland, WA	Wayne Ude Clinton, WA	Pam Williams Coupeville, WA
Richard Tamler Freeland, WA	Robert Ullman Langley, WA	Mary Willis Langley, WA
Sue Taves Langley, WA	Donna Vanderheiden Langley, WA	Dorit Zingarelli Clinton, WA
Karen Taylor Seattle, WA	Danetta Vawter Clinton, WA	Vito Zingarelli Clinton, WA
Lori Taylor Coupeville, WA	William Viertel Coupeville, WA	Kelly Zupich Coupeville, WA
Peggy Taylor Langley, WA	Linda Vorhis Greenbank, WA	
Sherry Thatcher Langley, WA	Kristen Wagner-Patterson Clinton, WA	
Sally Thompson Clinton, WA	Elin Waldal Freeland, WA	
Judy Thorslund Langley, WA	Elin Waldal Freeland, WA	
Richard Timmins Freeland, WA	Claudia Walker Clinton, WA	
Kim Tinuviel Freeland, WA	Andrew Warford Coupeville, WA	
Anna Toledo		