

Considerations for when Jamesville-DeWitt Administration and/or Board of Education respond to political and social issues

Purpose: The Board of Education for the Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District is committed to the success of every student in each of our schools. The district has an uncompromising commitment to excellence in preparing students to achieve and succeed, to respect themselves and others, and to practice life-long learning in an ever-changing, richly diverse global society.

The Jamesville-DeWitt Central School District stands united in support of all students and families. We are committed to providing a safe, caring, inclusive, equitable, and challenging learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and to building a community that recognizes diversity as one of our greatest strengths.

We recognize that outside events have the potential to impact stakeholders in our school community including, students, staff, families, and the larger Jamesville-DeWitt community. Such events may impact students' feelings of safety within school and during these moments the district and/or the board of education may comment on such events in an effort to reiterate and center our mission and core beliefs, to explain how the district is working to keep students and staff safe, or to provide resources for families and staff. With the understanding that the district cannot and should not make a public comment on every political or social issue or event, district leaders use the guiding questions listed below to determine if public comment is warranted.

Guiding questions to determine if public comment is warranted:

1. **Belief:** The district's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety and well being of all students.
 - a. Does the situation create an unsafe environment for students and/or staff?
 - i. Does the event create a substantial disruption to the operation of the school or the district?
 - ii. Does the event warrant a statement that ensures the safety and well being of students in the face of political events *without* taking a side or providing political commentary?

- iii. Does the event warrant a statement that acknowledges the situation and enumerates the steps being taken to focus on safety and support for students?
2. Belief: The district is committed to providing a safe, caring, inclusive, equitable, and challenging learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and to building a community that recognizes diversity as one of our greatest strengths.
 - a. Does the event or situation challenge the district's ability to maintain institutional neutrality or is there a challenge to alignment with our mission and vision?
 - i. Would a statement help students be accepted for who they are?
 - ii. Would a statement set a welcoming tone for students?
 - iii. Can the district speak as a unified voice?
 - iv. Would a statement discourage students from expressing dissenting opinions?
3. Belief: The district is often in a position to provide resources for families and staff that are helpful to navigate sensitive situations.
 - a. Does this situation have a substantial impact on students, staff, families or community?
 - b. Does the district have resources that would be beneficial for families and staff?
 - c. Does the district have expertise or standing in the particular topic?

Examples of outside events that may prompt a review of these guidelines:

- Political Issues: Matters that pertain to governance, public policy, and political ideologies.
- Social Issues: Topics that impact societal norms, values, and community welfare, such as racial equality, mental health awareness, and environmental concerns.
- Community Issues: Issues that have a significant impact on the school community or the school environment.

Using these guidelines, the Superintendent and/or the Board of Education will make a determination on the whether or not to make a statement.

Adoption Date: