

SLSD from A1

Jan. 1, 2021.

“The Oregon Department of Education recognizes that student health and safety are the cornerstone of education and that all students are entitled to a high-quality educational experience, free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, and without fear or hatred, racism or violence,” reads a statement on the agency’s website.

The department states that all staff and leaders are also entitled to work

in environments that are free from discrimination or harassment, and visitors should be able to participate in school activities without fear for their safety.

As well as addressing hate symbols, the policy asks that “bias incidents” be dealt with, which it defines as “a person’s hostile expression of animus toward another person, relating to the other person’s perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin, of which criminal investigation or prosecution is impossible or inappropriate.”

The policy also requires certain responses

to incidents, including requiring “staff to recognize the experience of all persons impacted, acknowledge the impact, commit to taking immediate action, and prevent further harm against those persons impacted from taking place.”

Responding staff are to include educational components that address the history and impact of hate and introduce procedures ensuring safety, healing and agency to the impacted persons as well as “accountability and transformation” for people and conditions which led to the harm.

The adopted SLSD board policy further states, “In responding to the use of any symbols of hate, the district will use non-disciplinary remedial action whenever appropriate.”

The district will also prohibit retaliation against those who file complaints.

SLSD has been working with students and teachers since last sum-

mer to develop an equity stance, largely informed by issues raised by last year’s protests involving Black Lives Matter, a decentralized political and social movement which has heavily criticized the racial targeting of Black people by police.

The district’s conversations helped form an Equity Steering Committee, which contains students among its several stakeholders, and continues to grow.

“We still would like to have some parents from different perspectives or experiences to join,” said SLSD Superintendent Yvonne Curtis.

From the meetings, the district has been developing plans of action.

“What we heard from our students [last] summer is that they wanted us to take actions. ‘No more talking. Let’s take actions,’” reported Curtis. “And the first thing they wanted us to do was to develop an equity policy.”

Meanwhile last sum-

mer, the state was also working on its own set of policies in response to the Black Lives Matter movement.

On Oct. 15 last year, the Oregon State Board of Education renewed “its commitment to anti-racism, equity, and access to education as a core value” in a resolution.

The All Students Belong rule currently exists only as a draft as the Oregon Legislative Assembly will not meet until February to vote to make the policy state law.

As the policy overlaps with many points the SLSD Equity Steering Committee wishes to emphasize, it was brought before the school board for a vote, Curtis said.

Curtis pointed out to the board that a lot of work will be involved in applying the policies once they become law.

“And so every person in the district is going to have to buy into this,” Curtis said. “Including

parents. They will be a part of it. And so we have a lot of work to do once the policy passes.”

Equity has been a recurring theme on the agendas of SLSD board meetings for the past several years, but the board’s adoption of All Students Belong represents a markedly stronger move toward its stated goals on the topic.

“Working through equity is beyond identifying a few groups of protected classes,” said Settlemeyer. “It’s making sure that it’s the right place to be for our students, and our staff, and our leaders and our families that would support including all children.”

Copies of the adopted policy and complaint procedure can be found separately by using the search function on the SLSD website at www.slane.k12.or.us for “All Students Belong” and “bias incident,” respectively.

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The Covid-19 pandemic impacts our stress and anxiety levels. One way to deal with the effects of the pandemic is to seek and build social connections in your community. Grupo FUERTE is a support group for Spanish speaking men in Lane County. Join Grupo FUERTE to learn about local resources, mental health topics and create your own social network. This is a free service sponsored by South Lane Mental Health. For more information or to enroll, call 541-942-3939 and ask about Grupo FUERTE.

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South Lane Mental Health
“Alas”

South Lane Mental Health, located in Cottage Grove, Oregon, is now providing mental health services for Spanish speaking individuals. Our program, Alas, serves children and adults, individuals, couples, and families. Our services include case management, group therapy, individual therapy and peer support services. We offer in-person services or remote services via telehealth. We can assist with your computer needs if you prefer Telehealth services. For more information and/or to make an appointment, please call 541-942-3939

South Lane Mental Health, ubicado en Cottage Grove, Oregon, ahora ofrece servicios para gente hispanohablante. Nuestro programa, Alas, apoya a jóvenes, individuos, parejas y familias. Nuestros servicios incluyen el manejo de casos (navegación de recursos y educación comunitaria), terapia de grupo y terapia para individuos. Ofrecemos servicios en persona, por teléfono y por video. Nosotros podemos ayudar con sus necesidades de tecnología si prefiere recibir servicios por teléfono o video. Para más información o para hacer cita, por favor llame a 541-942-3939.

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