

Dennis T. Ducharme

From: Megan Turnbull [mmshea@chicagogsb.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2011 4:39 PM
To: Dennis T. Ducharme
Subject: Fwd: Draft letter responding to Oyster River Student Senate

Rhoades' help on the student letter.

Megan

Begin forwarded message:

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> From: Megan Turnbull <mmshea@chicagogsb.edu>
> Date: May 30, 2011 3:06:46 PM EDT
> To: Rhoades Alderson <ralderson@nharbor.com>
> Subject: Re: Draft letter responding to Oyster River Student Senate
>
> Thank you, Rhoades!
>
> Megan
> On May 30, 2011, at 10:15 AM, Rhoades Alderson wrote:
>
>> Hi Megan, Jocelyn and Henry,
>>
>> I think this letter is excellent and will go a long way to calming the rhetoric and
taking the focus off of you -- this as part of a strategic goal to change the narrative
from "school board takes on _____ fight" to "school board takes steps to preserve
tradition of excellence in times of change." Below I drafted an alternative version of
the letter that seeks to portray you a little bit less as an official body and more as a
group of caring adults who volunteer their time because this stuff is what they care
about. It's true, of course, and softens some of the battle lines when you can be seen
this way.
>>
>>
>> Dear Oyster River Senior Class,
>>
>> Congratulations to each of you on the eve of your graduation. You have so much to be
proud of as you mark one of life's great milestones, and as Board members, community
members and parents, we are proud of you, too.
>>
>> Our school community is experiencing a period of change that it has been very difficult
at times. We are fortunate that so many in our community care so deeply about our schools,
but sometimes that passion can spill over into frustration. While the focus of the school
community should always be on what's best for current and future students, it has too
often appeared to be otherwise in recent weeks. Your letter to us regarding participation
at graduation underscored that point.
>>
>> This is your time, and graduation is your day. To make absolutely certain the focus of
the ceremony is where it belongs, we agree that it is best to do as you have asked and put
a pause on the current tradition of having a board member pass out diplomas to students.
Instead, we will be among the loudest voices in the audience cheering you on.
>>
>> Each of you represents a tradition of excellence at Oyster River High School and in our
district as a whole. It's a tradition that we volunteer our time as Board members to
preciously preserve and update for the opportunities and challenges of a new time. It's a
tradition to which all of us in the community are devoted, and which will keep our
district strong through the turbulence that comes with change.
>>
>> Class of 2012, we salute you! See you on graduation day.
>>
>> Sincerely,
>> the ORCSD School Board
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>> On Sun, May 29, 2011 at 10:49 PM, Megan Turnbull <mmshea@chicagogsb.edu> wrote:
>> Hi Rhoades,
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>> Per our conversation, we have been working on a letter to respond to the high school
senate's request to not participate in graduation ceremonies.
>>
>> Below are two draft letters (one attached as a doc. file) and one cited below. Please
take a look and let us know what would work well. I think a combination of the two may be
effective.
>>
>> Again, we would have our board chair, Henry Brackett, read aloud the letter at our June
1, Wednesday 7PM school board meeting to approve for submission to the student senate.
>>
>> Thanks,
>>
>> Megan
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>> ***
>> Dear Oyster River Senior Class,
>>
>> First, congratulations on your upcoming graduation. As Board members, community members
and parents, we are proud of your accomplishments here at Oyster River and wish you well
in your future endeavors.
>>
>> Second, we wish to respond to your recent letter regarding School Board participation
in your upcoming ceremony. Given the recent events surrounding the principal search and
its outcome, we realize that the participation of the Board at this event may cause a
potential distraction. Your graduation ceremony is important to us and to our community
and therefore we believe it is in the best interests of the community to waive the current
tradition of having a Board member pass out diplomas to students. Instead, Board Members
will attend the ceremony to celebrate your day.
>>
>> Looking ahead at the role the School Board plays in future graduations is a topic that
we would like to explore with students in the upcoming school year. There are several
different ways that Boards participate in these ceremonies and we would like to explore
together with the students how best to acknowledge this important milestone in your life
and how to develop a meaningful tradition for our district.
>>
>> Best Wishes, The ORCSD School Board
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