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*Pursuing Excellence for Every Student, Every Day*

December 13, 2021

Dear Families,

Last week, administrators at Lebanon High School and Seven Oak Middle School were made aware of Instagram pages that negatively targeted groups of students at our schools. Lebanon Community Schools' policy [ACB](#), entitled All Students Belong, follows Oregon's Every Student Belongs [rule](#); they state 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."***

Not only were several federally- and state-protected groups of individuals harassed on, and harmed by, these social media pages, but the pages are followed by many additional students, and that's where you, our families and community, come in. We need your help. Have you talked with your student about the responsibilities that come with their rights on social media? (There are [resources](#) to help.) Do they know how you feel about bullying? How do *they* feel about the messages posted by their peers? Do you know what pages your student follows and what privacy they have? (There are [resources](#) to help there, too.)

School devices and accounts do not allow access to social media; however, these posts are occurring on students' personal devices and often done so anonymously. Creating a hostile environment or a disturbance for others at school is not free speech: Oregon Department of Education reminds us that "schools are protected spaces that regulate what students can do, wear, and say because safe, welcoming schools don't allow bullying and harassment." Even when cyberbullying does not occur in school, schools can step in to protect the safety and educational access of students. While this does make our jobs more difficult, we want to emphasize this: even if your student is not actively participating in these social media posts, if they are following or "liking" them, they are a bystander and are passively involved in bullying behavior.

In response to these latest events, we have initiated conversations with school and district leaders, Lebanon Police Department, and the Office of Civil Rights. We are communicating with Instagram to have the accounts and postings removed. We have reached out with care and support for the students targeted. Lebanon High and Seven Oak will be discussing this issue with all students in the coming weeks. Students who engage in leadership and extracurricular activities that represent our schools will hear from their advisors and coaches.

Since these conversations will be happening in our classrooms, we appreciate your help in reinforcing them at home. When *all* students unfollow these pages and starve them of attention, they not only lose power, but we reinforce our values and increase our pride in our schools and community.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership at home. We couldn't do our work here without you. To share a concern, please contact your school administrator.

Sincerely,

Bo Yates, Superintendent