

3/4/2021

As a disclaimer: My name is Colin Perucco and Dom Bradburn has been kind enough to speak on my behalf tonight. My message today comes as a public employee concerned about issues surrounding my public employment. With that in mind, I want to address why you are all gathered today.

Some of you are here because you have students in the district and some of you ARE students in the district. Some of you are here because you have had students who received an education in Minnetonka and some of you are alumni. Some of you are here because you know me and many more of you are here even though you don't.

No matter what got you here tonight, what is important is that you are here and what is important is WHY you are here. While the situation is complicated, there is a clear message you are sending with your presence: you believe that all students have the right to feel seen and heard in their learning environment and that teachers should be supported in making this a reality every day.

No teacher wakes up and thinks about the political and social agenda they plan to push in their classroom. Most of us wake up and think about how we are going to show our students that we respect them, care about them, see them, and hear them. We look for opportunities to make them better citizens and active participants in their world. We try to create inclusive and welcoming communities that celebrate individuality and respectfully acknowledge differences. We do this in an attempt to address the whole student and, specifically, support their mental health, an issue that in part led to the need for and creation of Goal 2.

As a result, teachers come to school each day trying to uphold the mission, vision, and goals of the Minnetonka School District. This sometimes calls for us to have hard conversations and address difficult topics. Therefore, it is the district's responsibility that teachers feel safe, whether virtually streaming into a student's home or physically in the classroom, as we strive to have these open conversations. It can feel impossible to reach these high standards if the district does not follow through in supporting its teachers in these difficult tasks and we ask that the district do just that: send the message that teachers are supported in their work to deliver on district expectations.

I wish I could be with you tonight to voice my concerns to the school board. I know that many other teachers wish they could be out here in support of this message, too. However, many of us are doing what we do every day: putting the needs of our students and their families ahead of our own beliefs and fulfilling the expectations of our jobs. We are currently engaged in parent teacher conferences which preclude us from being able to attend tonight. That, however, does not mean we do not care about this message. I can speak from experience that many of my colleagues believe this is important and share opinions similar to my own: we want to be able to provide our students with the world-class education this district stands for and we want to know that the district will support us in this effort. We hope that moments like this will allow the district to move forward and that we can work together to uphold and

build on the values of inclusion, equity, and excellence. We hope that we can someday be a part of a district that is willing to ask us to strive for excellence and belonging AND back us up when we try to deliver on that directive.

Your support of me and my fellow educators means more than we could ever express. Your being here speaks volumes to the work that we are trying to do and the work that still needs to be done. Your actions and words are making a difference in this world and I hope that our students can look to this as a moment when the greater community stepped up for them. I also hope that they will see an outcome from this message that demonstrates the board's commitment to Goal #2 on excellence and belonging and that ALL students will be seen and heard every day in Minnetonka Schools.

Thank you for your support, thank you for your time, and thank you for standing up today. You are helping build the future for the students of this district and your actions give me hope that it will be bright!

Keep on keeping on!

Colin