

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter". That is why I make this statement today.

My name is Jennifer Karls; I am a parent and I serve as President of the Bellevue Special Needs PTA. On behalf of the Board of Directors of the BSNPTA, I sent to all of the School Board members as well as Dr. Mills, Eva Collins and Jose de Jesus Melendez a document that outlined some concerns that we have with regard to Policy 2420 being discussed during the study session today. I hope that you have all received this information but in the event that you have not had a chance to read it yet, I will share an overview of our concerns.

Parent communication, involvement and collaboration are known to be vitally important to the success of children in school. Some of the language that may be coming out of this policy and other policies in the 2000 series seem to limit requirements for parental notifications and therefore limit their involvement.

The Social Emotional Learning of a child is critically important to their success not only in school but also in life. The District has shown through their actions in our schools and the formation of a SEL curriculum review committee that there is agreement that these are important skills for students to develop. Yet, the language that would assure parents continue to be informed of their student's growth in these areas is being removed from the policy.

Additionally, it appears that language to inform parents if their middle or high school students are failing a class mid-term, other than via an electronic reporting system, is being removed. We know that there are many parents in our community that for a variety of reasons cannot easily, if at all, access an online system. It should be the goal of the school board to be certain that their policies do not help to create inequities.

While we understand that the district fully intends to continue to include students social and emotional growth on elementary report cards and that parents may still receive some notification when their students are failing through their procedures, we feel that it is of great importance that there be language included in the policy that protects the parents right to be informed of their child's progress.