

Subject: SSAC Statement to School Board and Superintendent

Date: Thursday, May 25, 2023

In January of this year, when I appeared before the School Board and the Superintendent in my capacity as Chair of the Social Studies Advisory Committee, Dr. Duran shared with me that APS teachers are concerned about the current national trend of scrutinizing how teachers present lessons on history, social studies, and civics. Dr. Duran asked if our committee could help APS support its teachers. Our committee decided that a statement made to APS teachers by the Board and Superintendent would be the most effective way to demonstrate support for our teachers.

SSAC has drafted, discussed, and revised the statement over the last several months. All members who attended committee meetings expressed their support for the statement, as did our staff liaison, Terrell Fleming. We are pleased to share this statement with you now.

Thank you,
Caroline Rogus
Chair
Social Studies Advisory Committee

SSAC Statement to School Board and Superintendent Duran

The Social Studies Advisory Committee, part of APS's Advisory Committee on Teaching and Learning, requests that the School Board and Superintendent Duran issue the following statement in support of APS teachers.

Statement of Support

Dr. Duran, Superintendent, and Members of the School Board for Arlington Public Schools (APS) recognize that APS elementary school teachers and its secondary social studies and history teachers are innovative professional educators who consistently demonstrate how to teach the difficult but important lessons of Virginia, U.S., and World history and social science with rigor, compassion, and courage. The Superintendent and School Board also recognize that APS teachers have expressed concerns about what and how they may teach topics in history and social studies, given the current intensified scrutiny of public school administrators and teachers.

To that end, the School Board states its unequivocal support for APS teachers of history and social studies. APS teachers will not face adverse professional consequences when they teach topics and ideas that are included in APS-approved curricula or otherwise align with the Values of APS: Excellence, Equity, Inclusivity, Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation, and Stewardship. The Superintendent and School Board support APS teachers who teach their subjects accurately and with developmentally appropriate methods, and who encourage their students to make inquiries and to find verifiable evidence in response to those inquiries.

We as a school community are committed to the APS Vision "to be an inclusive community that empowers all students to foster their dreams, explore their possibilities, and create their futures." A public education that includes instruction on racial justice, equity, and diversity is

essential to that Vision. No APS teacher should fear for their jobs when they incorporate the Values of our school community into their lessons about our past.