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MEDIA STATEMENT

Fresno Unified Takes Action from BSU Input

As promised by Superintendent Nelson at the District’s press conference on May 6th, 2022 addressing a racist social media post, the District is updating its actions taken since this culturally destructive act. The Fresno Unified School District is acting upon input and requests made by students in our Black Student Unions (BSUs). The District is sharing actions taken from those seven requests, as well as other actions taken intended to support an inclusive and culturally proficient culture across the district.

Immediate discipline of students involved in posing and capturing the image
All students involved have been investigated and disciplinary action has been taken. We are unable to share any details of those disciplinary actions due to student privacy.

The enrollment of the involved students into cultural sensitivity training
Involved students will undergo a reentry process that includes cultural sensitivity learning.

The immediate discipline of staff members who were supervising students
An in-depth staff investigation is taking place by an external, unbiased investigatory firm. As results are being finalized, disciplinary actions are being taken. When appropriate cultural sensitivity training is also being assigned.

A formal address to all students from their principal on the culturally destructive nature of racism
The principal has taken several actions to address cultural destructiveness. This has included conducting staff meetings, providing written communication to all staff, addressing all students in
a schoolwide announcement, and ongoing messages sent home to families. The principal has also met with BSU students and has been a part of brainstorming and planning with clubs, advisors, and affinity groups to dive into long-term planning around school culture.

**The expanded enrollment of Ethnic Studies and other topical Ethnic Studies classes**

Implementation of our newly designed Ethnic Studies courses is ongoing. Currently Ethnic Studies is offered at every comprehensive high school. Based on student interest, staffing is aligned. Fresno Unified is committed to implementing a graduation requirement of Ethnic Studies ahead of the state timeline.

**Hiring of black faculty and administrators with the goal of at least a five-year retention**

With the adoption of a new strategic plan in October of 2020, this is the first time the district has had a specific staff-focused goal, which is focused on our staffing better aligning with the demographics of our student populations. In that effort, the district has ongoing collaborations with higher education partners with a specific focus on the recruitment of BIPOC candidates. Affinity groups such as Men of Color in Educational Leadership (MCEL) and Black Women Educators United (BWEU) have been implemented and supported. Fresno Unified also receive a grant from the Wallace Foundation to develop our Equity Centered Pipeline Initiative, which focuses on recruiting, developing, promoting, and retaining leaders with an equity lens.

**The implementation of a student governing board to assess the enforcement of anti-racist policies**

District leaders have met to review and revise board policy to add a Race & Social Action Student Advisory Board (SAB) Member at our high schools. One Race & Social Action SAB Member will be elected to serve as a third student board member with our Board of Education. The district is also committed to relaunched the Student Voice Collaborative which meets with the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent on a quarterly basis.

**Other actions taken**

Our instructional leadership team has developed a new first four-hour response protocol for responding effectively to culturally destructive events. Our constituent services team is reviewing and updating our Parent Student Handbook to include language on our district’s response to racism. Our district is committed to continuing our work developing culturally proficient leaders and staff, which includes professional learning, resources, and intentional observation. Fresno Unified’s DEI Praxis Collaborative working on the next steps to continue pursuing their four goals of cultural proficiency, multicultural education, culturally responsive practices, and social action. Superintendent has been meeting regularly with the district’s affinity groups like MCEL and BWEU, who have been providing guidance on how to build and support an inclusive culture for our district. Those meetings will continue.

These actions were first shared with our BSU advisors and students as promised. There is much work to continue to be done and we are committed to doing what it takes to develop and sustain a safe, inclusive culture across Fresno Unified School District.

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