

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools spends significant time training staff and working with students in matters of equity. I consider us to be a progressive school district, so it stands to reason, when it comes to equity training for both students and staff. We are very concerned any time there are accusations of racist behaviors, and we take these conversations very seriously.

In the past three weeks, we have heard from many in our community who are concerned about a picture and comments posted on a social media site. We have been questioned about any consequences for the students involved.

First, it is unlawful for us to publicly discuss these matters. It is never permissible for us to share confidential information about our students. Second, while some would say we are hiding behind the first amendment, I would say we are standing on the first amendment. Students are guaranteed the same rights as all citizens.

Having said that, we agree that there is still much work to do. The implications, and sometimes unintended consequences, that arise on social networking sites need a more deliberate approach. Implicit bias does exist in all of us, regardless of our race. We need to address it directly whether it is in classrooms or in teachable moments on athletic fields, at extra-curricular events or in our school hallways.

As a school district, we are always looking to improve, and that includes our equity work with students, staff and our entire community. We need to recognize and celebrate the differences that bring a very healthy diversity to our schools.