



Island County Public Health

Shawn Morris, ND – Public Health Director

1 NE 7th St, Coupeville, WA 98239

Ph: Whidbey 360-679-7350 | Camano 360-678-8261 | N Whidbey 360-240-5554

Email: Publichealth@islandcountywa.gov | www.islandcountywa.gov

April 16, 2024

TO: Stanwood Camano School Board
FROM: Island County Board of Health
RE: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policies

Dear Stanwood-Camano School Board Members,

The Island County Board of Health is writing to express our deep dismay regarding recent statements made by two elected school board members during the Stanwood-Camano School Board meeting on March 19th, 2024. In alignment with our mission and values, we are also writing to express our strong support for the board's decision to maintain diversity, equity, and inclusion language in school policies. The Board of Health calls on all educational agencies to actively foster inclusive and supportive environments where all children and youth can learn and grow. We envision communities where all of our young people have the resources and support they need to realize their full potential.

The statements made at the March 19th meeting undermine the worth and dignity of children and families in our communities and the educators that serve our children. Recovery is a journey, and we firmly believe in the potential of all children and the strength and resilience of their parents and caregivers. We must support this potential with resources, policies, and constructive actions, acknowledging our shared responsibility for the well-being of our students. We embrace and celebrate the diversity within our communities and we are committed to working with our partners to cultivate safe and welcoming environments for all.

This incident underscores the need for greater education of policymakers in equity and inclusion principles and practices. The Island County Board of Health stands in full solidarity with the school district's pledge to empower every student within the Stanwood-Camano School District. As stewards of public health, we recognize our responsibility to effect systemic change. Our board members take this responsibility to heart, and we call on other local elected officials to join us in this essential effort. To this end, the Island County Board of Health remains committed to addressing biases, disparities, and discrimination as we champion equity throughout Island County.

Sincerely,

Island County Board of Health Chair

Commissioner Melanie Bacon

Attested:

Dr. Shawn Morris

Island County Public Health Director