

We are the nine McMinnville residents who comprise our city's first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee, established by the City Council last year to "create a culture of acceptance and mutual respect that acknowledges differences and strives for equity."

We are volunteering our time and energy because we love McMinnville—and see that there is more we can do to make our city welcoming to all.

We are writing to share our concern about recent moves by the Newberg School Board to consider banning Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Pride flags in its buildings and challenging policies on anti-racism and inclusion.

The purpose of BLM and Pride flags is to demonstrate love and acceptance, promote equity, and denounce racism and discrimination. As Dundee Elementary Principal Reed Langdon told his community last month: "We believe that we can be anti-racist and still love those police officers that are doing great work... Right now, our BIPOC [Black, Indigenous, People of Color] community is fearful and it is important for them to know we support them and see them in their moment of need. Supporting them in this time does not take away the love and support we have for others in the community." The same is true for our LGBTQ+ community.

The policy that the Newberg School Board is considering rescinding states: "All students are entitled to a high quality educational experience, free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin." It also states that employees are "to work in an environment that is free from discrimination or harassment based on perceived race, color, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or national origin."

That those words could be considered controversial is, frankly, abhorrent to us. We want McMinnville and our neighboring communities to be a place where all are welcome. To our neighbors who feel threatened or unwelcome because of the Newberg School Board's proposed actions: We stand with you.