Good afternoon. My name is Christine Moses. I am the Executive Director of Communications here at Lake Oswego School District.

I have a brief statement and will not be taking questions today.

Racism exists in our schools and our communities across the country. We here at Lake Oswego School District have had our entire school community hurt deeply by recent events.

Our utmost concern is for the victim and their well-being and to make sure this never happens again.

The offending students did violate school board policy in regards to harassment and our investigation into their behaviors are ongoing.

We support student voices, their safety and learning along with their right to demonstrate in a peaceful manner. We estimate about half of the students participated in the peaceful walk out. High school students were guest speakers along with junior high students from the school. The message they sent was about changing the culture of the school and creating a safer place for all. It is important for student voices to be part of the discussion.

As educators we must interrupt racism, bullying and harassment in our schools. As administrators, principals, teachers, bus drivers, and staff we must all do better by our students. We have to stop the inappropriate behavior.

As citizens, when we hear and see things that are racist or discriminatory, we must address these behaviors -- in our schools and in our homes and in our community.

Lake Oswego School District wants to learn from this incident and move forward.

On February 13, Lake Oswego Junior High will host a Listen and Learn event for its parents. It will be a chance for parents to discuss these issues.
On February 26, junior high parents are invited to attend the site advisory committee meeting to discuss the school’s racial climate.

Student events will be launched this month at the junior high. Curricular additions that focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion for students are underway and will be made permanent.

There are district-wide initiatives at every level to increase administrator, teacher and parent awareness in order to become the inclusive and welcoming learning environment we want for all students. And, in early January, we posted a full-time position for Director of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion who will lead these efforts. We embrace our leadership role in facilitating conversations across the entire community. In partnership with the City, the Chamber, and our faith-based organizations, we will be hosting a community-wide event this spring in order to address these issues.

Racism is learned behavior. If we are going to change beliefs and behaviors it must be from an educational stance.

Dr. Martin Luther King said, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

That is the work we are engaged in today, tomorrow and far into the future.

Thank you.