



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 18th, 2021

The CUES School System is a unique school system that offers tailored education and interactive learning. As part of our multicultural curriculum we offer interactive book readings presented by our teachers.

Last week, a teacher from Holy Name Catholic School was reading to eighth grade students "Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer - Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement" written by Carole Boston Weatherford. This book is part of the recommended curriculum by the Archdiocese and approved by the CUES School System.

This teacher was trying to express the anguish of the author's experience during the Civil Rights Movement, the same anguish many feel today, and she read aloud a word that has a history of trauma for many people of color. This interactive read aloud was recorded for students who are learning remotely during the pandemic. The original recording was an hour long and the video shared was taken out of context to make the lesson plan sound racist and inflammatory.

This matter has been reviewed by our school principal, the president of the CUES Schools System and members of the Archdiocese equity and diversity team. We are convinced that the teacher meant no malice or harm and supports the dignity of all human persons.

As a result of this situation, we have learned that more work needs to be done in the area of coaching our teachers about culturally responsive language and historic trauma experienced by people of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

CUES Schools currently use Restorative Practices and will continue these practices to prevent harm through relationship building, advancing our cultural knowledge, and repairing past harm.

Schools within the Archdiocese are working towards growth of cultural competency and restoration of past harms. Our Diversity and Equity Committee, formed in 2018, includes the Archdiocese's assistant superintendent of schools, president of CUES School System, and Holy Name School principal.

This committee is already working on providing resources and support for the review of curriculum and educational materials, as well as building educator cultural competencies and responsiveness through professional learning and educator practices. These resources and supports will continue to be implemented at Holy Name, and all CUES schools. We will continue to strive for better, more inclusive schools where all can come and feel welcome and safe.

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