

6/14/13

Scott,

Thank you for the opportunity to address the comments that you shared with me. Here are my responses:

1. Working with a parent we were able to coordinate a visit from Eve Ensler, the author of *The Vagina Monologues*. The visit was prompted by the Verde Article about rape culture. Our journalism, theatre, and teacher librarian collaborated to create an amazing experience for students with this visit by Ms. Ensler. The event was moderated by two Paly students and was just the beginning of a larger conversation. While I do not recall my exact words, I do remember saying something like "Why are you leaving? This is about vagina monologues."
2. Streakers continue to be an ongoing nuisance at Paly. This year teachers and students have expressed concerns about the frequency and number of streakers. We have devoted ongoing and serious staff efforts to control this issue. We have stationed staff at entry and exit points, discouraged streaking with a letter home and verbal conversations with the Seniors. During brunch one day there was a group of at least 10 female streakers. I was walking through the quad as the streakers ran across the front area of the senior deck. As I made my way to the senior deck, I said "Gosh, that looks painful. That must hurt their boobs."
3. My initial reaction to this comment is that I have never said anything of the sort and I never would say anything of this nature. This is simply not a comment I would make in any situation, social or professional. The only conversation I can recall that this comment may be in reference to is one in which the [REDACTED] who was struggling significantly, both academically and emotionally, was talking to me about [REDACTED] attending end of the year activities at Paly. [REDACTED] but struggled so significantly that the best educational environment was [REDACTED] so that he could rapidly recover credits in order to graduate from high school. In addition to the Paly staff, [REDACTED] had supported him extensively academically. When [REDACTED] asked me about him attending end of the year events, I said "no" and stated that [REDACTED] so he could not attend baccalaureate, picnic, graduation, or the graduation party. I do not remember exactly what I said, but I am absolutely confident I did not say you need to sit on his face, but rather something like, "Make sure you stay on him and make sure he gets his work done." For the last three years, I have been extraordinarily supportive of [REDACTED] and our staff has invested a massive amount of time in his well-being. I also think that it is significant to note that during graduation the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] leaned into me as she shook my hand and stated with a smile that [REDACTED] hates me.

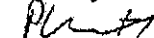
4. I was talking to [REDACTED] and asked if there was a Facebook page that seniors used to communicate about streaking. I said that they should add me so we could stop the streaking. I followed up with a statement indicating that if they saw their Principal as a member then maybe they would stop streaking, because it is not something any of us support and we need to stop it. [REDACTED] said "no, there is not a Facebook page and that it wouldn't be appropriate if there was."

5. Our District has a dress code that indicates that appearance and dress be in the limits of decency and appropriateness for school. Students continually push these limits of decency and expose themselves. It is a constant struggle. Yes, I have said "Your butt cheeks are hanging out, that is not appropriate" followed up with a directive that they need to cover up and not wear shorts that do not provide adequate coverage at school. It should be noted that students adjusted and changed to more appropriate clothing. I have, as have other administrators and staff, had similar conversations with male students about excessive displays of skin. Furthermore, many staff members have consistently expressed concerns to administration about students' body parts showing or hanging out, so this was done in support of staff with the purpose of creating a safe learning and teaching environment for all. I also want to note that the words used above were only used for students who were grossly inappropriately dressed for school.

6. My favorite educational experiences are [REDACTED]. As my teaching reviews indicate, I have proven myself as an outstanding advocate and educator [REDACTED]. If any of my staff felt that my interactions with [REDACTED] were inappropriate they did not indicate that to me or, to the best of my knowledge, my administrative team. Just as I've always encouraged professional growth for teachers, I've frequently solicited feedback on my performance from staff and my team. Had this information been shared with me, I would have been eager to resolve any concerns or make adjustments if necessary.

It is always disappointing when statements or conduct are misinterpreted, but I understand that this is going to happen from time to time, and I do my best to avoid such misinterpretations. I am certain I can do still better in that respect and I will take these comments as a learning experience that will help me further improve.

Sincerely,


Phil Winston

6/12/13

Phil,

Here is the information that came in regarding inappropriate comments to students.