

January 18, 2016

Randi Weingarten, President
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
555 New Jersey Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Ms. Weingarten:

We are writing today to make you aware of a reprehensible action committed by one of your affiliates' staff members. The Douglas County Federation of Teachers and Classified Employees (DCFT) is an American Federation of Teachers affiliate in the Douglas County (Colorado) School District (DCSD).

On January 12, DCSD held a regularly scheduled District Accountability Committee (DAC) meeting. One of the DAC members, an elementary school teacher, was present. The DCFT was tweeting the meeting from its official account, @Dougcofed. The person tweeting on behalf of the DCFT made a post to which she attached a direct message screenshot. A copy of the tweet (with the teacher's name redacted) is included with this letter for your reference. As you can see, the message referred to one of our teachers as resembling a "penis" and subsequently in the same tweet as a "douchebag." After this tweet was sent, the DCFT's tweets of the meeting continued in a more appropriate manner. However, the DCFT Twitter account has since been deleted in its entirety. A telling sign, for sure.

It is incomprehensible and inexcusable to us that the DCFT, which claims to be "committed to supporting DCSD teachers and staff," used an official social media platform to engage in this despicable attack on a dedicated classroom teacher. As you have suggested many times, teachers are the heart and soul of education and what we do for students. They do not deserve to be singled out and subjected to vicious smears on social media. Why, indeed, would any teacher wish to join the DCFT at this point, when its staffers might choose at any time to make him or her the latest target of an appalling public invective?

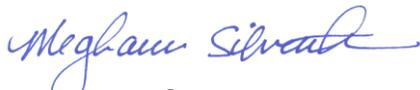
One way to begin restoring the credibility of both the Douglas County and American Federation of Teachers would be to terminate the AFT's local representatives for this act of unprofessionalism and failure of leadership, as well as the individual who posted the actual tweet. The DCFT has asserted the "Weiner defense" against their behavior, which is that they are the "victim" of a Twitter account hack. If you unquestioningly accept this explanation, then the perception will be reinforced that the DCFT and the AFT care little about teachers and a lot about shielding their own agents from outrage that the public will rightly express. In the event a credible investigation is conducted, we expect you will make public the results of the investigation – clearly demonstrating the account was hacked and that you will file with the appropriate law enforcement officials so that the hackers can be brought to justice. Alternatively, if this is a case of your

affiliate's officers attacking a teacher, we expect you will take swift action to remove the local leadership that created a culture resulting in this attack, one of the most egregious we have ever seen.

We call upon you to hold your affiliate accountable. The elementary school teacher deserves an apology from the DCFT for this disgraceful behavior. Our teachers and staff know that the focus should be on the phenomenal things our students and staff accomplish every day in the classroom, not the nasty and inappropriate comments found in social media. Furthermore, teachers who engage in this sort of behavior are not the teachers we want in our schools as leaders and role models for our children.

We on the Board of Education are here to support teachers – we always have been and always will be. We hope the DCFT will choose, in the future, to do the same.

Yours sincerely,



Meghann Silverthorn
President



Judith Reynolds
Vice President



DAC meeting. [REDACTED]
looks like a penis. And that's
not a compliment #douchebag

56 Tweet



DCF @Dougcofed · 12m

Brownrigg recognizes Wendy Vogel and apologizes for not doing it sooner. Vogel is a rep from two SACs.

