

**MEDIA ALERT
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Statement from Superintendent Narcisse:

Everything we do in the East Baton Rouge Parish Public School System is about providing the best education possible for our students to ensure their successful futures and to uplift our community. And with that focus, we engaged with an organization that has facilitated the “Day of Hope” event for 10 years with many EBRPSS students participating over that time.

The Memorandum of Understanding we signed with the facilitating organization states, “The collaborators together at Day of Hope will stimulate students to identify their purpose by exposing them to others in the world that overcame challenges and setbacks. Teens will get an opportunity to receive collegiate and trade school exposures to help reach their full potential in life. Our vision is for teens that attend Day of Hope is to instill an individual sense of responsibility and that each student recognizes the need to have a plan with life-enhancing goals.”

It has been 16 days since the event took place. In that time, our district leaders have made exhaustive attempts to identify evidence to support claims and concerns expressed to and through traditional and social media by a few students who attended the event. As we have viewed stated accounts provided to media outlets and heard troubling accusations and individual take-away perceptions of the event, we have not received, nor have we been able to find verifiable evidence supporting any of those claims and accusations.

While there has been no shortage of speculation from a chorus of adults who were not in attendance, we have found no evidential proof or verification of claims based on their secondhand information. Considering this was an event attended by approximately 2,100 students, organizers, and staff volunteers – most, if not all of whom had cell phone cameras in their pockets – we feel certain that if the claims contained demonstrable facts, we would be able to verify them with hard evidence and would surely take appropriate action. We simply have not discovered, nor have we received any such evidence.

There have been no direct, attributable quotes to support narratives provided by a few individual students, nor have we found consensus in media reports about what may or may not have happened that day. The claims made are not “testimony.” They are subjective, individual, and personal accounts provided by a few.

What we have ascertained in the bulk of the reports are adults making claims based on anecdotal perceptions from students. We simply have not received a great number of complaints. In the two weeks since the event, EBR Schools has received a total of one direct email containing a parent’s concerns about this event. That actuality suggests that much of the outrage displayed by those interviewed in media stories does not represent the desire for honest answers or a solution, rather confrontation and contention. What our research did find externally were social media posts, videos, and anecdotes directly from students who were in attendance and praised the event and their firsthand experiences.



I recognize the call for an internal and external review by the same staff members that have already assisted in conducting the investigation for the past 15 days and found no hard evidence. If the EBR School Board is comfortable spending additional taxpayer dollars, staff time, and critical resources to duplicate the efforts of the past two weeks that resulted in no evidence to match the allegations, then it is well within its discretion to do so.

As Superintendent and having received no direct documentation of wrongdoing on behalf of EBRPSS, it is my duty and responsibility to students, educators, taxpayers, and the Board to leave further investigation of this matter to the board — should they vote to do so. I will remain laser focused on students and ensuring educators have the support they need to get remarkable results with students every year.

In the 18 months that I have been Superintendent, we have invested heavily in our students: historic innovation and investments to expand access to early childhood education; literacy coaches in every school to improve literacy rates; getting more students on track by the end of ninth grade so they are more likely to graduate on time and expanded access to courses in high school that provide college credit and a career credential, should students be ready to enter the workforce after high school. And we are well on track to see tremendous growth in our students.

It is my job — and responsibility — to lead our school system, and that is where I will continue to maintain my focus. Should any hard evidence be received or presented, I am more than willing to accept it and take any appropriate resulting action.

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The East Baton Rouge Parish School System will be the cornerstone of the community as a premier educational institution by inspiring, cultivating and producing a modern workforce prepared to create a robust and thriving economy.

