

AUSD's Statement on Black Lives Matter on School Campuses

The ACLU released a press release Wednesday morning claiming that AUSD had issued a "Black Lives Matter ban" on our campuses. The headline and facts reported were misleading. We would like to take this opportunity to clarify the issues involved.

First and most importantly, AUSD has no ban on "Black Lives Matter" material. AUSD honors our students' First Amendment right to engage in political speech. As such, students on our campuses have been wearing Black Lives Matter t-shirts and stickers, creating Black Lives Matter artwork, and supporting Black Lives Matter as a movement for some time.

What AUSD does not allow is the posting or distribution of materials by *outside groups or community members*. This policy has been in place since 2009 and was created with guidance by the California School Boards Association. It is a policy that is shared by many districts in the state. It applies not only to social or political issues but commercial establishments, private educational institutions, and any other type of issue or entity.

This policy exists because, as a government agency, we cannot pick and choose among various causes to support. In other words, if we allow one group to use our facilities for publicizing their cause, we have to allow all groups to use our facilities to publicize their cause. This could become quite controversial quite fast and disrupt our teaching and learning environments.

We are aware that the ACLU's press release distressed some community members. We hope this clarification helps to reassure all community members that the "ban" reported by the ACLU does not exist. To the contrary, we support our students' rights to discuss and display materials related to social and political issues.