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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

November 22, 2016

Dr. S. Dallas Dance  
Superintendent  
Baltimore County Public Schools  
6901 North Charles Street  
Towson, MD 21204-3780  
Faxed to (410) 887-4309

Dear Dr. Dance,

As a member of Congress, with Baltimore County among the twelve counties that I represent, I am writing to you with concern about your controversial re-tweet on the night of November 8th, as our country was in the middle of selecting the next president.

I do wish you had responded to my request to discuss this issue by telephone, but since you haven't, I am writing instead.

When the original tweet was sent at 8:40 PM, no one knew who the next president was going to be. When you re-tweeted it before midnight, it was still true that no one knew who the next president was going to be. So exactly how was there going to be fear among certain students of the new president the next day when it wasn't even clear at the time who that was?

What is particularly disturbing to me is that this was done as an official act, on your official Baltimore County School System Twitter account, which I imagine is supported in some way by public funds. As a member of the House Appropriations subcommittee that deals with federal funding of education, I am always concerned with how taxpayer monies meant to educate students (and not to advance a political agenda) are being used.

I am particularly concerned when taxpayer funds are being used to discriminate based on race or religion. In your re-tweet, why were only some racial or religious groups singled out? Was it perhaps that you only viewed one candidate's rhetoric as harmful? For example, why weren't you concerned for those Americans or Christians with deeply-held cultural or religious beliefs who may have been frightened (like I was) by Secretary Clinton's rhetoric that "deep-seated cultural codes, religious beliefs and structural biases have to be changed." (April 2015). Or those who were afraid that a Clinton presidency would follow the same track of persecuting groups like the Little Sisters of the Poor for their resistance to mandates of the ACA that blatantly (and probably unconstitutionally) disregarded their religious belief? I hope that it wasn't because those groups didn't fit your political agenda.

Perhaps in the future you will show broader sensitivity to those who may not share your views. That's what would truly be appropriate for the leader of a school system, especially one who leads a broadly diverse student body.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "AHarris, M.D.", written in a cursive style.

Andy Harris, M.D.  
Member of Congress

cc: Baltimore County Board of Education