



**What's going on at YOUR school?  
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Contact: Paul White, (775) 685-8200

April 9, 2023

## **An Easter Message About Our Schools**

2.4 billion Christians are preparing to celebrate Easter this Sunday commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This holy day's timeless, universal message offers inspiring lessons to people of all faiths, or no faith at all, for solving the full range of life's challenges, including the growing problems within our Washoe County public schools.

The world in which the first Easter-related events occurred almost 2,000 years ago was dysfunctional and dangerous, just like our schools are becoming today. The people of that time were undoubtedly depressed by the perpetual turmoil around them and tempted to lose any hope of calming the chaos. Many citizens would have decided to just not think about the unsettling reports of constant upheaval, choosing instead to distract themselves with day-to-day activities.

Compare that Old World setting with the school problems confronting us today. The statistics regarding Washoe Schools – **just in the past few months** - are difficult to face up to: rampant drug abuse, robberies, violent fights, riots, stabbings, murder, teacher assaults, and gang activity.

ALL of these have contributed to a learning environment that makes effective teaching almost impossible. It's easy to feel that our dysfunctional school situation is hopeless, and many of US are tempted to avoid thinking about these challenges and remain uninvolved.

In celebrating Easter events, the early Christians committed to building a new way of life on higher values. They promoted and lived moral and spiritual qualities such as: fearlessness in speaking the truth; moral courage in exposing corrupt leaders, laws, and activities; and the importance of shepherding the development of children with teachings that encouraged purity and goodness.

We, too, are called to establish a new approach to teaching *our* children what they need to know to lead the world they will inherit from us. To do this, we must build *our* schools on the highest possible values.

Accomplishing this goal will require every member of our community to demonstrate moral courage. We *all* must be willing to publicly challenge people and practices that have led our children, teachers, and schools in the wrong direction.

We must demand school leadership at all levels that champions moral values, unbiased and accurate curriculum, and insists on accountable and lawful student behavior.

While ensuring equal opportunity and respect for every individual, we must expose and denounce the divisive practices of *anyone* who attempts to “cry wolf” about racial bias if no evidence of it exists. Most of all, we must be vigilant and fearless in maintaining schools that *never*

allow our children to be sexually exploited - but instead, nurture and protect their God-given purity and innocence.

Regardless of our individual religious beliefs, *all* our communities, schools, and children would be blessed and uplifted by applying the universal lessons of Easter to current efforts to transform our education system.

We cannot allow our schools to become adult employment centers or juvenile daycare facilities. It is *not* acceptable to let political indoctrination replace unbiased academic instruction. We must re-establish our education system with a higher, more selfless purpose. Our schools need a singular focus: to be safe, respectful, drug-free, and high-achieving learning facilities where ALL children are taught the skills necessary to become independent, contributing members of society.

After the first Easter, the early Christians frequently greeted each other with the words, "He is risen," referring to Jesus' resurrection.

It's an interesting coincidence that WCSD has recently chosen to identify our schools with the optimistic slogan, "On the rise!" **In light of our schools' present broken condition, the district's claim is dangerously misleading and utterly false.**

If the district's catch phrase is to become anything more than wishful thinking, it will require a demonstrated commitment by *everyone* in the community to get involved, take a moral stand, and implement the changes described herein.

**Happy Easter!**

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