

EDUCATION

# Lakota superintendent under investigation; board OKs critical race theory audit



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*A previous version of this article incorrectly stated the board approved a critical race theory audit through a third party. The board approved an internal audit.*

Lakota Local Schools superintendent Matt Miller is under investigation by the school board to determine that he "is not a threat to students and staff," board president Lynda O'Connor said during a Monday evening board meeting.

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The circumstances surrounding the investigation and what prompted it are unclear. The Enquirer is awaiting records from the school board and Butler County Sheriff's Office for clarification.

O'Connor said the board received a complaint from a community member on Aug. 22 regarding Miller, which "did not contain any direct evidence of misconduct, or that Mr. Miller presented a threat to students or staff." The complaint stated the issue was already submitted to law enforcement but there were no credible allegations against Miller.

The sheriff's investigation is complete and it found no probable cause for criminal charges, O'Connor said.

"To date, the board has not received any credible evidence of wrongdoing," O'Connor said. "However, in order to execute due diligence, and with the support of the superintendent, a

neutral party with no ties to Lakota has begun a review of the facts to confirm that the Superintendent is not a threat to students and staff."

The board declined to make additional comments regarding the complaint or the investigation until after the investigation is concluded. Miller remains on the job during the investigation.

O'Connor's statement was supported by board members Isaac Adi, Kelley Casper and Julie Shaffer.

Board member Darbi Boddy has historically criticized Miller and claims the district's use of critical race theory is indoctrinating children. On Monday the board passed an amended resolution for a critical race theory internal audit to be conducted this year. Boddy, Adi and O'Connor voted to approve an internal audit, while Casper and Shaffer voted against the proposal.

The original proposal would have been an \$82,500 critical race theory audit. It would have been conducted by Virginia-based nonprofit Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development to determine if the curriculum, curriculum documents and pacing guides or board-approved educational resources include "evidence of indoctrination or critical race theory," according to the organization's cover letter to the district.

Instead, Lakota spokesperson Betsy Fuller said, the board decided to conduct its own audit due to the cost of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and some concerns with the organization. Each board member will appoint a community member to be on the audit team.

Critical race theory is a graduate-level legal study that educators and experts agree is not taught in K-12 schools. Miller has said repeatedly the theory is not taught in Lakota schools.

The process for the internal audit will be decided at a future meeting, Fuller said.

*The Enquirer will update this article when more information on the accusations against Miller is provided.*

