

Dear Members of the Black Educators' Network,

March 10, 2022

It is with continued heavy hearts that we write to you, our community, comprised of many educators from Colorado Springs. Many of you are still impacted by the violence that took place at [Club Q in Colorado Springs on Saturday, November 19](#). As you may know, Club Q is a LGBTQ+ club and community center providing a safe space for folks to gather, to feel liberated, to celebrate, to memorialize, and to be authentic. Whether you, your friends, or your family live in Colorado Springs or not, you may feel impacted by the violence that occurred on November 19, which happened to be the Transgender Day of Remembrance, a day dedicated to honoring transgender victims of violence. This shooting was just one of many acts of escalating violence that affected the transgender community in 2022 and has continued into 2023. Unfortunately, transgender people of color tend to be affected disproportionately by large- and small-scale acts of violence. We recognize that this remains an extremely difficult time for many of you, your friends, and family, regardless of the identities you hold. Please take care of yourselves as you take time this week to be with biological and/or chosen family in your community.

BEN has been focused on the success of Black educators in the Colorado Springs area and on literacy of young people across Colorado. As educators and advocates, we understand long-standing oppression in the US and our state that seeks to undermine our own mission. When we experience, hear about, or see this psychological, verbal, or physical harassment or other undermining taking place, toward African American or other marginalized persons, the events can stir up many emotions within us. Such oppression may sometimes make us question our purpose to strive toward justice, enraging us in the short run and desensitizing us over time. As I have reflected carefully on the violence that took place in November and continues today, I've thought about our own BEN mission. Broadened success for us might look like building community on Monday evenings, like providing safe spaces for Black educators at our various events, or like moving toward passing state legislation that further supports Black, LGBTQ+, and other oppressed students, educators, and parents, in and outside of the classroom.

We encourage you to take time to reflect, pray, grieve, and heal, from the violence of Nov. 19. [There are a couple of ways to act right now, if you feel so moved \(linked\)](#). Please seek out your community for ways that you find especially helpful. These approaches may include talking with or simply checking in on friends and family members or seeking professional guidance. As BEN, we will check in with you at our next meeting to see what else we can do, within our mission and available time, to create safe spaces, provide community, strive for better equality-minded policies, or work toward other equality outcomes.

Take care,

Theresa Newsom, Chair, for the Black Educators' Network