



Pearl River School District

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Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

May 18, 2022

Dear Pearl River School District Community,

I'd like to address recent anti-Black remarks made by our students during scheduled athletics events with Nyack Public Schools this month. These offensive and unacceptable actions are hurtful and have led to serious consequences for those responsible. While we have identified and held accountable the students involved, I know this behavior in no way reflects the true character of our school community and we have zero tolerance for such hateful thinking.

We are reminded that we all have an obligation to not only confront racism when it occurs, but also to implement programs and allocate appropriate resources to prevent its continuation in our district. We must reiterate how absolutely essential it is to the core values of our school community that all persons be treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

The district's work in this regard will include moving ahead with the steps indicated in the Board of Education policy on *Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity in Education* adopted on April 12, 2022. This policy calls for the creation of an Equity Task Force to ensure that we provide "*Schools and classrooms where all students feel safe, welcomed and accepted regardless of their race, religion, identity, cultural background, and/or ability/disability.*"

The work of addressing these incidents is challenging and necessary. However, our greatest challenge and best path forward in creating inclusive, safe and respectful environments in our schools and across our programs is recognizing and understanding what fuels this hateful behavior and what can be done to prevent it in the future.

A letter of invitation will go out later today to our school community asking for volunteers to apply to join in this work as members of the Task Force. Please give this invitation your serious consideration. We are eager to get started on this journey together.

Sincerely,

