



High achievement by all students,
Where learning is our most important work

October 11, 2018

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Dear Farmington Public Schools' Families and Community Members,

I wanted to update you on several items that you may have read or heard about over the past several weeks. On September 21, there was an inappropriate comment made by an administrator about the cheer team at the Harrison High School (HHS) Pep Rally.

Following the cheer team's performance, a school administrator made an inappropriate comment where the students were referred to as strippers. This comment was made to two students by the administrator.

On Monday, September 24th, the school administration met with the cheer team and the administrator apologized to the students, followed later that same day by an apology letter shared by the administrator with the cheer families. Additionally, a formal investigation into the matter was initiated by the Human Resource Department and the District's Title IX officer.

When difficult events occur, it is important to keep in the forefront that we remain committed to creating an environment where every student can succeed and achieve their potential. This means creating a positive learning environment built on civility and respect. It means following our policies consistently and equitably. And, it means helping students and staff members understand and engage behaviors that reflect our policies and values.

When actions occur that are inconsistent with our policies, we will investigate to gain a full understanding of those concerns, hold individuals accountable when mistakes are made, take steps to prevent a recurrence of such actions by individuals involved, continue efforts to educate on equitable practices, and ensure that our processes provide fairness and due process to all involved. We are still working through the investigative process to determine the final outcome; however, we will take appropriate proactive and follow-up measures to prevent future instances of harmful comments or behaviors towards students.

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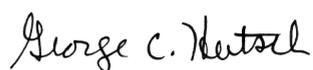
As a district, we continue to work on critical societal issues of concern:

- Continued learning on implicit bias, anti-racist practices, and transformational practice to address more equitable learning environments for our students.
- Active monitoring of, education regarding, and addressing of language and actions that do not take into account the experiences of our multifaceted community and discriminatory behaviors that undermine a safe and nurturing environment for our students.
- Working with student and parent groups to partner on collective action to promote positive, responsive learning environments in our schools.
- Having an audit conducted by an outside agency to review our processes and procedures on how the District responds to issues of inequity and marginalization. Marginalization is the process whereby something or someone is pushed to the edge of a group and accorded lesser importance. This is predominantly a social phenomenon by which a minority or sub-group is excluded, and their needs or desires ignored.
- Initiating a Feedback Tool on our website and phone app to be able to gather feedback from both our internal and external stakeholders. People leaving their feedback may identify themselves for follow up or remain anonymous.

While faced with difficult situations in our community, I want to thank all of our stakeholders for their hard work, respect, and compassion that illustrate what it means to create positive change in a hurting world. Our primary mission is to make our learning environments safe places for students. In order to achieve this mission, we need students, staff, and community members to partner with us to help us be better.

If you have questions, concerns, or stories of affirmation, please do not hesitate to contact my office or your school administrator. We remain committed to creating an environment where every student can succeed! Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Sincerely,



Dr. George C. Heitsch
Superintendent
Farmington Public Schools