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January 18, 2019

Dear Dover Community,

On November 30, 2018, an incident occurred in a Dover High School classroom in which students expressed racial insensitivity while giving an oral presentation as part of a classroom assignment. In addition to deeply affecting all those involved, this incident has had a profound impact on the Dover community.

The district would like to thank the students, teachers, parents, and community members who have been patient as we conducted a thorough investigation into this matter. The investigation is now complete, and affected students and staff members have been notified of the outcome. Federal and state confidentiality laws prevent us from releasing the report. However, the Dover School District feels that it is important to share next steps with the community.

Mr. John Carver will remain on paid administrative leave for the remainder of the 2018-2019 school year as he has committed to engage in an intensive course of study on issues pertaining to race, bias and privilege. Once that is complete, he is expected to return to his duties as a classroom teacher and coach next fall. Further, as part of an initiative that began last summer, districtwide training will be administered to all administrators, faculty and staff members on issues pertaining to race, privilege and bias in the school community in the 2019-2020 school year.

We are committed to preventing an incident like this from ever occurring again at our schools. The district deeply regrets that this incident occurred, and we acknowledge the harm that words, symbols and actions can cause, especially when offered without the proper educational framework and context. We acknowledge that we need to teach the hard lessons of our history as part of a robust social studies and civics curriculum, however the manner in which we do so must be done with respect and sensitivity.

Dover High School faculty and staff have worked continuously with our students and community members throughout the course of this process to ensure that students feel safe and valued in their classrooms and among their peers. The district has notified the Anti-Defamation League of the incident and has formed a steering committee made of school and community representatives, along with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to address future educational programming.

We recognize that these efforts must be ongoing, and we will continue to make resources available to assist and support students and employees alike.

This incident has sparked a necessary conversation among all educators in Dover to look inward and ensure that we are providing an educational environment for our students that is free of harassment and discrimination, both implicit and explicit. As superintendent, I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to the entire DHS faculty and staff for their commitment to equality and student wellbeing in this challenging time.

Dover School District Mission Statement
Empowering all Learners

Dover is a city with a rich history. Our foundation is built on tolerance and inclusion. The Dover School District is proud to continue that tradition and looks forward to putting in the hard work necessary to achieve better educational outcomes for all students.

Sincerely,

William R. Harbron, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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