



**Woodstown-Pilesgrove
Regional School District**

135 East Avenue, Woodstown, NJ 08098

Woodstown-Pilesgrove Schools are Equal Opportunity Schools

Allison Pessolano

Interim Superintendent of Schools
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September 13, 2022

Dear Dr. Dawson,

This email is to follow up on our conversation from Saturday, September 10, 2022, regarding the reports of racial slurs and sexually inappropriate comments being made to the members of the Paulsboro marching band by the spectators in the Woodstown bleachers. We are conducting an investigation on our end and are interviewing individuals to determine if more information can be identified, including specific people. If individuals can be identified, we certainly will take appropriate action. Our district does not tolerate behavior of this kind, and we have been working very hard over several years to prevent incidents like this from occurring, and this work will continue now and into the future. We are disheartened that the students of the Paulsboro school community were subjected to these behaviors at a Woodstown event.

Below are some things we are putting in place and/or continuing with our Woodstown High School students and at our football games to prevent such incidents from occurring again:

- Character Strong (our SEL program) lessons on acceptance and inclusion for all students
- Weekly grade level town hall meetings during which students will be reminded of appropriate behavior both in school and at school events
- Increased staff supervision at home events
- Increased security at home events, including escorts for visiting bands
- A repeat of the statement made at the beginning of all games that reminds fans of expected behavior and that any inappropriate behavior or comments are not tolerated and may result in removal from that and future events
- Reminders during home events to all spectators, home and visitors, to report any inappropriate behavior or comments from anyone in the stands to the nearest school representative immediately (this will help in identifying individuals at the time the offense occurs)
- Continue with No Place For Hate project through ADL

I believe I mentioned when we spoke that our district has made a dedicated effort to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion over the past several years. This involves not only work with our students and staff, but also with our larger school community, the NAACP and the E3 Network (Network for Educational Excellence Through Equity). We believe that our district and our community should be welcoming and inclusive to all who are members and all who visit. We are saddened that these events occurred in our home and have impacted the Paulsboro students and community. I plan to bring this incident to the attention of our Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee at our next meeting so we can continue to put proactive measures in place to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future.



Mission Statement: Woodstown Pilesgrove Regional Schools embody a collaborative partnership that provides a secure, supportive environment with high quality resources based upon New Jersey's Student Learning Standards, committed to challenging and empowering each individual to see and pursue his/her potential and to develop a passion for life-long learning in our diverse and changing world.



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We are always open to working collaboratively to find ways to make our school community even more welcoming and inclusive, and I appreciate any additional recommendations you may have. It is my hope that our continued efforts in this area will lead to a positive and enjoyable visit from your students at our next event.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further. I wish you and all of your staff and students the very best this school year.

Respectfully,

Allison Pessolano

Acting Superintendent, Woodstown-Pilesgrove Regional School District



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