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SPECIAL EDITION

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Community Update on Inclusion and Diversity

As we move through this difficult time for so many at Midland Public Schools and the greater Midland community, please allow us to provide an update on the racist and violent video that was recently created as well as our efforts and plans to advance MPS Inclusion and Diversity.

Since Monday, February 25, our Midland High administrative team, with support from district leaders, has concentrated their efforts on investigation, interviewing those possibly involved with the video, providing comfort and care for the victims, and support for all MHS students and staff. Our investigation is completed at this time. All information has been gathered in order to meet legal and due process rights.

As we have previously stated, we are not allowed to discuss the specifics of student discipline without violating The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), but we can say discipline, counseling and reformatory practices are occurring. Midland High administration continues to follow through on the welfare of the victims.

Below are a few highlights of the strides we have made and our future plans.

This week at MHS and across the District:

- ⇒ MHS teachers held discussions in their classrooms to help all begin to process what happened and explore ways to work together to address racism and Inclusion and Diversity issues.
- ⇒ Several staff members met with Dr. Amy Beasley from Dow Chemical's Inclusion Team to discuss short and long term initiatives.
- ⇒ During Friday afternoon's District-wide professional development, Dr. Beasley will assist MHS in facilitating conversations and professional learning on Inclusion and Diversity strategies.
- ⇒ Dr. Beasley and several staff members met with a small group of students who are deeply affected by this video and other events. We hope they feel safe to return to school, and we will continue to support their transition back to Midland High.

In the near future:

- ⇒ Midland High leadership has plans to engage the school community in an awareness campaign.
- ⇒ We are aware of a local group who is organizing a community awareness event.
- ⇒ Expand Inclusion & Diversity training (similar to Dr. Beasley's MHS staff training this week) to all MPS staff.

Long-term plans:

- ⇒ Explore the concept of providing release time to staff members who will receive training and become a point person on Inclusion and Diversity for the District.
- ⇒ Explore a school/classroom grant structure to encourage staff and students to develop and implement ideas for Inclusion and Diversity projects. Approved projects that support student participation in culture experiences, multicultural programs, promote gender equity and celebrate diversity could receive funding.
 - For example, for years an Adams Elementary staff member developed, facilitates and manages a wonderful Culture Club program for students.

I hope we continue to turn our anger and emotion into sustaining positive Inclusion and Diversity momentum. Over the last week, we have all gone through the full range of emotions, and now WE MUST TAKE ACTION to stop racism, separation and "exclusion" actions and behaviors. As educators, we sincerely believe education and awareness are our best strategies as we move forward.

Educationally yours,

Michael E. Sharrow, MPS Superintendent of Schools