

March 8, 2022

A letter to our community about recent unacceptable incidents

PITTSBORO — We have become aware of recent incidents involving students using racially insensitive language and offensive imagery. These incidents were unacceptable and do not reflect who we are as a school system or a community. Incidents such as these cannot and will not be tolerated by Chatham County Schools.

As a school system and community, we cannot be silent in the face of incidents and behavior that create an unsafe or uncomfortable environment for students in our schools. The core values espoused by this school system compel us to recognize and to interrupt any issues that demean or disrespect anyone on the basis of their race, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

No student, staff, or family should be silent when their humanity, dignity or identity are threatened, disrespected or challenged. I want to be crystal clear: Racist, homophobic or otherwise hateful behavior or speech has no place in the Chatham County School System. We are better than this as a school system and a community. I want to assure everyone that we are working with and will continue to work with families of students who are targeted in this way. Those who are acting outside of our expectations will be held accountable.

As a system, we have tools in place to encourage students to speak up when they are the target or witness behavior that is hurtful, racist and demeaning. We will be reviewing these processes to determine if revision or additional resources are needed because the truth is, if children master academics but fail to appreciate the value of inclusivity, respect and diversity, we as adults have fallen short of preparing them for tomorrow.

Moving forward, through our collective work, we must commit to dismantling racism and other negative influences that affect our school community. We must capture this moment to strengthen our commitment to ensuring that every person feels valued and respected for who they are and what they contribute to their school and our community. This means confronting issues openly, directly, transparently and unapologetically. This is our moment, we will not miss it.

Sincerely,
Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson