

OCR Resolution on OCR Process:

Before we begin our discussion, I'd like to be very clear that we all respect the Office for Civil Right's purpose and the important protective role they play in public education. Our affirmation of that shared mission is in the first clause of our resolution. Examples of dedicated staff work toward our shared goals are included in Attachment B. Our concerns with OCR are with their recent investigation practices.

Our resolution makes it clear why we have found the OCR investigation process to be unfair, excessive, and purposefully disruptive to our school district, and we hope that raising these concerns may help other school districts and broader efforts to improve the Department of Education's approach to providing technical support to public schools that face OCR investigations.

Our letters to OCR over the past year show detailed concerns with the integrity, legality and effectiveness of the OCR practices we experienced, while also making it clear that our efforts to establish mutually respectful and impartial investigative processes have not been successful. Throughout this process, our communications have been respectful and courteous and we have cooperated with OCR to provide information for ongoing investigations. -Yet, it has become clear that the disruption of our schools from OCR's investigation practices has continued to grow, despite four recent OCR findings of District compliance in completed investigations. The most recent example of this disruption is reflected in OCR's scheduling of 40 staff interviews, including 34 high school staff members, during the busiest final weeks of school. We have a responsibility to facilitate the OCR's investigations, but with consideration for student learning and school operation.

We are releasing the District letters, redacted to protect individual privacy, with the resolution to keep our community informed of our observations and progress and to provide public information for board discussion, community input, and consideration of next steps.

Our school district has a long history of fidelity to the protection of civil rights and we have provided extensive evidence to OCR documenting legal compliance with anti-discrimination and civil rights laws by our staff members. We believe very strongly that falsely implicating teachers and administrators of discrimination is no way to champion civil rights.

At the same time, it is our heartfelt responsibility to find all areas where we can learn, improve and grow stronger for the benefit and wellness of students. We are grateful to serve in a community where decades of working collaborations among staff members, students and parents have shaped the strong culture of inclusion we have in our schools. We must not take this asset for granted nor silently accept its misrepresentation. -We have consistently welcomed OCR's guidance on ways we can improve our practices.

As we continue our steadfast focus on strengthening the assets of empathy, respect and resilience in our children, and building upon our adult protocols for reaching out to students and parents in need with great care and support, we will again have the collective insights, teamwork and contributions of our students, parents and staff members to thank for the positive results.

This is a discussion item tonight and it will return for action on June 17. Mr. Chad Graff with Fagen, Freidman and Fulfrost, the district's legal advisor on this matter, is here to assist the board with questions.

