



PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
GREENE MIDDLE SCHOOL • 750 N. California Avenue • Palo Alto, CA 94303
(650) 494-8120 FAX: (650) 858-1310
Mr. Sebastian A. Benavidez III, Principal

September 3, 2021

To: Pete Colombo
From: Sebastian Benavidez
RE: Letter of Warning

Dear Pete,

This formal written letter of warning addresses the multiple parent concerns I received this week regarding inappropriate comments made to students and directly relates to CSTP 6.6, Maintaining professional responsibilities to maintain motivation and commitment to all students.

On Friday, September 3rd, I met with you, Lisa Hickey, Director of Certificated Human Resources, and [REDACTED] (PE colleague you requested to attend the meeting) in my office to discuss a total of four parent complaints received since the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. These complaints included using inappropriate language with students including calling a student a "pimp" and joking with them using the term "Deez nuts." In addition, one student felt you were not supportive when he was having difficulty with his PE locker and one student complained about contact you made with them that made them feel uncomfortable.

During the meeting, it was clear that you have been very concerned about the complaints and have taken responsibility and reflected. While the use of the term "pimp" was meant as a positive slang term, it is not an appropriate word used to address a student and will understandably be taken out of context by parents. In speaking with you on multiple occasions, you appear to be a physical communicator. While the physical contact with a student appears to be innocent, it can make students feel uncomfortable.

We discussed the range of students you work with as a teacher and coach, from 6th grade to high school upperclassmen and how essential it is for you to code-switch depending on your audience.

As a teacher of the District, you are required to use effective interpersonal and communication skills and establish good rapport and healthy relationships with students. As described above, you engaged in instances of inappropriate verbal conduct toward students, which contradicted your duties as a teacher. District Board Policy ("BP") 4119.21, which requires you to behave professionally, exercise good judgment when interacting with students and other members of the school community, engage in conduct that enhances the integrity of the District, advances the goals of the District's educational programs, and contributes to a positive school climate.

You are expected to reflect upon your conduct and take immediate steps to remediate these deficiencies. Effectively immediately, you are directed to do the following:

- Use appropriate language with your students at all times.
- Do not email directly parents who have a concern or complaint.

- Avoid physical contact with students at all times.

Failure to comply with these directives will result in disciplinary action.

A copy of this warning letter will be placed in your personnel file. You have the right to respond to this letter within 10 days.

Sincerely,



Sebastian Benavidez
Principal

cc: Personnel File