



OSSINING UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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DR. PHYLLIS GLASSMAN
Superintendent of Schools

27 May 2008

Re: *Education As A Civil Right That Promotes And Supports Honest Discussions Regarding Issues Of Intolerance, Creates A Climate Of Respect For All, And Educates Students To Appreciate And Celebrate Differences*

Dear Colleagues, Parents, Guardians, Families, Students, and Community Residents:

In the Ossining School District, we pride ourselves on respecting diversity and differences as well as promoting leadership to denounce and obliterate prejudice, racism, bias, and intolerance. We have been in the forefront of this mission and have provided cutting edge direction.

As an outgrowth of hateful incidents that have occurred in various communities, the Ossining School District Board of Education supported and endorsed an important statement at our Board of Education meeting of 29 April 2008. In light of a number of hateful incidents that occurred recently in some districts and in recognition that subtler expressions of intolerance persist in various communities and schools, the Superintendents of the Putnam/Northern Westchester Region joined together to address such issues in the region at large. That commitment and a related position statement are aligned with the mission of the Ossining School District, the values we embrace, and the respect we project for all students and our differences. Clearly, in Ossining we value and celebrate diversity and respect others for their inherent humanity. We are proud that our Board of Education endorsed such a statement and wish to share with you the motion that had been endorsed at our recent Board of Education meeting. Below please find that statement.

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Ossining Union Free School District endorse the statement of the Putnam/Northern Westchester Chief School Administrators Association which appears herein; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the District Clerk upon adoption of such resolution, through a certified statement, notify the president of the Putnam/Northern Westchester Chief School Administrators Association of such adoption; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Superintendent of Schools review the statement of the Putnam/Northern Westchester Chief School Administrators with building principals and other administrators with the expectation that principals will review the statement with respective faculty groups; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the statement of the Putnam/Northern Westchester Chief School Administrators Association that appears below be spread across the minutes of these proceedings for all to see the commitment of the Ossining Union Free School District Board of Education to the same principles as outlined in the statement.

Statement of Putnam/Northern Westchester
Chief School Administrators Association

In the history of our nation and our world, race and religion have been both powerful motivations for progress, as well as a source of conflict and intolerance. In fact, intolerance often extends to perceived abilities, socio-economic status, life style, and beyond.

The superintendents of the Putnam/Northern Westchester region, in concert with the New York State Council of School Superintendents, believe strongly that education is a civil right, which is essential to the achievement of the fundamental, inalienable right of equality.

We believe:

- All students must have access to a rich and challenging educational experience.
- All students must be provided the necessary support to achieve at a level that prepares them to be successful in the 21st century.
- All students should learn and value their roles as citizens in a global society.
- All students should embrace our differences and distinctiveness and understand that those characteristics contribute to the greater good.
- All students, when confronted with issues of intolerance, should challenge such attitudes appropriately.

We believe that as school district leaders, it is our responsibility to:

- Promote and support open and honest discussion about issues of intolerance.
- Create a climate of respect for all.
- Educate our students to appreciate and celebrate differences.

Sincerely yours,



Phyllis Glassman
Superintendent of Schools