

Members of the Black at Park Organizing Collective,

Thank you for the communication you shared with me and with the larger administrative team Wednesday afternoon. In your letter, you highlight the **magnitude** and **urgency** of the work we need to do at Park in order to address past and current failings and to create a safe, loving environment for Black students. I want you to know that I and we are listening carefully – to your collective voice; to the individual voices of those who have shared through Instagram and other social media platforms; through the many conversations and communications that I and we have had over the past many weeks with alumni, parents, and other community members. We also know that there are stories that remain untold.

As you note, we are working to complete an anti-racist action plan to be shared with the larger community in the coming week. Several of the items you highlight are included in our plan, as are others we feel it imperative to address this year and beyond. Recognizing the urgency of the work we must do, we have developed specific plans for this year, from faculty and staff training for all Park School employees, to building time into our newly created schedules (both virtual and in-person) for student programming (again, for all students). I look forward to sharing the plan with the larger community while also acknowledging that it is only one of many steps that we must take as we continue to build a school community that addresses racism as a foundational illness and ongoing threat to our society and to our school. I take responsibility for the fact that we have not acted swiftly enough, both in proactive and reactive ways to address racism and to promote a pro-Black culture at Park.

The members of Park's senior academic administrative team are committed to creating an anti-racist school. Several of these individuals have been personally and professionally committed to this work for decades, and all of us are ready to do the ongoing work — on ourselves and with our community — that is required in order for Park to move forward.

As the leader of this school, I take seriously my responsibility for dismantling the way that white culture, white systems, and white individuals have worked to harm Black people and damage positive Black identity. I would challenge you to consider, though, whether or not your intention in the letter was to include language and imagery that is, in its own right, rooted in hatred. Specifically, I am referencing the use of pernicious anti-Semitic tropes that have been applied throughout history — and you now apply to Park's history — including “wealth hoarding,” “tolerance for Zionism,” and “parasitic relationship.” We want, and need, to engage our entire community as we break down our own prejudices. We must create actions that bring the community's full strength to bear on anti-Blackness.

Dr. Bettina Love made it clear for us when she met with all Park employees this week: Allyship is not good enough; we need to be “co-conspirators.” We need to be *in community* with one another. I would ask you to consider the fact that we need everyone’s help in this effort — we cannot afford to exclude anyone. Anger and discomfort are part of this work. Hate is not.

I appreciate your offer to discuss the urgent and important work at hand, and I’m grateful for your willingness to participate in the sustained effort needed to create lasting change. We are moving forward with anti-racist action at Park; I and the other recipients of your message would appreciate the chance to come together with you to engage more fully. Please know I will reach out again, and should you want to schedule a time for an in-person (virtual) conversation with me and the administrative team you addressed, I and we welcome it.

If you think that @blackatparkschoolbaltimore’s followers would be interested in knowing that the school responded, please feel free to post this letter to the page.

Sincerely,

Dan