

A Letter for "Every" Student from the Superintendent



Dear Pine-Richland Students, Parents, Staff and Community,

Our country - and indeed the world - is focused on social justice, racism and equality. In our district, the mission is to “focus on learning for **every** student **every** day.” Every student matters. Every person matters. We want our district to be the place that families are proud to live, students are proud to learn and staff members are proud to work. However, **“every” can only truly occur within a culture that embraces respect, differences, kindness and inclusivity.** Given the complex social issues

facing us today, what is the role of the school? What is the role of the family? What is our shared role and responsibility? How or do answers differ at primary school...upper elementary...middle school and high school? As superintendent of schools, I ask myself these questions as I consider the responsibility and opportunity of leadership.

As I reflect on these questions, I think about the critical requirement of **civil discourse and candid discussion**. Challenging topics are best handled in a healthy environment. I find myself rereading and relearning the history of “every” in our world and country. Based on interviews by those who knew Dr. King well, the documentary “*King in the Wilderness*” was one of the sources that I reviewed. With a strong stance on non-violent protest, his assassination in 1968 was a horrific and tragic part of a long history of racism and civil rights in our country. From a racial perspective, Pine-Richland is not diverse. I have included a demographic snapshot for awareness from the PA Future Ready Index site. This lack of racial diversity **increases our responsibility to ensure that the culture of our school district is intentional in supporting every student.** It is the language of “we” and “us.”

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| | American Indian/Alaskan Native | 0.1% |
| | Asian | 5.7% |
| | Black | 1.3% |
| | Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander | 0.1% |
| | Hispanic | 2.2% |
| | White | 88.9% |
| | 2 or More Races | 1.7% |



I have also been thinking about many of the **other ways that “every” applies to our school district**. I think about students with disabilities and the right to an education with supports and services in our schools. It was not too long ago that some students did not receive an education within the public school setting. I think about economic differences in families. I think about students in our community who are homeless. I think about students who are hungry. I think about women’s rights and the fact that it was not too long ago that female athletes did not have equal opportunities to compete. I think about the persecution of Jewish people and others based on religious beliefs. I think about the small number of Asian, Hispanic and Black students in our district and the importance of a school culture that supports “every” student. I think about our LGBTQ students and the environment that supports them. I think about students facing challenges with mental health and wellness. I think about the **unique nature of 4,600 students** and the compelling mission of “every.”

As a policy, the Pine-Richland School District **believes in the critical importance of a positive culture of respect and equal opportunity for all people - students, staff, parents and community - regardless of race, color, gender or gender identity, orientation, religion, national origin, abilities, disabilities and more**. This policy supports our moral imperative to pursue a school environment where every single person feels welcome and engaged. Strengthening a school environment for “every” will require engagement and support from our community. As an excerpt from Dr. King’s famous speech, *“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”* We have the opportunity and responsibility to continue the good work that will make Pine-Richland School District the place that every family is proud to live, every student is proud to learn and every staff member is proud to work.

Respectfully,
Brian R. Miller, Ed.D.
Superintendent

