

July 22, 2016

Dear SAND School Families:

I am writing to inform you that I received *The Report of Findings: November 9, 2015 Instructional Rounds at South Arsenault Neighborhood Development (S.A.N.D.) School in Hartford* from the CSDE. I have begun to review the document in detail with senior staff. While there are some discrepancies with the findings of fact in the report that we will address with the CSDE, we continue to take this matter very seriously. We did not wait to take action; our response to these concerns was immediate and comprehensive:

- Immediate action was taken on the same day that the professional learning session was held. We reviewed the procedure used and it was determined to be inappropriate and not to be used again.
- The assistant superintendent responsible for the session issued a letter of explanation and apology to SAND parents/families in both English and Spanish explaining the protocol, its original intent, and the fact that it was a one-time occurrence. The assistant superintendent provided his phone number and offered to meet with families for follow-up questions and concerns.
- I reported the incident to the broader community at the following Board meeting, issued a public apology and expressed that the practice was inconsistent with the district's values and commitment, and that it was an unacceptable protocol.
- I personally met with the families directly impacted by the incident, spoke with each family, and offered support.
- The assistant superintendent and the principal met with parent leaders to discuss the matter, and the principal held a meeting with the School Governance Council.
- I addressed the situation and its larger implications in a conversation with all of our school principals and central office leaders at the December administrator professional development day. I publicly acknowledged the incident at a citywide event held on December 5th where parents, staff, community-based organizations and other partners were present, to reinforce our commitment to building family-friendly schools and effective engagement.

Several recommendations in the report fully align with the work that we have implemented as a district, including:

- We have provided training on diversity and cultural competency to increase our capacity on cultural proficiency in our decision-making, leadership, instructional practices and engagement. Training sessions have been held every month during this past year at principal professional development as well as during cabinet meetings and other staff meetings.
- SAND school has gone beyond the equity audit and is working with The Discovery Center to support its school-based efforts focused on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Working with our Board of Education Family and Community Engagement Committee, we held a Community Conversation on Race, Racism and Equity, and we have plans to further advance this work at the school/community level.

I take very seriously our work on cultural competency and meeting the needs of every child. We have worked consistently to strengthen our practices in this area. I welcome the opportunity to review the recommendations to strengthen the ongoing work at the district and school level. I will keep you updated of any further steps taken in relation to this incident.

Sincerely,



Beth Schiavino-Narvaez
Superintendent