



March 11, 2024

Dear Families:

I hope this update finds you well and filled with anticipation for the new possibilities that spring signals. As we work to finish the second semester strong and head into the home stretch of the academic year, I want to update parents on efforts underway to ensure the continued growth and well-being of our District.

In a letter sent to families on January 5, 2024, I noted that the District had experienced recent incidents of student bullying, harassment, hazing, and harm-causing, race-based behaviors within our school community. I further noted: 1) these actions go against the values and beliefs we hold dear at Mattawan; 2) it was disheartening to acknowledge their occurrence; 3) such behaviors will not be tolerated; and 4) that the District would be acting on several items to help address these concerns. The following are updates and next steps to this vital work.

The District has partnered with Marcy L. Peake, founder of The Center for Cultural Agility (see bio on next page). This partnership is an essential step in our commitment to fostering positive change and creating a more supportive learning environment and experience for our students. We have already begun collaborating with Ms. Peake on a variety of short-term action items, including:

- a comprehensive review of relevant policies and procedures related to bullying, harassment, and harm-causing, race-based behaviors;
- a collaborative review with building and department leadership teams of all student and athletic handbooks, as well as employee handbooks; and,
- an analysis of climate/culture data within our school.

Ms. Peake's role is to review, analyze, collaborate with, and offer her experience-driven feedback on our outcomes. As we move toward June, we will focus on a few additional goals, including:

- further perception data gathering and analysis from students if needed; and,
- recommendations for potential summer work or subsequent professional development.

We are dedicated to providing meaningful and age-appropriate learning experiences for our K-12 students and creating opportunities for our staff to come together for growth and excellence in their roles. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Kind regards,

Randy Fleenor, Superintendent

Bio

Marcy is the founder of The Center for Cultural Agility, published author of books, curriculum, and articles, State of Michigan Licensed Professional Counselor, National Certified Counselor, Certified Family Life Educator, and Great Start to Quality Trainer. She is a national consultant and speaker in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, pre-K-12 and higher education, youth development, family, and community engagement.

She is a former Family Science faculty member who taught graduate and undergraduate students pursuing degrees in education, youth development, and counseling and served as the Director of Diversity and Community Outreach Initiatives in the College of Education and Human Development at Western Michigan University. Marcy is the former director of equity-based youth social justice and educational programs, the author of a youth social justice curriculum, creator of graduate and undergraduate course content in the areas of race, gender, class, culture, families, and youth development, and was the DEI contributor to the State of Michigan Future Proud Michigan Educator curriculum.

Marcy provides direct services to pre-K—12 youth and families in school and out-of-school environments and prepares, coaches, and consults with education leaders and staff. Marcy has served and led various boards and committees as a participant, leader, and consultant - always approaching her work from her multi-racial, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural identities, research, service, and scholarship.