Dear King Philip Families,

King Philip Regional School District is an educational community that takes great pride in its accomplishments. As a regional school system, we strive to be a welcoming and supportive community for all the students who we serve. As a District, we have policies which are established so that our schools are places that are free of discrimination.

Recently, however, several students engaged in highly inappropriate conduct toward another student and the student’s parent. I am writing to address the steps that the District has taken to address this issue.

Several students participating on a sport team used inappropriate and racist slurs directly toward another teammate. In addition, the students obtained the student-victim’s mother’s phone number and shared it with other students. Several students called the victim’s mother’s phone repeatedly and those calls included inappropriate sexual comments toward the victim’s mother.

The District took immediate steps to investigate the situation and notified the local and state police, since the actions of these students can be considered a hate crime. The District issued disciplinary action, including school suspension to game suspensions, against those involved in this incident. I want to emphasize this type of behavior is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school community. It not only violates the policies of the King Philip Regional School District, it creates an unwelcoming and hostile environment for our students and families.

In response to the students’ behavior, we at King Philip have a duty to educate the community about these concerns and ask you and your child to join us in having an honest, constructive and thoughtful conversation about harmful behaviors. King Philip Regional High School has established a Cultural Proficiency Group to help improve our District’s ability to address racism and understand the complex issues involved in race relations in our school. We want you to be part of making our school incredible by talking to your own child and lend your voice and participate in upcoming seminars/events the Cultural Proficiency Group is planning.

We want to learn and embrace our differences to better understand ourselves and the world where our students will soon be employed. The face of King Philip is ever-changing, and schools have a moral, ethical and legal responsibility to be “vigilant about maintaining safe, respectful, and non-discriminatory learning environments.” If we do not publicly address these issues, then we as a community will be complicit and remain a part of the problem rather than the solution. We take pride in our diversity, which makes King Philip a stronger school district. Let’s continue to work together to strengthen and empower our students to be thoughtful and caring leaders.
Sincerely,

Dr. Elizabeth Zielinski
Superintendent of Schools