

RIVERHEAD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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September 18, 2023

Dear Blue Waves Community,

As many of you know, and has been reported in several local news outlets, there was an incident that occurred last Saturday, September 9th, that involved a Riverhead Middle School student, a Riverhead High School student, a third, out-of-District individual and several Riverhead parents of young children. The interaction began at the Pulaski Street Intermediate School playground and continued in the stands of our high school football field near the end of that Saturday's game. This incident was also the focus of discussion at our recent Board of Education meeting on September 12th.

What we currently know, based on our investigation into this incident, is that there was an altercation between the two Riverhead students and the non-Riverhead individual and the parents of the young children at the playground. Based on a review of the video footage from the Pulaski playground, it appeared words were being exchanged. The students then relocated themselves to the stands at the football field, with the adults involved in the Pulaski interaction following. According to several individuals who witnessed the ongoing interaction in the stands, racial slurs were voiced, as well as defamatory gestures being exhibited towards the adults. Riverhead Town Police, already stationed at the stadium for the game, became involved and filed a report.

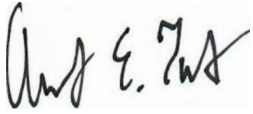
The District opened its investigation the week following the game, which included the review of the Pulaski videotape, a review of the police report, interviews with the two Riverhead students by the Riverhead High School and Middle School administration and interviews with individuals who witnessed the interactions. That investigation is currently ongoing. Based on the results of the District's investigation, any disciplinary action warranted by those findings will be taken. In accordance with student privacy laws, that information cannot and will not be shared publicly.

We are of course disturbed by this incident and the alleged use of racial slurs and other unacceptable behavior that may have been exhibited during this incident. As noted by Board of Education President Colin Palmer at the Board's September 12th meeting, the District will be looking to enhance its programming related to racial

relations. In this regard, the District will be meeting this week with members of the Heart of Riverhead Civic Association and will be asking for input from the Town's Anti-Bias Task Force regarding additional programming that might be incorporated into student curriculum.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind our students and families of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA) guidelines that are to be followed at all athletic competitions. The link to these guidelines can be found [here](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aug E. Tornatore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Augustine E. Tornatore
Superintendent of Schools