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What's the Opposite of We All Belong?

Superintendent Dr. Jill Gildea

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As Park City's kids head back to school, we as their educators are ready to teach them what they need to learn to succeed in school and in life. Equal to this critical mission of academic excellence within Park City School District, we are also ready to make sure each and every student, parent, guardian, staff, and community member is safe and secure knowing that here in our schools, we all belong!

This past year forced us to look deeply at who we are, what we do, and how we ensure that every child feels supported and that every stakeholder knows they are safe within our schools. As we entered into the Resolution Agreement with the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, we discovered that while we had maintained our mission *to inspire and support all students equitably to achieve their academic and social potential*, we fell short of our vision that *our students are safe, supported, engaged, challenged, and healthy*. Consequently, we have implemented several improvements as we enter into the 2024/2025 school year:

- Policy changes that clearly spell out what is and what is not accepted within our schools, along with clarification on how incidents are reported, investigated, and resolved.
- A simple reporting system that can be accessed from all school and district websites that allows students, parents/guardians, staff, and community members to efficiently report when bullying, harassment, and discrimination occurs so that the district can properly investigate and resolve every incident: <https://www.pcschools.us/about/bullying-or-harassment-reporting-form>
- Training for every staff member on what behavior, language, and treatment is allowed, how to investigate it properly, and how to productively resolve incidents for every person involved.

Beyond these technical and policy-driven changes, we need to go further so that our students and stakeholders are not only protected from harassment and discrimination but honored and respected for who they are, where they come from, and what they believe. For this purpose, we are launching a districtwide **We All Belong Campaign** for back-to-school that includes:

- Support materials provided to all parents/guardians and educators reinforcing that each and every one of us belongs in our school community.

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- Resources for parents, guardians, families, teachers, and administrators on how to build a better sense of belonging, especially for those who differ from ourselves.
- School-based community meetings to launch the We All Belong Campaign with families and stakeholders.
- A PCSD We All Belong website with resources, courses, and forums for all stakeholders to join in this district-wide effort.

Even though we live in challenging and divisive times, this need not be the reality in our schools and community. A “We All Belong” campaign may sound simplistic, until we consider its opposite—a community where we *don’t all belong*. Along with my team and our school board, we are committed to doing everything necessary so that *we all belong* is a reality we can claim.

Our foundational responsibility is to ensure every student and stakeholder feels safe and supported when in our schools. Our higher purpose is to create a highly engaging, supportive, and respectful learning environment where *we all belong* can be claimed by each of us—students, teachers, parents, guardians, support staff, administrators, community members. We cannot wait to serve and teach your students, and to make Park City School District a place where we all belong!

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