

January 15, 2026

Dear Cheltenham Community -

I'm writing today to update you on the situation with the Cheltenham High School Football program. At this time, the district's external hazing investigation has been completed.

The external investigation confirmed that the previously reported student-on-student assault did, in fact, take place in the football locker room on September 3, 2025, and that approximately 19 students who witnessed the assault made no attempt to stop the event, and several participated freely in it. Several students also filmed the assault.

In addition, the external investigation revealed the following: insufficient student supervision in the locker room by the coaching staff; a failure to prioritize student safety by the coaching staff and/or adult volunteers; failure of the coaching staff to speak to the students about anti-bullying and hazing; a general lack of credibility on the part of many of those interviewed during the investigatory process; and a toxic and negative culture within the current football program. The investigation did not, however, fully substantiate a pattern of hazing.

A number of recommendations were made as to steps the district should take in order to overhaul the football program before it resumes in the future. In the coming weeks and months, the district will be working diligently to implement the recommendations from the external investigation and rebuilding the Cheltenham High School Football program. Some of the initial steps that the district will be taking will include identifying and hiring new, highly qualified coaching staff who demonstrate a strong commitment to leading student-athletes in a positive and responsible manner, formalizing and strengthening student supervision and incident-reporting protocol, and obtaining or creating training materials for students and staff to communicate and exhibit standards of conduct for student-athletes.

Having a 2026 season is largely contingent on identifying, hiring, and onboarding the right coaching staff, and on the cooperation of parents/guardians, students, and staff in doing their part to address the recommendations that will strengthen our program. Those students who were not involved in this situation are especially important to rebuilding the culture of our program. If all of these conditions are met, the district will stand up a football team for the 2026 season.

While the external hazing investigation has been completed, there are still several student-specific Title IX and disciplinary matters that are in progress. The outcome of these student-specific matters could impact the eligibility of certain individual students to play

football in the upcoming season and lead to additional individual disciplinary consequences. The Cheltenham Township Police Department and Montgomery County District Attorney's Office also continue to investigate this matter, and the outcome of their investigation may similarly have an impact on those individuals involved in the assault and the circumstances that led to it.

We will continue to keep the community informed as we receive additional information.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brian W. Scriven  
Superintendent of Schools