

**VOLUNTARY RESOLUTION AGREEMENT**  
**Renton School District**  
**OCR Reference No. 10161183**

Renton School District (district) enters into this agreement with the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to resolve OCR Reference No. 10161183, conducted under the authority of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the regulations that implement Title VI at 34 CFR Part 100. The provisions of this agreement are intended to ensure that the district complies with the requirements of Title VI when it receives actual or constructive notice of racial harassment by students, staff or other individuals.

The district notes that, after the referenced complaint was filed, the district took a number of proactive measures to promote equity among all students at Hazen High School. These actions included training of staff on cultural awareness, culturally competent practices, conducting student focus groups, and the development of an Equity Team composed of faculty and staff to ensure equity and access for all students. In addition, designated staff members at Hazen High School are attending the “Undoing Institutional Racism” conference, December 8-9, 2016 in Seattle, Washington.

The district also notes that the district completed its State of Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Consolidated Program Review (CPR) in June, 2016. This program monitors multiple federally funded programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), including compliance with civil rights laws and regulations.

**A. Policies and Procedures**

1. By January 31, 2017, the district will review its policies and procedures with respect to responding to allegations of harassment on the basis of race, color or national origin. The policies and procedures will ensure that the district provides reasonable, timely, and effective action tailored to fully redress any specific problems identified by the district as a result of the harassment; and that the action is reasonably calculated to prevent recurrence. At a minimum, the policies and procedures will include the following:
  - a) A statement setting forth the district’s commitment to having a school environment free from all discrimination, including harassment on the bases of race, color, and national origin. Such statement must explain that the district prohibits race, color, and national origin harassment in the school environment, including all academic, extra-curricular and school-sponsored activities. The statement will encourage students to immediately report incidents of

- harassment. The statement will also specify that the district will investigate formal and informal complaints of harassment.
- b) An explanation of how to report harassment and/or file a complaint (formally and informally).
  - c) The name and/or title, mailing address, email address, and telephone number for the district employee(s) responsible (hereinafter “designated staff member”) for handling reports of racial harassment.
  - d) A requirement that the designated staff member document all reports of harassment, and a protocol for district-level recordkeeping of each of the reports submitted by the designated staff members.
  - e) Examples of the type of conduct and behavior that is covered by the policy and procedures, including examples of staff-to-student and peer-to-peer harassment.
  - f) Identification of the kinds of activities and sites where prohibited harassment could occur.
  - g) A description of the district’s complaint process, including a requirement that an investigatory report be completed during the course of the investigation, creation of a timeframe for the district’s investigation, and providing written notice of the outcome to the parties.
  - h) A description of the various steps the district will take to conduct prompt, adequate, reliable and impartial investigations of reported incidents, including:
    - 1) reliable techniques for fact gathering to include impartial fact gatherers and decision makers;
    - 2) conducting thorough witness interviews under conditions of privacy, but not necessarily confidentiality;
    - 3) creating a contemporaneous written interview record of the questions asked and the answers given; and
    - 4) collecting written statements of disputed accounts, as appropriate.
  - i) A description of the district’s standards for determining whether a hostile environment based on race, color and/or national origin exists.
  - j) A description of the action steps the district will take to stop, remedy, and prevent recurrence of the harassment and its discriminatory effects.

- k) A requirement that school personnel report incidents of alleged staff-to-student and peer-to-peer harassment that may be based on race, color, and/or national origin that school personnel witness or of which they have received reports or information, whether such incidents are verbal or physical or amount to harassment in other forms.
  - l) A requirement that district staff who observe acts of harassment based on race, color, or national origin intervene to stop the harassment, unless circumstances would make such intervention dangerous.
  - m) Prohibition of retaliation against persons who report alleged harassment or participate in related proceedings.
  - n) A statement that the district will offer interventions ranging from counseling, correcting, behavior, discipline and law enforcement referrals consistent with its district policy 3207 services to any person found to have been subjected to harassment on the basis of race, color, or national origin and, where appropriate, to the person(s) who committed the harassment.
2. **Reporting Requirement:** By January 31, 2017, the district will submit a draft of the policies and procedures revised in accordance with Action Item A to OCR for review and approval. OCR will review the draft submitted by the District and notify the District if revisions are required. If OCR requires revisions to the procedures, the District will re-submit the procedures to OCR for review and approval within 30 days of receiving notice of the revisions required by OCR. OCR and the District will follow the same process until OCR approves the District's procedures. Within 45 days of OCR's approval of the revised policies and procedures, the district will submit to OCR documentation verifying it has adopted and implemented them, including a working link to the policies and procedures on the district's website, if available.

## **B. Statement Prohibiting Harassment**

1. By January 31, 2017, the district will issue a statement to all students, parents and staff at Hazen High School that will be communicated to parents and students through email, posted in prominent locations at the school, and published on the district's website, stating that the district does not tolerate acts of harassment, including acts of harassment based on race, color, or national origin. The statement will encourage any student who believes he or she has been subjected to harassment or a hostile environment based on race, color, or national origin to

report the harassment or hostile environment to the district and note the district's commitment to conducting a prompt investigation. The statement will include the appropriate contact information for the designated staff member to whom students and parents may report allegations of harassment and discrimination. The statement will warn that students, teachers and any other district staff or contractors found to have engaged in acts of harassment or other acts that create a hostile environment based on race, color, or national origin will be promptly disciplined and make clear that such discipline may include, if circumstances warrant and consistent with state law, suspension or expulsion. The statement will encourage students, parents and district staff to work together to prevent acts of harassment of any kind.

2. **Reporting Requirement:** By January 31, 2017, the district will submit a draft of the proposed notice in accordance with Action Item B to OCR for review and approval. Within 45 days of OCR's approval of the notice, the district will submit to OCR documentation that the notice was distributed via email to all students, parents and staff at Hazen High School. The documentation will include a copy of the notice distributed via email, the location of where the notice is posted in the high school, and a working link to the notice on the district's website.

### **C. Training of Administrators, Teachers, and Staff**

1. By January 31, 2017, the district will, in consultation with the local Educational Services District (ESD), develop and implement a plan for a comprehensive on-going training program for all administrators, teachers, and staff at Hazen High School, including all security personnel. The training must include, but need not be limited to, the following:
  - a) the district's policies and procedures regarding discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, and national origin;
  - b) what constitutes racial harassment;
  - c) what constitutes a racially hostile environment;
  - d) how to respond to suspected or known racial harassment, including when an employee is required to report harassment and to whom the harassment should be reported;
  - e) how to respond to student complaints of student-on-student or staff-on-student racial harassment, including complaints of racial slurs or racial name-calling;
  - f) the contact information (name, title and telephone number) for the designated staff member responsible for addressing questions and handling complaints about racial harassment; and

- g) notice to all administrators, teachers, and staff that the district's disciplinary code regarding racial harassment will be strictly enforced.

2. **Reporting Requirements:**

- a) By January 31, 2017, the district will submit to OCR for review and approval the proposed trainer for Action Item C and his or her qualifications.
- b) Within 30 days of written notification from OCR of its approval of the trainer, the district will submit to OCR for review and approval a copy of the training materials and agenda to be used. OCR will review the draft materials and agenda and notify the District if revisions are required. If OCR requires revisions, the District will re-submit the draft materials and agenda to OCR for review and approval within 30 days of receiving notice of the revisions required by OCR. OCR and the District will follow the same process until OCR approves the materials and agenda.
- c) Within 45 days of written notification from OCR of its approval of the training materials and agenda, the district will provide documentation to OCR demonstrating that it has provided the training referenced in Action Item C, which will include a copy of all materials presented and distributed during the training, and a certification from the district that all administrators, teachers, and staff at Hazen High School attended the training.

**D. Student Committee**

- 1. By January 31, 2017, the district will establish a student committee at Hazen High School to provide a forum for students to discuss matters concerning discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, or national origin, increase student awareness of the district's anti-harassment program, and suggest measures for improving the effectiveness of the district's program at the school. The district will designate an employee to coordinate the committee's meetings and work. The committee will be asked to provide school administrators with input regarding strategies for preventing harassment, and ensuring that students understand their right to be protected from discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color and national origin and to be protected from retaliation for reporting alleged discrimination.
- 2. **Reporting Requirement:** By June 30, 2017, the district will provide OCR with a report documenting the implementation of the student committee developed pursuant to Action Item D. The report will describe (i) how the committee members were recruited; (ii) the name or identifying number and grade level of each student committee member; (iii) the name and position title of the staff

member(s) tasked to coordinate the committee's work; (iv) the schedule of meetings for the committee; (v) the specific action steps that the committee is tasked to complete; and (vi) recommendations that were made by the student committee regarding strategies for preventing harassment and ensuring that students understand their right to be protected from discrimination and retaliation.

#### **E. Individual Remedies for Students**

1. By January 31, 2017, the district will request a meeting with the student who was the subject of this complaint and the student's parent to discuss steps the district has agreed to take to ensure that all students and staff at Hazen High School understand their right to be protected from discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color and national origin. The meeting will also inform the student and parent of the steps taken by the district in response to the incident of alleged race harassment by a teacher against the student. The student will also be invited to participate in the student committee developed pursuant to Action Item D of this Agreement.
2. **Reporting Requirement:** By January 31, 2017, the district will provide OCR with documentation of its efforts to comply with Action Item E of the Agreement. This will include documentation of the district's invitation request; the student's and parents' response to the district's request; notes from the meeting outlining what steps, if any, the district agreed to take as a result of the meeting; and documentation that the district gave assurances during this meeting that the district does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race perpetuated by any member of the district's community, including students, teachers and other staff members and administrators.
3. By January 31, 2017, the district will submit for OCR review and approval a draft of a letter to be sent to the parents/guardians of each student who was enrolled in the choir class in which the incident occurred that was the subject of this complaint. The letter will inform the students that the district is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are protected from discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin, including harassment and discriminatory statements. The letter will inform the students that the district will establish a student committee at Hazen High School to provide a forum for students to discuss matters concerning discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, or national origin, increase student awareness of the district's anti-harassment program, and suggest measures for improving the effectiveness of the district's program at the school. The letter should also include contact information for the district representative who will be responsible for addressing any questions

that the students or their parents/guardians have regarding the district's commitments.

4. **Reporting Requirement:** Within 10 days of OCR's approval of the draft letter to students, the district will provide OCR a copy of the letter sent to the students, and the names or identifying numbers of the students who were sent the letter.

#### **F. General Provisions**

1. The district understands that by signing this Agreement, it agrees to provide OCR data and other information in a timely manner. Further, the district understands that during the monitoring of this Agreement, OCR may visit the district, interview staff and students, and request such additional reports or data as are necessary for OCR to determine whether the district has fulfilled the terms of this Agreement and is in compliance with the regulation implementing Title VI at 34 CFR Part 100, which was at issue in this case.
2. The district understands that OCR will not close the monitoring of this Agreement until OCR determines that the district has fulfilled the terms of this Agreement and is in compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI at 34 CFR Part 100.
3. The district understands and acknowledges that OCR may initiate administrative enforcement or judicial proceedings, including to enforce the specific terms and obligations of this Agreement. Before initiating administrative enforcement (34 CFR 100.9, 100.10), or judicial proceedings, including to enforce this Agreement, OCR shall give the district written notice of the alleged breach and sixty (60) calendar days to cure the alleged breach.
4. This Agreement will become effective immediately upon the signature of the Superintendent or his designee below.

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Art Jarvis  
Interim Superintendent  
Renton School District

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November 30, 2016  
Date