

We have read the petition posted on Change.org calling for law enforcement agencies to investigate the allegations in the petition. We hear you and commend you for exercising your right to free speech and for the courage to petition to have the allegations investigated further.

The first action taken by the Ocean City District Administration and the Board of Education was to contact the OCPD regarding the petition. We have and will continue to fully cooperate and provide access to the police department and/or the County Prosecutor's Office for any impending investigation. For information concerning this matter, please contact the Cape May County Prosecutor's Special Victims Office at (609)-465-1136.

While we can't change the past, our District is committed to taking additional steps to build upon the programs, trainings, support and intervention services, along with providing the necessary resources, which we have been put in place over the past decade to ensure enduring change.

Beginning in 2011, we brought in professional trainers, including a prosecutor, to educate our staff about teacher-student relationships, discrimination, boundary limits for staff and harassment.

We have implemented the Lifelines Curriculum from the Society of the Prevention for Teenage Suicide and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

Thanks to the generosity of the Sea Isle City Board of Education, we partnered with Cape Assist, a leading area and highly-regarded social service agency, to provide training for staff and support services for our students.

We have implemented online tools for students to give anonymous tips about concerns, problems, or bullying and we have similar online tools for parents to inform them of ways to help their children when needed. Furthermore, we survey parents and students in the exiting grades in each school regarding the school climate and their overall experiences at that school.

We support mental health of our students by establishing K-12 programs and wellness safe spaces for students in each of one of the three schools. In the past few years, we have Real Talk sessions, led by High School students, to discuss what is most important to them. Most recently we launched a Minds Over Matter Club at the High School. In addition, we send out and post on our website weekly wellness newsletters for each of the schools.

We have partnered with the Ocean City Education Foundation (OCEF) for wellness programs and positive experiences for our students. In addition, we collaborate with both AtlantiCare and the City of Ocean City for healthy and wellness living programs and presentations for our students.

We have an established Equity Committee, which is working to ensure that each student has access to programs, services and that we continuing to meet their needs. Recommendations from this community and school committee will be presented to the Board and the community upon completion of this strategic planning process.

Looking to the future, we will be instituting a Parent University for information on services and academic programs.

Additionally we are expanding K-8 summer school to all students and the needed support services during the summer months.

We are offering our Rising Seniors Programs this summer to help them jump start their college and lifelong career plans.

Through a collaborative effort with the OCEF, we are expanding our wellness program to outdoor spaces as well.

As understandings, knowledge and skills have evolved in the past in the areas of Law, education, rights, and equity, so too has our District, and at times, we have led the way both in region and statewide.

We will continue to work on our challenges and opportunities for improvements. The Board, the District and the School Administration and staff are committed to ensuring that we continue to provide support services and a safe and healthy learning environment today and in years to come.