



# UPLAND UNIFIED

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

**For Immediate Release**

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### **Upland Unified School District Reaffirms Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Response to Racist Bullying Incident**

*The Upland Unified School District is committed to ensuring our students receive what they need to be successful. Board Policy 0415 adopted in 2018 states the following: The Governing board believes the diversity in the community is integral to the district's vision and goals and is: committed to equity in opportunities and resulting outcomes to address the needs of the most marginalized learners; identifying practices, policies, and institutional barriers to eradicate bias and eliminate disparities, making decisions with an awareness of impediments to learning in mind; developing and implementing policies and strategies to promote equity; assessing student needs based on disaggregated data and allocating financial and human resources to provide students with equitable access to programs, services, and opportunities.*

**Upland, California** - The Upland Unified School District (UUSD) is deeply disheartened about the recent student incident of racist bullying by students that took place within our community. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to the student who was targeted by their peers and express our sincere regret that such hurtful behavior occurred.

It is important we make clear that the cards were not part of a classroom assignment or assigned activity. In accordance with district policy, progressive discipline was enacted and there is a continuing investigation into the incident to determine further district response.

We are concerned that the actions of a few students have overshadowed the good work that we have been doing. As a district, our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion remains steadfast. We want to assure our community that this work will continue, and we will do everything in our power to prevent such incidents from happening again. Some current and ongoing efforts include:

- Updated our board policy 6164.2 to ensure our guidance/counseling services include intervention and supports for targeted student groups and enhance equity and access to students;
- Revised Board Policy 5131.2 on Bullying to be more explicit about discrimination;
- An Equity Board workshop focused on defining educational equity and the Board setting further direction around equity;
- Establishment of a district Equity Taskforce focused on identifying and recommending leadership, policy, and instructional equity practices;
- Continuing partnership with Orenda Education to facilitate equity audits on every school campus; with findings being shared with staff and planning to address findings;
- Ongoing training in Restorative Practices for administrators and staff;
- Ongoing training in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports for administrators and staff;

- Establishment of an Inclusion Taskforce to address the needs of our students identified with disabilities and ensure our systems, programs and practices to create more inclusive environments;
- Upland Management Association attended a two-day Museum of Tolerance Leadership experience aimed to increase the cultural leadership capacity of the UUSD management team;
- District and site administrators visited the Ron Clark Academy Experience, one of the highest performing schools in the country, to increase our capacity to provide high quality teaching and learning experiences to our diverse student body;
- A Student Advisory Panel at the high school inclusive of students from diverse backgrounds to ensure student voices are heard and empowered to be change agents;
- Student and family surveys are administered three times a year to gather perception data on school climate and culture;
- All principals have begun an in-depth study of Cultural Proficiency;
- Establishment of a district priority to increase our diverse workforce;
- Proactive community building circles in classrooms;
- Establishment of Equity as a district core value and priority;
- Establishment of a district Guide for Excellence inclusive of an opening letter stating our Superintendent's expectations about Equity;
- Instituted districtwide cultural celebrations and corresponding student learning experiences in alignment with national heritage months;
- The Equity Taskforce attended the Riverside County Office of Education Equity Conference to engage in learning and collaboration on equity-based topics;
- Piloting more comprehensive and current history curriculum K-6;
- Expanded participation in History Day to include elementary and junior high schools;
- Using history consultants to support implementation of the state's updated History/Social-Science framework;
- First cohort of District staff participated in the Footsteps to Freedom Historical Empathy Tour to increase our professional learning rooted in history and culture;
- Launching a Unity program at the Jr. High and High School level;
- District adopted Social Emotional Learning curriculum, which teaches the core competencies of self awareness, self management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making and includes Learning for Justice lessons which focus on diversity and anti-racism; and
- All 14 school sites have an operational Wellness Center that provides social emotional support, interventions and proactive groups.

We will continue the important work of creating positive classroom climates and use our data surrounding equitable learning to create change. We have also planned several future initiatives, including:

- Adoption and implementation of recommended equity actions from the Equity Taskforce;
- Sending a second cohort of staff to the Footsteps to Freedom Historical Empathy Tour Summer 2023;
- Inviting all teachers to the Equity Institute in Summer 2023;

- Reviewing our current community engagement efforts and engage in targeted outreach to ensure diverse representation;
- Developing plans to accelerate response to climate and culture survey data revealing instances of bullying and harassment;
- Sending a second cohort inclusive of teachers to Ron Clark Academy Experience to continue to increase our capacity to provide high quality teaching and learning experiences to our diverse student body;
- Continuing Outward Mindset training and develop an accelerated training plan;
- Exploring a historical empathy experience at every site;
- Developing a plan to establish a Superintendent Community Advisory Committee representative of diverse community members, anticipated Spring 2023;
- Establishing a Board resolution, which explicitly describes our commitment to an equitable, inclusive, and safe educational system; and
- Regularly communicating with the community about our efforts and continued invitations to provide feedback.

These initiatives are just the beginning. Our community deserves nothing less, and we remain committed to listening to their feedback and concerns as we work together to create positive change.

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