



## SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Patrik D. Williams, Superintendent

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April 15, 2022

### SMYRNA SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICIAL STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Pending a district meeting with staff and student representatives from Smyrna High School, as well as representatives from the community, the painting depicting Angela Davis will be restored to full view in its current location during the spring break. To be clear, District Leadership had made *no decision* as of Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, to *permanently* remove this painting. The District *did* make the decision on Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, to *suspend* the display in consideration of those who had not been included during the creative process but were nevertheless negatively impacted by its selection. We all recognize that this painting represents more than simply a student work of art. It represents a gateway to greater and more honest dialogue about social, ethnic and racial equity. The Smyrna School District would not unilaterally make a permanent decision about such a work of art without first meeting to solicit input from those affected by *any* decision. We wish to thank our Smyrna High School students for their responsible and peaceful protest on April 14<sup>th</sup>, and we join them in prioritizing an open discussion of perspectives. A timetable will soon be set for representative individuals to meet and discuss a student-created mural inclusive of the painting of Angela Davis, as well as paintings of other, mutually agreed upon figures. Once this timetable is determined, the Angela Davis painting will be restored to view in time for school to resume on April 25<sup>th</sup>. In the interim we ask for patience and grace. Growing and learning from one another can be fraught with challenges, disagreements and, of course, mistakes. From this process often arise great learning, empathy and even accomplishments. We plan to make this experience result in just such an outcome.