



East Lansing
Public Schools

MacDonald Middle School, 1601 Burcham Drive, East Lansing, MI 48823

Dear MMS Students and Families,

This letter is being sent to express my sincere apologies for the events that occurred last Wednesday in my PE classes. There were students using the "N-word" interchangeably amongst themselves. In my haste to redirect the behavior, I addressed the students by stating that they shouldn't use that word and in doing so, I used the actual word itself. I immediately felt terrible and regretted using it. I take full accountability for the harm my actions have caused to students, staff and families, especially those of color. I understand that the use of the N-word is wrong and have no intentions of ever doing so again.

I am committed to working to repair the trust within the East Lansing community. I will be doing so by having restorative conversations in all of my classrooms with a trained facilitator, as well as our Director of Equity and Social Justice for ELPS. I will undergo racial justice, anti-racism and implicit bias training this summer and continue my conversations of accountability and learning with my administrators. I will continue to be reflective in my practices and make sure to create an environment where every student feels safe, both emotionally and physically, through the use of restorative practices.

I have been an educator for many decades, and I'm proud to work in a diverse community and school district. The diversity that exists in East Lansing is what attracted me and has kept me here. I know the importance of my role as an educator, and setting a positive example for our students is key in maintaining a supportive and inclusive classroom environment. I want to stand true to our mission statement of Nurturing each child, Building world citizens and Educating all students by taking accountability for my actions and bettering myself moving forward.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and again, I am deeply sorry for my actions and the impact it has had on the MMS community.

Sincerely,

Dennis Petrowitz
6th grade PE Teacher