

*This letter and list of suggestions is a working document that will incorporate input from students/alumni/families/staff/etc. Click "Open with Google Docs" for optimal viewing.*

*To add your signature and/or your own testimonial/suggestions, please fill out this form:*  
<https://bit.ly/2YPsFgz>

To the Pine-Richland School District Leadership,

On February 23, 2020, Ahmaud Arbery was shot by two white men and the incident was filmed by a third. On March 13, 2020, Breonna Taylor was shot by police officers while sleeping in her home. On May 25, 2020, a police officer knelt on George Floyd's neck until he suffocated to death while three other officers stood by watching. All these deaths occurred in the midst of a pandemic that is killing Black Americans at a rate 2.6 times higher than white Americans.<sup>1</sup> This is not a new issue. Police brutality has hit home too; on June 19, 2018, police shot and killed 17-year old Antwon Rose in Pittsburgh.<sup>2</sup> These deaths have shed light on the institutional and systemic racism that plagues our country and demonstrated the long-overdue need for change. We believe this change must occur in every aspect of society, especially in our schools, whose fundamental purpose is to mold us into upstanding citizens, to prepare us for adulthood, and to teach us invaluable lessons that extend far beyond the classroom.

We are writing in response to Superintendent Brian Miller's June 22, 2020 statement to address "social justice, racism, and equality." While the reiteration of the District's mission to "focus on learning for **every** student **every** day" is encouraging, the inability to firmly acknowledge the horrific deaths of any of these Black Americans and transparently address our nation's ongoing systemic racism is concerning. In Superintendent Miller's response, he showed the graph below with the demographics of the entire student body and wrote "Pine-Richland is not diverse." This is a fact no one can dispute. The demographics of the district are a direct result of systematic efforts to exclude Black people from neighborhoods like those in Pine-Richland. But in this particular moment, rather than address Black Students in the school district and let them know that their lives are valued, the letter shifted attention to an "All Lives Matter" sentiment that is detrimental for Black students and families to hear. This narrative diminishes and silences the trauma Black Americans experience following the killing of Black lives that very well could have been them, their families, or their friends.

American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.1%
Asian	5.7%
Black	1.3%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.1%
Hispanic	2.2%
White	88.9%
2 or More Races	1.7%

<sup>1</sup> "COVID-19 Hospitalization and Death by Race/Ethnicity." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 18 Aug. 2020, [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html).

<sup>2</sup> Please note that since this letter was originally drafted in July 2020, many more instances of police brutality and white supremacy have come to light.

On June 28, 2020, a group of Black Pine-Richland alumni met virtually to discuss their experiences as minority students in the district. The call included alumni from the past 25 years who want to make a change. We shared our experiences at Pine-Richland and were comforted to know that we were not alone. We all had experienced discrimination, everything from microaggressions to overt racism. In some cases, teachers and staff spoke out; in others, they were silent and sometimes even the perpetrators. We learned that some alumni had the courage to go to their teachers or even the school board with the racism they faced. We learned that most did not feel empowered enough to call out the racism they were experiencing because oftentimes they felt alone.

Pine-Richland is an award-winning high school and one of the best public schools in the nation, which is why many of us feel blessed to have received such a top-tier education. However, the school district has a long way to go to make sure that Black students continue to be included and empowered. **It is not enough that the district claims to be a place for all members of the community; Pine-Richland needs to be actively anti-racist.** It is also important to recognize that Pine-Richland is considerably less diverse than America as a whole. In fact, three of the most attended Universities by Pine-Richland graduates—Penn State, University of Pittsburgh, and CCAC—are 65%<sup>3</sup>, 68%<sup>4</sup>, and 60%<sup>5</sup> white, respectively, a number far lower than Pine-Richland's student body composition. Therefore, solving this problem will benefit all students and ensure that when they graduate, they can succeed in an America that is growing increasingly diverse.

Below is a list of demands from Pine-Richland's Black alumni and resources to aid in achieving them.

#### **List of Demands:**

- 1. Conduct a third-party audit to examine the state of race relations at Pine-Richland**  
Pine-Richland should conduct a district-wide, third-party audit to determine where best to focus its resources, identify current blind spots, and allow students and staff to submit their grievances and ideas for policy improvements anonymously.
- 2. Establish a permanent Diversity and Inclusion Committee lead by a DEI Professional**  
There is a parent-led anti-racism coalition collecting data and conducting research on the current racial climate at Pine-Richland in order to develop best practices for supporting Black students in the district. The group was formed this past summer as a reaction to the District's insufficient efforts in addressing issues regarding race. We applaud their efforts and have worked closely with them; however, the burden of promoting

---

<sup>3</sup> Admission Statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved September 27, 2020, from <https://admissions.psu.edu/apply/statistics/>

<sup>4</sup> University of Pittsburgh: Pitt: The College Board. (n.d.). Retrieved September 27, 2020, from <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-university-search/university-of-pittsburgh>

<sup>5</sup> CollegeSimply. (n.d.). Community College of Allegheny County Diversity & Student Demographics. Retrieved September 27, 2020, from <https://www.collegesimply.com/colleges/pennsylvania/community-college-of-allegheny-county/students/>

anti-racism at Pine-Richland should not have to fall on these parents, most of whom have their own full-time jobs.

A committee should be created whose sole purpose is to support students and faculty as needed regarding diversity and inclusion. This committee should be led by a full-time DEI professional and could consist of teachers and staff who strive and have proven to be actively anti-racist. This committee would address any needs revealed by the third-party audit, support the execution of the demands listed, and ultimately prioritize anti-racism within the school district. The hope is for this group to conduct anti-racism training district-wide for students and faculty on topics such as microaggressions, implicit bias, and hate speech. We ask that the DEI professional who is selected to lead the Diversity and Inclusion Committee be vetted and approved by the parents' group.

Furthermore, Pine-Richland must clearly outline the disciplinary steps that will be taken to address microaggressions, discrimination, and hate speech. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee should also provide a rehabilitative approach to minor transgressions so students may learn from their mistakes.

### **3. Hire more Black Faculty**

We acknowledge that the lack of diversity among the staff at Pine-Richland may not be intentional, but the lack of Black faces in academia can have detrimental effects. It is important that students at Pine-Richland recognize that Black people also belong in spaces of education. Research shows that Black students who have Black teachers have better academic outcomes, are suspended less often, and are held to higher expectations from those teachers. A 2016 study at Indiana University found that Black students are 54 percent less likely than white students to be recommended for gifted-education programs after adjusting for factors such as students' standardized test scores.<sup>6</sup> But Black students were three times more likely to be referred for the programs if their teacher was Black rather than white.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, we are demanding the addition of more Black faculty as hiring needs arise across grade levels, especially in core subjects. The hiring of Black faculty should also be extended to extracurricular activities.

### **4. Support and Fund Pine-Richland's Black Student Union**

It has been brought to our attention that the current Black students at Pine-Richland High School have formed a Black Student Union, as well as a similar group at the middle school level, with the long term goal of having the group supporting students at Eden Hall and the elementary levels. We ask that Pine-Richland continues to support and fund

---

<sup>6</sup> Nicholson-Crotty, Sean, et al. "Disentangling the Causal Mechanisms of Representative Bureaucracy: Evidence From Assignment of Students to Gifted Programs." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2016, pp. 745–757., doi:10.1093/jopart/muw024.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholson-Crotty, Sean, et al. "Disentangling the Causal Mechanisms of Representative Bureaucracy: Evidence From Assignment of Students to Gifted Programs." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2016, pp. 745–757., doi:10.1093/jopart/muw024.

this student group, and all other multicultural groups, to encourage diversity and inclusion and amplify the voices of people of color.

**5. Require every school to observe cultural and religious holidays and/or talk about the significance of the event.**

Examples but not limited to:

- September - Hispanic Heritage Month
- February - Black History Month
- May - Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- Juneteenth
- Change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day
- Lunar New Year
- Ramadan
- Rosh Hashanah

**6. Include anti-racism as a core component of the curriculum at all levels of schooling**

The Pine-Richland school board sets the curriculum; therefore, we are asking for an initiative among the board members to review and incorporate more diverse authors and stories.

The U.S. history curriculum should include and amplify Black voices. It is essential that Black history be taught as an integral part of American history. African American history should not just be mentioned when discussing slavery, the Civil War, and the civil rights movement. This approach gives students a partial view of American history. Students need to graduate recognizing that the fight for racial equity did not end after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 -- America's complex history continues to impact and perpetuate the events of today.

In addition, literature that reflects the multifaceted Black experience should be incorporated into the English curriculum. These lessons should not only highlight the hardships Black Americans have experienced, nor just the obstacles that are still faced, but these lessons also should celebrate the culture and contributions of Black Americans to this nation.

Furthermore, educators need to be equipped to teach and facilitate conversations surrounding race. As many of us [Black Alumni] reflected on during our call, oftentimes, discussions on Black history and literature left Black students feeling alienated and silenced rather than empowered and vocal.

Below is a preliminary list of education material:

**High School:**

Films:

13th  
*American Son*  
*When They See Us*  
*The Hate U Give*  
*Just Mercy*  
*Fruitvale Station*  
*I Am Not Your Negro*  
*4 Little Girls*  
*Selma*  
42

Books:

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou  
*Fences* by August Wilson  
*Black Boy* by Richard Wright  
*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston  
*Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie  
*Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, the Groveland Boys, and the Dawn of a New America* by Gilbert King  
*The Black Tax: The Cost of Being Black in America* by Shawn D. Rochester

**Middle School:**

Films:

*Remember the Titans*  
*The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*  
*Hidden Figures*  
*Hard Lessons*  
*Queen of Katwe*  
*The Color of Friendship*  
*Ruby Bridges*  
*Akeelah and the Bee*  
*Glory Road*  
*The Joy Luck Club*  
*The Secret Life of Bees*

Books:

*The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis  
*One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia  
*Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor  
*Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson  
*Glory Be* by Augusta Scattergood  
*New Kid* by Jerry Craft  
*Harbor Me* by Jacqueline Woodson  
*Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis

*Some Places More than Others* by Renee Watson  
*Stella by Starlight* by John McLaughlin  
*As Brave As You* by Jason Reynolds  
*The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander  
*The Stars Beneath Our Feet* by David Barclay Moore  
*Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks* by Jason Reynolds  
*Beyond Mayfield* by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson  
*Belle Teal* by Ann M. Martin

It is imperative that these demands are read and the school district makes a true effort to change policy moving forward. We look forward to seeing action taken and will gladly assist you in any way possible to ensure the protection of Black students and families at Pine-Richland.

**If you would like to add your signature endorsing this letter please fill out this form:**

<https://bit.ly/2YPsFgz>

Signed,

Edem Akwayena '14	Emily Reiling '14	Roslyn Knapp '21
Emefa Akwayena '16	Rachel Byrne '17	Mia Tucciarone '24
Ashlynn Thompson '16	Izzy Salpietro '16	Alessandro Phillips '20
Erica Densmore '14	Emily Gerst '17	Laurel Anderson, Parent/Guardian
Sydney Brooks '14	Joey Kelly '20	Abby Cornett '16
Enyo Akwayena '20	Sarah Libby '16	Dylan Crutchfield '20
Sarah Stratil '14	Allison Grant '15	Benjamin King '14
Taylor Rowe '14	Marissa Torchia '16	Kayla Resh '18
Molly Lienesch '15	Jess Gale '14	Olivia Scullion '21
Hannah Reiling '16	Alexis Simon '17	Jordan Hightower '14
Pamela Bryant, Parent/Guardian	Samantha Shipeck '11	Andrew Aukerman '15
Alyssa Gerlack, Parent/Guardian	Abby Newell '14	Emily DePaoli '14
Gabrielle Romeo, '14	Cassandra Fleming '15	Isabella Tortorice '13
Maggie Shope '14	Morgan Engle '18	Aylish Regan '18
Matthew Lydic, Parent/Guardian	Heather Miller '16	Maxwell Dugan '14
Levi Wentz '20	Jana Mourad '21	Grace Kozej '21
Rashard Gathers, Parent/Guardian	Mikayla Schiffer '21	Jennifer Lott '14
Bethany Wentz, Parent/Guardian	Anna Wagner '21	Megan Fox '16
Brad Wentz, Parent/Guardian	Rebecca Torchia '13	Elizabeth Peterson '16
Donny Bryant III '16	Sarina Chow, '16	Dallas Trescher '12
Kristen Rose Baxter '14	Riley Moore '19	Abby Krick '14
Ryan Mann '15	Rachel Keeler '14	Mikayla Saversky '24
Gretchen Plant '13	Alexandria Kisow '21	Molly Drass '20
Kayla VanHolten, '14	Kiersten Maxwell '18	Aislinn Tobin '18
Elizabeth Hassett, '16	Hannah Breisinger '15	Lauren Hoffman '21
Camille Boufford '13	Lindsay Holland '20	Kaitlyn Nock '20
Rachel Fleming '15	Victor Williams '21	CJ Williams '22
Mariah Kutcho '14	Sarah Klobuchar '12	Sasha Winter '16

Daniel Krill '20  
Jared Conway '20  
Quinn Mulvaney '23  
Danielle Hobbins '17  
Ally Germ '20  
Laura Krill '22  
Elena Mueller '17  
Grace Merlack '22  
Paige Kepes '21  
Tristan Webster '12  
Macie Rigewawy '20  
Meghan Wilson '20  
Peyton Ferraro, PR Community Member  
Erin Freshwater '15  
Andrea Cortese Hassett,  
Parent/Guardian  
Tanner Pachavis '15  
Dani Bartley '14  
Kate Jesko '20  
Abigail Drake '18  
Valerie Rachel Koester '20  
Shari Berg, Parent/Guardian  
Hailey West '17  
Alaina Oberle, PR Community Member  
Katie Rishel '21  
Anna Kepes '19  
Morgan Engle '18  
Christian Dyni '17  
Sarah Vigna '22  
Lauren McManus '16  
Hanna 'Aguglia '19  
Jamie Pasterick '02  
Michael Pasterick Sr. '01  
Ethan Landis '20  
Casey Tunney '20  
Christian Dyni '17  
Caroline Swan '19  
Caitlin Golla '21  
Sofia Compennolle '18  
Christina Szigety '16  
Elizabeth Profozich '16  
Delaney Rich '22  
Kristen Gustovich '14  
Carlie Carion '21  
Grace Johnson '20  
Kyra Laubacher '20  
Matt LeDonne '15

Jenna Kennedy '20  
Hannah Monske '14  
Rori Hom '21  
Kaitlyn Newport '20  
Erin Shriber '16  
Marissa Frick '20  
Justin Waltrip '20  
Aayushi Metha '20  
Sandrine Mbonampeka '21  
Alexa Chavara '17  
Judith Johnson '20  
Cynthia Richert, PR Community Member  
Carson Heil '20  
Grace Antol '17  
Grant Hoogstraten '13  
Molly Kane '18  
Samatha Dzielski '17  
Tanisha Lydic, Parent/Guardian  
Isabella Sanzi '17  
Abby Giesecke '20  
Emily Fitzpatrick '14  
Annie DeBaldo '10  
Parker Schubert '19  
Emily Russell '21  
Martha Layne '18  
Cassidy Oberst '16  
Mya Fitzgerald '17  
Nata Mongilio '17  
John Michael Oleksa '12  
Lauren McAluney '01  
Elaine Backer, Parent/Guardian  
Emma Skundrich '18  
Kelly Metzgar Greenblatt, Parent/Guardian  
Anna Ferguson '17  
Jordan Berresford '14  
Hannah Muth '17  
Julia Fest '16  
Emily Mongilio '14  
Sara Klinge '18  
MaryKate Tobin '16  
Carly Martin '16  
Rachael Weinberg '17  
Billy Weinberg '19  
Hannah McNamara '21  
Sara Braim '18  
Kesar Sampat '23  
Tori Ploesch '18

Natalie Pyle '16  
Abigail Waryanka '19  
Victoria McCarthy '19  
Brooke Singer '19  
Margo Dolgos '14  
Ryder Edwards '24  
Seth Kornbau '18  
Alyssa Lerda '12  
Devin McCue '20  
Bryanna Weigand '20  
Emily Bovan '17  
Declan Allwein '19  
Sara McNamara '16  
William Smithgall '21  
Hayden Unitas '20  
Philip Korey Moore '23  
Maddie Ince '16  
Cali Bosman '19  
Molly King '10  
Alexandria Catalano '21  
Erin Rodgers '14  
Brookelyn McAllister, Alum  
Coleton Hawbaker '14  
Amanda Gelly '17  
Max DeVinney '17  
Allison Battaglia '20  
Isy Villella '17  
Jill Baxter, Parent/Guardian  
Kayla Julio '18  
Zachary Richert '08  
Adrianna Avolio '20  
Noah Adams '17  
Amanda Labuda '17  
Sean Anderson '15  
Arushi Bandi '17  
Hailey Truxell '14  
Caitlyn Olson '18  
Bridget Horan '16  
M Susan Adams, Parent/Guardian  
Maximillian Tobias Bauer '16  
Masaki Teitei '17  
Jessica Libby '15  
Deborah, Parent/Guardian  
Justiniano Baxter '23  
Jia Kim '15  
Tyler Goncz '18  
Taylor Mackey '16  
Matthew Roskin '14

Devin Golla '19  
Julia Herrle '15  
Lindsey Battaglia '16  
Olivia McGearry '20  
Gwyn Neumont '15  
Lizzie Carion '24  
Sydney Jones '21  
Rebekah Shipley '19  
Anna Lagnese '22  
Karley Davis (Chism) '07  
Jane Resh, Parent/Guardian  
Brittany Edwards '11  
Laila Saah '21  
Rachel Jones '11  
Erin Ahearn '20  
Mercedes Foster '22  
Thomas Krill '15  
Bridget Behring '15  
Mariah Schlegel '12  
Anna Perry '14  
Carly Barton, Parent/Guardian  
Rachael Kovaly '17  
Michael Boeh '18  
Kimberly Lubic '14  
Haley Delligatti '14  
Alexandra Spallek '16  
Victoria Monroe '18  
Madie Argiro '19  
Maren Dennison '16  
Meg Ahearn '19  
Sophia Katres '20  
Eliot Duncan '20  
Max F. Miller, Parent/Guardian  
Rachel Cole '15  
Caitlin Henley '15  
Carly Barton, Parent/Guardian  
Sue Perry, PR Community Member  
Morgan Shaw '16  
Laura Toogood '15  
Antonia Hassan '16  
Erika Nofzinger '16  
Kelli Starr '17  
Katie Clouse '16  
Layne Chapman '23  
Lauren McSwigan '17  
Sarah Wallace '19  
Masaki Teitei '17

Kathryn Cole '20  
Rachel Bashe '22  
Antoinette Caputo '10  
Kendall Pomerleau '17  
Mara Benson '11  
Sean Trant '16  
Mahak Sethi '18  
Emily Smith '11  
Cooper Snyder '18  
Nate Nardulli '16  
Anna Martinez '18  
Elly Kobert '20  
Tyler Vijaste '18  
Alyssa Bigley '18  
Haley Brunner '16  
Nicole Kordenbrock '17  
Drew Neverett '17  
Brynn Surloff '23  
Drew Siegal '21  
Jo Vidic '19  
Kelsey Hillock '14  
Brendan Swan '14  
Julie Hehman '98  
Savannah Null '17  
Lauren Donahoe '16  
Jillian Schmidt '14  
Maura McAnney, Parent/Guardian  
Lauren Ewing '14  
Pamela Leibensperger, Parent/Guardian  
Abigail Skundrich '20  
Sarah Moen Shirley '99  
Malek Khalifa '16  
Nancy Brooks, Parent/Guardian  
Jeffrey Brooks, Parent/Guardian  
Stephanie Greer, PR Community Member  
Isabella Reyes '20  
Sophie Noel '17  
Scott McAnney '15  
Brianna Thel '24  
Rachel Ebner '15  
Kensi Wolfe '18  
Anna VanDusen '14  
Carolyn Byrne, Parent/Guardian  
Bailey Mohri '19  
Torrey Cunningham '16  
Sofya Greig '23  
Paige Johnson '23

Chalondra Clarke '20  
Andrew Holm '21  
Lakshmi Natesan '21  
Margaret (Peg) Richardson, Parent/Guardian  
Laura Celedón '15  
Madeline Collins '15  
Brianna Eckenrode '16  
Caitlin (Stalker) Molter '04  
Siani Null '15  
Olivia Ranallo '20  
Elena Obrycki '20  
Peter Blackwell '21  
Lisa Tripon '16  
Carly Switala '19  
Jared Todorowski '14  
Brandon Singer '16  
Shannon Donahoe '18  
Ashley Harris, Parent/Guardian  
Emma Kapoor '16  
Kenneth Kutzer '14  
Laura Feger '14  
Kayla Kamanos '23  
Sarah Khalbuss '11  
Allison Lehmann '18  
Keith Steck '14  
Christian Oberst '18  
Grace Noel '14  
Kelly O'Keeffe '14  
Danielle Bryant '21  
Camille Grier '21  
Brandon Hunt '99  
Kate Kwasnick '20  
Ashley Profozich '13  
Zoe Blackwell '22  
Alexandru Pelinescu '20  
Garima Gupta '15  
Logan Blackwell '24  
Elizabeth Tomczak '11  
Tori Roller '19  
Fiona Kortyna '22  
Mary Peterson, '12, PR Community Member  
Shelley Chow '13  
Lauren Deasy Blackshaw '11  
Caroline Curry '20  
Nicholas Langer '14  
Taylor Rains '11  
Sara Machi '14

Allison Eastburn '20  
Kalli Doctor '23  
Aditi Bokil '14  
Audra Krieg '05  
Kaelin Clogan '13  
Jeremy Collins, Parent/Guardian, Pastor  
Skip Cornell '02  
Katherine McEwen '05  
Alexandra Erdley '07  
Alexandra Cunningham '15  
Logan Blackwell '24  
Kelsie Bruton '07  
Lisa Hennen '05  
Kristen Slomka '89, Parent/Guardian  
Beth Roxby '02, Parent/Guardian  
Kaili Doctor '23  
Jourdan James '05  
Alexandra (Conlon) Walter '05  
Brendan Peck '09  
Evin Harpur '05  
Josh Grubbs '99  
Molly Rottinghaus '18  
Margee Rottinghaus, Parent/Guardian  
Breanne Cavanaugh '05  
Tom Bogacz '01  
Darrel Smalley, Parent/Guardian  
Troy Miller '04  
Alexandra Davis '06  
Ashley Fortier, Parent/Guardian  
Allison Cooper '05  
Katie Postreich, Parent/Guardian  
Melanie Maria Berexa '15  
Lena Ogiwara '14  
Jordan Paluch '06  
Natalie McLean '23  
Andrew Thomas '24  
Lauren Gigliotti '09  
Jordan Sender Sloan '09  
Carly Dolgos '16  
Alissa Connelly '09  
Kevin Killeen '14  
Mackenzie Bigley '16  
Danny Larrimer '17  
Carolyn Zeis '15  
Elijah Wentz '25  
Naomi Wentz '26  
Denise Dyni, PR Community Member

Hunter Treece '17  
Rachel Stalker '12  
Pauline R. Parker, PR Community Member  
Jess Marfisi '12  
Christina Spohn '11  
Tate Leone '12  
Meher Babbar '14  
Jack Catalano '20  
Kelsey Stark '13  
William Spohn Jr. '14  
Miguel Jackson '21  
Brendan Peck '09  
Sara Galitsis '05, Parent/Guardian  
Laura Herrle '12  
Barbara Glass '12  
Kerrie Wynn, Parent/Guardian  
Caitlyn Byerly '17  
Ellen Weiss '08  
Leann Klingensmith '16  
Rita Lakhssassi '17  
Marsha Wade, Parent/Guardian  
Jarrett Gustovich '11  
Kripa Venkatakrishnan '13  
Cassandra Rosemeyer '13  
Sabrina Duran '16  
Marissa Di '13  
Anna Cherry '13  
Maggie McMahon '13  
Rebecca Mettee-Carter, Parent/Guardian  
Norah E. Carter '22  
Kristin Rispoli '01  
Alex Salas '17  
Alex Hein '17  
Hannah Vernetti '13  
Kenzie Jenkins '17  
Erin Freshwater '15  
Aidan Meyer '20, PR Community Member  
Sara Shriber '17  
Gianna Julio '21  
Brooke Schonbachler '14  
Patrick Pearson '14  
Alyssa Bigley '18  
Kathleen Britten '14  
Brenden Peck '09  
Sarah (Lemmon) Sunderlin '99  
Aafke (Loney) Flitsch '14  
Tyler Fitzgerald '14

John Wagner '17  
Blayne Brachocki '14  
Miranda Kurlandski '14  
Danielle Shangold '13  
Jennifer Lucchino, Parent/Guardian  
Domenic Lucchino '24  
Indy Bernard '12  
Camille Grier '21  
Nicole Schlotterbeck '14  
Carla Gathers, Parent/Guardian  
Brienne Okuda '14  
Russell Patterson, Parent/Guardian  
Terry Pomerleau, Parent/Guardian  
Susan Mckee '85, Parent/Guardian  
Shawn Clemente '14  
Jihye Kim '13  
Meghan Rzotkiewicz '14  
Kyle Hoogstraten '16  
Paige Haenig '14  
Laura Rakiewicz '09  
Allie Shepard '15  
Callahan Miller '15  
Nisha Contractor '02  
Chelsea Rourke '16  
Katie Claus '15  
William Carl '09  
Fontana Micucci '17  
Shawnika Hunt, Parent/Guardian  
Patrick Cox '16  
AT '16  
Leslie Andrews, Parent/Guardian  
Sonali Dadoo '14  
Liliana Celedón, Parent/Guardian  
Elisabeth Beuse, Student  
Samantha Shipeck '11  
Jossep E Mata, Alum  
Denise Smalley, Parent/Guardian  
Jess Horner,  
Amy Cafardi, Parent/Guardian  
Jordan Sender Sloan '09  
Dawn Augustine, Parent/Guardian  
Shari Berg, Parent/Guardian  
Chris W. Bonneau, Parent/Guardian  
Susan Pelletier, Parent/Guardian  
Alexis Meier, Parent/Guardian  
Allison Bashe, Parent/Guardian  
Katrina Espey Crutchfield,

Joyce Kirkpatrick Smith '73

Edem Akwayena '14	Emily Reiling '14	Roslyn Knapp '21
Emefa Akwayena '16	Rachel Byrne '17	Mia Tucciarone '24
Ashlynn Thompson '16	Izzy Salpietro '16	Alessandro Phillips '20
Erica Densmore '14	Emily Gerst '17	Laurel Anderson, Parent/Guardian
Sydney Brooks '14	Joey Kelly '20	Abby Cornett '16
Enyo Akwayena '20	Sarah Libby '16	Dylan Crutchfield '20
Sarah Stratil '14	Allison Grant '15	Benjamin King '14
Taylor Rowe '14	Marissa Torchia '16	Kayla Resh '18
Molly Lienesch '15	Jess Galey '14	Olivia Scullion '21
Hannah Reiling '16	Alexis Simon '17	Jordan Hightower '14
Pamela Bryant, Parent/Guardian	Samantha Shipeck '11	Andrew Aukerman '15
Alyssa Gerlack, Parent/Guardian	Abby Newell '14	Emily DePaoli '14
Gabrielle Romeo, '14	Cassandra Fleming '15	Isabella Tortorice '13
Maggie Shope '14	Morgan Engle '18	Aylish Regan '18
Matthew Lydic, Parent/Guardian	Heather Miller '16	Maxwell Dugan '14
Levi Wentz '20	Jana Mourad '21	Grace Kozej '21
Rashard Gathers, Parent/Guardian	Mikayla Schiffer '21	Jennifer Lott '14
Bethany Wentz, Parent/Guardian	Anna Wagner '21	Megan Fox '16
Brad Wentz, Parent/Guardian	Rebecca Torchia '13	Elizabeth Peterson '16
Donny Bryant III '16	Sarina Chow, '16	Dallas Trescher '12
Kristen Rose Baxter '14	Riley Moore '19	Abby Krick '14
Ryan Mann '15	Rachel Keeler '14	Mikayla Saversky '24
Gretchen Plant '13	Alexandria Kisow '21	Molly Drass '20
Kayla VanHolten, '14	Kiersten Maxwell '18	Aislinn Tobin '18
Elizabeth Hassett, '16	Hannah Breisinger '15	Lauren Hoffman '21
Camille Boufford '13	Lindsay Holland '20	Kaitlyn Nock '20
Rachel Fleming '15	Victor Williams '21	CJ Williams '22
Mariah Kutcho '14	Sarah Klobuchar '12	Sasha Winter '16
Daniel Krill '20	Jenna Kennedy '20	Natalie Pyle '16
Jared Conway '20	Hannah Monske '14	Abigail Waryanka '19
Quinn Mulvaney '23	Rori Hom '21	Victoria McCarthy '19
Danielle Hobbins '17	Kaitlyn Newport '20	Brooke Singer '19
Ally Germ '20	Erin Shriber '16	Margo Dolgos '14
Laura Krill '22	Marissa Frick '20	Ryder Edwards '24
Elena Mueller '17	Justin Waltrip '20	Seth Kornbau '18
Grace Merlack '22	Aayushi Metha '20	Alyssa Lerda '12
Paige Kepes '21	Sandrine Mbonampeka '21	Devin McCue '20
Tristan Webster '12	Alexa Chavara '17	Bryanna Weigand '20
Macie Rigewawy '20	Judith Johnson '20	Emily Bovan '17
Meghan Wilson '20	Cynthia Richert, PR Community Member	Declan Allwein '19
Peyton Ferraro, PR Community Member	Carson Heil '20	Sara McNamara '16
Erin Freshwater '15	Grace Antol '17	William Smithgall '21
Andrea Cortese Hassett, Parent/Guardian	Grant Hoogstraten '13	Hayden Unitas '20
	Molly Kane '18	Philip Korey Moore '23

Tanner Pachavis '15  
Dani Bartley '14  
Kate Jesko '20  
Abigail Drake '18  
Valerie Rachel Koester '20  
Shari Berg, Parent/Guardian  
Hailey West '17  
Alaina Oberle, PR Community Member  
Katie Rishel '21  
Anna Kepes '19  
Morgan Engle '18  
Christian Dyni '17  
Sarah Vigna '22  
Lauren McManus '16  
Hanna 'Aguglia '19  
Jamie Pasterick '02  
Michael Pasterick Sr. '01  
Ethan Landis '20  
Casey Tunney '20  
Christian Dyni '17  
Caroline Swan '19  
Caitlin Golla '21  
Sofia Compennolle '18  
Christina Szigety '16  
Elizabeth Profozich '16  
Delaney Rich '22  
Kristen Gustovich '14  
Carlie Carion '21  
Grace Johnson '20  
Kyra Laubacher '20  
Matt LeDonne '15  
Devin Golla '19  
Julia Herrle '15  
Lindsey Battaglia '16  
Olivia McGeary '20  
Gwyn Neumont '15  
Lizzie Carion '24  
Sydney Jones '21  
Rebekah Shipley '19  
Anna Lagnese '22  
Karley Davis (Chism) '07  
Jane Resh, Parent/Guardian  
Brittany Edwards '11  
Laila Saah '21  
Rachel Jones '11  
Erin Ahearn '20  
Mercedes Foster '22

Samatha Dzielski '17  
Tanisha Lydic, Parent/Guardian  
Isabella Sanzi '17  
Abby Giesecke '20  
Emily Fitzpatrick '14  
Annie DeBaldo '10  
Parker Schubert '19  
Emily Russell '21  
Martha Layne '18  
Cassidy Oberst '16  
Mya Fitzgerald '17  
Nata Mongilio '17  
John Michael Oleksa '12  
Lauren McAluney '01  
Elaine Backer, Parent/Guardian  
Emma Skundrich '18  
Kelly Metzgar Greenblatt,  
Parent/Guardian  
Anna Ferguson '17  
Jordan Berresford '14  
Hannah Muth '17  
Julia Fest '16  
Emily Mongilio '14  
Sara Klinge '18  
MaryKate Tobin '16  
Carly Martin '16  
Rachael Weinberg '17  
Billy Weinberg '19  
Hannah McNamara '21  
Sara Braim '18  
Kesar Sampat '23  
Tori Ploesch '18  
Kathryn Cole '20  
Rachel Bashe '22  
Antoinette Caputo '10  
Kendall Pomerleau '17  
Mara Benson '11  
Sean Trant '16  
Mahak Sethi '18  
Emily Smith '11  
Cooper Snyder '18  
Nate Nardulli '16  
Anna Martinez '18  
Elly Kobert '20  
Tyler Vijaste '18  
Alyssa Bigley '18  
Haley Brunner '16

Maddie Ince '16  
Cali Bosman '19  
Molly King '10  
Alexandria Catalano '21  
Erin Rodgers '14  
Brookelyn McAllister, Alum  
Coleton Hawbaker '14  
Amanda Gelly '17  
Max DeVinney '17  
Allison Battaglia '20  
Isy Villella '17  
Jill Baxter, Parent/Guardian  
Kayla Julio '18  
Zachary Richert '08  
Adrianna Avolio '20  
Noah Adams '17  
Amanda Labuda '17  
Sean Anderson '15  
Arushi Bandi '17  
Hailey Truxell '14  
Caitlyn Olson '18  
Bridget Horan '16  
M Susan Adams, Parent/Guardian  
Maximillian Tobias Bauer '16  
Masaki Teitei '17  
Jessica Libby '15  
Deborah, Parent/Guardian  
Justiniano Baxter '23  
Jia Kim '15  
Tyler Goncz '18  
Taylor Mackey '16  
Matthew Roskin '14  
Chalondra Clarke '20  
Andrew Holm '21  
Lakshmi Natesan '21  
Margaret (Peg) Richardson,  
Parent/Guardian  
Laura Celedón '15  
Madeline Collins '15  
Brianna Eckenrode '16  
Caitlin (Stalker) Molter '04  
Siani Null '15  
Olivia Ranallo '20  
Elena Obrycki '20  
Peter Blackwell '21  
Lisa Tripon '16  
Carly Switala '19

Thomas Krill '15	Nicole Kordenbrock '17	Jared Todorowski '14
Bridget Behring '15	Drew Neverett '17	Brandon Singer '16
Mariah Schlegel '12	Brynn Surloff '23	Shannon Donahoe '18
Anna Perry '14	Drew Siegal '21	Ashley Harris, Parent/Guardian
Carly Barton, Parent/Guardian	Jo Vidic '19	Emma Kapoor '16
Rachael Kovaly '17	Kelsey Hillock '14	Kenneth Kutzer '14
Michael Boeh '18	Brendan Swan '14	Laura Feger '14
Kimberly Lubic '14	Julie Hehman '98	Kayla Kamanos '23
Haley Delligatti '14	Savannah Null '17	Sarah Khalbuss '11
Alexandra Spallek '16	Lauren Donahoe '16	Allison Lehmann '18
Victoria Monroe '18	Jillian Schmidt '14	Keith Steck '14
Madie Argiro '19	Maura McAnney, Parent/Guardian	Christian Oberst '18
Maren Dennison '16	Lauren Ewing '14	Grace Noel '14
Meg Ahearn '19	Pamela Leibensperger, Parent/Guardian	Kelly O'Keeffe '14
Sophia Katres '20	Abigail Skundrich '20	Danielle Bryant '21
Eliot Duncan '20	Sarah Moen Shirley '99	Camille Grier '21
Max F. Miller, Parent/Guardian	Malek Khalifa '16	Brandon Hunt '99
Rachel Cole '15	Nancy Brooks, Parent/Guardian	Kate Kwasnick '20
Caitlin Henley '15	Jeffrey Brooks, Parent/Guardian	Ashley Profozich '13
Carly Barton, Parent/Guardian	Stephanie Greer, PR Community Member	Zoe Blackwell '22
Sue Perry, PR Community Member	Isabella Reyes '20	Alexandru Pelinescu '20
Morgan Shaw '16	Sophie Noel '17	Garima Gupta '15
Laura Toogood '15	Scott McAnney '15	Logan Blackwell '24
Antonia Hassan '16	Brianna Thel '24	Elizabeth Tomczak '11
Erika Nofzinger '16	Rachel Ebner '15	Tori Roller '19
Kelli Starr '17	Kensi Wolfe '18	Fiona Kortyna '22
Katie Clouse '16	Anna VanDusen '14	Mary Peterson, '12, PR Community
Layne Chapman '23	Carolyn Byrne, Parent/Guardian	Member
Lauren McSwigan '17	Bailey Mohri '19	Shelley Chow '13
Sarah Wallace '19	Torrey Cunningham '16	Lauren Deasy Blackshaw '11
Masaki Teitei '17	Sofya Greig '23	Caroline Curry '20
Allison Eastburn '20	Paige Johnson '23	Nicholas Langer '14
Kalli Doctor '23	Hunter Treece '17	Taylor Rains '11
Aditi Bokil '14	Rachel Stalker '12	Sara Machi '14
Audra Krieg '05	Pauline R. Parker, PR Community	John Wagner '17
Kaelin Clogan '13	Member	Blayne Brachocki '14
Jeremy Collins, Parent/Guardian, Pastor	Jess Marfisi '12	Miranda Kurlandski '14
Skip Cornell '02	Christina Spohn '11	Danielle Shangold '13
Katherine McEwen '05	Tate Leone '12	Jennifer Lucchino, Parent/Guardian
Alexandra Erdley '07	Meher Babbar '14	Domenic Lucchino '24
Alexandra Cunningham '15	Jack Catalano '20	Indy Bernard '12
Logan Blackwell '24	Kelsey Stark '13	Camille Grier '21
Kelsie Bruton '07	William Spohn Jr. '14	Nicole Schlotterbeck '14
Lisa Hennen '05	Miguel Jackson '21	Carla Gathers, Parent/Guardian
Kristen Slomka '89, Parent/Guardian	Brendan Peck '09	Brienne Okuda '14
Beth Roxby '02, Parent/Guardian	Sara Galitsis '05, Parent/Guardian	Russell Patterson, Parent/Guardian
Kaili Doctor '23	Laura Herrle '12	Terry Pomerleau, Parent/Guardian

Jourdan James '05  
Alexandra (Conlon) Walter '05  
Brendan Peck '09  
Evin Harpur '05  
Josh Grubbs '99  
Molly Rottinghaus '18  
Margee Rottinghaus, Parent/Guardian  
Breanne Cavanaugh '05  
Tom Bogacz '01  
Darrel Smalley, Parent/Guardian  
Troy Miller '04  
Alexandra Davis '06  
Ashley Fortier, Parent/Guardian  
Allison Cooper '05  
Katie Postreich, Parent/Guardian  
Melanie Maria Berexa '15  
Lena Ogiwara '14  
Jordan Paluch '06  
Natalie McLean '23  
Andrew Thomas '24  
Lauren Gigliotti '09  
Jordan Sender Sloan '09  
Carly Dolgos '16  
Alissa Connelly '09  
Kevin Killeen '14  
Mackenzie Bigley '16  
Danny Larrimer '17  
Carolyn Zeis '15  
Elijah Wentz '25  
Naomi Wentz '26  
Denise Dyni, PR Community Member  
Joyce Kirkpatrick Smith '73  
Janie Mehaffey  
Cathleen Wiskemann '85  
Laura Potoski, Parent/Guardian

Barbara Glass '12  
Kerrie Wynn, Parent/Guardian  
Caitlyn Byerly '17  
Ellen Weiss '08  
Leann Klingensmith '16  
Rita Lakhssassi '17  
Marsha Wade, Parent/Guardian  
Jarrett Gustovich '11  
Kripa Venkatakrishnan '13  
Cassandra Rosemeyer '13  
Sabrina Duran '16  
Marissa Di '13  
Anna Cherry '13  
Maggie McMahon '13  
Rebecca Mettee-Carter, Parent/Guardian  
Norah E. Carter '22  
Kristin Rispoli '01  
Alex Salas '17  
Alex Hein '17  
Hannah Vernetti '13  
Kenzie Jenkins '17  
Erin Freshwater '15  
Aidan Meyer '20, PR Community  
Member  
Sara Shriber '17  
Gianna Julio '21  
Brooke Schonbachler '14  
Patrick Pearson '14  
Alyssa Bigley '18  
Kathleen Britten '14  
Brenden Peck '09  
Sarah (Lemmon) Sunderlin '99  
Aafke (Loney) Flitsch '14  
Tyler Fitzgerald '14  
Emily Robbbaro, Parent/Guardian

Susan Mckee '85, Parent/Guardian  
Shawn Clemente '14  
Jihye Kim '13  
Meghan Rzotkiewicz '14  
Kyle Hoogstraten '16  
Paige Haenig '14  
Laura Rakiewicz '09  
Allie Shepard '15  
Callahan Miller '15  
Nisha Contractor '02  
Chelsea Rourke '16  
Katie Claus '15  
William Carl '09  
Fontana Micucci '17  
Shawnika Hunt, Parent/Guardian  
Patrick Cox '16  
AT '16  
Leslie Andrews, Parent/Guardian  
Sonali Dadoo '14  
Liliana Celedón, Parent/Guardian  
Elisabeth Beuse, Student  
Samantha Shipeck '11  
Josseph E Mata, Alum  
Denise Smalley, Parent/Guardian  
Jess Horner,  
Amy Cafardi, Parent/Guardian  
Jordan Sender Sloan '09  
Dawn Augustine, Parent/Guardian  
Shari Berg, Parent/Guardian  
Chris W. Bonneau, Parent/Guardian  
Susan Pelletier, Parent/Guardian  
Alexis Meier, Parent/Guardian  
Allison Bashe, Parent/Guardian  
Katrina Espey Crutchfield,  
Parent/Guardian

**We will include testimonials about their experiences at Pine-Richland from students of color below.** These testimonials are anonymously submitted and republished in their entirety. We do not claim to investigate any claims, substantively edit the content, or support them as fact

*There were many times while attending PR that I experienced microaggressions and blatant racism from both students and teachers. Starting in elementary school, I was made fun of for my hair being different than the other students. I was told I looked like Troy Polamalu and until age 13, girls called me 'puffball'. I've experienced white students throwing around the n-word casually in front of me as if I don't exist and have heard side comments about being stereotypically black for the music I listen to and my interests. I've been told from white students I am not "really" black because I'm biracial as well. When I received acceptance letters from every university I applied to for college, I received shocked responses from both students AND teachers due to my race/"lack of intelligence". It's undeniable that Pine-Richland has allowed racism and ignorance to grow and spread in their community and the schools. This must be changed throughout ALL the schools in the district.*

*During my freshman year, my U.S. History teacher made the class debate the issue of slavery. Of course, my aging, white, male teacher played devil's advocate. As devil's advocate, he diminished the idea of slavery being "not that bad" and used the age-old excuse of "well, if I had a tractor, why would I misuse it" to justify the owning of human beings. Us 14- and 15-year-olds were ill-equipped with the partial education this school district has provided on slavery to properly debate his many excuses and justifications on the matter. After the discussion, he did little to rectify the situation. This type of exercise with no explanation as to the long-term effects of slavery or its tragedies is detrimental to students who have only received an education on slavery from the point of view of those who have always been free. The exercise only sought to reinforce the harmful idea that slavery was more of a system no different than the transacting of machinery than a tragic holocaust the effects of which are still felt today (e.g. the prison-industrial complex, the deification of Confederate soldiers, European ancestry—due to the rape of their ancestors—of countless African Americans who can trace their roots back to slavery etc.).*

*Alumni of Pine-Richland were afforded a privileged education. I'm immensely grateful for this. Some post-graduate success can be credited to the personal talents of alumni, but ultimately the district is a stepping stone to access: access to robust course offerings, college prep, financial and extracurricular resources. Pine-Richland plants seeds for academic and professional success. Unfortunately, the primacy placed on competitive ranking and public image has left systemic issues in the community unaddressed.*

*There have been issues of classism, ableism and homophobia in the district, but in particular there were numerous instances of racism throughout my education. Several White peers, who were ultimately accepted into competitive schools, spoke openly during class about how they had been disadvantaged by affirmative action. A White peer in my middle school science class told a classmate that Black people had an extra bone in their foot, which was the rationale behind their athletic success. During a class discussion my senior year, a peer asked why there wasn't a White History Month and suggested Black History Month was preferential. A substitute teacher my senior year told the class how Black parents teach Black children to hate White people. I rode the bus to school with a student*

who loudly made racist remarks about President Obama prior to the 2008 election. A friend told me that they thought discussing the ethnic diversity of their friends in their college essay was what helped their chances with admission. A friend laughingly told me about their racist family member. These instances vary in severity, but share common illiteracy, whether intentional or otherwise, when it comes to race.

These anecdotes are also specific to my time at Pine-Richland, but there are other experiences that I think are almost universally known by Black students in the district. We all know the look we give another Black peer (if we are lucky enough to have one in our grade) when, once again, a White peer makes a racially insensitive remark during lunch. We know when the Civil War unit is around the corner in Social Studies, we anticipate the way it will make our skin crawl when all the eyes in the classroom swivel to us during discussions of slavery. That will be the one of the only discussions for the year of the role Black Americans played in American history. We know what it's like to be a student's "Black friend" or be responsible for the anti-racist education of our White peers while we're still struggling to figure out what identity looks like in a predominately White school.

Pine-Richland lays claim to a series of PRIDE values that it's currently falling short of and has been for some time now. Providing diverse opportunities has been an admirable focus, leaving other important areas behind. There is no personal growth for staff or students if faculty are unable to facilitate difficult but necessary conversations. Resilience can't be fostered— for Black or White students —if they are solely educated by White faculty and taught a curriculum that only sits comfortably within the boundaries of their zip code. A lack of active engagement with all members of the district has resulted in a preference for maintaining the status quo over creating meaningful, innovative and essential change.

As a key institution in the community tasked with holistically educating students, Pine-Richland has an obligation to do better. I urge Pine-Richland's administration to consider the asks in this letter and make a demonstrable commitment to instituting anti-racist practices in the district.

Growing up Black in Pine-Richland was a constant reminder that I was different, and from what I experienced, I was different in a "negative" way. My peers would often call me "Oreo" signifying that I was "white" enough without being white as if my blackness was something to be ashamed of. I was told that "I was pretty for a Black girl" as if I could never be pretty in white people's standards. I remember being called the n-word leaving the bus in middle school, having to sit in a class as my white peers discussed the use of the n-word in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and all the eyes on me every time we discussed slavery in history class as if I was the one who did something wrong. I did everything I could to have my blackness not be the first thing people noticed about me. So I made sure I took all the AP classes, joined all the clubs, and did everything I could to get people to like me despite the fact I was Black. One of the last, painful experiences of racism I experienced at Pine-Richland was despite all my hard work, my peers would constantly say that I got into the college I did only because I was Black. I do not wish this pressure on any other student of color at Pine-Richland, especially during their most formative years. My hope is that other students of color don't have to wait until they are out of the Pine-Richland bubble to finally love themselves for who they are. Pine-Richland needs to do better for their students of color. Teachers need to "see" them like they see the white students. I remember graduating and all my peers were excited about friending their teachers on Facebook. I could not think of a single teacher who I was close enough to to even send a request. I firmly believe that my teachers did not know how to connect to me, therefore I was excluded from many experiences that I saw my

peers have. If Pine-Richland continues on this path, their student body will become less and less diverse. Currently, all the minorities at PR collectively make up 10%, and from the conversations I've had with my peers of color, they would never raise their children in an environment like the one we grew up in.

During my high school years, there was a certain substitute teacher who was well known to students and teachers alike. He filled in for many different teachers, as well as different grade levels. Looking back, I must have had him as a teacher at least 20 times during my high school years. He always began his classes the same way, taking attendance, a task that most teachers regularly did. Each time he would arrive at my name, he would always say it incorrectly, and everytime he did, the class would erupt in laughter and snickers. Throughout all four years, there was never a time where he would say it right or even try to learn it when I would correct him with the right pronunciation. Even more, he never took time to address my peers and suggest that their reactions to the situation were inappropriate. All of my peers learned to say my name correctly during my years at PR, most learned within minutes. They all knew he said it wrong, yet it was comical to them and hurtful to me.

A name is important; it should never evoke feelings of embarrassment and shame. As a black student, having this encounter every single time I had this substitute teacher was another painful reminder that I was not viewed the same way as my white peers. It was just another thing to add to the list of what made me different from my white peers. They would laugh and would sometimes even use that incorrect pronunciation that the substitute constantly used to joke around with me. These few moments of discomfort may seem insignificant, but they would remain with me throughout these class periods and as the day continued. It got to a point where I would find myself dreading class when I knew he would be teaching that day. His lack of attention to learning my name was hurtful. His silence when the class would find this situation comical was a harsh reminder that my feelings and well being during class did not matter. Our teachers at Pine-Richland are not just in their roles to educate, they have the opportunity to act as role models- to speak up when things are wrong, and to encourage us when things are done the right way. The way this substitute teacher treated me does not align with the values and character that the district prides itself in. That is not empowering young students. What I felt throughout these years was a lack of value and pure disrespect.

One day, visibly upset and on the verge of tears, I firmly told the substitute teacher that what he was saying was not my name (something I did each class, this was just the first time I did not hide my emotions) He seemed perplexed and surprised that I was so upset. I continued by repeating the correct pronunciation and asking him to only call me by my name in the correct way going forward. Thinking I had finally done something for him to realize how upset I was, I hoped that that day would be the last of my experiences. However, the next time I had him as a substitute teacher, the exact same situation played out, with him saying my name incorrectly and of course, the chuckles from my peers.

As I reflect on these experiences, it angers me that this was something that occurred, not once but continuously. It was detrimental to my learning because I purposely would avoid participating and answering questions during class, as I knew that way the one way I could ensure that I wouldn't be called on and have to be reminded that my own name was not important enough to learn for this teacher. It was the only way I didn't have to be singled out from my classmates and made to seem that my name was the difficult one.

My hurt doesn't come from the fact that he had trouble stating my name; it is from the fact that he continued to use the correct pronunciation even after being corrected by a clearly upset me. It comes from him never once reproaching my classmates for their reactions. My name will never be too difficult

to learn. It has meaning--it is my identity. I took History courses at Pine-Richland where we learned about historical heroes and figures, oftentimes with unique names as well. If students are expected to learn and memorize these new names, teachers, all teachers, should make it a priority to display care and respect to all of their students and show them that something as simple, yet as imperative as a name holds meaning and carries an identity.

As I write this, I wonder if this specific substitute teacher is still there, I wouldn't be surprised if he still was considering how often he would fill in for various teachers. I hope Pine-Richland takes time to consider the leaders they have in the district, from teaching to coaching. I truly hope that they go above and beyond so that all students, especially those who are minorities know that they are just as valuable as every single other student. This cannot be ignored any longer. We must not shy away from differences that make individuals unique but rather learn to fully embrace them. My name matters. I matter.

During my middle school years, I was frequently called "spud potato" by a girl in my class due to my brown skin and eczema scars. In high school, it was a weekly occurrence to be passed in the hall and for someone to use the N word. When we read *To Kill a Mockingbird* in class, students were expected to read aloud passages to support their viewpoint on the book. Several students would read aloud the N word and then snicker. The teacher pulled aside a few people and said you have to be sensitive because "N" is in this class. The lesson was not-- this is an inappropriate word, it was--stop snickering because there is a brown student in our class. When my mother addressed it with the teacher, there was still no follow up with the class about it. I traveled to another school district to play in a game knowing that the other team had made a racist twitter account in my name. I was frequently targeted by the other school's fan section who would chant about my hair and appearance. I was told by coach's that I have a chip on my shoulder and play too much like "street ball" players. While there are many things I love about this district, there is a lot of learning and growth that needs to happen in the community. I am praying for change for my siblings and other students.

This is my anonymous testimony. I am a former student who graduated in 2016. When I was in high-school, I will say that the system setup for both me as a student and athlete were not good. For starters, I was not given any ideals on how to be successful for college because of my previous academic history. To elaborate, I was setup with classes that would not give me any insight of having a collegiate future to better my life. Instead, I was constantly being persuaded to go to CCAC, or trade schools because of me taking classes that I had no interest or motivation to succeed in. However, when there would come a class such as politics that has a more advanced level of education, it was an extreme nuisance to convince the school that AP government would be a class that I would be successful in. Whenever someone would ask me as an alumni my school setup for success, I wouldn't be able to answer that because of the negligence specific teachers would give my potential intellectually. I think if I wasn't profiled racially for my intelligence, it would have given me a better setup for success in the future with multiple colleges wanting me to join their school. Other students from the class of 2015 and under have been shown to have had a better setup for success for their futures. I also believe that during my time in sports, I did not have the best setup for success either. Comparing to other athletes who have had previous coaches utilizing their connections to get them offers and into schools, I was not one of those students who had that opportunity. Everything I had to do was by myself, making me feel like I was alone and the world was against me. Thankfully, my motive to work hard ended up in me going to college and having an opportunity to enhance my future for success with a 3.4 GPA. However, I can't say that Pine-Richland did anything for me to set me up for that future. I have been through so much agony at Pine-Richland physically, emotionally, and mentally. All I ask is for the system to change so I can proudly say that I am a Pine-Richland Alumni.

*\*\*<sup>8</sup>In terms of academic skill, I believe I was well prepared to go to university. However, there is so much about race relations and microaggressions that Pine-Richland did not prepare me for. There was next to no diversity in our class. When I moved to the school district in second grade, and my parents asked if the school was diverse, they told them "We had a mexican family once, but they moved away." It only got worse over time. I remember the children screaming "Obama is Osama" in school during the 2008 election, and teachers laughed it off. When I left for college, I learned just how blatantly awful the experiences I had at PR were, and I can only imagine what it would have been like for people of color. Pine-Richland needs to do better.*

*\*\*I'm not an alum of color, but I have seen things happen to my peers who have a different color skin than myself. I am a graduate of the Class of 2020. I would be sitting on the bus to Beattie with a friend who was of color and other students would scream the n word at her and the bus driver wouldn't do a single thing about it. We would take it to the guidance office, they would review the tapes from the bus and even have administration look at it and nothing would be done. My senior year study hall, I had another friend of color in that class with me. My teacher in that class would allow me to leave early to go to my locker to grab my coat before it was time for me to leave. He would not allow my friend to come with me. Another pair of girls, both white, would do the same thing and they could both go. Pine-Richland needs to train its staff in how to treat people of color, the same goes with it's bus drivers.*

*Throughout my years in PRSD, I constantly faced racism from my peers and teachers. Being an Indian, I have a darker skin color which resulted in students saying I look like poop, i'm a terrorist, or that kids want me to cry because they wanted to see Indians cry. Teachers also treated me differently. The talk of different skin calls and anti bullying never occurred, although I wish it did. Being at pine richland shattered my self esteem and made me constantly feel as if I was not enough. I hope they make changes to make students that are of color feel more comfortable attending school!*

*Throughout my years at PR, there was a lot of implicit bias, a severe symptom of systemic racism in the community. As shown by the data breakdown Dr. Miller gave, Asians were higher in population than other minorities. This, I believe, enabled a more open way for students to bully Asians (myself included). The racial biases that occurred frequently are something I'll never forget. It's now going on three years since I've graduated, and it's quite frankly followed me to where I am now in college: insecure, shy, and doubting. Will the colleagues I meet automatically think I'm smart just because I'm Asian? Will people come to me for answers because they see an Asian? How does that make me feel when I simply want to meet people and make meaningful connections? As you can most likely guess, I experienced this at PR, and as I ponder it more, I truly believe there were many, many instances of teachers not standing up for people like me, and even perhaps perpetuating it. Now, this brings me to the main point. Black Lives Matter. In addition to seeing the frequent Asian racism, Black racism was also just as rampant, if not more. Yet, the All Lives Matter narrative is being pushed more. Diminishing the experiences and history of a group of people is not beneficial to anyone. There is always room to grow. If you aren't Black, you will NEVER know or understand the disparities and injustice. But what we can do, is sit down, listen, absorb, and call to action to change the system. Movements are powerful, and it is an amazing thing to recognize we are living through something truly monumental. Of course, it's due to the unfortunate and traumatic Black history, but to be able to know that PR had direct, active involvement is something to be proud of. To be a part of rewriting history into a safe space for Blacks and other minorities. To have empathy, compassion, and motivation to create a better future for our children.*

---

<sup>8</sup>\*\*Written by White Alum, Student

Personally had really good experiences in PR as one of the very few Asians in the school district. There were times when classmates commented on my lunch food and the way I dressed - which were influenced by Korean culture. While those didn't really hurt me or affect me, it could have been comments that someone more sensitive may thought it as racism. (Actually more like indifference and unawareness to diversity of culture - and this is why education is so important just like the letter mentioned!) Besides, I would like also add to give shout outs to all my friends who helped me with my bad English, taught me American culture, were inclusive with me and didn't view me any different than who they are. And thank you for the staff and faculty who made that warm culture within the school.

<sup>9</sup>\*\*I'm white but I had a social studies teacher at pine Richland who consistently told a student from Venezuela to "Go back to Mexico" during class in front of everyone

I'm a white-passing POC, so i never experienced this first handedly, but POC that I knew would tell me about how white students would call them racial slurs during school.

\*\*Being a student from Pine-Richland has negatively impacted my career and education. Because of a lack of diversity in the student population and curriculum, I was often behind my peers in undergrad and now graduate-level education regarding racial equity issues. I am earning my Master's in Public Health. Having a fundamental understanding of racial inequities in the United States is vital to providing superior healthcare to all. Although, I feel Pine-Richland prepared me academically. I was not ready for the real world. I did not understand how certain groups have been systematically oppressed, why there was fear in communities with police and healthcare workers. I have worked hard to educate myself on these topics. However, to this day, I am still behind. I believe the school district has to prepare its students for the real world we live in.

"We are PR family." I remember getting those shirts. I remember smiling seeing everyone around me wear them. But I also remember walking to class the very next day and having 3 members of the football team yell "Naruto!" at me. Since I was Asian, I guess they thought it would be funny to reduce me to the name of a Japanese anime character. Sure, that was a less than positive experience, but what really got me was how I then had to celebrate and cheer for those same 3 football players and their accomplishments during a mandatory assembly. That is no family I want to be a part of.

I think one thing about growing up in Pine-Richland that's had a significant impact on me is how little ability people that look like me have to teach other students and staff or community members in general about my struggles of being a young black student in this white community is how oblivious many people are to the racial disparities that affect myself and others everyday. One time in class after reading To Kill A Mockingbird my friend, who was Egyptian, and I were singled out because of our skin color and asked if we had ever gone through anything similar to what had happened to some of the black characters in the book and she was very caught off guard when I told her that I'd been called the n word the day before by a student in the school. That's when it really hit me that so many people have no clue what black people go through on a daily basis.

\*\*When I was still attending this school, I was bombarded with anti-LGBTQ slurs (I am a very, very obvious butch lesbian). I imagine if I was a POC, the harassment would be much worse. If the LGBTQ+ community was harassed to the extent it was (and likely still is), I cannot imagine what queer POC have to endure from the privileged white students at this district. There were absolutely no policies protecting minority students, and I doubt there are now.

---

<sup>9</sup> \*\*Written by White Alum/Student

*I am biracial but white-passing. I know that I did not witness or understand visible POC's experiences at PR, but I certainly had enough instances of micro-aggressions directed toward me to know that Pine Richland must change. I was called exotic by my peers and had one student complain that there aren't any awards or scholarships for white people after I won an award for Asian-American students. One English teacher also refused to allow me to take a different version of a quiz that tested my knowledge of a topic in Christianity - I am not Christian and did not understand how to respond to the question so I offered to stay late and prove I had done the reading by taking a different version of the quiz, since he had multiple versions. I was not provided the opportunity and left in tears. This may not seem so relevant to the topic at hand - but religion and race often intersect, which is certainly true for me - and in my case, led to a failed quiz that did not represent my knowledge. Instead, it led me to stop reading and just look at Sparknotes for the remainder of that class. These instances of racism, no matter how small, don't just evoke negative feelings, but negatively impact students' achievements in school and their future careers. Even though we can't teach students about everything, we can teach them to have empathy and learn how to change when they are told they are wrong or insensitive - including how to be more anti-racist as they grow and develop even after they leave school. At present, Pine Richland isn't teaching any of these values in the classroom.*

*I was one of the only Arab and Muslim students in the district. I am white passing so I was saved from most of the harassment, something my South Asian Muslim neighbor's daughter was not able to handle and left the school district. I will say that PR's lack of diversity in staff is deplorable and sets a standard to students that the people they look up to are all white, and look like them. The social studies curriculum focuses on Western history, ignoring much of the rest of the world. Anti-racism must be taught actively to develop our youth into intelligent and aware citizens. Conversations need to happen. Don't silence BIPOC students. Students at PR will be unprepared for future spaces that have a diversity of race and privilege. And don't forget, PR is not a safe space for LGBT teens and this further needs addressed.*

*Racism is something that occurred every single day during high school at Pine Richland. I was constantly faced with questions about my race, asking about my ethnicity, and constant racist remarks made towards me. I was called the N word every day by white students without any response from teachers that were present in the room. Although I am not Black, as a Latino student in a county with one of the lowest hispanic populations in the country, racism was directed towards me in a non-subtle manner. Students felt the need to be quiet around Black students when making racist "jokes," while making directly racist comments toward me calling me everything from the N word to George Lopez (because I am Mexican) to a terrorist (because my skin is brown) and far more than I can count. Students making these remarks felt as if I had no justification for being offended because I am not Black. Just because I am not Black does not make their comments any less offensive. I remember being laughed at by both students and faculty for supporting Leon Ford, a Black man who became paralyzed after being shot 7 times by Pittsburgh Police during a routine traffic stop. Students would always say that Ford "probably did something wrong" or asked "what if he had a gun on him?" The assumption from students that a Black man in the City was likely a criminal, or that he posed a threat to officers is a blatant display of arrogance and racism within Pine Richland. BLACK LIVES MATTER. My experience with racism at Pine Richland was not nearly as bad as that of Black students, who have been the most affected by racism at PRHS. Pine Richland must stand behind their Black and Latino students as we continue to be killed by police across the country.*

*In elementary school, I was called the N word on the bus. It is the first time I can remember being called this word. At Eden Hall there was a girl that called me a burnt granola bar every day as we went to the bus. I finally said something back to her, her parents called the school, and I got in trouble for saying something back. I did not feel comfortable sharing what she was calling me. My mother later*

called and shared what I was called, and the school insisted that what she called me was not based on my skin and we could not know if there was any consequence for the girl. I was frequently confused by teachers and staff with another brown student. Sometimes we did not feel comfortable correcting them, so we wouldn't. There have been many uncomfortable situations where teachers/staff did not choose to get to know me, but saw me as one of the few brown kids in the school.

*As the parent of two African American students, we took our kids out of the PR District due to the lack of diversity in the staff, administration, and student body. Sadly that was several years ago and unsurprisingly, nothing has changed.*

<sup>10</sup>\*\*As a white alumna who spent K-12 in PR, I know that I could very well be one of the racist classmates others have referred to in their testimonies. I take full responsibility for my harmful words and actions - they were undeniably racist in both blatant and subtle ways that I failed to acknowledge and apologize for. I must also acknowledge, however, that there was virtually no challenge to the beliefs I held or the microaggressions I committed from faculty and other leadership within the school district. These beliefs and behaviors were highly normalized and in some instances, even promoted. The tragedy - and the hope - that can come from PRSD acknowledging and taking responsibility for this reality is that it is absolutely possible and worthwhile for things to change, and there is no valid excuse not to. I grew up in an entirely white neighborhood, attended school in a predominantly white district, and went to college at a predominately white university. This university, however, had in place many of the practices, curriculum, leadership, and organizational supports that are listed in the demands of this letter - and they were and are absolutely effective. Superintendent Brian Miller may be accurate in stating the Pine-Richland is not diverse, but a lack of diversity is not a valid justification for a lack of anti-racist action. White students like me were and are capable of change, and the BIPOC in the school deserve better from us and from the district responsible for our education. The anti-racist education I received in college, whether it came in the form of curricular elements or simply through the presence of BIPOC faculty members, not only helped change my personally held beliefs but also massively enriched the quality of my education, better preparing me to enter the workforce and become a truly engaged member of my current community. This is not a political issue (as many white parents are likely to complain), but a human issue, and we must push forward with these demands knowing that if PRSD truly wants to "focus on learning for every student every day," fulfilling them is their necessary start finally living up to its mission.

*\*\*While I'm not an alum of color, I am a Jewish alum. My mother spent time on diversity committee throughout my sister and I's time in the district. Every single year she had to battle the district to not give homework during the Jewish High Holidays. Every single year. They never learned, or really cared. The ignorance that filled that school was appalling. Not only because of the lack of diversity, but because no one did anything to make up for that. Our history classes were incredibly white washed, with barely any mention of prominent members of black history; always trying to protect the white christian man it seemed. If we give students a better education, they will be better people.*

Growing up going to Pine-Richland, everyone would always praise the school for their academics and programs, and I cannot deny that - I received a sufficient education. However, the lack of representation when learning was apparent; the "diversity" activities were always broad and superficial, and students more than anyone would try to educate others about different cultures, diverse issues, etc. that they had access to. It was also more apparent that students treated their peers of color differently. Generalized questions about a culture and making that student uncomfortable, other students making inappropriate comments or statements, and much more. While I've seen many of the other students I graduated with making statements and educating themselves about issues, it needs

---

<sup>10</sup> \*\*Written by White Alum/Student

to start with the education provided by the school. Pine-Richland as a PWI must take on the responsibility to educate its students to ensure every student, no matter what, feels safe and included in their learning experiences. I can't forget the uncomfortable experiences I had, but I hope that by listening and learning from the efforts being put forth here, no one else has to feel the way I did in the future.

*My son was at a Pine Richland sponsored camp (elementary school KG to 1st). I received a phone call from the camp director. I was a little panicked but was told my child was fine. I was told that my child told the camp director that the little boy next to him said that "he did not want to sit next to him because he had brown skin." She said she went to confirm this with the white student. This was lunch time. She said the white student confirmed that he stated he did not want to sit next to my son because he had brown skin. The counselor then goes on to further explain that she removed my son from the lunch table. In my mind I thought this was a terrible idea. This was a teachable moment for both students. What she taught in that moment is that my son's brown skin was something to be ashamed of and to be removed and that the white student was right in not having to sit by a brown skinned person. The teachable moment would have been to make them sit by each other. Also, allowing us to have a conference afterwards would have been beneficial. This was literally in our elementary recently. I have the documentation for all of this as well.*

*I've had teachers and students either threaten my life, abuse, harass, and even go as far as haze me in my own home while attending Pine-Richland. The school district should address the students and teachers affiliated with the KKK, and stop defending them and their actions. We can not ignore the white supremacy clusters surrounding Pine-Richland and their wanna be country radicals.*

*Moving here was a culture shock when seeing so many homes of "Patriots" proudly displaying confederate flags on trucks, cars, homes, and clothing right alongside the numerous US flags. On the many drives to and from school during our first summer here, one such house with 7+ flags added a Confederate flag to the mix for a couple weeks. I do not disparage anyone who is conservative and proud of the privileges afforded to us living in the US. It feels different than loving your nation though when anti-Black flags and signs that came about solely in opposition to the rights of Black people to vote (Confederate) and the Black Lives Matter (All Lives Matter, Blue Lives Matter) movement pushing for a change in the violence to Black bodies, the constant assumption that Black and brown skin equals danger to police officers when they were fully capable of showing restraint from harm and harassment and capable of respecting community members with less melanin. One day recently our then 14 and 11 year olds were biking on our street with their dad when a truck flying the Confederate flag filled with teens yelled out the "N" word and told them to "Go Back to Africa". Our MS and HS students hear the "N" word and LGBTQ slurs daily on the school bus, which is driven by a bus driver talking about how great our 45th President is and how the election is stolen wearing his trusted MAGA hat. My 12 year old son was told at length the many scenarios it is okay for white students to use the "N" word at lunch by a student who told a harmful "joke" disparaging Black fathers a few weeks prior. Our Black daughter who looks racially ambiguous constantly was told her hair is too big and kids couldn't see because of it. She was asked by teachers and students "what is she" and any time racism or any Black history is discussed all heads turn towards her. Kids subjected to the reading of "To Kill a Mockingbird" without a mention of how harmful and historically violent the "N" word was and still is. I could really go on and much of other testimonies are echoed by our kids' experiences. We are in the process of deciding if staying in this district is worth the harm our kids experience by the toxic Anti-Black, anti-LGBTQ, Anti-non-white thoughts and feeling that are displayed in public by many. We can only hope that by having forums to amplify the voices of those who experience these things can bring understanding to the broader community how it makes our kids feel unwanted and unvalued and*

*unloved and less-than. I cannot fully express how hateful it feels to many in our family, especially after the summer of 2020, to see student profile pictures and flags in our community that are Anti-Black.*