



## Board of Education President

**Joseph Herd**

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## School Board

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January 26, 2022

Dear Grosse Pointe Public School System,

As Board President, I feel compelled to address a situation that occurred at our meeting Monday, January 24th. At this meeting a resident used a racial slur and profanity during the public comment portion of the meeting. It is critically important that our entire community understands that this behavior has no place in our school district.

Here are some key points:

- As President, it is my job to conduct the meeting per Robert's Rules.
- I immediately stopped her from using that language and said she could only continue if she refrained from such behavior.
- As President, it is my responsibility to determine when and how to respond to public comments. This is rarely done at our formal business meetings, and often involves further investigation and participation by the administration.
- Moving forward, anyone using inappropriate language will be removed from the meeting.
- At the end of the meeting, board members have the opportunity to make a public comment. Trustee Weertz did so eloquently. She modeled what our students call being an "upstander not a bystander."
- Superintendent Dean also responded as the leader of our district, clearly denouncing the speaker's comments when he stated, "Our school district does not tolerate language like that in any construct."
- In my comments, I stressed "being aware of the examples we set for [our kids] in our agreeing and disagreeing and also in the way that we treat one another."

If you have watched any board meeting during my time as President, you have seen me emphasize how critical it is for us to model civil discourse and listen to all voices, even when we disagree. By nature and professional training, I am a peacekeeper. But do not think my willingness to listen means I or the board agree with the use of such language. We condemn this language. In fact, this only underscores the importance of our collective work set forth in our [new strategic plan](#).

Our expectations are high for our children. We hold our community to those same standards of excellence.

Your Board President,

Joseph Herd