



March 23, 2023

Subject: Determination Regarding Allegations of Racist Behavior Toward Beloit Memorial Basketball Team

On March 3, 2023, following a basketball game at Muskego High School between Beloit Memorial High School and Muskego High School, the Muskego-Norway School District received a written complaint from the School District of Beloit's Athletic Director summarizing concerns received from Beloit Memorial parents and players related to the March 3rd game. On March 4, 2023, the District received an email from a parent of the Beloit Memorial basketball team expressing similar concerns. The complaints alleged three primary concerns related to the basketball game on March 3, 2023: (1) Racist images and words traced in dust on the tops of lockers in the guest team locker room, (2) Racist and/or otherwise inappropriate Muskego High School student theme, and (3) Racist and/or unsportsmanlike behaviors of the Muskego High School student fan section.

In response to the allegations, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Jeff Petersen, one of the Muskego-Norway School District compliance officers, conducted an investigation into the claims. The investigation process was thorough and included interviewing those with first-hand information about the incidents (e.g., game officials, event staff, students) and ascertaining information from other sources (e.g., game video footage, hallway video, police reports, social media, emails from attendees, news media). After reviewing Mr. Petersen's report, I determined that his investigation was comprehensive and that, at this time, no additional investigation is needed before issuing the following determinations regarding the concerns that were raised, along with action steps to be implemented by the Muskego-Norway School District. However, it should be noted that in the event the District becomes aware of additional evidence in this matter, including as a result of the ongoing investigation being conducted by the Muskego Police Department, the determinations stated herein may be modified as appropriate.

Regarding the allegations of racist images and words traced in dust on the tops of lockers in the guest team locker room:

- Evidence confirms that racist images and words (n-word, Nazi swastikas) did appear written in dust on the tops of the lockers in the guest locker room that was used by the Beloit Memorial basketball team on March 3, 2023. Neither the District nor the police have identified any individual who was responsible for tracing the images and words into the dust. It is also unclear as to when such images and words were drawn and if there was an intent to target Beloit Memorial's boys basketball team. The investigation revealed that it had been months since the tops of lockers were cleaned. In addition, there were similar images on the top of lockers in other Muskego High School locker rooms. Nevertheless, the Beloit Memorial boys basketball team was greeted in the locker room with racist images (n-word and Nazi swastikas), which, regardless of whether such images were intentionally directed at the Beloit players, was inexcusable and cannot be tolerated by the Muskego-Norway School District. Board Policy 5517 - Student Anti-Harassment was violated by the racist words and images drawn in dust in the Muskego High School guest locker room.
- Action Steps:
 - The Muskego-Norway School District will ensure Board Policy 5517-Student Anti-Harassment is upheld and any forms of harassment will be dealt with immediately;
 - An inspection checklist will be developed for ensuring locker rooms and other athletic facilities are clean and welcoming for guest players, coaches and staff, prior to their arrival for events at Muskego High School;
 - All Muskego High School locker rooms, including the tops of lockers, and other athletic facilities will be monitored and cleaned with greater regularity and thoroughness;
 - The District's activities office will designate an event host who will be introduced to the visiting team and be used to interface periodically with the visiting team to ensure there are no issues with the game environment.

Regarding the allegations of racist and/or otherwise inappropriate Muskego High School student theme:

- Evidence confirms that some Muskego High School students wore ski masks/shiesties during the game on March 3, 2023. Some Beloit Memorial fans believed that the student section theme was "thug" which gave them the perception that Muskego students were

mocking black culture. A parent stated that she asked more than one staff member what the theme night was but was not given a response. Theme nights for Muskego High School basketball games are not currently pre-approved or in any way authorized by administration or any staff from the Muskego-Norway School District. Muskego High School event staff were unaware of the theme night or that Beloit Memorial fans were concerned with the theme night until after the game concluded, and therefore, did not ask students to remove the ski masks/shiesties. Similarly, the three basketball game officials, all of whom are black, indicated that ski masks/shiesties are seen at various games and schools, and were not in their view, racial. In addition, tank tops, also known as "beaters," are commonly worn by Muskego students. Evidence confirms that the student section theme, communicated on March 3, 2023 through the MHS Student Theme Page on Instagram, was "Beaters and PJs." Some students independently chose to wear ski masks/shiesties, noting they were replicating the 2022 Muskego High School playoff game theme of "Beaters and Shiesties." The predominant number of Muskego students interviewed agreed that in retrospect they understood the negative perception they gave Beloit Memorial fans through their attire, including the wearing of ski masks/shiesties, even though there is insufficient evidence to find they intended to do so.

- Action Steps:
 - All student themes at Muskego High School athletic events will require pre-authorization by the Administration, and only those themes that are in compliance with the student handbook and other District policies will be approved;
 - Students attending Muskego High School athletic events will not be permitted to dress in a manner that has the potential to harass or intimidate others, including but not limited to on the basis of any protected characteristic, and any student doing so will be immediately confronted by District staff and appropriate corrective actions taken;
 - The District's activities office will share proposed theme nights with the visiting team's activities department to determine if there is any concern with the theme.

Regarding the allegations of racist and/or unsportsmanlike behaviors of the Muskego High School student fan section:

- Evidence confirms that during what was described as an intense and high energy game, some Muskego High School student fans, by their own admission, used personalized

chants, yelled profanities, and/or brought musical recorders which are in conflict with WIAA's "Fundamentals of Sportsmanship." Musical recorders were removed by event staff, and students who were believed to use profanity were ejected by game officials. Evidence collected and reviewed video did not substantiate that students used cell phone flashlights during the game. Only after the game, when Beloit players were walking to the locker room, did the Muskego student section use their cell phone flashlights and sing, "na, na, na ... hey, hey, hey, goodbye." Evidence collected and reviewed video did not substantiate that the n-word, other racist remarks, or monkey noises were used by the Muskego High School student section. The game officials noted, *"we as a crew didn't hear any racial slurs or monkey noises during the basketball game. As to being three black officials working that night I do believe if we would've heard such language we would've stopped the contest and spoke with game management the same way we did as when removing 3 students from the game for using profanity."* Individuals interviewed stated that the student section barks, in order to distract the opposing player when shooting free throws, which may have sounded like monkey noises. While there is insufficient evidence to determine that the Muskego student fan section directed racist chants or comments at any Beloit player or fan, it is clear that some Muskego students demonstrated unsportsmanlike behaviors.


- Action Steps:
 - Students will be required to stand or sit on bleachers or other designated areas with appropriate distance from competitors during any Muskego High School athletic event;
 - The District's activities office will create a "Code of Conduct" or "Participation Rights" to be shared with all athletic event attendees. It will communicate steps to take if students, parents, staff, or other attendees feel unsafe or believe any WIAA violations occur.

Muskego-Norway School District remains committed to continuing the dialogue with the School District of Beloit and its stakeholders. Additionally, the District's Administration will continue to provide listen and learn opportunities to hear about experiences in our schools and thoughts and ideas to ensure our District is a place that all feel safe and welcome to engage and learn.

Based on the District's investigation, it is clear that what Beloit Memorial players and fans experienced on March 3, 2023 was an environment that they felt was unsafe, hostile and racist.

We are thankful that the concerns were brought forward and Muskego-Norway School District apologizes for all behaviors that did not maintain a welcoming and positive environment for our guests, including Beloit Memorial players' exposure to racist images and words. Muskego-Norway School District condemns all forms of racism and is committed to ensuring that all District schools are an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Please contact me with any questions regarding this determination.



Dr. Kelly Thompson
Superintendent