

Petition to the RCSD Board Of Education Regarding Race, Inclusivity and Community Task Force

We, the parents and residents of the City of Rye, declare our full support for the mission of the Rye City School District, “to ensure that every student is capable of becoming a life-long learner who can thrive in a global environment as a self-reliant and socially responsible citizen and to provide an engaging, challenging personalized program that supports each individual’s talents and potential.”

We believe that all students regardless of race must be treated equally – offered equal opportunity – and taught to strive for the best they can accomplish in all aspects of school life.

We affirm the individuality and dignity of every person regardless of their race, background or capabilities. Where racism can be identified, we will stand with the school and community to fight against it.

This past summer a Race, Inclusivity and Community Task Force was created by the Rye City School District Board of Education, with the stated purpose of “ensuring that we provide a school environment that supports all students and provides equity in opportunity.”

To run the Task Force, Rye City School District Board of Education hired representatives from The Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and Transformation of Schools of the Steinhardt Center at NYU.

In light of our commitment to the above principles, this petition expresses concern about the course of the Task Force and, specifically, the choice of the Steinhardt Center at New York University as a consultant.

The Steinhardt Center espouses Critical Race Theory that is widely criticized for its propagation of racial division and creation of a discriminatory standard that doesn’t consider individual abilities and personal efforts. A recent letter from the Dean of the Steinhardt Center says:

“We not only affirm anti-racist education, critical race theory, and all of their antecedents, we also call for more initiatives and reflective spaces...such initiatives and ideas have long given us a sense of how to settle the debts we owe for our overdue national sins”

Employing Critical Race Theory risks increasing, and indeed institutionalizing, racial awareness in ways that, we fear, may ultimately harm all our children especially those in whose name it is propounded.

The goals of the Steinhardt Center are opposite to the mission of the Rye City School District and equal opportunity for all.

The Steinhardt Center cannot be an impartial advisor and guide for the RCSD Task Force.

We ask that the School Board end all involvement of the NYU Steinhardt Center in our Task Force and hire a vendor that is committed to fighting bigotry rather than enforcing it and one that does not demand secrecy of task force proceedings.

We further ask that the proceedings and records of the Task Force be open to all residents of Rye.