

ANGÉLICA INFANTE-GREEN
Commissioner

HARRISON PETERS
Superintendent



Providence Public School District
Office of the Superintendent
797 Westminster Street
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June 12th, 2020

Dear Dr. Paxson,

It was recently brought to my attention that Brown University is now moving in the direction of removing varsity teams from their sports program. It was extremely disappointing for us to hear this news. DelSesto Middle School is a school in Providence, RI. Our enrollment is close to 1000 students; 90% of our students qualify for free and reduced lunches. Many students come from families where they could be the first to have an education. In some cases, the first to graduate from high school and even college. We have been partners with Squashbusters since 2017. At this time, there are 60 students participating in the squash program. Most of the students are from low-income families, immigrants and English Language Learners.

Squashbuster's program offers a wonderful opportunity to all students built around the pillars of college readiness, character building, health and wellness. They focus on supporting students from our community with academic programming, college counseling and scholarships to have enough support to be able to dream of being the first in their family to go to college. Partnerships with colleges through varsity teams allows our students to dream that they too one day can go to an ivy league school. Cutting varsity teams equals to taking away the opportunity, to be able to go to your school one day.

I understand the times we are going through right now with the global pandemic. Every organization is going through difficult economic times. Financial cuts are taking place in almost every organization. While we all deal with this pandemic and the economic cuts, our country, Providence schools as well as Delsesto Middle School is pushed more to recognize that we cannot take our focus away from equity and equal opportunities for all; especially when it comes to underprivileged students of color in urban schools. Losing this program is another opportunity taken away from them yet again.

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Before I have to make this announcement to my parents of students in the squash program, I am writing to ask you to please reconsider your decision. Partnership with Brown University means a lot to us. It means a whole new world of opportunities possible for our students. Moving forward with this decision would mean one more door shut for our students which seems to happen more often with them than students with privileged backgrounds.

Thank you very much in advance.

Sincerely,

Arzinia Gill

Principal

DelSesto Middle School
Providence Public Schools
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