



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS  
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT**

March 30, 2021

United States Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights  
Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-1100  
Via Email: [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a federal civil rights complaint pursuant to the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) Office for Civil Rights' (OCR) discrimination complaint resolution procedures.

Parents Defending Education (PDE) brings this complaint against Hopkins Public Schools (HPS or District) in Hopkins, Minnesota, for discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. § 2000d *et seq.*

PDE makes this complaint as an interested third-party organization that opposes racial discrimination and political indoctrination in America's schools. Attached to this complaint is supporting evidence in the form of two news articles – one published by Alpha News on September 3, 2020 and one published by the Daily Caller on September 4, 2020. Both articles detail Hopkins Public Schools Superintendent Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed's presentation to district staff members on August 24, 2020.

As Alpha News reports, Mhiripiri-Reed stated:

“Hopkins Public Schools can no longer be a place where scholars experience racism. Racism does not only not belong in our schools, it does not belong anywhere, and in order to eradicate racism, we need to examine the role that whiteness plays in our macro-system of white supremacy,” she continued. “As we intentionally work to turn crisis into opportunity, Hopkins Public Schools will work intentionally to become an anti-racist system.”



...

“She then encouraged educators to consider instances in which they have ‘reinforced a racist policy’ and what they can do to ‘more deeply examine’ their ‘racist beliefs.’

As the Department of Education is no doubt aware, such an admission of “racism” from a district superintendent raises concerns that Hopkins Public Schools has received federal funds in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which declares that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” When the President of Princeton University made similar claims in an open letter to the University, *Ltr. from President Eisgruber on the University’s Efforts to Combat Systemic Racism* (Sept. 2, 2020), <https://bit.ly/2PHrvBY>, OCR swiftly opened an investigation, *Ltr. from Robert King to President Eisgruber* (Sept. 16, 2020), <https://bit.ly/3dIMORI>.

Accordingly, we ask that OCR promptly investigate the allegations in this complaint, act swiftly to remedy unlawful policies and practices, and order appropriate relief.

Thank you for your prompt assistance with this request for investigation and resolution. Please contact me for further information.

Sincerely,

Nicole Neily  
President  
Parents Defending Education  
[Nicole.neily@defendinged.org](mailto:Nicole.neily@defendinged.org)

Enc. Exhibits A-B



## **EXHIBIT A**

3/29/2021

Hopkins superintendent: 'System of racism pervades every aspect of daily existence' - Alpha News

## Hopkins superintendent: 'System of racism pervades every aspect of daily existence'

*"If you are white and/or if you are privileged in another way, I ask you to engage in the same self-analysis to see your own privilege and to examine your whiteness."*

By **Anthony Gockowski** - September 3, 2020



Screenshot from video of Hopkins Schools Superintendent Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed.

Hopkins Public Schools Superintendent Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed recently welcomed teachers and staff back to school by urging them to examine their "whiteness."

During an Aug. 24 virtual staff kickoff event, Mhiripiri-Reed delivered a 25-minute lecture on the "dual pandemic" of COVID-19 and racism in Hopkins Public Schools, which voted Tuesday to not renew its contract with the Minnetonka Police Department.

"In our communications to staff and families, we have referenced a dual pandemic. Mr. George Floyd – rest in power – is seemingly the contemporary face of the pandemic of racial injustice. This pandemic of systemic racism has soiled this country, not just since slavery, but since the genocide of the Native Americans and the American Indians who resided on and cared for this land," she said.

At Hopkins Public Schools, "we talk extensively about our diversity and we celebrate it with great pride," said Mhiripiri-Reed, but a YouTube video of the kickoff event was removed from public view Thursday afternoon when it began receiving some negative attention.

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3/29/2021

Hopkins superintendent: 'System of racism pervades every aspect of daily existence' - Alpha News



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"Hopkins Public Schools can no longer be a place where scholars experience racism. Racism does not only not belong in our schools, it does not belong anywhere, and in order to eradicate racism, we need to examine the role that whiteness plays in our macro-system of white supremacy," she continued. "As we intentionally work to turn crisis into opportunity, Hopkins Public Schools will work intentionally to become an anti-racist system."

Mhiripiri-Reed thanked the members of the "Anti-Racism Task Force," a group of 30 teachers and students who "studied the 13 characteristics of white supremacy and used the research to form an anti-racist learning framework."

"Researchers who have studied what it means to be anti-racist explain that it is not the responsibility of people of color to fix racism, or to explain to white people how not to be racist. Rather, anti-racism requires an understanding of history and an understanding of how people of color have been historically and systematically impacted by racist institutional policies and human practices," she said.

She explained that becoming an "anti-racist system" requires "white people and all people to self-educate, to listen to people of color, and to identify and interrupt racist policies, practices, and behaviors."

"Becoming anti-racist is a journey that begins with self-reflection. Without blame or shame, we must recognize that we were conditioned to operate within a system of racism that pervades throughout every aspect of our daily existence. Yet each of us still has the responsibility to engage in self-education and self-analysis," Mhiripiri-Reed added.

She then encouraged educators to consider instances in which they have "reinforced a racist policy" and what they can do to "more deeply examine" their "racist beliefs." In her own "self-analysis," Mhiripiri-Reed said she "recognized the privilege of being light-skinned, well-educated, and being in a role that is given formal authority."

"If you are white and/or if you are privileged in another way, I ask you to engage in the same self-analysis to see your own privilege and to examine your whiteness," she continued.

<https://alphanewsmn.com/hopkins-superintendent-system-of-racism-pervades-every-aspect-of-daily-existence/>

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3/29/2021

Hopkins superintendent: 'System of racism pervades every aspect of daily existence' - Alpha News

According to Mhiripiri-Reed, the whole district "will benefit from Hopkins becoming anti-racist."

"For scholars and staff in the LGBTQIA+ community, for scholars and staff who are religiously, linguistically, and/or neurologically diverse, becoming a teal organization where all voices are heard and included, and becoming an anti-racist system where black and brown folks are uplifted, we will all benefit. Let's do what we ask of our scholars and demonstrate empathy toward one another as we begin this important journey together," she explained.

She concluded her remarks by declaring that the "dual pandemics" present an opportunity for "seeking wellness."

"The Wellness Task Force, through their extensive research, suggests a trauma-informed and anti-racist approach to adult and scholar wellness across all Hopkins schools," she said.

The kickoff event then featured a series of "student stories" on "being black at Hopkins," which were submitted by past and present students of Hopkins Public Schools.

Dr. Raj Sethuraju, a faculty member at Metropolitan State University, was the keynote speaker for the virtual event and reiterated that America is facing a "pandemic of racism."

Although Hopkins Public Schools has made the video private on YouTube, Alpha News obtained a copy, which can be viewed below.

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## **EXHIBIT B**

3/29/2021

Public School Superintendent Tells Teachers To 'Examine Their Whiteness' | The Daily Caller

Daily Caller - <https://dailycaller.com>

US

## Public School Superintendent Tells Teachers To 'Examine Their Whiteness'



Youtube/Screenshot/AlphaNews



MARLD SAFI  
CULTURE REPORTER

September 04, 2020

12:41 PM ET

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**T**he superintendent of a Minnesota public school ushered in the new semester by urging staff to examine their whiteness and the role it plays in perpetuating racism.

The video, which was reportedly made private, was **published** by Alpha News and features Hopkins Public Schools Superintendent Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed guiding a Aug. 24 virtual staff kickoff event, where George Floyd is invoked as the contemporary face of the “pandemic of racial injustice.”

“In our communications to staff and families, we have referenced a dual pandemic. Mr. George Floyd – rest in power – is seemingly the contemporary face of the pandemic of

<https://dailycaller.com/2020/09/04/minnesota-hopkins-public-school-examine-racism-pandemic-george-floyd/>

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3/29/2021

Public School Superintendent Tells Teachers To 'Examine Their Whiteness' | The Daily Caller

racial injustice. This pandemic of systemic racism has soiled this country, not just since slavery, but since the genocide of the Native Americans and the American Indians who resided on and cared for this land," she said.



Hopkins Public Schools Superintendent Rhoda Mhiripiri-Reed/Screenshot/AlphaNews

Mhiripiri-Reed says that “we need to examine the role that whiteness plays in our macro-system of white supremacy,” and it’s not the “responsibility of people of color to fix racism, or to explain to white people how not to be racist.”

She says that to become **anti-racist**, one must undertake the “journey that begins with self-reflection.”

“Without blame or shame, we must recognize that we were conditioned to operate within a system of racism that pervades throughout every aspect of our daily existence. Yet each of us still has the responsibility to engage in self-education and self-analysis.”

Educators are then asked to ponder instances where they have “reinforced a racist policy,” and are encouraged to think about what they can do to “examine” their “racist beliefs. In Mhiripiri-Reed’s own examination, she “recognized the privilege of being light-skinned, well-educated, and being in a role that is given formal authority.”

“If you are white and/or if you are privileged in another way, I ask you to engage in the same self-analysis to see your own privilege and to examine your whiteness,” she continued.

<https://dailycaller.com/2020/09/04/minnesota-hopkins-public-school-examine-racism-pandemic-george-floyd/>

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3/29/2021

Public School Superintendent Tells Teachers To 'Examine Their Whiteness' | The Daily Caller

Numerous public schools across the country have initiated similar “anti-racism” efforts. In 2019, the Seattle Public Schools Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee (ESAC) released a rough draft of notes for its Math Ethnic Studies framework which attempts to connect math to a history of oppression, suggesting that math is subjective and racist.

**(RELATED: Seattle Public Schools Say Math Is Racist)**



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“Who gets to say if an answer is right,” the committee suggest under one question, and under another, “how is math manipulated to allow inequality and oppression to persist?”

School systems across the country have also **sought to abolish** honors classes with this goal in mind. Advocates say the moves are aimed at diminishing an achievement gap between demographic groups.

Numerous universities have also followed suit. The **University of Pittsburgh**, which is partially taxpayer funded, will begin requiring its first-year students to take a course on anti-Black racism to prompt students to identify “current structures of power, privilege and inequality” and articulate personal beliefs and opinions about race, so that they may leave the course with an introduction to “Black radical tradition” and “resistance to Anti-Black racism.”

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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