



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

February 17, 2026

By e-mail only to: [REDACTED]

Sandra Parshall Perry
Vice President & Legal Fellow
Defending Education

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Re: Portland Public Schools – OCR Case Number 10261121

Dear Sandra Parshall Perry:

On December 17, 2025, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) received the complaint you filed against Portland Public Schools (the District). The complaint alleges that the District discriminates against students on the basis of race by creating a Center for Black Student Excellence and providing educational programming and services only to Black students and their families.

OCR enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations at 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination based on race, color, and national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance. As a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Department, the District is subject to this law.

OCR is opening an investigation to examine whether the District discriminates against students on the basis of race by providing programs and services only to Black students and their families in violation of Title VI and its implementing regulations.

OCR's initiation of an investigation is not itself evidence of a violation of federal civil rights laws and regulations. During the investigation, OCR is neutral; OCR will collect and analyze the evidence it needs in order to make a decision about the complaint. OCR will ensure that its investigation is legally sufficient in accordance with OCR's [Case Processing Manual \(CPM\) \(February 19, 2025\)](#).

Please be advised that the District must not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate, or otherwise retaliate against an individual because that individual asserts a right or privilege under a law enforced by OCR or files a complaint, testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding under a law enforced by OCR. If this happens, the individual may file a retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. If OCR receives such a request, it will seek to protect,

to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable information that, if released, could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

If you have any questions about this investigation, please contact me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Stevens', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Margot Stevens
Attorney