

## Pittsford district announces 'inclusivity' meeting

Schools under fire over racism allegations

**Justin Murphy**

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The Pittsford Central School District, under fire for charges of racism among students as well as district leadership, has announced an "inclusivity event on racism" Thursday evening. It also asked the state Education Department to review its policies and "culture and climate," Superintendent Michael Pero wrote Monday. It was his second letter to the community since a heated school board meeting last week where parents and students charged district leadership with disregard for the racism that exists in schools.

"I am so proud of the students who had the courage to stand up and share their personal stories at the recent board of education meeting," Pero wrote. "The board of education and I



**Pero**

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are committed to hearing your voices and student voices, and creating the kind of change that will be impactful, meaningful and lasting."

His message came shortly before a PTSA Diversity and Inclusion committee meeting where the controversy was to be addressed.

The issue first rose to the surface in relation to two events: a Pittsford Mendon High School student repeatedly using the N-word toward her black teammates on the track and field team, and a Black History Month display at Park Road Elementary School, where several of the featured black inventors were in fact photographs of white people.

Since then, though, the district's critics have keyed in on Pero and School Board President Amy Thomas's unwillingness to consider racism as a separate issue from a general push for inclusivity of all kinds.

Indeed, Pero maintained that position in announcing Thursday's event: "While this is an inclusivity event on racism, we are planning other events over the next school year to address full inclusivity."

The event will be from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday at Calkins Road Middle School, 1899 Calkins Road. It will be facilitated by the organization Partners in Restorative Initiatives.