



TOWN OF WESTFORD  
**DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION  
COMMITTEE**

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**Via Email (School-Committee@westfordma.gov)**

Westford Public Schools -- School Committee  
23 Depot Street, Westford MA 01886

To the School Committee:

Pursuant to the advisory authority granted to the Westford Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (the “DEI Committee”) by the School Committee and the Select Board, we are writing on behalf of the DEI Committee to formally advise that the School Committee implement broadened awareness, education, and dialogue throughout Westford Public Schools regarding the hurtful history of the “blackface” phenomena in American society.

Why? Simply put, lack of awareness regarding this history can lead to hurtful actions within Westford Public Schools, as well as the dissemination of hurtful images via social media posts beyond the confines of Westford Public Schools -- even if any such hurt is inadvertent. Case in point: the unfortunate face-painting choices that were made during recent Westford Academy “spirit rallies,” wherein numerous students rallied in black face paint, and pictures of the rallies were widely disseminated on social media. Avoiding the recurrence of any such hurtful incidents, both within the Westford Public Schools community and beyond, is a critical goal of the DEI Committee.

The underlying premise of our policy advice – namely, that “blackface” in virtually any form is hurtful even where no specific hurt is comprehended by the actors -- is well-supported. While the supporting history cannot be boiled down to a simple letter, we can recommend a resource for taking the first, best steps towards a better understanding: the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture. Their summary of the pertinent history can be found here: <https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/blackface-birth-american-stereotype>

The DEI Committee is committed to working with the School Committee – as well the Superintendent of Schools and the entirety of the Westford Public Schools staff – to implement this policy advice. Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to the work.

Sincerely Yours,

*Eric R. Barber-Mingo Mamatha Jagannathan*

Eric R. Barber-Mingo & Mamatha Jagannathan  
Co-Chairs, Westford DEI Committee