



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY

The Honorable Kathy Castor  
United States Congress  
205 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20003

APR 04 2016

Re: Case No. 04-16-5001  
Pinellas County Public Schools

Dear Congresswoman Castor:

I write to advise you that the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education (Department) will conduct a compliance review of the Pinellas County Public Schools (District).

OCR has enforcement responsibilities for federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, and age by institutions that receive federal financial assistance from the Department, and under the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001. In addition to its responsibility for investigating complaints of discrimination, OCR is required under 34 C.F.R. §100.7(a) to periodically conduct compliance reviews to ensure that recipient practices are in compliance with the laws that OCR enforces. Compliance reviews are designed to address systemic issues and ensure that violations are readily identified and promptly eliminated.

The OCR enforcement office in Atlanta will conduct this review to evaluate the District's compliance under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. §§2000d *et seq.*, and its implementing regulation, 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin by recipients of financial assistance from the Department. The District receives funds from the Department and is therefore subject to Title VI.

This compliance review will examine whether the District discriminates against African American students with respect to providing access to courses, programs, and extracurricular activities, including access to foundational courses that are essential to prepare students to take rigorous courses in high school and to provide them with the skills necessary for success in college and/or career. In addition, OCR will examine whether the District discriminates against African American students with respect to providing access to effective and qualified teachers, leaders, and support staff.

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*The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.*

I emphasize that a compliance review in no way indicates that a violation of any federal civil rights law exists. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the United States Department of Education, Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs (OLCA) at (202) 401-0020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Lhamon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Catherine E. Lhamon,  
Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights