

free speech

ETHNIC INTIMIDATION

I am writing to express my disgust over the racist slurs and gestures my Kettering Fairmont High School varsity cheerleader endured at the Kettering Fairmont vs. Dunbar home game December 1.

Dunbar, which is a Dayton Public School, won the game fairly and dominated the game. However, as the Dunbar athletes scored, shouts of "Hey Kool-Aid," "Ain't no fried chicken here" and "Monkey" were delivered by Kettering Fairmont students, and "Bojangles" type dances were done in the front row of the student section.

Would racial slurs not be in direct violation of OHSAA codes of conduct? Granted it was not coming from the athletes but from students who should have been controlled by authorities. Kudos must also be given to the Dunbar athletes, athletic staff and supporters who maintained control and composure while enduring this verbal attack.

Kettering Fairmont High School authorities obviously heard the slurs and did nothing. After the game I spoke with Athletic Director Brian Donoher and asked why nothing was done to stop the actions and shared how hurt we were. He listened to me, threw his head to the side, said "OK," and walked away. He didn't ask for my name or any contact information in which to follow up.

Superintendent Jim Schoenlein and Principal Dan VonHandorf were in the building as well. The shouts were loud enough for me to hear in the side bleachers and loud enough for the Dunbar fans to hear as well.

My daughters (the cheerleader and her sister), who were embarrassed by their school peers and the lack of authoritative concern,

apologized to the Dunbar coach on behalf of Fairmont. The Dunbar coach stated that they are used to this type of treatment when they come to Kettering. This is most unfortunate and is indicative of a deeper issue.

On December 2 at approximately noon, my daughter Kyetra Williams called me to let me know that Mr. VonHandorf and Mr. Donoher pulled her out of class to question her. This is also inappropriate, as I left VonHandorf and Schoenlein my work number and an alternate number in order to reach me. Questioning my child (who was already upset) about my actions was out of line. Donoher's excuse was that he was in and out of the arena and didn't hear the insults.

This is not the first racial incident at Kettering Fairmont High School for my family either. I have been battling perceptions and attitudes since my daughters' kindergarten and first grade years at Orchard Park Elementary School. I was not afraid to speak out on injustice and wrongdoing back then, nor am I now.

Incidents such as the Fairmont vs. Dunbar occurrence make me concerned for the well-being, education and safety of my children. We have lived here for 12 years, supported levies and volunteered for city functions. To have these high-ranking school officials ignore blatant racism at a high school game on home turf disappoints me and covertly empowers those who embrace this ethnocentric lifestyle.

My family seeks a verbal and written apology from the Kettering City Schools administration. We also request apologies from the students involved and ask that they be suspended from home games. My daughter Kyetra Williams is a varsity cheerleader and has represented Kettering City Schools in the most professional and academic manner in all of her five years of cheerleading for Kettering City Schools. She maintains a 3.5 cumulative average and has conducted herself as an ambassador for this school district.

This type of behavior is completely unacceptable in this day and age.

As of December 7 I have heard nothing more from any of the Kettering City Schools administrators. I asked to be kept in the loop regarding changes and consequences, as I believe it affects my children.

~ Yvette Williams, Kettering

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