

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**PATERSON STATE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT DEMANDS
NJSIAA INVESTIGATION OF RACIST POST AGAINST
KENNEDY KNIGHTS FOOTBALL PLAYERS**

Superintendent calls for state action after Clifton officials remain silent

PATERSON – State District Superintendent Eileen F. Shafer today demanded an investigation by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) of a social media post that included a racial slur against Kennedy Knights football players.

The post, which was made before the football game between the Kennedy Knights and the Clifton Mustangs that was originally scheduled for this past Friday night, included the phrase, “Watch these Kennedy niggas get they ass whooped ... [sic].”

The post was forwarded to Shafer on Friday morning while she was at a meeting of all Passaic County schools superintendents, where Clifton Schools Superintendent Richard Tardalo was also in attendance. Shafer brought the post to Tardalo’s attention at the meeting.

“The social media post that used the n-word against Kennedy Knights players took healthy competition down to the depraved level of racism. It’s unacceptable and I won’t tolerate racist behavior against anyone in the Paterson Public Schools, most especially against our students,” Shafer said. “When I learned of the post, I immediately brought it to the Clifton superintendent’s attention. Because I have seen no action from Mr. Tardalo, I’m calling upon the NJSIAA to make sure this matter is investigated fully and that the person, or group of people, responsible for the racist post are held accountable.”

Kennedy Knights football players appeared to be reacting to the post in a video that was also posted online. Foul language used on the video led to a number of players being benched for the game against Clifton, which was postponed until Saturday morning. Today, Shafer explained why she did not publically react to the racist post on Friday when the rescheduled game was announced.

“Safety must always come first, and calling attention to the disgusting racial slur against our football players before the game could have put at risk the safety of players, students, staff and families who attended the game,” Shafer said. “Now that the game has been played, the time has come for action against the racist behavior against our football players.”

In a meeting that Shafer held with Kennedy Knights coaches this morning, it was reported that one of the officials at Saturday’s game – a man who had introduced

himself to the players as “Joe” –responded to a question asked by one of the Knights’ team captains’ by saying, “Shut the f--- up.”

“An allegation like this emphasizes how much we need the NJSIAA to investigate this matter,” Shafer said.

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