

Below is an email sent by Grace Church head of school George Davison on April 18th, 2021 to the faculty, staff, and administrators at Grace Church School.

For more information and to see Paul Rossi's response, visit: www.fairforall.org/gracechurch



GRACE

Message from the Head of School

Dear Colleagues,

Please see the letter below, which we will soon be sharing with Grace families.

The response from the school community about Paul Rossi has been clear and strong concerning his lapses in professionalism, his conduct during the February 24 meeting, and the decisions that he has made since. Numerous students, parents, and faculty have expressed discomfort with Paul's continued presence at the school. You should know that Paul has declined his contract so will not be returning in the fall. Students have requested to be removed from his classes in light of his published demeaning comments that the school has cultivated in them "despondency, resentment, and moral superiority." The wellbeing of our community is our first priority, and we take it seriously whenever students raise concerns about the professionalism of a teacher. It is clear to me that Paul cannot be effective as a teacher at Grace any more. I have informed him that he is relieved of his teaching duties, and we've asked two support teachers to take over his math classes for the final quarter. He has been asked to not come into the building without prior coordination.

You will see in the note below that we are establishing a Task Force as a sub-committee of the ICC to help us to continue to examine our blind spots, review best practices nationwide and strengthen our community. As I said in the parent letter, if we are not there yet, we can create the best way to do this. (As you can see below Paul has been invited to contribute to this effort through Robbie.) If you have interest in participating in its work, please let Robbie know.

In the meantime, please know how grateful we are for the extraordinary work you continue to do under such challenging circumstances.

George

Dear Grace Church School Families,

As an Episcopal School, we care deeply about human dignity. That's core to our identity. It's why we work hard to make sure every student feels a deep and abiding sense of belonging in this community. Our commitment to antiracism is consistent with our identity and mission, which is why it has been at heart of work for years.

We don't always get things right. Any time a member of our community feels diminished owing to their race, their sex, their faith, or any immutable aspect of their identity, then we're doing

something wrong, and our values call on us to do better.

Which brings us to the recent articles about our school. We find it regrettable that Paul Rossi chose to air his grievances with the school in the press, especially with an account that contains glaring omissions and inaccuracies. But Grace is a school genuinely committed to inclusion and to the values of an excellent education including critical thinking and civil discourse. We're not afraid of ideas, and we welcome any critique that brings us closer to achieving the aims of our mission.

We are establishing a Task Force, which will function as a sub-committee of the ICC with members drawn from various constituencies of the school to help us to continue to examine our blind spots, review best practices nationwide and make recommendations to strengthen our community. Led by our Assistant Head of School, this team of teachers, staff, and parents will work this spring and make a report to the Head of School and the Board of Trustees in July. We have invited Mr. Rossi, who has chosen not to return next year, to contribute to this committee's work, and have asked him to focus all of his efforts for the remainder of his time at Grace on constructively engaging with the school as we try to foster a culture of belonging for all of our students.

Our identity as a community of values demands that we recognize the precious worth of all our students and that we seek to equip them with an outstanding education and with the desire to use it to make the world a better place. But even as we must be unflinching in our commitment to justice, our very name calls us to mercy—to embody a grace that seeks understanding, promotes kindness, acts humbly, and demonstrates reverence for the dignity common to humanity. We believe that there is a sensible approach that can affirm all, and if we are not there now, we can create it.

And so that is what we will try to do, full of gratitude to you, who have entrusted your children to our care, and to all who work on their behalf to make us worthy of that trust.

With warmest regards,

George

Grace Church School | 86 Fourth Ave | 46 Cooper Square | New York, NY 10003 | 212.475.5609

