

October 26, 2010

Omékongo Dibinga  
Chief Executive Officer Free Your Mind Publishing  
2724 Knox Terrace, SE  
Washington, DC 20020

Dear Omékongo:

I want to express my sincere appreciation to you for your continuing commitment to building the capacity of Montgomery County Public Schools staff to eliminate racial disparities in student achievement. As a member of the original design team charged with designing, planning, and implementing the *Elevating the Black Male* module, your experience and expertise have been indispensable. In large measure, this module has become one of our most highly sought professional development offerings due to your skillfulness.

Guiding staff through courageous conversations about race can be fraught with roadblocks. Many well-intentioned and caring teachers resist training focused on race and culture because they view such training as contrary to harmonious race relations and an indictment of their teaching ability. Teachers also resist training on race and culture because of the feelings of guilt and or blame that often arise from discussions of racial issues. You have a unique ability to negotiate these hurdles through your open facilitation style that acknowledges and respects the diversity of experiences while evoking new insights into the experiences of others.

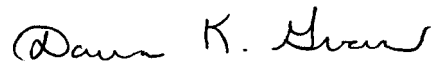
Perhaps the best evidence of your unwavering commitment to equity and your skillfulness in leading professional development on race and racism can be found in the comments from staff with whom you have worked. Testaments to your extraordinary abilities can be found in the comments below.

- “Excellent presentation and insights. Mr. Dibinga was very impressive in his knowledge and presentation of such a relevant issue. We need more trainings like this in MCPS.”
- “I truly learned more, I plan to integrate as much as I am allowed into my work and as much as I can in my personal life.”
- “Great training. Very motivational. I’m looking forward to working with African American boys this year.”
- “The 2-day session was powerful. It needs to be mandatory. It has enlightened me in many ways. I am more than excited to meet my new students. Beautifully designed, substantial learning experience.”

- “I liked that Omekongo didn’t give facial and vocal gestures that he listened and didn’t respond in a negative way to participants.”
- “Absolutely outstanding. So much to digest; so much to put into practice. Thank you for making a class of this type (and caliber) available.”
- This is a great training that everyone should take. It will have a positive impact in changes I intend to implement this year.”

These comments reflect the high regard in which you are held. I feel extremely fortunate to that you share your expertise with educators in our county.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna K. Graves". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and 'G'.

Donna K. Graves, Director  
Equity Initiatives Unit  
Office of Human Resources and Development  
Montgomery County Public Schools

DG:gg