

# BROOKWOOD HIGH SCHOOL

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J. ALVIN WILBANKS  
CEO/SUPERINTENDENT

William Bo Ford, Jr.  
Principal

**November 5, 2018**

Dear Brookwood Students, Parents/Guardians, and Community,

I am following up to you on my communication from over the weekend regarding the situation that occurred during our band's halftime show on Friday night. As promised, we started an investigation into this matter, and I wanted to share with you our current findings and the steps we are taking with the students who were involved. After extensive interviews with many students, we have determined that three seniors intentionally planned and executed the use of the sousaphone covers to spell out a completely unacceptable, racist term. The fourth student, a junior, who carried one of the letters spelling out the word, appears to have gone along with the plan at the last minute. However, all four of the students knew what was going to happen and knew what they were spelling out during the halftime show. In our interviews, the students-- two of whom are African American, one of whom is Asian, and one of whom is Hispanic - indicated that this was intended as a joke, one that they thought would be funny. However, they acknowledged that they knew this racist term was not acceptable. We have identified two other students who do not appear to be involved in the planning and execution but did provide false information to school officials. All six of these students will receive discipline consequences commensurate with their involvement in this incident.

I am hurt and disappointed in these students and their actions that have stunned our community. As you all know, this is not who we are. Brookwood is proud to be an inclusive and accepting school community. This is a teachable moment for all of us, and students need to be aware that their actions and words have consequences.

We are wrapping up our investigation; however, in an effort to be transparent and responsive to our community, I felt it was important to share our findings with you as quickly as possible. I have heard from many of you since my first communication, and, unfortunately, I have not been able to get back with all of you. As you would expect, our first priority was to conduct a thorough and fair investigation into this matter. That said, I appreciate your patience and support and will be reaching out to those who have contacted me. It is also important for us to unite in support of our program and student and staff leaders of our award-winning band. I have faith in our students and community that we will rise together and become stronger in this challenging time. I hope that our program, school, and community will not be judged based on the unfortunate decisions and actions of a few developing teenagers. As always, thank you for your support of our students and school.

Sincerely,

William Bo Ford, Jr.  
Principal