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District Statement Regarding Pending Litigation Involving Clara Barton Elementary School January 2, 2020

The Cherry Hill School District is devoted to inclusivity for all students. The *Courier Post* published an article this morning regarding a lawsuit filed against the Cherry Hill School District. While we respect the right of the plaintiffs to pursue their claims of alleged discrimination in Superior Court, those claims are unfounded. It must be noted:

- The W.A.T.C.H. program, which is at the center of the lawsuit, is a voluntary program that was created to address the needs of 5th grade boys at Clara Barton Elementary School.
- The Girls Inc. program is a voluntary program that was created to address the needs of 5th grade girls at Clara Barton Elementary School.
- Clara Barton Elementary School principal Mr. Sean Sweeney, who is an excellent principal, implemented separate leadership training programs for 5th grade boys and girls at the school because boys and girls sometimes have different social and emotional needs that are best met in single sex environments. Based on Mr. Sweeney's experience and trends within the elementary school population, both of these voluntary programs are currently providing benefits to 5th grade boys and girls at Clara Barton Elementary School.
- Other than the family who filed this lawsuit seeking damages, no other family of a past, present or future 5th grade student has complained to Cherry Hill administration about our current practice of separate voluntary leadership programs for boys and girls at Clara Barton Elementary School.

While in the face of potentially costly litigation we could simply disband the Girls Inc. program and provide the W.A.T.C.H. program to boys and girls together, in the absence of any complaints beyond those made by the family who is suing the District and because experience dictates that these separate voluntary programs are beneficial to our students, we intend to continue to provide the programs to the students whose families choose to have their sons and daughters participate.
