



June 4, 2020

Families,

I want to address concerns raised around language in the letter that was sent a couple days ago that refers to Black and African-American people, in both the English and Spanish versions, and to apologize for some of the language we used. Some students and parents questioned why the term “Black” was used instead of other terms such as “African” or “African American” in the English version. In the Spanish version, the translation mainly used was “los negros.”

The intention behind using the word “Black” was around wanting to be in sync with language used in the Black Lives Matter movement. Our alignment with the cause is important to us. In addition since not all black people identify as African American we felt it to be more inclusive phrasing.

In the Spanish translation, we can see now how the term “los negros” can be painful or signal a lack of respect for some, and realize we should have used terms like “personas afroamericanas/afrolatinas,” “personas de tez morena,” or “personas afrodescendientes.” We believe these other terms better reflect the balance we want to strike between preserving the spirit of the Black Lives Matter movement as one that recognizes *racial* bias rather than focusing on ethnicity, while simultaneously respecting that Spanish-speaking communities have differing experiences with all of the above terms for many reasons.

Words matter – there are terms in English and Spanish that some folks choose to identify with, and there are terms that are triggering or are contextual and hold different meanings to different people. Moving forward, we’re implementing a more inclusive and holistic editing process so we make fewer mistakes and honor the linguistic differences and experiences of Excel families.

I want to express my thanks to the students and families who came to us with this important and valid concern. As we strive to be an anti-racist organization, having members of our community tell us when they feel excluded or offended is absolutely essential.

Sincerely,

Owen

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Owen".

CEO, Excel Academy Charter Schools