



It Could Happen Anywhere!

*Rebuilding community trust following a violent incident
that rocked the community*

Richland School District Two



Learning
Character
Community
Joy



RICHLAND TWO IS...

PreK-12 District

Suburban, Columbia, SC

Population 125k+

27,842 Students

39 schools & centers

Demographics

58.8% Black

23.7% White

9.70% Hispanic

4.81% Other

2.86% Asian

0.16% American Indian/
Alaskan Native

46.87% Free & Reduced Lunch

CHANGES IN THE MAKE-UP

Richland County School District Two has traditionally served relatively affluent families.

Between 2008-2012 the minority population in the school district increased by 5 percent.

Two-thirds of the community residents are now Black.

Three superintendents in five years.

CHANGES IN THE MAKE-UP

Black Parents Association forms.

- Claims injustice and racial disparities in the areas of discipline, employment, and administration
- Portray themselves as the social justice representatives of all black families in the district

Superintendent identifies priorities for the district including discipline and diversity.

November 2014 board elections become racially charged.

The district hired a Chief Diversity Officer.



INCIDENT AT SPRING VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

- October 26, 2015
- A non-compliant Spring Valley High School student refused to get out of her seat when asked by teacher, administrator, and school resource officer (SRO), respectively
- SRO deploys physical tactic, eventually resulting in a violent removal from seat
- All done the presence of students
- And then...

CELL PHONE CAMERAS + INTERNET = CONTROVERSY



THE BOTTOM DROPS OUT...

Heads-up email to Board of Trustees.

First media call within 30 minutes of seeing the video.

First national media call, NBC News, less than two hours later.

First statement issued at 6 p.m.

Called Communication Resources for Schools out of California.

THE BOTTOM DROPS OUT...

Calls and emails start coming in from everywhere!

Local, national and international media call, email, camp out and report daily.

Social media blows up.



Feeling the Bern @BernieIn2016 · 31 Oct 2015

Students at Spring Valley High School are planning a walkout on November 2nd.
[#AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh](#) [#anonymous](#)



Rev Jesse Jackson Sr @RevJJackson · 1 Nov 2015

"There seems to be zero tolerance for black children".- [@Terryoneill](#)
Do you agree? Call [#KHA](#) 866.594.HOPE Re: [#AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh](#)



Rep. Barbara Lee @RepBarbaraLee · 1 Nov 2015

[#AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh](#) shows why we need more conversations like my racial justice forum. RSVP for change: [facebook.com/events/1660125...](https://www.facebook.com/events/1660125...)



11



8



Huffington Post @HuffingtonPost · 31 Oct 2015

Of course Bristol Palin blames the [#AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh](#) on the student victim huff.to/1OejqMV



Hillary Clinton 

@HillaryClinton

 **Follow**

There is no excuse for violence inside a school. The [#AssaultAtSpringValleyHigh](#) is unacceptable—schools should be safe places. -H

12:03 PM - 27 Oct 2015

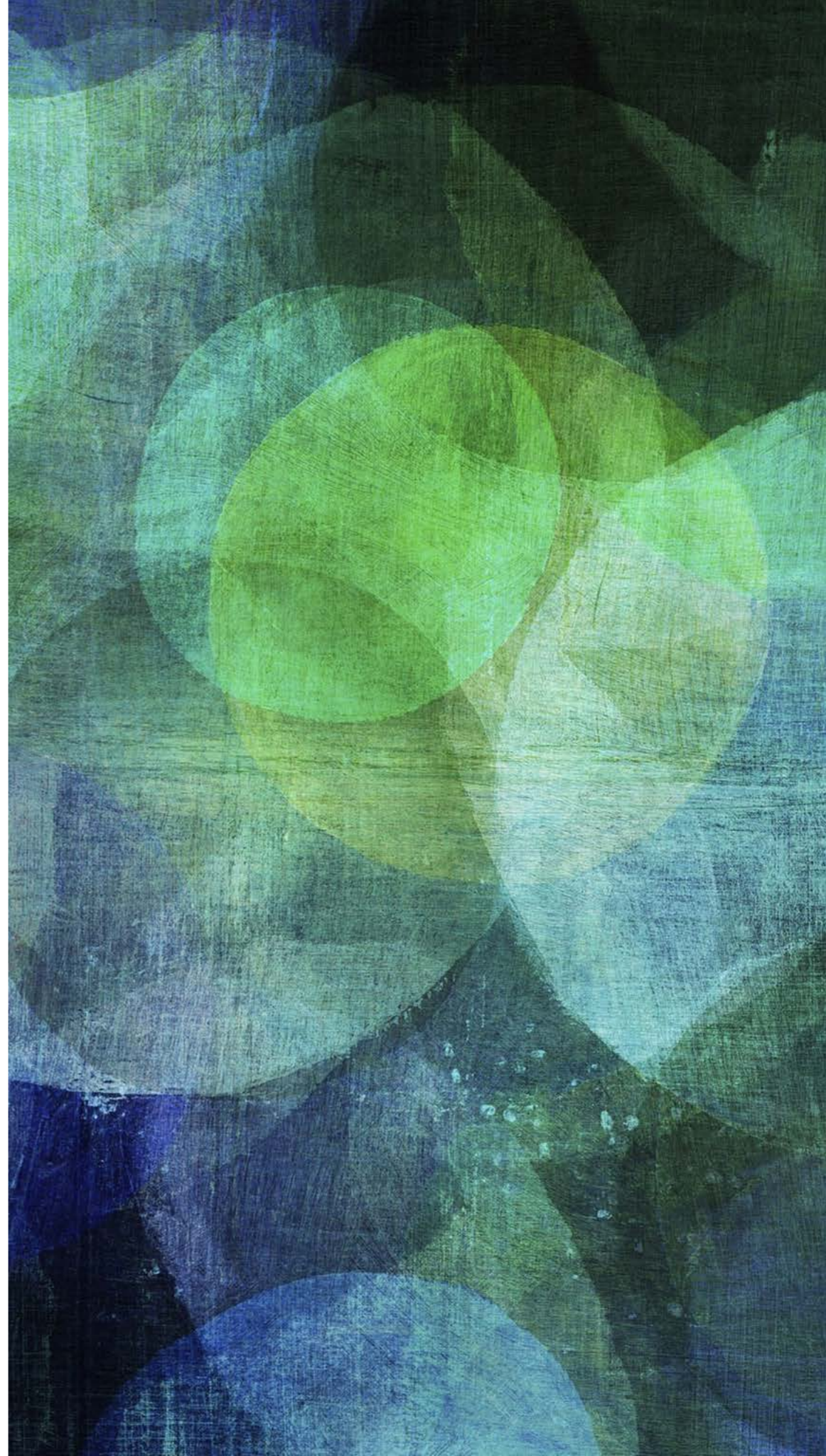


4,945



5,621

**PUTTING
OUT YOUR
FIRES WITH
FIREHOSES**



YOU ARE A FIRST RESPONDER

- Be in the war room
- Involve key staff
- Bring in district's attorney
- Protect the school
- Take care of yourself
- Call for backup
- Triage

BRING IN THE BIG GUNS

There is a unique strain on staff when in the midst of crisis:

- Objectivity can become difficult considering the circumstances
- Generally speaking, staff is busy doing what they were hired to do when the district is not in crisis
- Edification of the communication function becomes paramount

Called in Tom DeLapp and Stephen Nichols immediately.

- Assisted in Developing Short Term & Long Term Strategy
- Remained Counsel for Duration

PRESS CONFERENCE AS A TACTIC

Pre-Conference Considerations

- When do you call one?
- What can be accomplished?
- What are the risks?
- Where and when do you hold it?
- Who are the spokespersons?
- What are the messages?
- How do you prep your employees?



THE CONFERENCE

Limit Access

Good Lighting

Entrances and Exits

Set the Stage

Seating Arrangement

Brief your staff

Post greeters

Post staff at key entrances

Record the meeting

Equipment Set-up (i.e. live audio, media audio feed, rental equipment)

YOUR JOB(S) DURING A PRESS CONFERENCE

Stage Manager

- Manage the set
- Control the flow

Emcee

- Open and close the conference
- Introduce the actors

Director

- Know when to call “Action” and when to yell “Cut”

AND THAT WAS JUST THE DAY AFTER...

- Board Meeting Tuesday night
- SRO terminated on Wednesday
- Created the [webpage](#)
- Special Called Board Meeting on Thursday
- Student walk-out on Friday
- Football game on Friday
- Protest at statehouse on Saturday
- Participated in first community forum on Sunday
- Freedom of Information Act requests
- State of the District on Nov. 19 at Spring Valley



OWNING IT

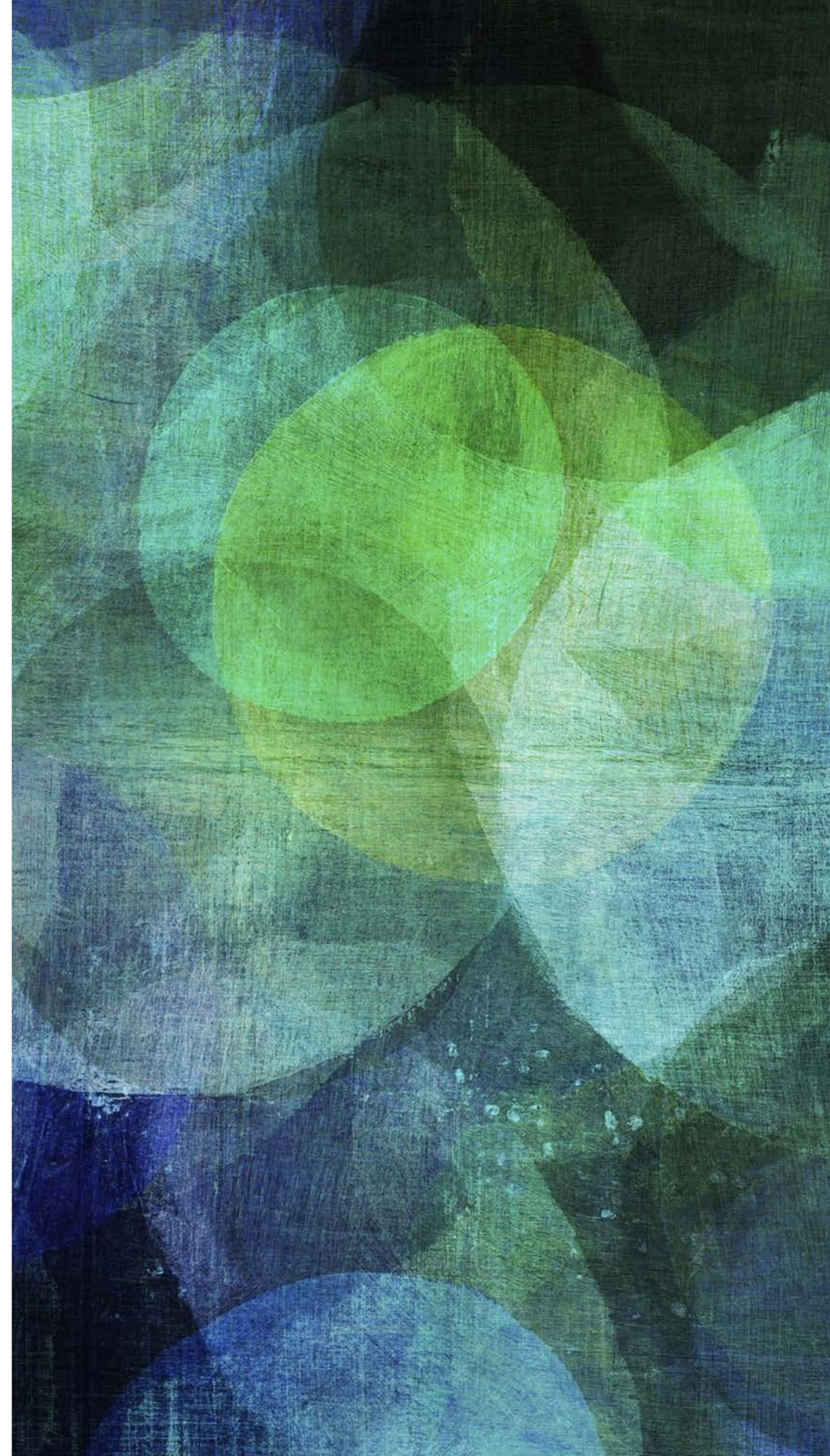
NIMBY doesn't apply

Can't label this as not my
problem

Calling it an overreaction is
shortsighted

Placation is the opposite of
resolution

MAKING & KEEPING COMMITMENTS



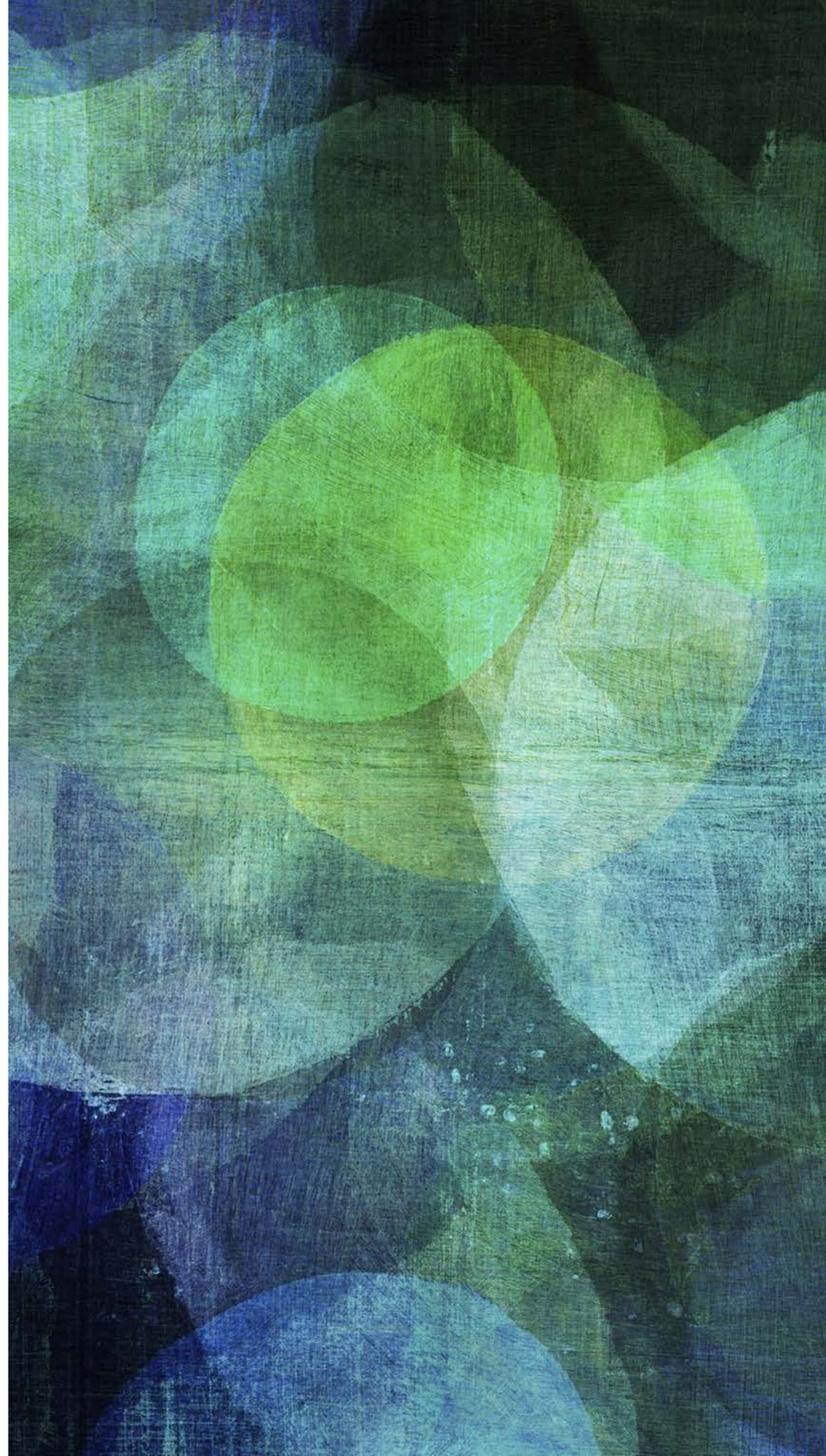
A CONCENTRATED EFFORT

- Community Visibility
- Community Conversations
- Diversity and Multicultural Inclusion Plan
- It Never Goes Away
- [Pipeline to Success](#)
- Black Parents Association

TIPS FOR STARTING A DIALOGUE ABOUT RACE

1. Start by understanding yourself. Be centered on your views and challenge your own preconceptions, biases, and vantage point.
2. Deny your fear. These are sensitive and scary topics that can spiral out of control and strain relationships and test communication skills.
3. Acknowledge what's going on. Students and parents are not immune to the swirling news about confrontations and events. Denial and avoidance are not options because it can happen to you.
4. Move from shock and sorrow to action. Just people need to personalize that they can do something, anything even if it's small steps.
5. Remember that everyone lives in a context. You don't know what is going on in people's lives when you talk with them. Get some of that on the table early in the conversation.
6. Push for evidence to support opinion. Emotion drives opinion making but it doesn't help uncover the factual and actual informational base for the conversation.
7. Resist the temptation to shut down. This can be too painful and relentless as nationwide events compound the situation. Stay in the game!

**A YEAR
LATER**





COMEDY
CENTRAL