

*This letter was received by the Shrewsbury School Committee on March 2, 2022 and read at the March 2, 2022 meeting by Chair Mr. Jon Wensky during Agenda Item II. Chairperson's Report & Members' Reports.*

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Dear School Committee members and members of the Shrewsbury community,

The Black History Committee would like to address the School Committee and the Shrewsbury community as a whole. As students who participated in the Black History Assembly, we feel the need to speak out regarding things being said online and at the last meeting. Seeing lies spread about the assembly invalidates all the hard work we put into it. People have reduced the assembly to one topic rather than taking the message we were trying to convey. In no way were students being indoctrinated. Students were presented with Black struggles and we shared how Black people have and still are rising above them. We believe these things should and need to be taught at our schools. There were no statistics shared during the assembly. No one was forced to stand for the Black National Anthem, we invited them to join us and stand. The poem was not meant to bash any police officers, certainly not the ones here in Shrewsbury. The poem was about the death of George Floyd and the lasting impact of racism and systemic injustice. Our goal was for people to listen and understand the emotions and the message it was trying to express. Being able to hear the perspectives of others is the only way our community can grow.

As students, we are concerned about the rude comments online and the lack of support from our school community. There is no way for us to make change without debate and discussion, and change certainly will not come if people are not open to topics that make them

uncomfortable. Moving forward, we hope that people will recognize that Black history IS American history, and it must be taught and discussed in our schools in order for change to come. We would like to invite the school committee to join us for ongoing discussions regarding Black History and how we can support our minority community. We also hope to have these conversations with the Shrewsbury community without fear of continued harassment and threats. Thank you for your time and consideration in addressing these issues.

Sincerely,

SHS Black History Committee Members