



ARLINGTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Brendan Lyons, Ed. D., Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Arlington School Community,

Throughout the country, we have seen a documented increase in hate-based incidents targeting diverse racial, ethnic, or religious groups. This spring, our District has responded to multiple bias incidents across our elementary, middle and high schools where students and staff members have been targeted by written and spoken racial or anti-Semitic slurs. This behavior is in direct contradiction to our core values and has *no place* in our schools.

Although each incident was immediately addressed with serious consequences and communication with all families and students involved, we recognize that responding to these incidents as a school system is not enough. Parents, community members, faculty and staff, and students need to work together, as a united community, to ensure that our children understand that the use of racist, derogatory, and/or discriminatory words or actions are never acceptable.

Our core values include:

All people are responsible for their choices and actions

A community thrives when all members embrace their interdependence with compassion and empathy

All people have inherent value

These incidents can and often do cause irreparable harm to their targets. Even if students do not intend harm, they need to understand the impact of their words and actions on others. Therefore, regardless of intentions, students who use racist, derogatory, or discriminatory words will face consequences. As a district, we are committed to supporting the victim(s) of intolerance and hatred.

To prevent further incidents, we recognize you may need guidance on how to talk to children about bias. [This Beyond the Golden Rule guide from Teaching Tolerance](#) is one that you may find helpful in working with children of all ages. We recognize these are not easy conversations. However, they are necessary to ensure that all students feel safe and are treated with respect.

Furthermore, if you feel your child has been the target of bias, there are legal protections for them. [Please review this link about New York State's Dignity for All Students Act.](#)

Each of our schools has an Equity Team. During the 2019/2020 school year, the teams will expand to include parent/community members. Our goal is to have all voices represented in our quest to ensure that all students are safe to pursue their learning. If you are interested in joining or want more information, you are encouraged to contact your school's principal.

Thank you for your continued support of our work and your willingness to partner with the District in preventing future incidents.

Sincerely,

Brendan Lyons, Ed. D.
Superintendent