



MINNEAPOLIS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Urban Education. Global Citizens.

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Michael Goar
Interim Superintendent of Schools

November 24, 2015

Dear parents and guardians of MPS students,

The current events that have dominated the news for the past couple of weeks present a unique challenge for teachers, parents and guardians. From the terrorist attacks in Paris, to the shooting in Minneapolis that is prompting protests and a federal investigation, it is difficult to comprehend these occurrences at any age. But we know understanding and coping with such events is especially difficult for children. For the youngest of our students, feelings may include fear and sadness. For our more mature students, it can raise questions about civic responsibility and social justice.

Our classroom professionals have been paying special attention to guiding students through the turmoil of these times. Important discussions regarding these current events are developing organically across the district. There have been facilitated talks during lunch periods. Educators are using these events as teachable moments in classrooms.

We have experienced two protests in our schools. In both cases, students were offered space in the school to conduct peaceful and thoughtful articulation of their thoughts and feelings. Some students chose to leave school grounds. As you know, past a certain age we cannot force these young people to remain in the building. Principals and teachers have worked to protect the right to free speech, while doing everything possible to keep students in a safe place to express themselves.

Our crisis teams have been on alert throughout these events. Social workers and school counselors are available wherever needed. Security staff are vigilant about school safety. We will provide these resources at a heightened level for as long as necessary. It's crucial that we support our students and their feelings around what they read in the headlines every day and experience in our community.

I have asked principals to encourage teachers to use these difficult occurrences to help students explore their worldview and what it means to live in a democracy. I would encourage parents and guardians to do the same. We have your children in our care for only a few hours in the day. They trust and rely on you and need to share their concerns and views with you as well.

These events remind us that learning does not stop at the classroom door. We never forget that teaching children is a partnership between their parents and our educators. Thank you for being in this important endeavor with us. Let the principal of your school know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Michael Goar
Interim Superintendent
Minneapolis Public Schools