

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools

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Dear SPF Community,

As a school district committed to providing safe, welcoming and affirming schools for all members of our diverse community, we recognize that we must remain vigilant to prevent hate, racism and violence in all of its forms and respond in order to protect all of our students from the direct or indirect hurt that these incidents cause. The recent violence in Atlanta and the escalation of incidents of hate crimes against people of Asian descent in our country are deeply troubling. As such, we stand in solidarity with the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities of Scotch Plains-Fanwood and elsewhere in rejecting hate, xenophobia and violence.

A February, 2020 article in the *Fanscotian* (the award-winning student newspaper of SPFHS), included a piece by student journalists that drew attention to the long history of anti-asian racism in our country. "Instances of racism, no matter what form they take can occur anytime and anywhere," the authors stated, suggesting that our community is not immune from racism. "By bringing awareness of racism against Asians to others, society is one step closer to equality and harmony among all citizens of the country," the students concluded.

We are extremely proud of these and many of our other students' leadership in social justice matters and the inspiration they receive from family members as well as our educators. Examples of how young people have galvanized communities to stand up to hate gives us hope in the face of incidents such as that which happened in Atlanta. Student-led campaigns and actions can not only educate and inspire fellow students, but they can also motivate adults and community leaders to act. As a school district we are continuing to work to integrate anti-bias education into the curriculum through current events, literature, social studies and other subjects. These teaching tools help us to address bias and bullying and to promote social justice in our schools and classrooms in developmentally appropriate ways.

Please join us in our efforts to ensure that all students are able to learn in a safe and inclusive learning community in SPF. As we move forward, please help us to remind students to:

- Speak up when they witness bias, hate, and bullying;
- Seek out a trusted adult, or a student leader, for guidance and support when they have concerns; and
- Reach out and stand with each other and all who are targets of hate and bias.

As always, your partnership is greatly appreciated.

Dr. Joan Mast
Superintendent

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