

Dear West Bloomfield Families and Staff,

In June 2020 when the West Bloomfield Board of Education passed their “Resolution to Change the System, Eradicate Racism and Create More Equitable and Inclusive Schools for All Children,” it was in response to continued violence and racism toward Black Americans and to stand in solidarity with our Black students and families in a time of national unrest in the face of racial injustice.

While the Board resolution may have begun there, that’s not where it ends. For us as a district to live into the commitments of the resolution and the equity statement that came out of the resolution, we must commit to anti-racism in all forms. Over the past year as the COVID-19 pandemic drags on, we have listened to increasingly racist rhetoric that has resulted in violence toward the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. While this pandemic requires us to be flexible, to adapt, and to reconsider best practices, we remain steadfast in our commitment to **respect all persons and all differences**.

Nationally, the COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed a “second virus” of racism and xenophobia against our Asian and Asian American community members. While the connection with COVID-19 to China may have triggered this despicable behavior, the racism and xenophobia toward the Asian community has long historical roots. This racist rhetoric echoes a history of discrimination such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and the internment of Japanese-Americans.

We have to acknowledge this hate, heighten our awareness about these continued acts of racism, and support and stand in solidarity with Asian and Pacific Islander members of our community. We also recognize that it is not enough to simply publicly denounce incidents as they happen or to have words on paper but never take action. As a school system we have a unique opportunity to educate our community on the nature of these and other such events.

The West Bloomfield School District rejects racism and xenophobia unequivocally. We reject hate and hateful language in all its forms. We strive daily to make sure our schools, both physical and virtual, are places in which everyone is safe and valued. We must continue, prioritize, and deepen our anti-racism and anti-bias work through professional development, classroom instruction, and courageous conversations.

One of our core values as a district is our respect for human difference. We are committed to acknowledging and celebrating the diversity that makes up our community, and we strive every day to make our schools a place where everyone can feel safe and welcome.

Linked below are some resources both staff and families can use to talk with students about anti-Asian racism. Together we are Team WB.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gerald Hill
WBSD Superintendent

Resources for talking with students about anti-Asian racism:

Addressing Anti-Asian Violence and Bias

Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center Interview with Liz Kleinrock

Combating Anti-Asian Racism