



Notes from the principal's desk...

December 9, 2016

Dear Families,

It has been several weeks since the presidential election, and I thought it would be appropriate to share some of my thoughts about how we at Longfellow have responded to any post-election concerns that have been raised by our students. As a staff, we took a proactive approach. We were provided with resources from the district and reviewed these during our summer work together. We talked about students who might feel threatened by the rhetoric from the campaign, discussed various scenarios that might arise and brainstormed appropriate responses. From my standpoint, we have had a few concerns raised by our students and families and we have responded appropriately to each.

We strive to make Longfellow a place where all students and families feel welcome. Each day, we are committed to Longfellow being a caring, supportive and safe environment for all students and their families. Our students see adults who embrace and celebrate diversity and believe that diversity is what makes our school and district a great place for all students to learn. Our students see our commitment to honoring the uniqueness and nurturing the growth of all students.

We promote an environment that is based on the mutual respect of all members of our school community. Each day, there are countless examples of students being respectful and kind members of our community. If a student is not respectful towards another, we teach him or her why what they did or said was disrespectful or hurtful. We spend time teaching students how to take the perspective of another, so they are able to learn from the experience. We talk about how fortunate many of us are and how important it is to help others who are less fortunate.

We model inclusiveness in our classrooms, cafeteria, and on the playground. If peers exclude a student from a game, we coach students in how to advocate for themselves, either by being more assertive, or asking for help from an adult. We work with students to be proactive when they see another person who is being treated unfairly. We teach them to speak up and use strong "I" messages like, "I don't think you are being very nice to her." When that doesn't work, we teach students to ask for adult support on behalf of the other child.

While we cannot change the tenor or dialogue of the election, we believe that in our own small way, our daily commitment to making Longfellow a safe place for all students helped to offset some of the messages and angry rhetoric of the election. Please feel free to contact me at Longfellow if you have any suggestions or concerns.

Terry Young

