



## WEST WINDSOR-PLAINSBORO REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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David M. Aderhold, EdD  
Superintendent of Schools

April 23, 2020

Dear WW-P Community,

This letter is in follow-up to our [previous communication](#) to parents and staff (which can be found at the attached link) regarding the inappropriate social media posts last night by a student in the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District.

Unfortunately, it appears that there are some misunderstandings and incorrect assumptions being made as to the District's position, actions taken, and tolerance for any acts of hatred, racism or bigotry. To be clear:

- The West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District has NO tolerance for racism, hate speech, or bigotry of any kind. The district condemns all acts of bigotry, racism, and hate. Actions such as what occurred last night are not the norm, and are not tolerated in any sense. Our community is one that welcomes, values and embraces diversity of all kinds, whether national origin, race, sexual orientation, sexual identity or religion, just to name a few.
- As noted in our [original message](#), it was the District that immediately contacted and involved law enforcement upon learning of what was posted.
- The omission in our original statement of any specific discipline being imposed does not mean that discipline was not imposed, or that the conduct is somehow condoned and being excused.
- The district cannot, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and New Jersey's pupil confidentiality laws, divulge the specific discipline that was imposed on this or any other student. However, appropriate discipline was imposed in accordance with our District Code of Conduct.
- The references to social media platforms and how teenagers use them for a connection to the outside was not meant to shift blame or try to excuse this particular incident. Rather, it was to remind our parents of the importance -- now more than ever -- of monitoring their child's social media postings and reinforcing the need to practice good digital citizenship.
- The statement at the end of our [earlier message](#) has been taken out of context and is being construed as some kind of excuse for this abhorrent conduct. It most certainly was not. It would be easy to write off those that engage in conduct that is the antithesis of what we stand for and believe. But that is not our job as educators. Our job is to try to work with those that make terrible decisions, and educate them about the error of their ways so they can ultimately better themselves and be productive members of society.

In closing, the District continues to investigate and work with law enforcement, has zero tolerance for this type of conduct, and has taken and will continue to take necessary actions to both educate and try to protect our students from any hate, racism or bigotry.

Sincerely,

David Aderhold, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools



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Superintendent of Schools

April 23, 2020

Dear WW-P Community,

This morning the Administration became aware of a video that was posted to social media overnight by a District student that contained racist and hateful language, as well as troubling images. While we don't know the intention, we do know that the consequences of such postings are emotionally hurtful and raise rightful indignation.

The West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District has been and still is working in cooperation with law enforcement authorities in accordance with the New Jersey Memorandum of Agreement between School Officials and Law Enforcement. While we cannot comment on the specifics of the investigation, suspected incidents of racism or hate speech are contrary to our core values and investigated thoroughly.

The district condemns all acts of bigotry, racism, and hate. Instead, we continue to be committed to valuing our long-standing racial, religious, and cultural diversity. We believe it is our responsibility to provide our students and staff with a safe environment, free from hate and bigotry. Whether we are in our brick and mortar buildings, or in our current virtual remote learning program, we will continue to do everything in our power to reinforce our District and community values and protect our students and staff.

In this digital age, and especially in this time of social distancing and stay-at-home orders, we ask our parents to be cognizant of the access their children have to various social media platforms, and to be mindful of what they are posting. Unfortunately, sometimes these social platforms are used to spread hateful and hurtful messages. These platforms can be used to encourage users, through various methods of enticement and reward, to post outrageous messages and content in the hopes of attracting the most attention. In a time of physical isolation and an understandable yearning for social connection, students may turn to social media for a connection to the outside. A helpful resource to guide and assist our parents/guardian navigate through these social media challenges is [Common Sense Media](#).

To our West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District and our West Windsor and Plainsboro communities, we must continue to uphold our shared values of racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. We are appreciative to all that sent messages alerting the school district of the posted

comments and applaud you for standing up for those values. As a community, we have a responsibility to monitor and support these shared values. We also have a responsibility to one another to forgive wrongdoing and allow individuals the opportunity to grow from mistakes. Honoring the social emotional learning and growth of individuals, which is a hallmark of our district, also means recognizing that errors in judgment will be made. While we do not condone the posting or the message, we will never condemn the growth potential inside each of our students. Let this misguided incident be one that unites us as a school community.

Sincerely,

David Aderhold, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools