
Thursday, February 2, 2017

Dear Staff and Parents:

With the tragedy in Quebec City this week and the recent changes to immigration law affecting travel for some to the United States, it is fair to expect students will have questions for our teachers and parents.

As educators we talk about current events in our classrooms at all ages, as an opportunity to ignite greater interest and conversations in law, politics and international affairs.

Facilitating these discussions, the public education system plays an important part in developing socially aware and responsible citizens. We encourage our students to appreciate various perspectives, form opinions, and become involved as local and global citizens.

Over the past few days, I have heard from parents, students and educators about what has happened in Quebec City and the recent developments in the United States. All have expressed concern for our Muslim students and our staff who may be affected.

We have long celebrated our cultural diversity as a School District. It is a sign of the awareness and compassion present within our schools that we openly recognize that these events may have a real impact on our students and their families.

I feel it is important at this time to remind our staff and our parents of our values as “One Learning Community”, a community where each and every student belongs. I hope this provides a foundation for conversations you may need to have with students about what is happening in the world.

As educators we look for teachable moments and this is certainly one. As a collective team of educators, we are here to foster a values-based community of young people, a community of young people who are aware, respectful, supportive, and compassionate. My advice to parents and to my staff is to focus discussion on our values and what we celebrate as a public education system and as an inclusive community. All students belong here; it can’t be said enough.

Sincerely,



Piet Langstraat
Superintendent

Values of the Greater Victoria School District:

- Engagement – Students are actively engaged in their education and connected to our learning community.
- Equity – We give each student the opportunity to fulfill their potential.
- Innovation/Positive Change – We are innovative. We constantly seek ways to make positive change.
- Integrity – We are ethical and fair.
- Openness and Transparency – We are open about the decisions we make and how we make them.
- Partnerships – We create open and respectful partnerships with each member of our learning community.
- Respect – We respect ourselves, others, and our environment.
- Social Responsibility and Justice – It is our shared responsibility to work with and inspire students to create a better world.