



Message from Superintendent Skelly: It's Almost Winter Break...

December 22, 2016



Dear Parent/Guardian:

A long time ago, when I was an aspiring school leader, a wise mentor at graduate school stated the obvious – students can't learn when they are afraid. This idea has stayed with me, as I became an assistant principal in charge of discipline, a principal, head of student services, and finally a superintendent.

Educators should be proud of the progress we have made in school environments, for our schools have become much safer places. I would predict that many of your students have never seen a physical altercation in high school. But it isn't just physical safety. It's also about emotional safety. Our students can be themselves at school because their classmates embrace each other's differences across multiple dimensions and truly judge one other by the "content of their character," as Martin Luther King would say. It goes without saying that they are better than our less-enlightened generations.

This is not to say that our work is done, for when any student doesn't feel safe, we are all a little bit more vulnerable. We are fortunate to have caring, perceptive, vigilant adults who sense when courageous conversations are needed and improvements to campus culture are called for. Our work around safety is not a destination but rather a journey.

At its December 15, 2016 board meeting, the school board passed a resolution affirming our support for all students – particularly undocumented students. This action affirmed our constitutional mandate to educate all students residing within our boundaries, whatever their immigration status, and to obey all laws related to this topic. Just like with any other student characteristic, we have a duty to provide undocumented students with the same safe environment we would any other student.

It's almost winter break. We send your charges back to your care for seventeen days. Please know that staff will be resting and rejuvenated, ready to provide the safest, most nurturing educational environment we can when your students walk back in the doors in 2017.

In this season of thanks, we are grateful for the chance to support your parenting during some of the most formative years of your student's life and, importantly, to live in a place of relative safety and peace.

Happy Holidays!

Kevin Skelly, Ph.D.
Superintendent