

Dear VPS Families,

Last night at our school board meeting, our board adopted a resolution which “reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the essential work of the equity policy and supports the district-wide implementation of the hate and bias protocol, thereby strengthening efforts to provide a fair, inclusive, and supportive educational environment for each student.”

While we implemented an equity policy, we are still receiving reports from our students that a number of hate and bias incidents are occurring in and outside our schools. Our student empathy surveys have indicated something more is needed, staff has requested more training in how to do this important work, and both students and staff have made direct requests for a clear protocol to be put in place.

We have been piloting a new hate and bias protocol at a number of our schools, and now beginning with this school year, **we are introducing a districtwide hate and bias protocol.**

We will be taking the following next steps to reduce the incidents of hate and bias in our schools as part of a focused and intentional effort to improve each student’s sense of belonging and safety.

First, our students will receive age-appropriate preventative lessons about hate and bias.

Our entire staff has, or will soon, receive hate and bias protocol training.

Staff who witness, or learn about, hate or bias speech or actions in our schools will:

- Interrupt the harmful language or action (Example: “Stop, that is hurtful.”)
- Write an OFFICE referral for that student’s behavior
- Contact students’ parents or guardians
 - parents/guardians of both the student harmed and student responsible will be contacted
- Create an educational learning opportunity for the student responsible for harm on the type of harm they have caused
- Offer an opportunity for a restorative conversation/restorative re-entry plan
 - This will depend on whether both students are willing to restore the harm
- Administer additional disciplinary consequences as appropriate

- Hold a formal meeting with the student, family, and staff
- Explore exclusionary discipline options as well as additional behavior interventions.

Following incidents of hate and bias, we will also be teaching our students age-appropriate restorative response lessons.

We also ask that you have important conversations at home about the fact that hate and bias have no place in our schools.

We are always open to improving upon our practices and learnings. We would like to offer an opportunity to hear your questions and thoughts about how we could possibly continue to improve on these important efforts.

Please answer our one question ThoughtExchange and provide feedback on the following question:

What are your thoughts on our new hate and bias protocol? Please share your suggestions, concerns, or experiences that might help us improve it.

Thank you,

Jeff Snell