



Wednesday, March 9, 2016

Dear LCS Families,

A recent incident at a Black History Month assembly at Dunbar Middle School on Friday, February, 26th has highlighted a series of long standing concerns in our community around both racial and religious sensitivity and inclusiveness. My letters to Dunbar families have elicited some feedback from community members saying that the situation was characterized only as a racial matter rather than a complex issue that also was about religious freedom and inclusiveness. To clarify, I believe that it is essential that we are tolerant, understanding, and inclusive of people of all religious beliefs, or non-religious belief, and of race and identity.

To help us move forward, I met earlier this week with the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC). VCIC has been a leading resource for school systems around the state on these critical issues of race and religion.

In partnership with VCIC, LCS will begin a listening tour to gain a better understanding of the concerns expressed from this incident. We will hold 3 forums throughout the City on the following dates and locations:

March 21: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
1000 Langhorne Rd.

April 4: Jubilee Family Development Center- 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
1512 Florida Ave.

April 12: Miller Center, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
301 Grove St.

Transportation and childcare will be provided. Please call 515-5041 to make arrangements or go to www.lcsedu.net/ListeningTours and fill out the childcare/transportation form.

For those that cannot attend, we will have the following website for you to share with us your comments and concerns: www.lcsedu.net/ListeningTour.

I also know that to move forward from this incident, we will need to do more than listen. I will recommend to the School Board that the input we receive from these listening tours will be shared with our LCS Equity Task Force, which can provide recommendations to the School Board around school system policies, procedures and protocols, as well as training. This Equity Task Force was created by the School Board in March 2015 to enhance the communication between the School Board and the community around such issues of equity and fairness.

Our goal in this entire process must be to ensure that we uphold our core values of Integrity, Respect, Teamwork and Learning as well as provide the racial and religious understanding, sensitivity, and inclusiveness consistent with our values as a public school system and our mission of Every Child, By Name and By Need, to Graduation. Through adversity, we can emerge stronger if we confront our challenges, listen, and commit to grow.

I hope to see you at the forums. I am confident that by working together, we can create the solutions necessary to move our system forward.

Sincerely,

Scott Brabrand

Superintendent