

Saturday, May 21, 2022

Good Afternoon to all in our Buffalo Public Schools (BPS) Learning Community,

*This past week, has been the saddest and most trying of times that we in the Buffalo Public Schools, have ever faced. It has been filled with extreme trauma and unexplainable grief, at the senseless and horrific loss of ten beautiful lives.*

*Hate in any form is poisonous and unacceptable! It will not be tolerated in any form, in any of our schools. I am urging all BPS employees, students, families, and community members to report all hate messaging, which they may experience or witness. It is important to understand that silence is complicity, and we must not be complicit to evil and wrongdoing. My plea is that "if you see or hear something... report it... swiftly!"! Do not stand by and hope that someone else will report it. **WE MUST BE THE CHANGE; WE WANT TO SEE!** The future of our children requires this!*

*We have also witnessed, in this last week, unyielding kindness and a coming together, in our "City of Good **Neighbors**" like I have never seen before! It gives us all hope for better tomorrows, even in this moment of deep despair.*

*I must share that I could not be prouder of our BPS employees. Every single one! You came together this past week to: care for, teach, and support our beautiful students, while suffering from your own grief over this tragedy. The professionalism and genuine concern that I witnessed, is best in class! Thank you!!*

*To our BPS students and families please continue to demonstrate resiliency, trust, and courage. I know that this last week was confusing, frightening, and may have evoked feelings of anxiety for you... rightfully so! But, despite this YOU have showed our country that your EDUCATION MATTERS and that we shall not allow cowardly and hateful acts of violence to interrupt the BPS mission and vision! I am deeply appreciative to you. We know that you have hopes and dreams for a bright and productive future, and we as the educators in your lives take our role seriously, in helping each of you to reach all of your goals.*

*Finally, to our school- based community partners; you have stood shoulder to shoulder with us, embodying the meaning of true partnership! Thank you for meeting the call of duty and providing generous and thoughtful support to the children and staff in our schools. ...AND STILL WE RISE!*

Yours Truly,

Dr. Tonja M. Williams, Interim Superintendent

CC: Members of the Board of Education