

HOLLAND TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mrs. Stephanie Snyder, Superintendent & Supervisor of Special Services
Mrs. Susan Wardell, Principal/Curriculum & 504 Coordinator

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

As February comes to a close, we would like to update our parent community as to the steps we have taken as a school faculty and district board of education to educate our children about inclusion, equity, and diversity.

A little over two years ago, several parents approached district administration and the BOE regarding our efforts to create an environment of acceptance and inclusion within both our school walls and our community in general. All involved promised to work at educating our students and faculty in this very important area.

We have enlisted the expertise of several professionals in the fields of racial equality, ethnic diversity, and inclusive education. These professionals have held professional development sessions with the staff, discussing implicit bias and how to address race with students, promote inclusion, empathy, and ethnic diversity education. Additionally, the district invested in online and text resources to use in the classroom to aid in addressing these issues with our students throughout the school year. These resources include lessons which take place during morning meeting, advisory, and special times. The lessons engage students in discussions about inclusionary practices, acceptance, and belonging.

Additionally, the district has had presenters come in and meet with our student body. These assemblies have addressed diversity and bias with our students. Student groups have also worked together through leadership activities which have brought together students who have been targets of name calling, isolation, and intolerance with students who demonstrate leadership qualities as well as students who have shown intolerance. These groups have worked with outside professionals to learn how to collaborate and accept each other and to stand up to inequality and have their voices heard.

This Spring the district will continue to work with student groups, empowering our students to share their stories with others, as well as to teach groups of students leadership skills to help give voice to those who are choosing to do the right thing. These groups will bring together students with similar experiences and backgrounds to share their truths. The curriculum and activities the students will engage in have been developed by outside experts in the field of race and ethnic diversity. Parents of students invited to these groups will receive emails that include information about the experiences.

We continue our dedication to inclusionary practices for students with disabilities, engaging in celebration of special days to stress the importance of understanding and empathy. The faculty works together daily to engage students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers in the classroom.

Holland administration, faculty, and board of education encourage parents to share their ideas to help teach our children acceptance, empathy, and understanding.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Snyder
Superintendent