



BRANDYWINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

1311 Brandywine Boulevard
Wilmington, DE 19809-2306

(302) 793-5000
www.brandywineschools.org

LINCOLN HOHLER
Superintendent

RALPH ACKERMAN
President, Board of Education

JOHN A. SKROBOT, III
Vice President, Board of Education

Dear BSD Families,

For the past eleven weeks, we have found ourselves struggling, coming to grips with the social and emotional impacts of COVID-19. We have all felt the direct effects of this plague, some to greater degrees than others, including those that have felt the pain and sorrow of losing a loved one. Part of the emotional trauma we are experiencing is due to the fact that we continue to struggle in our efforts to contain the spread. Despite extensive educational efforts and proactive measures, the disease finds a multitude of avenues to spread, contaminate, and sicken members of our community. Until COVID-19 is eradicated, our lives will never fully be the same. Some members of our community are more susceptible and are at greater risk for injury than others. As a community, we have a social responsibility and moral obligation to monitor our daily actions as individuals, families, organizations, and as a community to promote and protect each other. Then and only then will we feel desired relief of the trauma associated with the COVID-19 outbreak.

Sadly, we find ourselves in the throes of another pandemic wreaking emotional, social, and physical trauma. The senseless death of Mr. George Floyd did not signal the start of the pandemic; it was a reminder that a disease that we have long known about still exists. A disease, like COVID-19, that we are all exposed to on a daily basis, and just like COVID-19, we know that some groups are more at-risk of its devastating, life controlling, life changing, effects – including loss of life. That feeling of helplessness brought on by racism exists on a daily basis in the hearts and minds of many of our minority community members. They are our friends, our colleagues, our neighbors, who bear the weight of this disease while others are seemingly only reminded when such tragedies occur.

Our call to action for one pandemic must be as focused and intense as the other. If we can put social distancing measures in place to safeguard against disease, can we put social understanding, tolerance, and acceptance measures in place to do the same? Is the social responsibility or moral obligation any more of an imperative for one than the other? If we've learned one thing from COVID-19, it's that we must work together to achieve the good for all. The disease of racism and its harm on our community will require the same self-monitoring and corrective action of changing existing patterns of behavior and attitudes from all of us. We can't delegate the responsibility or wait for someone else to figure out the solution.

Our children are looking to us, parents and teachers, for guidance during these trying times. What we do, how we respond, our attitudes, actions, and words will leave indelible impressions on which their attitudes, actions, and beliefs will be formed. Take the opportunity to engage your children and raise awareness and understanding about the complexities of race and racism. Help them see the hurt and harm from multiple perspectives and to understand that change begins and ends with all of us. Let them see, by our example now and moving forward, that together, diseases of all types can be controlled and eradicated when we unite as community out of concern for our neighbors, regardless of color of skin, race, or culture.

It won't be easy. There will be outbreaks that will continue to test our resolve. Let's model the resiliency, commitment, and determination to take an active role in eradicating social injustices and racism right here in Brandywine and beyond.

Our teachers, support staff, and administrators are here to offer support and ensure that students of all cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives are provided an environment and resources to maximize their academic, social, and emotional development. To this end, teachers, despite the restriction of not being face-to-face, have found opportunities within office hour discussions, Schoology chats, and other means to work with some students already, and will continue to look for opportunities in the last few weeks of the school year. To assist parents, the District will be posting additional resources related to diversity and equity on our website over the course of the next few days.

Thank you in advance for your commitment and support in working together for the future that our children and their children deserve.

Respectfully,

Lincoln Hohler

Superintendent