



Nov. 9, 2016

Dear DPS Community,

We in the Denver Public Schools wake up today grateful to the Denver community for their generosity and investment in our kids and in the future of Denver. At the same time, we also wake up to a country painfully divided and hurt after a divisive election season, in some parts excited and in others very fearful for the future.

Although this election season has reminded us of how far we have to go as a country to reach our nation's ideals and to heal our wounds, I deeply believe that we as a community and as a country have far more in common than what divides us. And, it forcefully reminds us of the importance of our mission in DPS. Education can help us bridge our differences and can help bring us together around respect and understanding rather than fear. For us to move forward as a community, our mission is more important than ever.

It is through education that we can better understand our past and grapple with the issues of today, including those that are dividing us. That we encourage more and not less dialogue about deep differences and bias in our country around race and ethnicity and class. That we challenge ourselves as to how we can move forward to make our country better.

In that process, it's important that we don't demonize those we disagree with -- no individual or party has a monopoly on wisdom. We should seek to understand the diverse views and perspectives of all members of our community.

And, in doing so, we should not hesitate to emphasize how deeply we believe in our core values of equity and inclusion, respect for the dignity and worth of all members of our community. We will fight for these values and advocate for our kids and the families we serve, and the educators we serve with. We value every student and every educator. Each of you is a vital part of our community, and we will advocate for you and work passionately to ensure your success and well-being.

We encourage students, families and educators to talk, to create safe spaces where hopes, fears and differences can be raised -- spaces where we can challenge each other to reach common ground on issues that divide us. In support of these conversations, we wanted to provide a set of resources for educators and families.

Thank you all for your dedication and commitment to our kids.

*Best,
Tom Boasberg
Superintendent*

These resources provide factual information and supports for conversations:

[Teaching Tolerance](#) - A thoughtful essay about the days after the election in classrooms.

[PBS](#) - A lesson plan about democracy and healing divisions.

[Newsela](#) -- A factual article about the election that can be changed for different reading levels in English and Spanish.

[Election Processing Community Circle](#) -- Helping students of all ages talk about the election.

The following questions may help lead to constructive, thoughtful conversations:

Identify concerns -- Let people talk about what they are sitting with -- what are the things we need to be aware of and talking about?

Process emotions -- This is the most challenging part because people will be emotionally charged and we want to give people the opportunity to express their emotions.

Talk about issues and not personalities -- This is from the lens that many people in our community supported both candidates and we don't want to increase the divide by focusing on the people. What are the issues that people feel are important to express? What does this say about the divide in America?

Process next steps -- How do we come together to combat the divisive nature of our country and communities? What do we need to do to support each other with conversations, gatherings and events designed to invite diverse groups to work together?