



# Lexington Public Schools

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Dear Lexington Parents/Guardians, Students and Community,

At this time, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to Lexington for all you do to support Lexington Public Schools students, staff and families. The district staff and I are deeply grateful for your unwavering support for our students and their education. Lexington is a town truly committed to lifelong learning, and this support so clearly emanates from all citizens and town governance. Thank you on behalf of the district for all you do for our schools.

Since Election Day, I have visited with students, teachers, and school and community leaders. In many ways, it is hard for me to characterize my day-to-day experiences as anything but emotional. I have learned firsthand about a wide range of feelings and reactions that are genuine to each individual. I share some of these same emotions and reactions myself, and some I do not. Like you, I too have experienced how divisive this election has been for youth and adults, and moreover—confusing and sometimes upsetting for our youngest children. I could not be more proud of our students, staff and administrators as I have witnessed their understanding, compassion and support of one another during this extraordinary time in our country.

As a lifelong educator, I believe that education is founded on democratic principles and ideals. That is, we engage in intellectual discourse to build understanding, expand our perceptions and exchange viewpoints to foster perspective taking, in hopes of creating a more peaceful world for our children and the future. In our schools, I have observed classrooms of young children sitting in community circles engaged in caring classroom discussions and older students holding vibrant and constructive classroom debates. I believe these are true examples of how we help students learn how to engage with respectful voice and civility in the larger democratic process.

The faculty, staff and I are connected and committed around our students. At our core, it has been difficult to know what to say to our young people of all ages when they express real feelings of distress and fear. Some things they have seen and heard in this election are in stark contrast to the ideals we teach and promote everyday in our classrooms. In Lexington Public Schools, we do not allow or condone hate language toward any person or group. We have a zero tolerance for hurtful language, prejudice and discrimination. We remain steadfast in our belief that *all persons* regardless of race, religion, gender, ethnic background and sexual orientation—*are equal and valued*.

As a school district, we are uncompromising in our belief and practice that school is a safe, welcoming place for all students, staff and families. We stand tall and proud in our three core purposes: academic excellence, respectful and caring relationships, and a culture of reflection, conversation, collaboration and a commitment to continuous improvement. Whether we hold a respectful classroom conversation or provide our reassuring support to individual students, the school district will continue our focused teaching on empathy, caring,

compassion, understanding and inclusion for *all*. This will be the case in our classrooms, programs, departments and offices, and if there is any change for us at all, it is that we are even more strengthened, renewed and united in our commitments for ALL people.

As an educator, I believe there is a learning opportunity in all moments. I encourage us to open up healthy and constructive dialogue in our homes, community and beyond. We have an opportunity and an obligation to model and foster a much needed discussion and debate about the principles and ideals in our country for *all* people. I believe we have an ethical responsibility to do so with an open mind and an open heart, and with an eye to the future.

We must consider the future for not only our children, but also our children's children. In education, we believe each person can change the world for the better. Let us not overlook the teaching and learning opportunity to engage with one another with respect, civility, understanding and empathy. I am confident that together we can be a community of healthy communication, collaboration and change for our children.

During this holiday season, I extend my personal and professional gratitude for your incredible support for Lexington Public schools, and also my words of commitment that Lexington remains relentlessly dedicated to equity, support and inclusion of ALL students, staff and families. Please accept my very best for a peaceful and restful holiday season.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mary A. Czajkowski, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools