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Where Every Child  
is a Superstar!

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Evanston/Skokie SD 65  
[www.district65.net/lincolnwood](http://www.district65.net/lincolnwood)

October 28, 2018

Dear Lincolnwood Families,

I write this letter to you with a heavy heart as I watch the stories coming out of Pittsburgh. We are all fed up of the violence and hatred that disrupts peace-building in our nation. As parents, we want this evil to disappear. How our most sacred spaces have become open to violence is mystifying and maddening. Still, I hold out hope for our own community to be better and do better.

For the past several weeks, I have debated sending a letter about our own need for a more peaceful Lincolnwood. I have been hesitant because I am well aware that Lincolnwood hosts many different viewpoints and experiences. I write not to blame or shame; I write to ask for your partnership and support.

I must share that I am deeply concerned that a crucial portion of our student body, specifically our Black students, are being made to feel unwelcome. I cannot allow this.

Over the past several weeks, I have learned about hate-filled language spoken by children in our school. Specifically, I have heard and received information about the following comments from students:

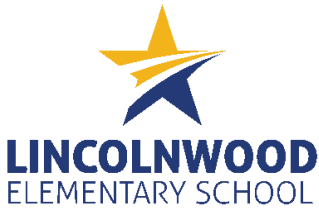
- "I want to know why Black children come to this school."
- "This isn't your school."
- *Several* instances of the N-word
- "You are dumb Black boys."
- "Brownie"

I want to make it clear that hatred is not welcome in our community. Our Black students will understand that they belong here; that, as a neighborhood school, our arms stretch to the edges of all of our boundaries.

I acknowledge that discomfort around race has also led to some shaming of white children, children of Asian descent, our Latinx children, and multiracial children. Meanness and misunderstanding stop through education, an expectation of excellence, and a welcoming spirit.

I feel proud to work in a district as committed to equity as District 65. The [D65 Racial and Educational Equity Statement](#) is an important guiding document for my work as a building leader. I am committed to having a Lincolnwood experience that is rooted in an understanding of our stories, shared experiences, and deep learning opportunities.

Questions and concerns about difference are always welcome in the name of learning. We will work to celebrate the richness of culture, family structure, socioeconomic class, opinion, ideas, color, gender and gender expression, and



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religion that each child and family bring to Lincolnwood. As the ubiquitous poster states: hate has no home here. In fact, we lead with love.

I ask for your partnership in reminding children to both see and validate children who look different from themselves. It will take intentional work to build understanding and care for one another. [This article](#) is a primer on having supportive conversations with our children. My staff is also working to put together useful parent education resources to help us in navigating this terrain.

Please continue to look out for opportunities to participate in district-sponsored conversations regarding equity. I encourage you to explore more of the District's equity work [here](#), on the D65 website.

Finally, I want to share that on the afternoon of Monday, October 29, all students will come together in the auditorium for a peace-building assembly. We will not speak in any detail of any tragedy or destructive behavior. We will, however, discuss student's rights, as named in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child to, "...have exactly the same right to be respected whether I am Black or white, small or big, rich or poor, born here or somewhere else' and to "...be free from any kind of violence." (The book, [I Have the Right to Be a Child](#), by Aurelia Fronty is a developmentally-appropriate book that is well worth reading for your whole family.)

Following our brief gathering in the auditorium, classes will return to classrooms for a peace or sharing circle where they will be able to express their own ideas about our community and how to continue to build a better school. When they come home, please ask your child:

- What did you think about during the assembly?
- How can you make Lincolnwood School a better place?
- What does peace mean to you?
- How can you make sure that your classmates and friends, including Black friends, are being taken care of and free from hurtful language or behavior?

Please share your child's thoughts on [this website](#).

As always, feel free to contact me directly with questions about this letter or our assembly.

Peace,

Max Weinberg

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