

**William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.**  
Superintendent

July 2, 2020

Dear School District of Philadelphia Families,


I'm writing to share some important information with you regarding a recent incident in our School District where some very derogatory and hateful messages were directed to and about some of our students by other students via social media. Unfortunately, this is not the first time this sort of hate-based speech has occurred involving our District.

I want to be crystal clear that this type of harassment and discriminatory behavior is unacceptable by students and staff. We have a zero tolerance policy for harassment or hate speech of any kind. We will investigate all such matters in accordance with our Student Code of Conduct, Employee Code of Ethics, and Board Policies 248 and 348, which cover Harassment and Discrimination of Students and Employees respectively. We will also make referrals to law enforcement agencies as warranted.

We **all** play a role in supporting the welcoming and inclusive environments that every student deserves. As a District, we have provided ongoing staff professional development on implicit biases and how to support culturally inclusive learning environments, and will continue to expand on these development opportunities. We've also issued an [Anti-Racism Declaration](#) and shared resources (<https://www.philasd.org/antiracism/>) with staff and families to support needed conversations around race relations, social injustice and the importance of respecting our differences as easily as we embrace our similarities.

If you or your child experience harassment or discrimination within our District, please email us at [antiharassment@philasd.org](mailto:antiharassment@philasd.org). I'm also asking all parents and guardians to use the shared resources to talk with your children about the personal harm hate-based speech can cause their fellow students and about the very serious consequences of these unacceptable behaviors. Together, we can support the inclusive culture that is needed to help all students become the thoughtful and compassionate leaders we all strive for them to be.

Sincerely,



William R. Hite Jr., Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
The School District of Philadelphia