



# DEMAREST PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

*LEARNERS TODAY • LEADERS TOMORROW*

**MICHAEL FOX**  
SUPERINTENDENT

December 6, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope this email finds you enjoying the holiday season. You may have heard that, sadly, over the course of the last several weeks, there have been a variety of anti-Semitic graffiti and slurs found in various schools in Bergen County. In recent days, evidence of acts of hatred have been found in nearby districts. In Demarest Public Schools, we have had no sign of any acts or behaviors that mirror the experiences in other districts. While that is a positive and speaks to the collective choices of our students, the growing energy around this issue offers all of us the opportunity to use these events as a teachable moment. As the leader of our district, I endeavor to clearly communicate our belief that a collective respect for all individuals is a core value cherished in our community.

Parents and families are asked to please spend some time discussing with your children the important ethical and behavioral expectations that we all set for our children. When it comes to the treatment of others, all of our schools offer classroom activities designed to foster empathy, good decision making, social-emotional learning, and the development of an effective moral compass. Through our teachers' actions and words, high expectations are reinforced for our students. We are grateful for their guidance and leadership in this area.

You will best support your child's school environment by sharing your personal expectations for their behavior. Parents hold incredible power to guide and foster children in good decision making. These events open the door for important conversations for what your child chooses to say and write, as well as what they choose to post on social media.

This email does not mean that Demarest is immune from such a situation. In the unfortunate event a student or students should engage in an act of hate speech, we will use all of our district resources, including the presence of our security surveillance system and our strong connection to the Demarest Police Department to identify and address anyone who would commit such an act.

A strong partnership between educators and parents will build a community grounded in kindness, ethics of caring, compassion, and respect for all people. These beliefs children have towards peace and caring, start with the conversations at the dinner table, family gatherings, and in the classrooms. Through our partnership and open dialogue, we can have a positive impact on our young impressionable children today and for years to come.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Michael Fox', written over a white background.

Michael Fox

MF/djr

568 PIERMONT ROAD • DEMAREST, NJ 07627

E-MAIL: [foxm@nvnet.org](mailto:foxm@nvnet.org)