

August 23, 2017

Dear Members of the LEAP Community:

As we begin our new academic year, we want to address recent events in our country and reinforce our commitment to social justice, peace, equality and diversity. Let us begin by condemning the acts of terror spearheaded by white supremacists in Charlottesville, Virginia. Hate acts like the ones that we all witnessed have no place in our schools and classrooms and will not be tolerated in our community. The events this month in Charlottesville have awakened a national understanding about the importance of eliminating bias, prejudice and hate in all corners and at all levels in our country. While our country has achieved progress in addressing issues of equality and acceptance, the events this month remind us that there is a lot of work ahead of us to preserve that progress and to unite our nation in ways that embrace our diversity, honors our many contributions, and challenges the vestiges of racism, discrimination and white supremacy that lead to oppression, abuses of power and the marginalization of people of color in our communities. We shall not let power and privilege ravage the best of what we can offer and what our country can aspire to.

These events and the discourse that they have ignited impact our students, teachers, staff, families, and community every day. We all play a role to discuss current events with our students and protect the physical and emotional safety of all of our children and families at LEAP. We are committed to providing our students and families with an environment that is grounded on peace, love and justice. Our school charter and the work we do every day builds the academic, social and emotional lives of children that have been disenfranchised from opportunity. At LEAP, we work every day to prepare our children and families to embrace opportunities and to be able to compete and advance through a transformative process that will lead to rich life trajectories.

As we embark on a new academic year, and given the urgent political and social context that our nation is facing, we expect that our teachers and staff will serve as role models for our students and will express their commitment to individual freedom and to upholding the respect and dignity of all people. Remember that violence and hate are never the best alternatives--that prejudging people based on affiliation, religion, race or ethnicity is wrong and that our country is strong because of its rich diversity. Our expectation is that all members of our community will be treated with fairness, respect and dignity and that our Constitution guarantees fair and equitable treatment under the law for all Americans. Throughout the year, we will continue to share resources that can assist with the creation of social and emotional safe spaces for each of our students, while also encouraging our teachers to engage in classroom conversations that help clarify, understand and process the types of hate language and actions that have proliferated since the Charlottesville incident.

At LEAP, we are re-writing history for many of our students. If you need to speak with someone about how these events are affecting your children or family, please feel free to contact your principals and the school administration to ensure that we address any issues proactively and with conviction. We urge you to shape the

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opportunities for our students to be fully engaged in our democratic society in constructive ways. Remember that we are agents of change bestowed with the honor and responsibility to shape our students into productive, healthy and civically minded adults. We do this every day with caring and passion. Now we need to be very intentional about our words and actions as everything we do matters tremendously.

We are eager to begin our year and witness how our diverse community, representing different races, ethnicities, religions and principles, come together for the common good of educating our children and families

Thank you for being part of our community and welcome back!

Sincerely,



Dr. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago  
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