



TONAWANDA CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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TIMOTHY A. OLDENBURG, Ed.D.
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

June 17, 2021

Dear Students, Parents, and Staff:

Congratulations on the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year. All of us have made incredible accomplishments in unprecedented educational conditions. Our students, staff, and families worked together to successfully create unique, positive, and new learning environments to advance through this pandemic period. I expect and hope that further progress is made in the areas that will afford our 2021-2022 school year to resemble an instructional model that includes the schedules, opportunities, services, and curricular programs that best meets the needs of all students.

A year ago, our nation was hurting and experiencing social unrest as many people expressed their anger, outrage, and upset over the continued discrimination and treatment of the people that make up our diverse country. As a community and as a nation, we need to continue to learn and grow our ability to engage in difficult conversations and take on challenging, complex questions that have no easy solutions.

Our district continues to be committed to making our school district a place where we celebrate our diversity and where all feel welcomed and loved. Our role in educating students is broad and deep. This year we have worked to create awareness of bias, practice inclusivity, and grow our district culture to respect and value one another. As a district, we will be continuing to engage our students, staff, and school community in conversations and learning activities that can lead to change, growth, and solutions. We will further our work with our staff and students in productive and appropriate awareness focused on racism and discrimination.

Our district does NOT tolerate racism, bigotry, or discrimination. Our district and community is proud, but not perfect. We all have an opportunity to learn, grow, and understand from one another. This district has not, and will not, tolerate any situation that involves racism, bigotry, or discrimination from anyone in our school community.

The month of June is recognized as LGBTQ Pride Month. This month celebrates the accomplishments and leadership of the LGBTQ community. This month recognizes the strides and gains that have been made and continue to be made to ensure equal rights and protections for members of this community.

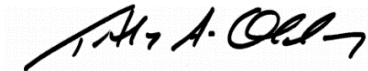
Additionally, our district will observe a holiday on Friday, June 18, 2021 to celebrate and recognize Juneteenth. This is the first year that this holiday is recognized as an official public holiday. All of our school buildings and offices will be closed for the day. The new law celebrates Juneteenth, a day which commemorates the end to slavery and celebrates Black and African American freedom and achievements, while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all cultures. Earlier this year, Governor Cuomo issued an Executive Order recognizing Juneteenth as a holiday for New York State employees.

Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when the news of liberation came to Texas more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863. African Americans across the state were made aware of their right to freedom on this day when Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston with federal troops to read General Order No. 3 announcing the end of the Civil War and that all enslaved were now free, as well as to maintain a presence in Texas for the purpose of enforcement of emancipation among slave-owners throughout the state.

Although I do not have all the answers, I can commit to you that we will continue to make progress in this area, address every unacceptable action, and work to create an environment that is welcoming, safe, and enjoyable for all of us.

On behalf of our entire school community, I wish our students a great summer of fun and exploration in their learning, growth, interests, and play. Always remember the Warrior Way – I am respectful, I am responsible, I am safe, I am a Warrior! Go Warriors!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy A. Oldenburg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Timothy A. Oldenburg, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools