
Jonathan P. Raymond, Superintendent

Dear Colleague



January 28, 2022

Dear Colleague:

I want to share my reflections from a challenging and traumatic week for our community. In my view, there are times when our work can be very gray, like late Monday to early Tuesday, when we were sorting out how to respond to the legal ruling on the state's indoor mask mandate. But later that day, when one of our high school students was fatally shot by another student, the work became crystal clear. All that matters are our students. Each and every child we serve is vitally important and at the center of our work and focus.

The effect of the tragedy on our students and our community became even more clear on Thursday, when I attended a support session for families who live near Columbus Elementary School, where the shooting took place. Those present were sharing their feelings, emotions, and concerns. One parent shared that her child had unsuccessfully been asking her all year for permission to walk to school by herself. Now, the child no longer wants to walk to school alone, because now she is afraid.

As I sat reflecting on the enormity of how this tragedy reverberates in our community, I thought about how we – both as educators and many of us as parents – pour as much love, strength, and resilience into our children as we can. It became clear to me that, despite our best efforts, we can only do so much to protect them. But we must do more.

We have so much work to do. We need to ensure that all our children have the supports and skills to navigate an increasingly complex and challenging world. We desperately need to ensure that every child has an adult who can connect with them, so they do not slip through the cracks.

I am grateful for the school support staff and crisis teams coming together to be extra present for our students, families, and staff. As I sat there with a team of psychologists and social workers guiding the conversation, I was reminded that this is our work: to find ways to connect, educate, support, encourage, push, love, and never give up on any single child. This is tremendously challenging, and I see how skilled and dedicated our school and district staff are at doing this.

We cannot do this work of educating, developing, and caring for children alone. We need our families, community, city, and other partners to join us in this work. The fabric of our network must be so tightly woven that no child slips through the safety net. There is urgency. We lost two young people this week. We have a moral purpose in this work to come together with clarity, resolve, and focus to rebuild our sense of community and do whatever it takes not to lose another child.

Thank you for what every one of you do collectively and individually for our children every day.

Sincerely,

Jonathan P. Raymond
Superintendent of Schools

New Rochelle High School • Albert Leonard Middle School • Isaac E. Young Middle School • Henry Barnard Early Childhood Center
Columbus Elementary School • Daniel Webster Elementary School • George M. Davis Jr. Elementary School • Jefferson Elementary School
Trinity Elementary School • William B. Ward Elementary School