



Binghamton City School District

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May 25, 2022

Dear Binghamton Families,

The past few months have demonstrated the power of community in both times of tragedy and celebration. I have witnessed an outpouring of kindness and support from our students, families, and employees as we mourn the loss and celebrate the lives of Aliza Spencer and Xavier Cooper. I have also seen amazing enthusiasm for our incredible Unified Basketball team, Binghamton athletes partaking in community events and sports programs, and hallways, auditoriums, and gymnasiums full of families and neighbors as we celebrate the talents of our artists, musicians, thespians, and singers.

Strong relationships and opportunities enrich lives and build positive and productive communities. Our district strives to create this from within, building bridges that go beyond our school buildings. Being an involved member of a community combats social isolation and provides a network of support when you need help. I encourage you to take advantage of opportunities to become a stronger, more collaborative school community, and extend those opportunities to others when you have the chance.

In June, we will be crafting an updated mission, vision, values, and goals for the district, using the results of the recent [ThoughtExchange](#) and the input of roughly 50 parents, educators, staff, students, and community members. This input will provide guidance and direction for the next five years on academics and extended learning through athletics and the arts that will connect the school community through common goals. This is another example of how a community of people can drive change.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Unfortunately, senseless, horrific acts of violence are traumatic and can be damaging to our mental health. This month's shooting in Buffalo, and yesterday's school shooting in Uvalde, Texas can lead to stress and anxiety for all of us, but especially for children. We must be mindful of how we approach conversations with children who may wish to discuss these events and reassure them that they are safe and protected. Here are two resources you may find helpful when speaking to your children about these recent events: <https://www.apa.org/topics/gun-violence-crime/shooting-aftermath>, <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-school-shootings>

We would like to remind you that our BCSD guidance counselors, social workers, and school psychologists are on always available as a resource for our students and employees. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you need support.

Coretta Scott King shared, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." Take care of yourselves and one another. We must stand together with love and Patriot pride throughout these difficult times.

Sincerely,

Tonia Thompson, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Educating, empowering and challenging all students to become productive, global citizens through innovative approaches to learning.