



VALLEY STREAM SCHOOL DISTRICT 24

75 Horton Avenue, Valley Stream, New York 11581-1499
(516) 434-2825 • FAX: (516) 256-0163

Dr. Don Sturz
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Valley Stream 24 Staff and Parents,

These past few days have left me heavy hearted. Our world is in chaos and so much pain has been unleashed. It's happening at a time when we are not able to be together to attend to each other in the ways in which we would normally do so. The past few months robbed us of that privilege and now here we are needing it more than ever. It's all swirling around us with seemingly no end in sight.

As a leader in a culturally and racially diverse school district, the issue of diversity and equity is part of every decision I make, as well as what I believe is best for children. Now I find myself reflecting on what is best for children during a time like this. How do I explain why some people get treated differently than others? How do I convince them that it will all be okay? Parents and teachers are struggling with these same questions.

The only thing I have control over right now is what I can do to help those in Valley Stream 24. We only have two weeks left until the last day of instruction and our daily scheduled contact. There is nothing more important right now than attending to the emotional well-being of our children, their families and our staff. All are experiencing this tragic moment in time in different ways and yet we are all connected by it. The conversations may be difficult to have but we need to be talking. More importantly we need to be listening. Racism, diversity, justice, equity, compassion, and understanding are just a few of the starter words for our conversations.

No matter how bad a situation gets people always step up and show the inherent good by reaching out, standing up and helping others. That's what we need to do now. We need to be checking in with each other and with our children on a regular basis. Just letting someone know you care and that you are there for them goes a long way. We do that really well in Valley Stream 24 so let's lead with what we do well.

We also need to stand up and make sure our voice is heard. **In Valley Stream 24, we celebrate our diversity and we do not tolerate racism, bigotry, discrimination and hatred.** We must make sure our children know this well and that they all know they are special, deserve respect and most importantly, that they are loved.

Please reach out. Please speak up. Please listen.

Stay safe and be well,

Dr. Don Sturz

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Armando Hernandez
President

Kimberly Wheeler
Vice President

Trustees

Paul DePace
Donna LaRocco
John Maier
Lisa Pellicane
Joseph Shipley

Jaclyn Cacioppo
District Clerk

Brian Cleary
Treasurer

Ingerman Smith LLP
School Attorney