

Good afternoon,

This week's letter is going to be a bit different. Normally, I concentrate on giving you information regarding what is happening within the district. Today, I want to address what is happening on a larger scale in our society. This week our nation witnessed yet another example of the violence and hatred in society. The shooting deaths that occurred in Georgia were tragic. Unfortunately, I am not sure if the death of 8 people, 6 of whom were women of Asian descent, even comes as a surprise to the nation. As a society, we have been inundated with harsh rhetoric, acts of violence at our nation's capitol and tragic deaths such as what was televised this week. Many of us ask the question, "when it will end?"

Since the inception of COVID, a year ago, much was made of the origin. Across the nation, we have had people of Asian- American and Pacific Islander descent – which includes students and educators – be harassed and/or bullied because of the rhetoric around that origin. We know it is not right and that it can't be tolerated. Denise Specht, our EDMN president said it best, "Our union stands for safe and welcoming schools and communities for everyone, no matter what they look like or where they're from. We reject the attempts to divide Minnesotans by race and place and call on everyone to come together and make a state where everyone can thrive, white and Black, Asian and Latinx, native and newcomer."

I was very pleased to see our district respond to this tragedy with not only words of support for staff and families, but also with resources so that these discussions can take place in safe environment. I know that each and every day, our members try to offer the best to our students. Please continue to offer support to your students and colleagues as we move through a very troubling time in society.

"I have just three things to teach: simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures."

-Lao Tzu

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