

Dear DPS Community,

It has been another challenging week in Danvers as DHS investigates alleged incidents with the wrestling team on Tuesday and an incident involving antisemitic graffiti, a swastika symbol in a third floor bathroom from today. We condemn these hate incidents and want to be clear that this type of hateful and discriminatory behavior has no place in the Danvers Public Schools and in our community. DHS will be meeting with students throughout the next few days to engage in work around biased and hateful language, dangers of social media and the importance of reporting concerning information.

This comes directly after we presented a comprehensive action plan to the School Committee regarding what the district is doing to improve culture. Please see the School Committee recap below, which includes a statement I made at the beginning of the meeting regarding the impact of racism, homophobia, and antisemitic language on the community. We will present this plan again tomorrow night at the Human Rights and Inclusion Committee meeting at 7:00pm at Town Hall. It can also be viewed on DCAT.

We are asking for your support. As parents, caregivers, and community members, please have the difficult conversations with your children about these issues. As DHS Principal Adam Federico mentioned in his message to DHS families, it is important for families to review their use of social media and cell phones and to reinforce that racist, biased, or inappropriate language is unacceptable.

I would also like to share the [Dec/Jan resource flyer](#) from our DanversCARES Partner, the Behavioral Health Family Resource Center at Salem Hospital. It includes information about *Kids and the impact of toxic stress: How the pandemic, systemic racism, societal inequalities, technology, and other stressors of our current world can impact our children in toxic and traumatic ways and how we can help*. This ZOOM presentation is on Thursday, December 16, from Noon to 1:30pm. It is free and open to all. [Register Here](#) no later than 10am on the day of the presentation.

Warm regards,  
Lisa Dana

Superintendent

## **December School Committee Recap**

From the December 13th Danvers School Committee, here are some of the highlights:

### **Statement from the Superintendent:**

At the beginning of the meeting, Dr. Dana made a [statement](#) regarding the issues of racism, homophobia, and anti-Semitism and its impact on the district and the community.

## **Information from the Student Representative for the School Committee:**

Reese Macdonald has joined Lil Montevocchi as a Student Representative for the School Committee. They will either present together or take turns, as their schedules permit. Reese provided a brief update on activities taking place at DHS.

### **COVID-19 Update:**

- Keith Taverna provided the latest [DPS statistics](#) related to COVID-19.
- [Mask Mandate](#): As it currently stands, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has issued a mask mandate in public schools through at least January 15, 2022.
- Reminder: Stay home when not feeling well and check our [Family COVID Information Update](#) for symptoms that require students to stay home and be tested.
- Reminder: Share your child's vaccination card with your school's principal or nurse to assist in contact tracing and information gathering in regards to masking policy decisions

### **Strategic Plan:**

We presented a comprehensive update on the district's work related to [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#). Mary Wermers explained what the district has been doing on the issue since 2018 when we began deepening our commitment to culturally responsive and inclusive work. She explained how efforts have been redoubled to continue to be an inclusive community.

We explained how we are working with our community partners, both the Danvers Public School Community and the wider Danvers Community. One of our new partners is the Lappin Foundation which is hosting an Intergenerational Holocaust Symposium. As was mentioned in last week's district message, we are looking for 25 community members to join 25 DHS students in this innovative endeavor. DHS Principal, Adam Federico, noted that all 50 slots filled up very quickly.

An overview of work related to Anti-Bias and Anti-Racism work can be found [here](#).

### **Equity Subcommittee:**

The committee is focused on providing a safe and supportive environment for all students.

We are looking to bring the community together - School Committee, administrators, parents, and community members - for sessions (likely two 2-hour sessions) and will have more information about our plans at our January meeting. We will let people know how they can get involved.

### **Community Engagement**

As we continue to review our community engagement strategies, we are looking into conducting surveys for families and staff with follow-up interviews with engagement consultants. The committee supported the plan, which could cost up to \$50,000, by shifting funds from other areas.

### **Summary:**

The next regular Danvers School Committee meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Monday, January 10, 2022. It will be held at Danvers High School. The meeting is open to the public. The meeting may also be watched live on DCAT - Comcast channel 8 and Verizon channel 37. Previous school committee meetings can be viewed at <https://www.danverstv.org>.

As we approach our holiday break, please keep school attendance in mind and remember that Every Day Matters! Together we can improve school attendance. Please see the 2021/22 School Calendar for early release days, holidays, and vacation periods, to ensure your child is in school every school day.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the principal of the school your child(ren) attend(s) or contact the Central Office.

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