

#ChesapeakeUnited #CougarPride

April 9, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As I drove to school this morning, I was filled with a variety of emotions. As I looked at sign after sign and saw message after encouraging message, I was first and foremost filled with immense gratitude for the work so many in our community put in over the weekend. That work was done to inspire students not just at our school, but throughout our cluster.

I was also filled with hope. The messages I saw – and which our students and staff saw a short time later – were more than words. To me, they represented a commitment on the part of this incredible community to uplift our students and proclaim a loud and clear message that hateful mindsets and demeaning and discriminatory behavior have no place here. As someone who grew up in Pasadena, I know that it is we who must join together in resolving issues like those which have dominated the news in recent weeks, and I proudly lend my voice to every message I saw this morning.

Finally, I was both encouraged and inspired. The last several weeks at Chesapeake High School have been difficult for all of us, and what our students and staff saw this morning, I believe, energized everyone. We encouraged students and staff to wear blue today as a show of pride in their school and in each other. Community members put forth a strong show of unity and support for every student in our cluster.

There is clearly much more work to be done, as evidenced by two more incidents today. A fight occurred in one of our classrooms during first period this morning. That fight was not related to any of the recent incidents at our school, but we must all remain vigilant and do everything we can to support every child and adult at our school.

Far more seriously, however, a student alerted a teacher in fourth period today to another mouse pad that had racially-charged writing on it. The mouse pad was located in a different computer lab than the one involved in Friday's incident, and contained writing that was both threatening and racist in nature. Police are involved in both matters, and we will also take appropriate action with regard to any students involved in either matter.

We will continue to work with our students and staff, and our Student Equity Team will have a significant role in shaping some of our future initiatives. I continue to ask that you talk very seriously with your child about the ongoing series of events at our school, which continue to detract from our mission.

I want your input as well and to that end, I will hold a "Coffee with the Principal" event at 8 a.m. on Thursday, April 19, at the school. I will be sending a link to you by email so that those wishing to attend can RSVP for the event. I have set aside an hour to have conversations that will help us all move forward.

Additionally, Anne Arundel United – an initiative launched last year by County Executive Steve Schuh – will be hosting a coffee at the Anne Arundel County Public Library branch on Mountain Road. That event runs from 9 to 10 a.m.

Our efforts to showcase #CougarPride and be #ChesapeakeUnited will be built on solid communication and a willingness on the part of all involved to discuss and appreciate similarities as well as differences. We must continue to convey to all of our students that they are supported and loved not just today, but every day.

Thank you for your ongoing involvement in this effort.

Sincerely,

Stephen W. Gorski
Principal, Chesapeake High School

SWG/bm