



January 6, 2021

Dear Princeton Day School Community,

The morning sun broke on the promise of a glorious day, one in which the rich and full exercise of democracy would be on display: the peaceful certification of our nation's 46th President, Joe Biden; and the calm, orderly resolution of two run-off elections in Georgia. How glorious were these prospects, and how hopeful we were for the day ahead.

Although the latter has resolved itself, the former is a goal deferred, as chaos and violence have rained down on the Capitol, the People's House. In living rooms across the country, we have witnessed our fellow citizens debase and disrespect a building – and a dream – more than two centuries in the making.

We now strive to comfort our children – young, eager, filled with faith and hope – who have witnessed this senseless display. In a time filled with trial and tribulation, we try to explain to them the crisis that has broken out before us, and we urge them to remain hopeful while this spectacle unfolds.

Having tried very hard to steer the middle path for my 13 years as Head of School, I will say to you tonight that I am deeply troubled by what I have seen today and saddened for our students, for whom a most difficult year has taken on another, troubling aspect altogether. I am sorry for our parents and teachers, who must help their children make sense of that which is senseless.

And yet I know that work has begun already, as the connections we have built with one another over months of strife and challenge will keep us together tonight and during the days to come. I know our faculty will pull their students close to them, to reassure them that they are safe and secure. I know our parents will summon the strength to guide

their children through these roiling waters. We will make sense of this moment because we know and care for one another. We will gain from this moment because we know that at the center of every tragedy is a lesson to be learned. We will find the lesson in this moment, I am sure. And above all things, we will reassure our students that they are safe.

Within the hour, our division heads – Sandy Wang, Renée Price, and Chris Rhodes – will be in touch with faculty and students about our plans for tomorrow. I will address the Middle and Upper Schools at 8:05am. Sandy Wang will work closely with her faculty to determine how and if to address today's events with our youngest students. As the day unfolds, we will offer opportunities for students and faculty to discuss these emergent events. As always, our counseling staff will provide resources for our students.

For the Middle and Upper Schools, there will be no homework done tonight and no assessments given tomorrow. Associate Head of School Lisa Surace will work with the department chairs to spread tomorrow's assignments across the coming days. Having just met for an hour with the leadership team, it will gather tomorrow to plan opportunities for our students to discuss and make sense of the events they have witnessed.

On behalf of my faculty and staff colleagues, I want to assure you that our School's resources will be arrayed in service to our students. As you have questions or suggestions, please reach out to me, your child's advisor or classroom teacher, or any member of our professional staff.

The day we hoped would greet us today still awaits us. It is not far off.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "RJP" with a horizontal line extending to the right.