



Thursday, April 14, 2022

Dear Lamoille North School Community,

As promised, we are writing with an update regarding the homicide that took place in Morristown earlier this week. WCAX has reported that the victim of this homicide was a transgender woman. In recent days, community members and others have reached out to express how shaken they are and concerned and fearful about this kind of violence occurring in our Lamoille County community. Today, we send this message to reconfirm the value of human life and the importance of love, acceptance and community.

We have seen much tragedy around the globe, and understand the anxiety and angst, in general, that the past few years of a pandemic have caused many. School Board Chair, Mark Nielsen, and I want to take a moment to reflect on what our school community stands for and reassure you that we continue to take steps to ensure that our students and staff have the equity, access and opportunity to create an environment of safety and belonging in all of our schools. It needs to be said that if we collectively stand for equity in our schools - and we do - then we stand against this sort of violence.

Governor Phil Scott, on Tuesday evening, issued a statement about the case: "Across the country, we have seen disturbing hostility towards the transgender community. Unfortunately, recent events show we are not immune to this in Vermont, and we must commit to continuing our work to make Vermont a more inclusive and welcoming place. Exploiting fear and targeting divisive rhetoric at people who are just trying to be who they are is hateful and can lead to violence. I ask Vermonters to do their part to ensure everyone feels safe in our state and to engage in these conversations from a place of empathy and understanding".

Lamoille North strives to create and maintain a community where individuals feel accepted, welcomed and cared for, and we vehemently reject hate and violence in any form. Our vision does not change in that we are consistently and thoughtfully working towards being the kind of community that is welcoming and that provides people with a strong sense of belonging and safety. We end this message with a sentiment shared by a parent in our community, who beautifully wrote, and I paraphrase, "that we need to counter acts of violence and hate with acts of love".

Please feel free to reach out to either of us at any time. We thank you for your collaboration, kindness and compassion.

Our very best to you,

Catherine Gallagher, M.Ed.  
Superintendent, LNSU

Mark Nielsen  
School Board Chair, LNSU