June 1, 2020

Dear Evergreen Mill Community,

The recent months and weeks have been exceedingly difficult as we have all been dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. This abrupt halt to normalcy forced us all to transition to a new way of working and a new way of learning. I want to express my deepest thanks to all of you for the tremendous role you have played in your child’s education this year. I am so proud of the school/home partnership that exists in our community.

Unfortunately, the events of this past week involving the death of George Floyd, have reminded each of us in a very real way that systemic racism and injustice exist in our country, in our state and in our local communities. The Director of Equity for LCPS captures what many of us are thinking and feeling in this moment very poignantly.

_These recent incidents have many people, no matter their race or ethnicity, wondering many things. There are feelings of fear, outrage, confusion, uncertainty, hopelessness, as well as those who feel determined to use these ongoing unfortunate incidents to lean into humanity, reach out across racial lines and endeavor to bring about a hopeful change. No matter the feelings or emotions, I encourage us all to lean into the words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. here which say “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”_

My commitment as Principal at Evergreen Mill is to ensure that every child and family member that walks through our doors is embraced and celebrated for the unique and amazing individual that they are. Our students must not just feel included, they must be included in every aspect of their school day. We must work to ensure that we provide an education to every child that values their culture, their race, their religion and above all, their humanity. At Evergreen Mill we communicate daily to our students that we are called to respect everyone. Your children know that hateful words and actions are wrong. They know that each of us is to be valued, treated fairly and loved. Though we
may look different on the outside, we have all experienced hurt, loss, fear, sadness, and loneliness, as well as joy, peace and love. This is what binds us together as people.

I want to take this time to remind you that we have many supports available to students and families who are hurting. If you need anything, please reach out to our Unified Mental Health Team at Evergreen Mill UMHT Email or visit the LCPS Mental Health and Community Resources for Families site at https://www.lcps.org/domain/31226. Lastly, I encourage you to revisit Superintendent Williams’ video message on equity from the beginning of the school year as a reminder of our school division’s commitment to providing a safe, equitable and nurturing learning environment for all students. Consider using this link as a springboard to having conversations with your own children about issues of race, justice and humanity.

LCPS Superintendent's Message on Equity

The Evergreen Mill school community is defined by our diversity. It is what makes us the strong, successful, and caring school that we are. While we are committed to equity and inclusive practices, we acknowledge that we have much work to do in these areas. We are a beacon in Loudoun County, and our parents and students are to be commended for the daily efforts they make to stand against hate and racism. As your principal, I want to reaffirm that I stand for and beside every family that calls Evergreen Mill Elementary School home. To our black families who are both filled with grief and anger at this time, I can never understand the pain you are feeling, but I can and do stand beside you in the fight to end racism in our world.

In Solidarity,

Daniel Lani

Daniel Lani
Principal