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Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

This week, in a letter to staff and colleagues, I acknowledged that last week's election remains at the front of our minds and that the current state of discourse is challenging. And, it was important that I shared how my mood and outlook has been uplifted in seeing that our school sites are busy with teaching, learning and activities of all kinds. I also reminded our teachers that many of us who've been in education for more than twenty years have seen the ideological pendulum swing to the right and to the left and that for those new to education, while this election will have an impact on all of us for years to come—educators remove barriers, keep kids safe and provide hope.

Be assured that Elk Grove Unified School District's commitment to safe schools means that we foster and model respect—and none of us should expect less. As educators and leaders in our communities, we are responsible for providing an environment where students are safe to share their points of view so long as the expression of such views does not impinge on the rights of others. I applauded staff members who have already successfully redirected students to express their feelings in a positive manner instead of one that would interfere with teaching and learning. If you have concerns of discourse at your school, it should be brought forward to site leadership.

Now focused on a bright future, it's important to note that California voters supported several state and local appropriation initiatives. Proposition 51, Proposition 55, and locally, Elk Grove Unified's Measure M, passed! Those three measures support the work that lays ahead and their passing demonstrates that our communities locally and across the state care about investing in our children's futures and in education. A great deal of work that was completed in preparation of the Board decision to place Measure M on the ballot and our collective teamwork and determination paid off. The confidence our parents and communities have in us is something we all take pride in. Thanks goes to all for the groundswell of support to maintain and modernize our schools and in particular to the many parents who helped us in a grassroots community outreach effort.

The winter season is also a time when we have a very watchful eye on the Governor's Preliminary Budget to be released in mid-January that will give us our first look at the 2017-18 budget. While the economy continues to be challenging, and although jobs are being created at relatively high levels across the state, revenues from state income taxes lag behind the Governor's forecast. Due to the trend of declining state revenues, EGUSD received nearly a million dollars less in our 2016-17 allocation compared to what had been projected in May.

Thanks to efficient and collective work with our employee organizations and our commitment to wellness, we reduced our health care premiums for the next two years resulting in a savings in the couple of years ahead.

Although there is uncertainty on the political front, inspiration abounds in our schools and in the faces of our children. The approaching winter season is always one of my favorite times of the year. Fall sports playoffs have started, theatrical productions are underway and plans for winter musical and choral performances are in place. Grades will be due soon and winter sports are about to kick-off. Soon, the holidays will be upon us and should you need to reach out for support, we offer many resources across our district. I am proud that we have many outstanding programs that help make the holidays a little brighter for many of our families and the people who help remind us of our humanity and civility.

We recognize that winter months often bring about a great deal of stress, whether because of college applications, family dynamics or financial stressors, the holiday seasons can be challenging. To that end, I have asked staff to keep an eye and ear out for students, families and colleagues who may need some extra support at this time of year and to share the strength of resilience. Remembering to care for each other can make a world of difference and EGUSD has properly trained staff also available to help.

As always, I am grateful to live and work in such a wonderful community.

Christopher Hoffman
Superintendent