



## Members of the Board

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Superintendent

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January 9, 2018

Dear Elk Grove Unified Community Members,

Having grown up within Elk Grove Unified, I have never seen the ugliness of hate unfold before me like it has these past few weeks. The idea that hate, intolerance and narrow-mindedness remain pervasive confounds me. Having taught history to students who are now adults, the backwardness of hate and racism was never an ideal worthy of developing. Now as your Superintendent, I grapple and wrestle with the question of how we arrived at where we are today. We have good programs, systems and people in place to safeguard our students. However, it is clear that we urgently need to do better.

The appalling acts of hate found within our institution are unacceptable and I will not give up until we repair the hurt and restore a renewed sense of safety at every site. I often state that our purpose and function as a school district is to improve the academic and personal outcomes for each of our students. The only way I know how to do this is to improve our performance as the adults. Therefore, as an organization, we will pull ourselves up to protect our students, value their uniqueness, swiftly and appropriately respond to their issues and continue to provide the positive and supportive learning environments they need to learn.

My fellow colleagues and I have chosen to do the honorable work of educating children, but the education of our children is far reaching. Providing our students with an academic education is not enough; at the same time, we also must help them form their moral fiber. I believe we currently do work at a very high level and I recognize that we are not where we could and need to be. We must get better, including me. Having been shaped and molded by this community, I have faith in our ability to overcome these turbulent times. We have good staff, good parents and we live in a good community. We will persevere.

Know that we are currently working to improve a variety of internal programs and strategies designed to provide a supportive, caring and accepting learning environment across the entire Elk Grove Unified School District community. It is obvious, however, that it is clearly time to redouble our efforts and our pace. This means including and enlisting additional expertise to support our work to increase empathy, acceptance and open mindedness in everyone. My task and that of my entire team is to engage our parents, our students and our community partners and organizations to develop clear and comprehensive long-term strategies to address the issues we face.

Be assured that we have multiple strategies already in place to ensure the safety and well-being of our students. These strategies include a heightened sense of awareness by all staff, the addition of added safety and security staff, support groups and teams at our sites and at the district level plus the conducting of parents, staff and community meetings.

The challenging situation in which we find ourselves did not occur overnight and this problem cannot be solved overnight. However, we can and we will rise to the challenges we face. I fully commit to see this work through and I ask for each of you to join me in this most important endeavor.

Many of you have already reached out to me to offer your assistance, support and commitment in supporting district efforts to improve. Some of you, I have yet to meet in person and some of you I have worked with closely either in Elk Grove Unified or through other community organizations. I thank each of you for taking the time to reach out to me and I accept your offer.

While this message is being sent to the entire Elk Grove Unified School District Community, please know that we are also working diligently at specific schools where recent examples of hate and intolerance have occurred. Additional information about the immediate planned actions and opportunities for students and parents to share their thoughts and concerns directly with us will be communicated directly to the affected students and parents.

Thank you for taking the time to read this communication. I take great pride in the Elk Grove Unified School District and our entire community. I look forward to our work together as we strive to make Elk Grove Unified School District a place where all are welcome, encouraged and valued.

With a heavy but optimistic heart,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHR' followed by a stylized flourish.

Christopher R. Hoffman  
Superintendent