

The Goodness of ALL

The local, national, and global events of the past few months have created many moments of extreme emotion and long reflection about what it takes to move humanity, caring, kindness and equity forward in the world. To that end, our educational community has capitalized on every action possible to teach and empower our children to be engaged citizens and we are mindful that our actions should speak louder than our words.

In the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District, we serve ALL children and we fully embrace the diversity of our students and families. This will not change despite recent national discussions regarding immigration. We, like many districts in California, wish to reassure our community that all students have the right to attend school regardless of the immigration status of the child or of the child's family members. We build our public schools based on the notion that all children are equal and deserve the very best education we can offer. First and foremost this means we value our differences, in school and out, and want all of our students to feel safe, valued and nurtured as learners and individuals. ALL means all, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, religion, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status or political beliefs. It's important for us to remember that diversity and inclusion means assuring everyone has a place in our hearts. At school and in our community we value that our differences can be expressed freely and our services received with equanimity.

In 2016, we experienced a number of issues in our schools related to bullying that served as additional reminders to us of the importance of inclusion, compassion and the acceptance of differences among us. We have responded with community outreach, addressing our policies, creating new site level procedures, investing in social and emotional learning and bullying prevention programs, and continuing parent education and outreach. We have measured the impact and see evidence in the data that our actions are making a difference in school climate. Through programs like Beyond Differences (No One Eats Alone), No Bully, Restorative Justice and Responsive Classrooms we continuously link social and emotional skills and awareness to academic success. We are proud of these efforts. We hope that our practices clearly communicate our intent to provide safe, nurturing and accepting school environments that support all of our families during these times of change.

The gift of inclusion inspires us to act bravely, think critically, collaborate willingly and communicate effectively. This is what we want for our children now and in the future. There is no time like the present holiday season for celebrating these values. We believe in the power of ONE and the power of ALL to create, maintain and enhance our learning community.

May your holidays be joyful!

Valerie