

October 28, 2020

To The Center School Community:

Our world is experiencing an historical shift in terms of Covid-19, protests for racial equality and access, climate change and political divisiveness for everyone. November 3rd is Election Day. This important election comes at a time that none of us could have imagined a year ago. We are navigating a pandemic and remote learning while working to uphold our values as a school and district with an unwavering commitment to becoming an anti-racist community and organization. Locally and nationally, we are witnessing and experiencing anti-Black racism and actions along with related protests, and for some of us, participating in a national debate about the value of our lives and the lives of people we love. It is normal for election outcomes to cause some level of anxiety – this year is truly unprecedented.

Our democracy as a nation is built on the strength of our social responsiveness, restorative justice, and community engagements in sharing the diversity of perspectives that contribute to “we the people”. We are the people embraced in respect, graciousness and a forward consciousness of creating a world and leaving a legacy that defines the brilliance of our hearts. As your student’s Principal, I want you to know that together, we will create a safe, respectful learning environment next week – no matter the outcome of the elections. Educators have prepared guiding questions to facilitate students’ conversation, development of critical thinking skills and their own ideas. Those conversations have begun and will continue in our school community.

While we can’t predict what will happen next week, what I can promise is that the election results won’t change our approach at The Center School. No matter who wins or loses the election, our student’s well-being, safety, and academic success remain our priority. I am asking parents to continue to support students in remaining focused in online learning, attending classes, and being active listeners and participants in classroom engagements. For parent and staff support, CSCA is providing a talk on Zoom with Dr. Jason Kilmer from the UW Center for the Study of Risk and Health Behaviors on 11/9/20 from 6:30-7pm. Dr. Kilmer will discuss strategies for stress management, student anxiety and depression, and ways parents can help. Dr. Kilmer is an Associate Professor in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Washington.

We will continue to provide a safe, affirming, and caring learning environment for our students as active listeners valuing and confirming students’ feelings and insights in navigating today’s local and global world. We will keep a regular schedule, take attendance and provide space in classrooms to have safe discussions to check-in and engage in empathic listening and mindfulness activities to help students focus in the moment.

I also want to offer resources for you to use at home to help with conversations about the 2020 election.

- Common Sense Media, [17 Tips to Steer Kids of All Ages Through the Political Season](#) with K-5, Middle School and High School resources including a 30 second video
- Common Sense Media, [5 Thing to Tell Your Kids About the Election](#)
- Teaching the 2020 Election: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/teaching-the-2020-election-what-will-you-do-on-wednesday>

Finally, this is an unusual election season, and it may take longer than normal for the votes to be tallied. This may cause additional apprehension and stress for students and your family. Please take care of yourself and your loved ones. You can find health and wellness resources provided by trusted community partners [here](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out directly to your student's teacher or you can contact me, Dr. Barbara Casey – blcasey@seattleschools.org . If you are interested in a professional counselor referral for your student, please contact Michele Hayes, Counselor, at mrhayes1@seattleschools.org.

In partnership,

Dr. Casey

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***To Empower and Inspire All Students
To Positively Impact Our World***