



# WAYLAND HIGH SCHOOL

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May 3, 2018

Dear Students,

We stand together before you because what happened earlier this week has not only shaken but also fractured our community. The racist language written on the displays in the Timeline Tunnel in the History wing and in the bathroom of that same wing is an affront to the entire community. And it is not acceptable. As a staff, we decided that we cannot have business as usual. We must stop. Today. Right now.

Our regular school day routine is disrupted because someone wrote hateful language, ugly words and sentiments directed at specific members of our community. Though we may wonder about the writer's choices in committing this act, in the end, we may never know why they did it. What we can control is how we respond. Today, we choose to say to our METCO students and our resident black students: You matter. You are important. And you are Wayland High School.

A victim of unspeakable hatred and violence himself, Dr. Elie Wiesel once said, "There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest." And so we, the staff of Wayland High School, pause in our school day to protest this act of racism and bigotry that has defiled our school. We refuse to allow it to define us.

We invite all of you to join us in doing not what is easy and comfortable but what is right and difficult; not to minimize but to empathize; not to grow complacent but to nourish compassion. And, this is so important: to listen as much as to speak. Our collective voices are powerful, and we can use them to build connections rather than to tear them down. In a culture where few things seem to last from one moment to the next, our commitment to each other must persist. At Wayland High School our community has always been bigger than the borders of our town and more inclusive than the majority.

We leave you with powerful words from former South African President Nelson Mandela: "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

Sincerely,

and the entire Wayland High School staff