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January 7, 2021

Dear Bridgeport Public Schools,

As many of you, I have been monitoring news of the terrible unrest at our nation's Capitol yesterday. It was a day like so many others over the past several months. Like many of you, I was disturbed by what I watched unfold on the television screen last night. Despite this dark day for our country, we must remain strong and calm for our students and community. So many children have had questions and concerns around the events which they have witnessed in our great country and are struggling with their emotions.

Our public schools are charged with the important task of promoting and cultivating diversity and equity. We teach students about respecting others and the importance of celebrating our differences. At this crucial moment, they will be looking to you for reassurance, guidance, and leadership. Thus, we must continue to be a support system for our community.

We must continue to give students opportunities to practice how to engage with people and exchange ideas across their differences. These are the social-emotional and life skills that we want to model and teach all of our Bridgeport Public School students. Yesterday's events may seem dark and disturbing, but they also present us with an opportunity to further discuss respect, civility, and ways to engage in safe civic actions to impact change. We know that many of our teachers have facilitated difficult conversations about these events and will continue to do so for the remainder of the school year.

We are all still processing these events and I encourage everyone in our BPS family to support one another, so we can better support our students. I am optimistic that brighter days are ahead for our country and our community. Thank you for always putting our students' well-being first, especially during such difficult circumstances.

Every kid....Every Day....

Sincerely,

Michael J. Testani