

Rainier School District #13

28168 Old Rainier Road | Rainier, OR 97048

Tel: (503) 556-3777 | Fax: (503) 556-3778

January 2, 2022

Dear Rainier Families,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you have enjoyed a wonderful winter break. As we close 2021 and begin what I hope will be a better and brighter 2022, I wanted to share some of my hopes for this new year. Two days ago, many of you took some time to reflect on the past 365 days and made resolutions for the coming year. This is our chance to improve who we are and identify our hopes for ourselves, our school district, students, and community.

It will come as no surprise to some that the past year has been filled with greater tension, unrest, and confusion than years before. Our lives have been permeated with bad behavior on social media and in communities across the country. We expect our children to practice respectful behavior but when the adults in their lives (both on social media and in our community) do not provide those examples, it is difficult to expect our kids to do better. My wish for 2022 is that the Rainier School District and community practices higher levels of peace, compassion, grace, and respect than we have seen in the past.

During the first months of this school year we have seen higher incidences of discipline as a result of harassment, intolerance, racism, and discrimination. No student deserves to feel unsafe as a result of disrespect and these behaviors will not be tolerated. Therefore, it is my hope that our students, staff, parents, and community exercise higher levels of respect for one another. When we don't agree with how someone thinks, feels, or lives their life, that should not give us a reason to act out in hateful or hurtful actions or words. Rather, I would hope that we seek to understand rather than belittle in an attempt to make others feel bad. As we enter into the new year, I will be announcing an initiative to put respect and kindness above all else and it is my hope that your family will join in this commitment.

I am also hoping that we will continue to be able to provide the full school experience to our students. At our December board meeting, I presented the test to stay program which would greatly decrease COVID-exposed students' quarantine time. The challenge, however, is we are not authorized to implement this program until our district has higher compliance with the mask mandates set forth by the Oregon Health Authority and the Governor's Office. None of us enjoy being required to wear face masks, but encouraging others to be non-compliant (which some will propose to your student) will not improve the situation in which we find ourselves.

The Rainier School District is committed to educating our students and to keeping students safe, while supporting their prosocial skills which will enable them to be respectful and responsible citizens in the future. I hope that as you prepare your students for a return to school you will each have a conversation about respecting those with whom they come in contact. It is only through heightened levels of respect that we can rise above the climate we experienced in 2021 and create a brighter future for 2022.

If you have questions or would like to discuss the initiatives we plan to introduce at Rainier, please feel free to contact me.

Your partner in Education,

Dr. Joseph Hattrick
Superintendent