

January 7, 2021

Dear Families, Faculty and Staff,

The horrific events we viewed in and around the Capitol yesterday were an assault on our country. While this school year continues to be one that tests our mettle as parents and educators, please know that the Brookfield Public Schools have begun to meet our students' needs this morning and will continue to do so as yesterday's events continue to unfold.

Disturbing events seen by our children often leave parents wondering how they can support their children. I want to reassure you that the Brookfield Public School's staff are here to provide students and families with support as they may continue to view unsettling images as we watch replayed video of our Capitol under siege. As we consider the possible exposure to these images and events, we know your children will likely seek out answers and support.

As shared last June, if we were in person we would have the opportunity to come together as a community to dialogue, share, connect, and listen to the concerns and experiences of one another. Despite the current lack of in person opportunities, our administrators, teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers are available should your child(ren) desire to speak with someone. Students or parents can call or send an email to schedule an opportunity for such connection. Guidance will be provided by school administration to our educators in alignment with the student's developmental stage.

Your children may have questions and ask for explanations about what they have seen or heard. Here are a few tips when speaking with your children or students:

- Let them know that there are trusted adults they can speak to at any time.
- Model a sense of calm and let your children know that they are safe.
- Be honest and review current events or information in age-appropriate ways (resources below)
- Clarify what students might have misunderstood about the images or events that have taken place.
- Reiterate home and/or school values (tolerance, respect, civility, diversity, reason) as part of the discussion.

There are also many resources available for families to engage in conversations regarding violence and trauma.

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers>

<https://www.schoolcounselor.org/parents-public>

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/when-bad-things-are-happening>

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/teaching-in-the-wake-of-a-traumatic-news-event-like-the-storming-of-the-u-s-capitol/2021/01>

The Brookfield Public Schools reject those who support violence and mob rule as a means of problem solving and we will not tolerate such forces of unreason in any form. This is a moment in which we should all unite and stand up for the rule of law.

Sincerely,

Dr. John W. Barile
Superintendent

*This letter includes some language developed in collaboration with the
Western Connecticut Superintendents Association.*