



# SUFFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## *Office of the Superintendent*

*Timothy M. Van Tassel, Ed.D.*  
*Superintendent*

*Melissa Bielonko*  
*Executive Secretary*

April 20, 2022

Dear SHS Families,

Our district and school administration regret to inform you that we recently learned of an incident in which a teacher used harmful and highly offensive racial and gender stereotypes in classroom discussions. As a district and school, we reject the damaging and inaccurate statements that were made and we believe it is imperative that this be clearly articulated in the correspondence we are sending you. Although we cannot comment on a pending personnel matter and the investigation, we can assure you that we are taking this matter very seriously and will take all administrative action necessary to ensure it does not happen again. The Suffield Public Schools is deeply committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion within our schools, and this conduct will not be tolerated.

Please note that our School Counselors and Social Workers will be made available to any student who would like support in processing this matter. In addition, we thank our students for promptly reporting the matter and providing our administration the opportunity to respond immediately.

Sincerely,  
Timothy M. Van Tassel, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Michelle Zawawi  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools/Interim SHS Principal

Mr. Matthew Dobi  
SHS Assistant Principal

Mrs. Shannon Inero  
SHS Assistant Principal