

Dear Dr. Hichens and Members of the Board,

We are contacting you in regards to another incident in our school community where a hateful and harmful word was written on school property. As engaged community members ourselves, we want to express serious concerns around hateful speech, written or verbally expressed in our schools, and acknowledge the harm this causes. Equally important, however, is the impact of how these incidents are responded to. Incidents like this one, involving hate speech, require a clear, swift, thoughtful and trauma informed response; one that centers bringing healing and repair to those most impacted first, and for the entire school community following.

As our school leaders, we do not expect you to have all the answers all of the time, but we do hold you accountable to being transparent and bold in how you respond to hateful actions in our schools. We expect you to clearly demonstrate that you are taking steps in a proactive manner to seek out and listen to other school communities, who already have helpful plans in place, and take the initiative to educate yourselves at the pace of urgency incidents of racism and otherful harmful acts require.

At the same time, we recognize our role as citizens and parents in this community is to acknowledge that what happens in our schools is also a reflection of all of us. Racism and violent words and actions in a school is about a problem in our larger community. So, we take responsibility that it is on all of us to offer solutions and be in partnership with our school board, school leaders, teachers and all who work every day with our community's young people.

Therefore, we are providing this [resource](#) from Learning for Justice as a necessary starting point for you to take the swift steps necessary to address short term and long term pathways for responding to hate at school. A neighboring K-12 district, Evanston/Skokie District 65, has had a plan adapted from Learning for Justice, responding to racism, discriminatory language, and hateful acts in our schools you can see [here](#). While we want to express disappointment that this current board has not collectively taken steps to seek and implement resources like these on your own, we are hopeful that when presented with this framework, you take the opportunity to do so.

Batavia Community Diversity Initiative seeks to create a sense of belonging for all members of our community through our commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. This includes calling on our district superintendent and school board members to do more, but also sharing our own learning materials and other [resources](#), and then holding you accountable to take what we are sharing and offering seriously. We believe we all want a safe and supportive environment for all staff and students, and we need to hold each other accountable to that as an entire community.

Sincerely,

Freedom Library Branch of Batavia Community Diversity Initiative