

Superintendent's Board Report for Jan. 14, 2021

Thank you Chair Alt and members of the Board.

Tonight, I want to talk about two different subjects, but the focus for both is the same - our students.

First, I want to celebrate our students and their incredible commitment to serving others, even during a global pandemic.

In December, Youth Services Coordinator Courtnee Floback shared with me that 109 students at BHS had volunteered more than 2,200 combined hours of service since June 1st.

That service has qualified 12 of our students for national awards through the InnerView Impact Awards program, 5 of whom are contenders for the Presidential Service Award.

In her message to me, Ms. Floback shared how incredibly proud she is of these students and how they inspire her.

Well, they inspire me, too. So often, especially when things are difficult, we just need to look to our students and be reminded of why we do what we do, the awesome responsibility and amazing privilege that we have as an education community. When I hear about their commitment to service, I know we're on the right path.

Secondly, I want to talk briefly about the message I sent out following last week's attack on the US Capitol, and especially about the responses I received from staff and community members.

I want to truly thank those who wrote in to share their thoughts with me - whether they felt the same as me or if they disagreed. I believe wholeheartedly in the importance of dialogue. I learn from others and hearing their voices helps me better understand our community members' experiences and that informs my thinking and decision making.

That's important, because at the end of the day, this is not about me. It's about our students.

Thankfully, I was fortunate enough to hear from some of our students, too, following last week's events. Several students sent an email with their reactions and with some requests.

They made it clear that the events of the past year have been incredibly difficult for them, as they deal with a global pandemic, the social isolation that comes with it, social unrest, a contentious election and now an attack on our country's Capitol. These things are causing stress, but that stress is not being mitigated. In their words, what they need is not to hear that everything's going to get better. What they need is time, guidance and the opportunity to process their own emotions.

I am so grateful for everyone who shared their thoughts with me, especially our students. When they tell us what they need, we must listen.

And that concludes my report for tonight.