

Superintendent's Message on New Zealand Tragedy

Dear Parents, Students & Staff,

It is with great sadness that I am writing to you again regarding yet another horrific tragedy.

The mass shooting that took place last week at two mosques in New Zealand – the largest mass shooting in the country's history – reminds us that there are individuals throughout the world who choose to be guided by fear and hatred, rather than by compassion and understanding.

We join New Zealand in their grief as they mourn the loss of 50 individuals – including children – who were simply observing their Muslim faith. But what comes next? Do we simply shake our heads and move on until the next tragic event?

As the leader of this school district with over 3500 children, I encourage all of us to work together as a community to build partnerships and to foster understanding. Such efforts can begin by taking simple steps such as inviting a student of a different faith or race to join you for lunch or dinner. Or we can take time in a classroom to discuss ways of how we can celebrate our differences, and more importantly, show respect for one another. Or we can open our doors and welcome each other in our houses of worship – which is what will happen at our upcoming Strategic Plan Town Hall events.

After the Pittsburgh tragedy, I quoted Margaret Mead: *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

The time for moments of silence has passed. Let us come together and lead by our example.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Irving, Superintendent of Schools