

**Wachusett Regional School District  
Chocksett Middle School**

40 Boutelle Road, Sterling, MA 01564

Telephone: (978) 422-6552

Facsimile: (978) 422-7720

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October 31, 2008

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I write this letter to inform you about concerns that have been brought to the administrative team's attention over the past few weeks. These concerns stem from students making derogatory comments to each other regarding physical appearance, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. The school has always dealt with issues like this. However, the level of intolerance and insensitivity exhibited by the students recently is greater and more concerning than in the past.

How does the school address these kinds of behaviors? We address student behaviors as they occur on an individual basis; we also educate all the students throughout the school year. September begins with grade level assemblies in the theater to discuss the rules and regulations in the school handbook. We talk about the school's core values that focus on respect and responsibility. We also discuss negative behaviors like harassment and bullying that are so destructive to individuals and the school community. During this meeting, we stress that students should treat each other – students, faculty and staff - with respect. The administration again meets with students in January to review the above information. Additionally, homeroom teachers have similar discussions with students at the beginning of the year and whenever necessary during the school year.

In light of the recent events, we need to do more. As a result, Chocksett will take the following steps:

- First, Chocksett will implement the **Second Step Program**, which is a curriculum specifically designed to teach students how to resolve issues of bullying and harassment. Dr. Lisa Garrone, Chocksett Middle School Psychologist and Sherri Mecum, our Graduate Intern from Assumption College, will facilitate these classes. The **Second Step Program** aims to reduce problematic behaviors such as aggression and peer-rejection by helping students develop stronger social skills, an understanding of empathy, and an appreciation for diversity,
- Second, Chocksett will form a **Task Force** of students, parents, staff and administration. Objectives of this group will be to review how we teach tolerance in the school and to develop a plan to address it more effectively. If any parent or guardian would be interested in working with us, please contact me at 978-422-6552.

As parents and guardians, you can help. Please take some time to talk about diversity and tolerance with your child. Together we can help students become more accepting of all people. The Chocksett faculty and I appreciate your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Snow  
Principal

*Marguerite Snow, Principal*

Betty Sabacinski  
Assistant Principal

*Elizabeth Sabacinski, Assistant Principal*