

Today we want to address all Halifax West High School students, family members and our school community. Many of you have been sharing your thoughts, concerns and voices about the Black Lives Matter movement and recent and past anti-Black racism . Many of you have been waiting for our response and we haven't responded as we should have. We remained silent for far too long. Some of our graduates are leaving the West with hurt, anger and a voice not listened to. We don't want this and we need to do what is right. We have a responsibility to stand up and speak. Today we say sorry. Sorry to each and every one of you. We must stand in solidarity with our Black students, families and community members. Today we ask to join you and to be silent no more. To become one.

The International news events and the continued spread of anti-black racism has saddened us. Each day we ask our staff and students to be responsible, respectful, honest and inclusive. Today we stand up and say we see you, we are sorry and we are sad.

Halifax West must do better. We must learn. The anti-Black violence and systemic racism that exists and continues must stop now and with us. We must take responsibility for our role in dismantling the system of structural racism and oppression. We know that education can be a powerful tool for impactful change and it is our responsibility to teach anti-racism in our classrooms, our hallways and to take every opportunity that presents itself.

In order for true progress to happen we must proactively work together for change. We welcome communication from students, families and our community. We are open to suggestions that will improve our school community. As we move forward, we want you to know. You matter! We see you! We hear you! We stand with you! Black lives matter!

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor".-Desmond Tutu