



GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Preparation • Passion • Perseverance

June 10, 2020

To the Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech Community –

The tragedies that we have all witnessed in America over the last several days and weeks are unacceptable and sadly happen all too frequently in our Black and Brown communities. We all share a responsibility in ending “systemic and institutional racism.” I know many of you are angry, hurting, and I not only will stand with you, but will kneel with you in acknowledging those same feelings and be part of facing much needed change in our country and our community.

To bring change, lasting change, we all must look inward at ourselves and acknowledge that we all have inherent biases learned from our own unique experiences in life. We must look at what we think about one another, how we behave towards one another, how we learned what we think and believe we know about one another.

What we witnessed, with the murder of George Floyd and before that Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and the many others too numerous to mention, was immoral; it should have awakened all of us to ask the question, “What can I do to help stop such senseless and egregious acts of violence in our Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities so it never happens again?” We also must not forget our Native American communities who have suffered right from the onset with the colonization of America.

The work will not be easy but it must start somewhere and that work can start within our schools, it can start with me, with you and every staff member at Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech. Our work begins with listening to each other and learning about our unique differences that make us who we are. It begins, in our classrooms, in our shops, in our hallways, in the cafeteria, on the bus, and on the sports fields. We are one community and I am committed, along with our entire faculty and staff, to finding common ground together to start the process of healing, understanding, and realizing that All Lives can't matter until we understand that Black Lives Matter.

Today, as always, we are committed to improving Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech as a place where no one is discriminated against. It is powerful to see so many people young and old, Black and White across our country and now the world uniting under a common cause to exercise their right of protest, reinforcing “Enough is enough!” In acknowledging that rage, I commit to you that I will do my part to help bring that understanding to our staff and students at Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech, through increased multi-cultural programming and education. Discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated, but I cannot do it alone.

I am sure many of you are eager to have your voices heard. I am asking all Black students, Black teachers, Black staff members, and our Black and Brown families, how they have been affected. We want to lend the support you need from our school and learn how we can work together now and moving forward.

In the coming days, if you feel you need to demonstrate, I ask that you do so safely and peacefully. Protest is fundamental to our country and it is your legal right as Americans to peacefully protest.

Please remember all resources like guidance counselors and school adjustment counselors are still available to all students. If you would like to share any of your personal experiences here at Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech with us I encourage you to do so and we all look forward to the time when we can all be together again.

Regards,



James L. O'Brien
Superintendent-Director

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all students. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, homelessness, immigration status or veteran status in its education programs and activities, including admission to or employment in such programs or activities.

James L. O'Brien
Superintendent-Director

Michael P. Watson
Principal

Robert J. Watt
Principal

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