



GREATER NEW BEDFORD REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

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Preparation • Passion • Perseverance

January 6, 2024

Statement of Michael Watson, GNBVT Superintendent/Director on the Death of Student Jacob Pothier

On Friday night, Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech senior Jacob Pothier, age 18 of New Bedford, died in an automobile accident while traveling in the Town of Dartmouth. On behalf of the entire GNBVT community we extend our heart-felt condolences to his family.

The death of a person so young, no matter the circumstances, is a tragedy. It is the stark reminder of a life not realized. It is the loss of a son to his parents, the loss of a brother to his siblings and the loss of a peer to his friends. We know many members of the GNBVT community currently and in the days ahead may have a difficult time processing the loss of their friend and fellow student. For many of our students this may be the first time they've experienced the death of a friend or someone they knew close in age. To assist our students, staff and faculty, we have put in place several mental health counseling services to assist them in their time of grief.

On Sunday from 10am to 1pm, the school will be open for all members of our community who need a safe place to gather and grieve. School administrators, staff and counselors will be available to meet with those who attend and facilitate conversations. Additionally, we will have guidance counselors available to receive phone calls from members of our community who call the school at a special number we've set up at 508-998-4698.

On Monday morning beginning at 7am, Reverend David Lima will be at school leading crisis intervention teams to support our students. Rev. Lima has worked for years with various school communities, he ministers to families dealing with violence and trauma and helps lead a volunteer trauma-response initiative. He currently serves as New Bedford Police Chaplain and has been Executive Minister of the Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford since December 2006.

For our faculty and staff, we have arranged for mental health supports through our Employee Assistance program, which they can access as needed.

Today, out of respect for Jacob's memory and his family, we also cancelled our varsity non-league hockey game for this evening against East Boston High School.

We will share more information with our community as appropriate in the coming days.

Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech is one community, and together we will support each other in the days ahead.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Watson
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, genetics, ancestry, limited English proficiency, sex, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, homelessness, immigration status, military status or veteran status in its education programs and activities, including admission to or employment in such programs or activities.

Michael P. Watson
Superintendent-Director

Robert J. Watt
*Executive Director of Operations
and Compliance*

Warley J. Williams, III
Principal

Pamela Stuart
School Business Administrator

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