

MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT RUNDLE ON ISRAEL AND HAMAS CONFLICT AND WAR

Fred Rundle

Oct 9 2023



Dear Mercer Island Staff, Students, and Families,

Our hearts are with our students, staff, and families impacted by the horrific events in Israel and Gaza that began over the weekend. This is a scary and emotional time, especially for our Mercer Island community who is so connected to this part of the world. We are focused on supporting our students studying in Israel this semester, reaching out to families directly affected, and connecting with community partners such as the Jewish Community Center. When students return to school tomorrow, our staff will be ready to assist them in any way they need us.

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MORE NEWS



Superintendent Rundle December Message On Cultural Days of Celebration, Students Making Their Mark, No Place For Hate Student Group, and Marching Band in NYC

(<https://www.mercerislandschoolnews/post/superintendent-rundle-december-message-on-cultural-days-of-celebration-students-making-their-mark-no-place-for-hate-student-group-and-marching-band-in-nyc>)

Dec 4 2023

English

Mercer Island is home to families with cultural ties to Israel, Palestine, and the geopolitical region known as the Middle East. Violence is unfortunately not uncommon, but it has been unavoidable in such a politically, culturally, and religiously complex area of the world. While we may hold different or congruent opinions about the years of war and conflict, I worry that the escalation this weekend will spark a rise in [Antisemitic \(https://www.adl.org/what-we-do/fight-antisemitism\)](https://www.adl.org/what-we-do/fight-antisemitism) and [Islamophobic \(https://islamophobia.org/civil-rights-reports/2023-civil-rights-report-progress-in-the-shadow-of-prejudice/\)](https://islamophobia.org/civil-rights-reports/2023-civil-rights-report-progress-in-the-shadow-of-prejudice/) incidents in our own community. Our staff will be committed to safe and supportive learning environments and encourage anyone who is subject to or observes hate speech of any kind to report it to our staff members or administrators in the school district.

A focus for this year has been fostering a deep sense of belonging for students in our schools. Regardless of political, cultural, or religious ideology, every student should feel welcome to show up as their authentic self. We offer the following resources to our educators and parents to support students during this difficult time.

Teaching Resources

- o Facing History and Ourselves – [Fostering Civil Discourse: How Do We Talk About Issues That Matter \(https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/fostering-civil-discourse-how-do-we-talk-about-issues-matter\)](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/fostering-civil-discourse-how-do-we-talk-about-issues-matter)
- o Judy Pace – [Teaching Controversial Issues: A Framework for Reflective Practice \(https://teachingcontroversies.com/framework/\)](https://teachingcontroversies.com/framework/)
- o Street Law – [Classroom Deliberations \(https://streetlaw.org/about-deliberations/\)](https://streetlaw.org/about-deliberations/)
- o Constitutional Rights Foundation – [Conducting a Civil Conversation in the Classroom \(https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/civil_conversation.pdf\)](https://www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/civil_conversation.pdf)

Social and Emotional Resources for the Classroom and Home

- o [How to Talk to Kids About Violence, Crime, and War \(https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-violence-crime-and-war\)](https://www.common sense media.org/blog/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-violence-crime-and-war): Common Sense Media gathers tips and conversation starters to help you talk to kids of different ages about the toughest topics.

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I struggled with this month’s message- starting, stopping, and deleting many drafts. Toiling with what to say seems odd given the many student, staff, and district accomplishments in 2023. I’m proud of what we accomplished in November alone. However, I am also keenly aware of that which continues to challenge us near and far.

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[\(https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/~bnews/post/superintendent-rundle-december-message-on-cultural-days-of-celebration-students-making-their-mark-no-place-for-hate-student-group-and-marching-band-in-nyc\)](https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/~bnews/post/superintendent-rundle-december-message-on-cultural-days-of-celebration-students-making-their-mark-no-place-for-hate-student-group-and-marching-band-in-nyc)

This Is Not About Me Film Screening and Forum
 [\(https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/post/this-is-not-about-me-film-screening-and-forum\)](https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/post/this-is-not-about-me-film-screening-and-forum)

Nov 22 2023

English

- o [Talking to Your Kids About War \(https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-war-4147597\)](https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-war-4147597): VeryWell Family explores ways families can speak with young people about war, including tips on sharing information and restricting media coverage.
- o [How to Talk to Your Children About Conflict and War \(https://www.unicef.org/parenting/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war\)](https://www.unicef.org/parenting/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war): UNICEF's guide offers eight tips to support and comfort your children.
- o [Handle with Care: Supporting Young People During Crises \(https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/handle-with-care-supporting-young-people-during-crises\)](https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/handle-with-care-supporting-young-people-during-crises): Learning for Justice offers recommendations and resources to help guide conversations with young people and to manage potential subsequent actions and reactions.
- o [Resilience in a time of war: Tips for parents and teachers of elementary school children \(https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/kids-war\)](https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/kids-war): This article from the American Psychological Association can help adults guide their young children beyond fear and to resilience.
- o [Resilience in a time of war: Tips for parents and teachers of middle school children \(https://www.apa.org/topics/schools-classrooms/middle-school-resilience\)](https://www.apa.org/topics/schools-classrooms/middle-school-resilience): The American Psychological Association provides tips and strategies for parents and teachers of middle school-aged children.

If your child needs extra help or attention, please do not hesitate to reach out to our schools or me directly. The more we know about how the world around our students is affecting them, the better we can partner with our families. We may be thousands of miles and a continent removed, but I know our community has family, friends, and loved ones right at the epicenter of the violence. We are hurting together.

In Solidarity,

Fred

In honor of Inclusive Schools Week, WASA is partnering with the Mercer Island School District to present a showing of the film **This is Not About Me** followed by a forum with the film's star Jordyn Zimmerman and Mercer Island High School graduate, Grant Blasko.

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(<https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/~bnews/post/this-is-not-about-me-film-screening-and-forum>)

Superintendent November Message On Humankind, Cultural Days of Significance, and Power of Positive Partnerships
(<https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/post/superintendent-november-message-on-humankind-cultural-days-of-significance-and-power-of-positive-partnerships>)

Nov 2 2023

Humankind. Last November, I attended a conference with our student representatives to the school board, Director Lurie, and Director Tucker. Guest speaker, Dr. Adolph Brown, delivered one of those keynotes that leaves you reflecting, wondering, and thinking well beyond the ride or flight back home.

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(<https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/~bnews/post/superintendent-november-message-on-humankind-cultural-days-of-significance-and-power-of-positive-partnerships>)

MISD Asking For Your Feedback On Long Range Facilities Planning
(<https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/post/misd-asking-for-your-feedback-on-long-range-facilities-planning>)

Oct 13 2023

This past week, the Mercer Island School District held three community engagement sessions to present proposals and ideas from the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee. While nothing has been decided, the presentations and feedback from the community will help the District complete the final Long Range Facility Plan (LRFP).

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(<https://www.mercerislandschools.org/news/~bnews/post/misd-asking-for-your-feedback-on-long-range-facilities-planning>)