



Beechwood Weekly

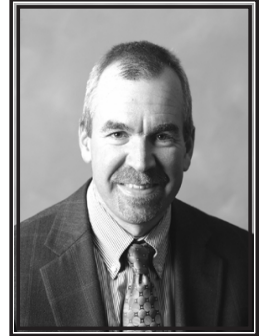
Wednesday, February 8 2017



Principal's Message

"Beechwood: This is What We Stand For"

Recent events in our country have motivated me to write a response to the Beechwood Community. The President has issued an executive order banning people from predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States. In addition, he has continued to call for a wall to be built making in effort to make it more difficult for people to come to the United States. He is acting in a very aggressive way towards other countries. I am unsure of whether or not I should voice my opinion on these matters. It is not for me to say what you should believe nor is it my place to endorse one political ideology over another.



What I can confidently say, is that the Trump presidency is making many of our children, our parents and our staff anxious, as they wonder what the future holds. I wish I could reassure you and say: "Don't worry. Everything will be OK." The fact of the matter is, we do not know where this is going. Protests, angry tweets, and confusion over changing government policy are part of the daily news. This is, to say the least, an unsettling time to be living in America.

Another thing I can tell you, without reservation, is what Beechwood stands for. We stand for what we have always stood for, since our founder Dick Jacobsen had the idea for the school back in 1984. We stand for diversity. We stand for kindness and tolerance and empathy. We stand for equal opportunity and the right for every child to receive a quality education. In short, we stand with you, the students and parents and teachers who have made Beechwood great.

When you look at the makeup of our school you will see that our families and staff come from all over the world. We have Kenyans, Asians, Nicaraguans, Cubans, Filipinos, Fijians, Black-Americans, Caucasians, El Salvadorans, Panamanians, Mexicans, Peruvians, Belgians, and Tongans. We have a number of mixed-race families as well. We have documented and undocumented immigrants. We have people who were born and raised in Belle Haven and EPA. We have people who make a good amount of money and people that are struggling to get by. We have Christians, Muslims, Mormons and people who are not religious at all. Beechwood welcomes and respects all of these groups. We honor the experiences that they have had as they have made their way in this country. We recognize that those experiences have, at times, been difficult and even traumatic. We want Beechwood to be a place where your personal story is valued; a place where you can feel accepted as you are.

Beechwood continues to be actively engaged in the promotion of kindness towards others. When our children behave in an unkind way, we address the situation and work to help them make progress. We encourage our students to reach out into the community and help those in need. We raise awareness about poverty, the disabled, the elderly and the persecuted. In our classrooms, we teach about the great heroes who helped our country to become a more tolerant and empathetic place. We encourage our students to stand up for what they believe is right and to speak out against hate and racism.

As I said in the beginning, I do not know where all of this is going. I can only tell you that, as the leader of this school, I will do everything I can to make sure that Beechwood School is a place where everyone is respected and everyone is safe; regardless of their religion, race, beliefs, immigration status, gender or sexual orientation. I hope that you will stand with us in this ongoing struggle by promoting the same values in your homes. We are small but we are mighty. We are Beechwood and we stand for peace, love and positivity.

Mr. Laurance