



**A COMMUNITY MESSAGE FROM THOMAS ANDERSON
SUPERINTENDENT OF NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The power of positive relationships is immeasurable. As human beings we inherently desire communication, attention and appreciation from others. Our schools have increasingly shifted to include more than cultivating a child's math computation and reading ability or their critical and analytical thinking skills. Our focus also includes helping them become compassionate and caring people who are socially-aware, ethical, empathetic, and self-aware.

Human life is precious and the need for people to practice compassion and empathy toward others is needed now more than ever in our society. Compounding the horror of the bombs that were mailed to several prominent Americans last week and the racially-charged, random shooting of two grandparents inside a Kroger grocery store in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, our nation is once again faced with a senseless mass tragedy. The news about the shooting inside the Tree of Life Synagogue near Pittsburgh in which 11 lives were taken and several others were wounded is heartbreaking. My deep sympathy goes to the injured and the families of all affected.

We could debate why this horrific event occurred or why the numerous previous mass killings happened. Regardless, we are once again dealing with a heart-wrenching tragic situation that isn't reversible. What cannot be debated is the power that positive relationships and positive human interactions can have on the climate and culture of our communities. I strongly believe that it is my personal responsibility as a citizen, as a father and as the leader of the New Bedford Public Schools system to emphasize and utilize all resources at my disposal to help cultivate our children's critical and analytical thinking skills while also uplifting and empowering our educators and staff to nurture greater empathy and compassion in our students. We want our students to be people who can think for themselves, understand the impact of their actions, and value their fellow human beings no matter race, gender, religion, class or country of origin.

It is essential that we use our individual voices to inform change. Whether it be as an educator or parent or neighbor, together we must each light the torch that will illuminate the path of positivity to influence the world. Although we are in trying times we must keep a positive outlook about the days ahead.

I'd like to leave you with the lyrics from one of my favorite, inspirational songs by the notable Louis Daniel Armstrong:

What a Wonderful World

*I see trees of green, red roses too
I see them bloom for me and you
And I think to myself what a wonderful world
I see skies of blue and clouds of white
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night
And I think to myself what a wonderful world
The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky
Are also on the faces of people going by
I see friends shaking hands saying how do you do
They're really saying I love you
I hear babies crying, I watch them grow They'll
learn much more than I'll never know And, I
think to myself what a wonderful world Yes, I
think to myself what a wonderful world*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2nGKqH26xlg>

