

**An Open Letter to the Community
From Superintendent Steve Webb
Vancouver Public Schools**

Earlier this week, a student at one of our middle schools assaulted another student, who is transgender. As you know, bullying or any form of harassment in Vancouver Public Schools is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

The aggressor in this incident was disciplined immediately and appropriately according to district policy, which prohibits bullying, harassment and intimidation. Additionally, information about this incident was provided to the Vancouver Police Department's hate crimes unit.

A [recent communication](#) from the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction makes it clear that Washington state law continues to protect transgender students from discrimination in school, despite a recent change in federal guidance on this matter. It assures that Washington schools will treat transgender students "consistent with the student's gender identity."

I want to be unequivocally clear: we will act quickly and decisively in addressing bullying, harassment and intimidation misconduct, up to and including expulsion from our schools and incident referrals to the appropriate law enforcement agency if warranted. Every child and every young person has a right to attend a safe and supportive school free of fear and hate.

We work hard every day to ensure that our schools are inviting, respectful and safe learning environments for each student. We will continue to support district staff in this effort by providing various professional development and training opportunities. We ask that parents help reinforce these expectations with their children at home.

As I've stated in previous communications, we want all children and families to know and feel that they are valued members of our diverse learning community.

3/17/17