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July 2, 2020



To all Saint Basil Academy families, alumnae, and the community,

I want to address the recent activities that have prompted an outpouring of reactions and opinions toward the Academy.

To our students and the Saint Basil Academy community, we hear you. We have heard your frustrations over recent events and will continue to put proactive measures in place. Since I have become principal, I have taken my responsibility seriously in developing a faculty, school, and curriculum that is committed to the development of a larger awareness of perspectives from different backgrounds.

Our priority in promoting diversity has included the following:

- Over a year ago we began our No Place for Hate School Initiative to work on issues that involve creating awareness and combatting hate toward groups or individuals.
- I have continued to work with our History and English departments in planning how we encompass a broader history of our nation and include all perspectives in our reading curriculum.
- This past winter, the Anti-Defamation League conducted teacher training on anti-bias, and we continue to promote those strategies in our classrooms and to work with them through our No Place for Hate group.
- This past winter, I began preliminary discussions with a student and our History teachers and agreed to creating a Black Student Union; COVID-19 hit in March and everything at school came to a standstill.
- During the early start of the protests this summer, a statement from the Sisters of Saint Basil the Great was communicated via email to all families, alumnae and students and has been posted on our website. The statement addresses the need for us to rely on our faith and effective action to restore communities.
- The Academy continues to offer a Race, Culture, and Ethnicity History course that explores the impact that diverse races, cultures and ethnicities have had on America from the time of European discovery to the present-day. The course focuses on the accomplishments and movements of the Americans whose stories are often neglected or underreported in conventional U.S. history textbooks, and examines the effect that discrimination and inequality have had on ethnic and racial minorities on political, social and economic levels, as well as efforts Americans have taken to resolve inequities in society.

On June 30, I, along with the No Place for Hate moderator, met with the NPFH student committee and will be implementing the following actions:

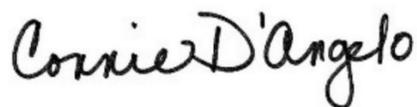
- The creation of a Black Student Union to increase awareness and appreciation for Black/African American issues, history and culture among the student body and to create more opportunities for involvement in the life of the Academy for Black/African American students. BSU membership will be open to any Basil student.
- The use of social media to share respectful dialogue effectively about all topics without silencing opinions.
- Collaboration with students to gain perspective on social media.
- More definitive inclusion of diversity across all curriculum areas.
- School-wide involvement in other specific NPFH projects.
- The creation of a NPFH mission statement that includes anti-racism and ties in with the mission of the Academy.

We are proud our students are confident to voice their opinions and speak up for what they believe. However, Saint Basil Academy does and will not condone any verbal or written explicit/derogatory language that directly disrespects the principles the Academy was founded upon. We respect those taking a stand, reaching out to initiate change, and working hard on making that change happen for the good of all.

No one's responses or postings have gone unnoticed. I have read all concerns that have been sent my way, and I will continue to create action plans to respond to any issues. The hard work and reform needed in making effective change take the perspective and collaboration of all involved, including our students, families, teachers, and administration. We are individually and collectively all capable of doing better always, not just during these sensitive times.

Let us be reminded of the Sisters of Saint Basil statement. "In order to heal the wounds of racism and injustice, we as a community cannot alienate one another. We must find common ground and stand together even in the most challenging of times. These days, weeks, and months have been difficult. But there is hope, there is always hope. And we assert that Jesus Christ is the only true source of peace and reconciliation. Let us turn to Him now and always as we restore our communities and ourselves."

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Connie D'Angelo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Connie D'Angelo  
Principal