

May 22, 2019

Dear Roland Park families and staff,

As you know, it is always important to me to communicate with you all information related to the school and students. It has come to my attention that Fox 45 will be airing a story related to our school in its “Project Baltimore” series. The story may be broadcast as early as tonight’s evening news. The focus is on bullying and it may present our school in a negative light.

I learned about the story when the reporter contacted City Schools’ district office to request a statement about disciplinary response to bullying. For your information, the statement the district provided to the reporter appears on the second page of this letter.

Here at Roland Park, we work hard every day to create a positive, supportive environment where our students can learn, grow, and reach their potential. In a school of almost 1,500 students, conflicts and disagreements sometimes happen—but part of our work is to help students learn how to resolve issues in productive ways and to restore relationships when damage has been done. This includes responding to bullying, which we take very seriously.

As a first step in addressing bullying, I strongly encourage any student who has been bullied or any member of our school community who witnesses, becomes aware of, or suspects bullying to report it. (Online and downloadable report forms are available at City Schools’ website, www.baltimorecityschools.org/bullying.) I assure you that all reports are taken seriously and are thoroughly investigated. If the investigation confirms that bullying took place, the bullies receive consequences in accordance with the district’s code of conduct. Depending on the nature of the incident, the response can range from steps including detentions, loss of privileges, class and schedule changes, and restorative practices, to short- or long-term suspension in the most serious and repeated cases where other disciplinary actions have not resulted in improved behavior.

An equally, if not more, important part of addressing bullying is ensuring that the victim of the incident receives support. This may take place as part of restorative practices that seek to repair harm and rebuild relationships, but it can also include counseling or other support. We have a related service team that consists of social workers, school psychologists, and guidance counselors. Please encourage students to speak with a trusted staff member or one of our related service providers if they are experiencing emotional or social distress resulting from bullying. Parents and family members, if you are concerned about your child’s social and emotional well-being, please contact me so that counseling or other support can be provided.

With your support, I look forward to ensuring that our school continues to be a place where students are valued, respected, and successful, and where positive stories far outshine the negative. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have concerns.

Best,

Amanda Brown
Principal

The district's statement to Project Baltimore:

Safe and supportive school environments are essential for student success. That's why we emphasize social and emotional learning and restorative practices, have partnered with the Baltimore Teachers Union to review our code of conduct to ensure it provides for appropriate disciplinary responses, and have prioritized funding to provide a social worker in every school beginning next year. Bullying has no place in our schools. We encourage any student who has been bullied or anyone with information about bullying to report it so incidents can be investigated and appropriate action can be taken.

Everyone has a role to play in creating the culture and climate that enable students to thrive, and we welcome the involvement of all members of our school communities in this important work.