



2.20.22

Dear Charter Arts Community,

On February 15th, we made families aware that there was a student-generated letter that was distributed to some members of the school community. This letter contained allegations of discrimination and harassment. We are actively working with the Bethlehem Police Department and Northampton County District Attorney's Office regarding this matter. As it is an ongoing investigation, we cannot comment on it at this time, but we wanted to assure you that the appropriate authorities are involved.

First and foremost, it is important for you to understand that the student-generated letter, or any copy of it, is not a charter school document. Posting to the document cannot guarantee that your report will be seen by the administration, properly investigated by the administration, and/or reported to the appropriate authorities such as law enforcement or children and youth. **To ensure your concerns are properly received by Charter Arts, you or your child must complete this [complaint form](#) and submit it to a Charter Arts administrator OR make an oral report directly to a Charter Arts administrator, who will ask you to write your complaint on the form.**

Charter Arts denounces all expressions of discrimination, racism, intolerance, and violence in our school community. We commit to holding those who engage in such practices accountable to the extent we can in accordance with law and our Student Code of Conduct. We are committed to taking the steps necessary to help our school community heal.

As is outlined in the letter you received yesterday by our School Board President, **Charter Arts will resume in person instruction for all students next Tuesday, February 22, 2022.** To ensure the safety of our community as a priority, security will be on site throughout the day on Tuesday. No unauthorized assemblies of students will be permitted, and students engaging in this behavior will be subject to discipline. Our highest priority is a return to learning and educating in a safe, accepting, and inviting atmosphere.

Students will report directly to 1st Period on Tuesday. We will start the day with some important school wide announcements and a review of expectations. It is important for students to understand our official reporting procedures and guidelines for discrimination, bullying, sexual assault, and/or harassment. Any report of harassment and discrimination that is filed through our process is fully investigated from the civil rights statutes perspective and the student code of conduct. When our students share information with us regarding alleged criminal activity, we report that to the

appropriate authorities, such as the local police department and Children and Youth Services. Like every other public school, we are bound by the law, which provides all students and staff their due process and confidentiality.

The School Counseling Team will have increased counseling support in the building upon our students' return. In addition to our counseling team, outside agencies will be on site to meet individually with students. Students interested in meeting with someone should complete this [Counseling Appointment Request](#). The team will schedule the appointment and notify students via email with a time and location.

Outside agencies and increased counseling support will include:

- additional trained counselors from Concern Lehigh Valley to provide 1:1 support as needed for our students and employees Tuesday through Thursday (in addition to our own school counselors and social worker)
- School Psychologists Dr. Wargo and Dr. Bomgardner will be available to meet with students 1:1 as needed and as available
- Scott Blair, our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Consultant from DeSales University, will be available on Wednesday all day to speak with students 1:1 by appointment or in small group settings

Structurally, we have made the following changes to our leadership team to ensure that students, employees, and families have clear and direct access to Assistant Principals by major.

- Assistant Principals will be the main point of contact for any disciplinary or complaint issues for their students.
- Assistant Principals will also have other schoolwide project assignments, including overseeing the EDI committee, Federal Programs, etc.
- Mrs. Vinci is the Title IX Coordinator.
- Ms. Diana will continue to oversee all specialized services, including the Student Support Team, IEPs, 504s, etc.

Jennifer Levernier, Interim Principal		
Dance & Theatre	V/I Music & Production Arts	Literary & Visual Arts
Jessica Diana Lead Assistant Principal Specialized Services	<i>Details coming soon!</i> Interim Assistant Principal	<i>Details coming soon!</i> Interim Assistant Principal

We will be posting job descriptions for a Director of School Counseling position and an additional social worker. These structural changes and additional personnel will ensure that students have access to a variety of support services on site as needed and direct access to administrators and counseling support when necessary. The interim changes outlined above will take effect immediately.

To ensure student voices are heard, and to ensure continued connection and collaboration with school clubs, departments, teachers, and school leadership, we will be instituting monthly schoolwide public

meetings to openly discuss any ongoing issues, new ideas, and creative solutions to encourage continuous improvement.

Mr. Weldner is in the process of scheduling our mid-year Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee meeting. If you would like to participate on that committee to review our current plan, progress, and new ideas, please email him directly at bweldner@charterarts.org.

We have also already initiated conversations with other local community partners, including the Center for Humanistic Change, Lehigh University, St. Luke's, the International Institute for Restorative Practices, and Reset Outdoors who will be working with us to provide additional support and trainings for our students, employees, and families in the coming days, weeks, and months.

We look forward to seeing our students back in the building on Tuesday after President's Day.

Sincerely,



Dr. Carise Comstock
Superintendent & CEO



Jennifer Levernier
Interim Principal