



## MEMORANDUM

**To: Schools, Families, and Communities**

**From: Marcus Harden, Executive Director**

**Date: January 28, 2026**

**Subject: A Commitment to Student Safety, Voice, and Belonging**

The highest and best calling for all communities is ensuring safe and secure places for their children to thrive. In every community, school classroom norms include expectations for respect and accountability as values that should be reflected throughout civic life.

Everywhere we fall short, we teach future generations about the weakness of our society. Every time we persevere against bullies, we remind future generations about the power of community and the strength of many, standing as one. The Washington State Charter School Commission stands with all who seek to protect classrooms and playgrounds from anyone who would transform an environment of learning and play to one of terror and intimidation. As part of our broader public schools community, we will not allow those who choose terror to diminish our dedication every day to pursuing that higher, better calling in service of our children's future, this is not about parties or politics, this is about young people and our stewardship of their safety to learn and to lead.

### To Our Students:

*“You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them.” — Maya Angelou*

Your education matters. Your peace matters. YOU matter. And hear this clearly: you never have to stay quiet, not because you're “too young,” not because you're “just a student,” and not because you think nobody will listen. Whether you're feeling happy, confused, angry, scared, overwhelmed, or tired, your voice still matters. In a democracy, your voice isn't optional. It's essential.

### How change happens (civics / legislative process)

Laws don't just appear, people make them, and people can change them.

1. Someone speaks up about a real problem
2. A bill is written to address it

3. The public gives input at hearings and meetings
4. Lawmakers vote to move it forward (or not)
5. The Governor signs it into law (or doesn't)

This matters because you belong in the process, even when it doesn't always feel like it.

### **What you can do right now**

You don't have to be an expert to make a difference:

- Ask questions
- Learn who represents you, like the people in Congress, your U.S. Senators, your Governor, your state representatives, and local leaders such as your mayor or city council. These are adults whose jobs are to help make decisions for communities like yours.
- Talk to a trusted adult when something feels unsafe or unfair
- Stay informed about what's happening
- Share your story (writing, drawing, blogging/vlogging, all counts)
- Speak up with respect and courage (your thoughts and feelings matter!)

Being informed is power. Being involved is power. Using your voice is power. We believe in you, and we will keep showing up for you, every day, because your safety and learning aren't politics, they're purpose.

In Service to You,

*Marcus Harden*

Marcus Harden

Executive Director

Washington State Charter School Commission