



December 4, 2015

Dear educators and community leaders:

More than one million children walk into our public school classrooms every year. As educators and community leaders, we do everything we can to ensure these children feel safe and secure during the precious hours they are under our watch.

That task is especially important now. In the wake of the ISIS attacks in Beirut and Paris, as well as the recent shooting in San Bernardino, it is our responsibility to be on the lookout for children who are affected by hateful rhetoric and continue to protect each student from harassment in all forms.

These attacks are causing a renewed wave of anti-Muslim sentiment, and there are many who are turning their fear and anger against ISIS into fear and anger against Muslims. Members of our Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim communities will likely find themselves targets of anti-Muslim sentiment. Let us all be particularly vigilant and responsive to any indications of bullying or harassment of children in our schools or amongst members of our communities.

We want to thank all of our schools and educators who have been working tirelessly to address bullying in our classrooms. Your commitment and hard work does not go unnoticed, and we applaud you.

In addition to your work, the Governor's Office of the Education Ombuds stands ready to assist superintendents, principals, and educators to answer any questions and support your work in addressing bullying and harassment. They can be reached at 1-866-297-2579 or [OEInfo@gov.wa.gov](mailto:OEInfo@gov.wa.gov). All interactions can be confidential.

There is no place for intolerance or bigotry in any form in any of our schools. Whether the child sitting in your classroom is Muslim or Christian, wears a turban or a Mariners hat, dons a hijab or nose piercings, that child is a Washingtonian first and foremost. We want our children to thrive and grow up to be the global citizens who will espouse our Washingtonian values of respect, tolerance, and understanding. It is our duty to protect these children and ensure they and their families know we stand with them during these trying times.

Sincerely,

Jay Inslee  
Governor

Gary Kipp  
Executive Director  
Association of Washington  
School Principals

Dr. Bill Keim  
Executive Director  
Washington Association of  
School Administrators