



**Jan 21, 2026**

**Dear BSA Families:**

I am writing to share that our school will be piloting civil discourse lessons starting this week and next in our social studies classes. This is an opportunity for students to explore critical skills in navigating identity, stereotypes, discrimination, and hate speech in thoughtful, meaningful ways.

### **About the pilot program**

These six lessons (approximately 45 minutes each) will give students space to explore complex topics while developing the skills to promote caring and inclusive communities. The curriculum was developed by [Facing History and Ourselves \(Facing History\)](#), a national organization recognized for its work in helping schools address hate, discrimination, and bias. City Schools has reviewed the lessons to ensure that they are tailored for Baltimore's specific context and aligns with academic, wholeness, and equity priorities.

Here are the titles of the lessons:

1. Contracting for Difficult Conversations
2. My Identity Chart
3. We and They
4. Encountering and Countering Stereotypes
5. How Can Hate Speech and Hate Crimes Impact Schools?
6. How Can Students Promote Belonging in Their Communities?

### **Why is our school getting this opportunity?**

This pilot is part of the more intensive support our faculty and staff are receiving following incidents that stakeholders have reported at our school, building upon City Schools' cross-functional work to support schools.

### **How are teachers and other school staff getting ready?**

Our teachers attended a training at Poly on 1/9/26 delivered by the FHAO staff on how to...

- Guide students through important conversations.
- Create spaces where all students feel comfortable sharing.
- Answer sensitive questions with care.
- Teach students specific strategies for listening and respecting each other during conversations when they have different perspectives and understandings.



Teachers also will have ongoing opportunities to share feedback and reflect on student experiences as we assess whether to expand this pilot more broadly for the 2026-2027 school year.

### **What can you do at home?**

You can support this learning by:

- Asking questions - Try: "What did you talk about in your civil discourse session today?" or "Did you learn anything new about your classmates?"
- Sharing your own experiences - Talk about times when you stood up for someone or when someone stood up for you, as well as times when you've had conversations with someone who had a different perspective and the strategies you used to keep those conversations civil.
- Reinforcing school lessons - If you notice bullying or unkind behavior, talk about better choices and/or talk to your student's teacher for support.

**Our Goal:** We want every student to be safe and valued at school, understand and respect differences, know how to stand up against bullying and hate, and practice empathy and kindness.

### **Questions? We want to hear from you!**

For this pilot to be successful, we need your perspective on how it is going and what you're noticing at home. Please reach out to Principal Roz or myself if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for partnering with us!

Principal [Roz Cauthen](#)

Asst. Principal Tom Askey