

*An email message from Henry J. Turner, EdD, Principal, Bedford High School
sent at 2:55 pm on Wednesday, May 27, 2015*

Dear Bedford Community,

This morning a video appeared on Bedford High School's daily student run TV broadcast "BHS LIVE" entitled "Sh*t White People Say, BHS Edition". What was intended to educate students around complex and challenging issues, we believe instead oversimplified, offended and may have closed off important conversations. One example of the oversimplification in the video was a vignette of an african-american student, impersonating a white student, and made stereotypical comments and insinuations towards other african-american students. The video insinuated that all white students make these kind of comments.

In speaking with the student who created the video, her intent was not to offend other people. Rather her intent was to spread awareness about how she felt about race at BHS and used a popular video on YouTube, "Sh*t People Say" as a way to reach this goal. Still, the video offended and hurt some students.

Videos, typically shown as public service announcements, are common stay on "BHS Live". However, there has not been a vetting process of videos for "BHS Live". Therefore, the video was not previewed by any administrator, student or teacher surrounding "BHS Live". A protocol for vetting student videos is being developed. We are further looking into the creation of the video so that we can turn this event into an educational one both for the video's creators and for the BHS audience who observed it.

This afternoon, 150 students and teachers voluntarily joined me in a discussion about the video during X block, our activity block. Students had diverse opinions about the video; some students were offended and some students thought that it ignited an important discussion for their school. This discussion was emblematic about our belief that we want to encourage students to think and not tell them how to think. I was impressed by the respectful nature of the discussion and I commended the students that they were able to have a discussion about a complex topic that many people in the greater society are unwilling or unable to discuss.

Thank you in advance for your support as we continue to address these issues and educate our students around these complex topics.

We ARE BHS!

Sincerely,

Henry J. Turner, EdD
Principal, Bedford High School

www.bedford.k12.ma.us/bhs

BHS News on Twitter: @BHS_Turner

BHS Blog: <http://hturner.wordpress.bedford.k12.ma.us/>

The mission of Bedford High School is to educate all students in a nurturing, democratic, challenging, and inclusive environment. Bedford High School, in partnership with parents and the community, helps students attain the knowledge and develop the skills and intellectual curiosity to become independent and self-sufficient adults who will contribute responsibly in a global community. By providing opportunities for students to create meaning and to develop understanding in a variety of contexts, Bedford High School prepares students to grow and to act in a well-informed, creative, ethical and compassionate manner.