

The Smithville Board of Education is committed to providing the support and resources to ensure safety and equity for all students, families, and employees within the Smithville School District. We support the [statement released by our Superintendent, Dr. Todd Schuetz](#). Bigotry and injustice towards all races, communities, and cultures will not be tolerated. The recent examples of injustice that have taken place in our country are heartbreaking. Change is needed and it requires us to listen, conversate and act now more than ever.

As our children witness these events, it's essential that we embrace honest conversations and questions. To assist parents and staff in this effort, resources are provided below that might assist in starting the conversation with students:

- [Beyond the Golden Rule](#)
- [Talking to Children After Racial Incidents](#)
- [Talking to Young Children about Bias and Prejudice](#)
- [Countering COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Stigma and Racism: Tips for Parents and Caregivers](#)

The Smithville Board of Education consists of seven elected members. Collectively, we are representatives of you, the community. Our purpose is to oversee all school district policy decisions. We recognize the power education holds when change is needed, and it is our responsibility to hold ourselves and our stakeholders accountable in promoting an inclusive and just community. With the cooperation of our Superintendent and supporting staff, we will first look inward diagnosing our current policies and procedures.

Facilitating activities and practices that increase the level of acceptance as it relates to the diverse backgrounds of others is one of our top [board priorities](#). We will build on programs already in place, and foster new educational opportunities and professional development for students and staff. For example, we look to build on our Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Created in 2017, the committee is a collection of students, staff and community members tasked with analyzing data to determine cultural awareness and diversity training for staff and cultural awareness and diversity lessons for students.

We challenge our school district and community to come together during these uncertain times. We challenge you to listen, we challenge you to have difficult conversations, and we challenge you to take beneficial action.

Respectfully,

Smithville Board of Education

Denney Fales, President

Sarah Lamer, Vice President

Wade Kiefer, Member

Ian Saxton, Member

Len Matthies, Member

Scott Haggerty, Member

Susan Whitacre, Member