

# Dept. of Public Instruction: State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly op-ed on the importance of schools being welcoming places

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State Superintendent Dr. Jill Underly today [published an op-ed](#) on the importance of schools being welcoming places. Dr. Underly's message stresses the need for all students to feel supported, with welcome and with belonging.

*Excerpt: "Many Wisconsin educators are doing incredible work to affirm and welcome students through social emotional learning, through choosing resources that reflect the diverse identities of their students, through working with special services staff and integrating mental health supports into their curriculum. It's hard and necessary work, and we know our current climate is making it harder and even more necessary. The way we - as leaders, as community members, as adults - talk about race, or about respecting pronouns, or about including books in libraries that address racism or those with LGBTQ+ characters, have an impact.*

*When the adults in charge - those who make policy, or run for office, or serve on boards - speak negatively and encourage harassment of students with disabilities, or of students because of their gender, immigration status, race, sexuality or gender identity, it makes life harder for students. These are children! And when adults sit passively without calling out these harmful behaviors, they are no different than the bystander who does nothing or says nothing when someone is being bullied or harmed. We are indirectly and directly telling these children, these precious humans, that they are not welcome. And that hurts our students of color. It hurts our LGBTQ+ students. It hurts all our students. And it hurts our state."*

The full op-ed for publication [can be found here on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's website](#). This is the third in a three-part series of op-eds by Dr. Underly on equity, inclusion, and diversity. Visit the DPI's website [here for the first part](#), and [here for the second part](#).