

Dear UP Staff,

Like many of you, I watched yesterday's events in Washington, D.C. with outrage, sorrow and resolve.

It is imperative that we name what we saw yesterday was an unprecedented attack on our country's democratic process. This was a deliberate attack on Congress for the sole purpose of disrupting the election results certification, heightened by repeated lies about the outcome of the election and brazen attempts to subvert our constitution.

Our democratic republic has been resilient to serious threats throughout history. And our communities, our families, our scholars, have borne the brunt of racial and economic inequality. I recognize how hard it is to recommit to a system that hasn't valued Black and Brown bodies in the past, but I am confident that if we stand firm - together and united - in the face of this attack, we will build an overwhelming majority that upholds the principles of democratic self-government and values all of us.

School communities such as ours are uniquely positioned to help address these challenges. Our staff has already developed focused social-emotional lessons to address what happened yesterday with their students. It's important that our scholars understand this is not normal, not the way our democratic process works, and that they have the support and space to talk through their feelings and emotions.

While it's likely that the immediate crisis will subside over the coming days, the underlying threats, and overall social, economic and racial inequity in this country will persist. We must take it upon ourselves to contribute to the defense of democracy, strive for a more perfect union, and ensure equity is at the forefront of all we do.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica Conforme'.

Veronica Conforme  
CEO, UP