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Dear Parent/Caregiver,

This year we are continuing our implementation of **Aavidum (Grades 8) and Little Aavidum (Grades 2 and 5)**. The Aavidum curricula support our SEL commitment outlined in our district's strategic plan, specifically centered around best mental health practices and the cultivation of a caring, supportive school culture. These short lessons will be taught during health class by our Physical Education teachers and supported by your child's grade-level School Counselor. This year the Aavidum curricula will be taught to students in grades 2, 5, and 8. The lessons and activities support the current health standards and have been purposefully integrated into the health scope and sequence. Here is a brief, but detailed description of the program written by Francesca Pileggi, Executive Director of Aavidum.

"Aavidum isn't just any ordinary word. It's a movement that was created by a teen who, after losing her friend to suicide, wanted to inspire others to be there for their friends. She wanted to inspire her peers to have each others' backs. So they spread the word around their school... then around their community... then..."

Take a moment to think about Aavidum's "I've got your back" message." What does it mean to have someone's back? What does it mean to be a friend, an advocate? Aavidum is about creating a culture of kindness that permeates the classroom and hallways of a school. Aavidum is about empowerment and hope and fun. Its philosophy is present in the caring adults and inspired students who call the school home.

People often ask, "What is Aavidum?" Aavidum is empowerment. Aavidum is awareness. Aavidum is hope. Aavidum is being there when no one else is. Aavidum is being there when everyone is. Aavidum is youth. Aavidum is a good friend, a trusted advisor, a wise mentor. Aavidum is an educator or an adult or a friend who cares and inspires above and beyond what's in his or her job description. Aavidum is an administrator with vision, a coach whose passion remains long after the season ends, a secretary or a cafeteria worker whose caring voice is a constant reminder that your school is something special and that your students are truly surrounded by people who care. Aavidum is creating a culture of kindness. It's a song a student writes about friendship, a PSA students film about advocacy, a poster that highlights the talents of students in your school. It's a sculpture. It's a painting. It's a short story. It's a poem, a photo, an online campaign. It's encouraging your principal to say it, empowering your students to live it, and inspiring someone famous to spread it. It's how the football team ends a huddle. It's a series of yellow hands that grace a hallway, each hand representing a student in that class. It's anything that promotes our "I've got your back" message. Aavidum is simple. Aavidum is powerful and real."

If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to me or Sarah Pauch, Supervisor of Math, Science, and Technology. We will be happy to discuss this further if needed. Thank you and I wish you well.

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