

(Insert date here)

Greetings Parents and Guardians,

In an upcoming unit, our class will be studying the complex social, economic, and historical conditions under which large scale historical atrocities (e.g., genocides, slavery, etc.) develop.

Throughout history, groups of individuals have been marginalized, systematically oppressed and even eliminated. It is in uncovering patterns and similarities across historical atrocities, verbalizing the philosophies and ideologies of the dominant group, and recognizing societal trends that we can become equipped to evaluate current social practices, identify atrocities occurring in our midst today, and challenge the status quo. With this mindset, students will study primary and secondary sources in order to cultivate a better appreciation for and a wider understanding of the contributing factors that promoted four historical atrocities: American slavery, eugenics, the Irish potato famine, and the institutionalization of disabled persons. Students will rely on what they have learned about history in this unit as they consider a current social trend--disability selective abortion (DSA). They will learn about this increasingly common trend in medical practice as they watch a CBS News Special Report and explore related media. Then they will evaluate this issue and whether it has characteristics in common with the historical atrocities they have studied and support their position with historical facts, concepts, and other evidence in writing.

I am sending this letter home because the atrocities we will be studying may be difficult, but I believe that by studying these historical occurrences, the students will be exposed to the complex circumstances that allow such historical events to unfold and the potential for these events to shape society for generations. I will be using carefully curated resources, worksheets and questions for the analysis in order to keep our discussion focused on curricular goals. Further, we will utilize ground-rules that will allow us to maintain a productive academic discussion.

I am dedicated to creating a classroom community where students are challenged but also feel safe and supported. If you have a concern about your student in relation to our historical atrocities unit, I would be happy to discuss how I might best accommodate him or her. Please feel free to contact me at *(Insert contact information here)*.

Sincerely,

(Insert teacher's name here)