

Board President Nicholas Ciappetta provided the following statement at the February 24th Board of Education Meeting:

“Good evening. Earlier this week we reached yet another grim milestone in this awful pandemic as the death toll in the United States alone surpassed 500,000. This total is simply staggering and almost incomprehensible. It is not something that anyone could have ever imagined a year ago this month.

The number of deaths is so large that you could almost become numb to it. We need a way to measure and compare this awful toll. More Americans have died from COVID than soldiers in World War I, World War II, and Vietnam combined. 500,000 is more than the population of all but 37 cities in our country. The number of deaths caused the average life expectancy in the United States to drop by a full year.

Yet the people impacted extends so much further. Each of these 500,000 people were sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and friends. Their deaths leave a hole in the hearts of all the people they touched, stretching the casualties of this war into the millions.

We look to our leaders in times like these to find the right words to say, to provide comfort and healing, and to remind us that adversity makes us stronger. And that is all desperately needed, but we cannot forget the lives cut short or those still recovering from this terrible illness.

Eventually this insidious virus will loosen its grips upon us, our “new normal” will recede, and we will do our best to rebuild. But we should never forget the lives lost or those forever changed.