



Smithtown Central School District

26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, New York 11787

Mark Secaur, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
(631) 382-2006

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Dear Smithtown School Community,

As we excitedly look forward to the start of another school year, we have also reflected on the work we have done to eradicate incidents of bias and hatred in our schools. We have made it abundantly clear that any form of bias or hatred has no place in our schools or community and will not be tolerated.

Throughout the prior school year, we informed the community regarding each and every reported instance of anti-semitism and racist graffiti that were identified within our schools. This year, our philosophical approach will remain the same; however, community notifications will only be sent regarding actionable threats rendered to a given school, a specific race, religion, sexual orientation, or any identifiable group. While deemed inappropriate and deplorable, some instances of graffiti do not legally rise to the level of a threat and are not actionable. In continued partnership with the Suffolk County Police Department, community notifications will be sent to the community only when a legal violation has occurred. The district, however, reserves the right to implement school based consequences in accordance with our Code of Conduct whether an incident is legally actionable or not.

As a reminder, all threats to our schools and students are taken seriously and investigated immediately. When the School District is made aware of a potential threat, the School District will immediately notify the SCPD. Should the SCPD determine that a threat was made, an arrest will be made regardless of the intention of the person who made the threat. State law (N.Y. Penal Law § 240.78) has broadened the definition of what constitutes a threat that can be punished criminally. The new law makes it illegal to make a mass threat of harm with the "intent to intimidate a group of people or to create public alarm." To be found guilty of making a mass threat, the offender would not need to be shown to have the intent or capability of committing the conduct they are threatening, according to the recently signed law. The School District will also implement school based consequences in accordance with our Code of Conduct

We all have a responsibility to address the impact that acts of bias and hatred have on people. When it comes to any form of hate and bias, we will hold people accountable, but we also need to look at the root causes of these behaviors. We need to reflect on the role we all play, the example we set, the environments we create.

It is natural and understandable that we turn to our schools to help with these types of situations. We have shared, in detail, the work (see [HERE](#)) we are doing and will do in this area. In fact, we highlighted a new initiative called The Smithtown Promise at the August 13 Board of Education meeting and will be sharing details regarding this important work soon after school begins.

We welcome this responsibility, but cannot bear it alone. We all need to work together to break this cycle of hate and do better by our children.

Sincerely,

Mark Secaur, Ed.D.
Superintendent