



# Smithtown Central School District

26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, New York 11787

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

February 13, 2023

Dear Smithtown School Community,

In September, the Board of Education and I sent a letter that outlined the importance of creating and maintaining a safe, supportive school environment for all of our students. We shared our belief that everyone has a responsibility to work together to address important issues such as bullying and harassment so that we can help create the environment we all want for our children to thrive.

The recent news of the passing of Adriana Kuch, a 14-year old student from New Jersey, serves as a grim reminder of the importance of this work. This student took her life days after a TikTok video of her being attacked by four other teenagers was widely distributed. The unfortunate combination of violence, bullying, social media and continued harassment all took place in the days leading up to her suicide. It is difficult to put into words the sadness and frustration a tragedy like this can engender, but we can use it to remind one another about the fundamental traits we hope to instill in all of our children-- traits such as kindness, empathy, courage, self-control and trust.

When people choose to film fights rather than call for help, attempt to de-escalate or break them up, something is very wrong. When people choose to belittle someone on social media rather than offer a caring voice, something is very wrong. When people physically attack someone without provocation, something is very wrong. These behaviors are a societal problem, and while we fully understand and accept our responsibility as a district, we also need your help. We ask that you speak with your children and use this tragedy as an opportunity to discuss the choices we make when confronted with situations like these.

As was stated in the letter in September, we have a moral and legal obligation to provide a safe and supportive environment. It is codified in state law with the Dignity for All Students Act and via Board of Education Policies #0115 [Student Harassment, Discrimination and Bullying Prevention and Intervention](#) and #5300 [Code of Conduct](#). It is not uncommon for students to have disagreements and peer conflicts, but when these situations rise to the level of harassment, discrimination and/or bullying there will be consequences. Please know that the district stands ready to live up to this obligation. To report an incident of harassment, discrimination or bullying, contact your building level Dignity Act Coordinator. A list of these individuals can be found on the district website under DASA or by clicking [here](#).

By working together to address these important issues, we can help create the environment we all want for our children to thrive, and our hope for a bright future will be better realized.

Sincerely,

Mark Secaur, Ed. D.  
Superintendent

Matthew Gribbin  
BOE President

Michael Saidens  
BOE Vice President

Michael Catalanotto  
BOE Trustee

Jerry Martusciello  
Trustee

John Savoretti  
BOE Trustee

Stacy Murphy  
BOE Trustee

Karen Wontrobski-Ricciardi  
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