



Smithtown Central School District

26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, New York 11787

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

September 15, 2022

Dear Smithtown School Community,

I hope that you and your children have had a successful start to this school year, a year of great optimism and hope for a brighter future. Our hope for a brighter future must be met with an understanding of the responsibility we all share in creating and maintaining a safe, supportive school environment for all of our students. Towards that end, we must acknowledge that too many students, in Smithtown and elsewhere, are struggling. They are struggling with the aftermath of the pandemic as well as the typical ups and downs realized by children as they navigate their path to adulthood. The district is acutely aware of these struggles and have put in place a variety of safety nets to assist our students when necessary. Over the last few years, the district has increased the number of support staff who are available to assist our students and their families. In addition to increased staffing, we have instituted a building-wide referral system in order to identify and assist any student that may need an additional layer of support due to academic and/or behavioral concerns. In addition, SCSD has partnered with Northwell Health to further our coordination of care and support for students in crisis and their families in our school community. For a more in-depth description, please see the flyer which can be found [here](#).

We have a moral and legal obligation to provide this safe, 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](#).

School security and the safety of our students and staff has always been of utmost importance to the Board of Education and administration. We have resources, clear plans, and detailed procedures in place to address prevention, as well as emergency situations. As we have shared in the past, the district routinely partners with the Suffolk County Police Department (SCPD) in an effort to stay current and obtain their feedback and support. This support is greatly appreciated and always sought when we deal with a situation that may constitute a threat to our schools,

students and staff. Please know that all threats to our schools and students are taken seriously and investigated immediately. 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. **A new 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 would also implement school based consequences in accordance with the School District's Code of Conduct, Board of Education Policy #5300.

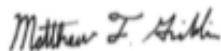
We ask for your assistance in speaking with your children about the seriousness of such acts, including making threats against our schools and students, whether or not there is intent, the likely consequences of these actions, and to encourage them to make good decisions.

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
BOE Trustee



John Savoretti
BOE Trustee



Stacy Murphy
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