



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF HARRISBURG

Lincoln Administration Building
1601 State Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103
(717) 703-4000
Visit: www.hbgdsd.us

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

November 29, 2021

Dear Harrisburg School District Parents/Guardians and Community,

As we prepare to return from Thanksgiving break, I am writing to thank you for your support for our schools and our students. I am also writing to request your assistance and commitment to help ensure ALL students reach their full potential. As schools across the country are seeing increases in student altercations this school year, experts point to a year of pandemic isolation and family stress as potential root causes. **As Superintendent, I not only want to share what our District is doing to address such matters, but I am also asking for your help to reinforce the message and expectation that school must be a safe place.** Physical and/or verbal altercations, threats, and bullying are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Recently, I issued a notification to our school community regarding a video of an incident that occurred at Rowland Academy that was shared on social media. The video showed a short clip of a teacher who stepped in to stop a physical altercation among students. I want to emphasize, the District in no way intended to downplay this video. The behavior and actions a few students chose to display is extremely disappointing and concerning. We remain committed to transparency and are willing to discuss these issues with parents at any time.

The Harrisburg School District is taking the following measures to address the increase in student altercations and disruptions to the educational environment inside the classroom and on school property:

- Convene scheduled parent/teacher conferences for students who are struggling with academics and/or behavior.
- Modify school procedures to address when/where conflicts occur, including arrival, dismissal, cafeteria, bathrooms, and hallways, etc.
- Emphasize our Positive Behavior Support programs in all schools.
- Emphasize Social Emotional Learning lessons in classrooms to help students manage their emotions.
- Refocus efforts on classroom management and student engagement.
- Review the roles and responsibilities of security personnel.
- Partner with Effective School Solutions to provide therapeutic support and training.
- Work in collaboration with PA Counseling Services to enhance support for students, staff, and families in the areas of in-person and virtual counseling, and mental health services.
- Request that students refrain from using their cell phones during the school day.
- Require strict adherence to the Student Code of Conduct (Board Policy 218.3) by holding students accountable for their actions and reinforcing severe consequences which may include suspension, reassignment, or expulsion.

Our schools **must** be safe places where all students can focus on learning, growing, and reaching their full potential. This is a goal to which the Harrisburg School District is fiercely committed. Inappropriate behavior is not acceptable, nor will it be tolerated in our schools. We need all parents, guardians, families, and community members to partner with us in achieving this goal. Our collective goal must be to ensure that all students are **READY** for school, **RESPONSIBLE** for their learning and actions, and **RESPECTFUL** of themselves and others.

As a District, we will continue to provide information and updates to our school community. Thank you for your support and commitment to sharing this message and reinforcing these important expectations with our students.

Sincerely,

Mr. Eric Turman
Superintendent
Harrisburg School District

"We Are...One Harrisburg for ALL Students!"