



Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Dear Fairfield Public School Families and Staff,

Yesterday, our high school head principals issued a [statement](#) strongly condemning the actions of a small group of students who created an inappropriate post on social media and explaining the actions being taken by school administrators.

While we understand the intense reaction of our Fairfield community, ongoing public comment, misinformation, and speculation on social media and in the local press are hampering our investigation and creating unfortunate consequences of their own. We respectfully ask that everyone carefully consider the implications of amplifying what has become a public conversation and allow us to continue our fact finding.

The persons originally involved in creating the list of girls' names are not responsible for posting polls, voting systems, or the multiple fake accounts that continue to proliferate. However, these individuals and their families are being personally, targeted, bullied, and threatened based on false and misleading accusations. We condemn all forms of harassment and ask that no one escalate the situation further. We risk losing sight of the real issues and the ability to appropriately address them in productive ways that help our children make better choices going forward.

Our high school students have demonstrated that they understand how to be allies in this situation. Students came forward to report the incident and advocate for themselves. Most encouraged the poster to remove the offensive post. As an example, a freshman girl who was personally affected asked her mother to share this online with other parents:

“I think the adults here are a big part of the issue. Obviously he messed up. But that does not give anyone the right to send him threats or shame his family. I think by assuming things and getting angry it is overshadowing the bigger issue which was the fact that these girls were being objectified.”

We recognize that for some adults, this incident has reopened wounds and triggered past traumas. We also recognize that most adults are grateful we did not grow up in a time where all our immature, adolescent mistakes were exposed for all the world to see (and comment on).

There are clearly important lessons to be learned from this for all of us, adults and students, alike. We tell our students to think carefully before posting because what goes online lives forever. So we are asking families to do what we ask of our students. Think carefully before you

post. Engage in meaningful, face-to-face conversations rather than venting online. Allow us to continue our fact finding unimpeded. And if you have specific information, please submit a TIPS report.

We take this situation very seriously and commit to a thorough investigation. All students involved will be held accountable. Consequences will be appropriate relative to actions, and as part of our restorative practice, students will make amends.

We also commit to providing support to any student who has been victimized or hurt by these actions. Our high schools will be communicating directly with families regarding their specific plans. We again encourage families to talk with their children. Here are [parent resources](#) about social media for your information.

Finally, we commit to continuing to educate our students to help them make better choices, and continue to advocate for themselves and each other.

Respectfully,

Mike Cummings
Superintendent of Schools