

Tomlinson Middle School

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Anthony Formato, Principal

Jodi Sacks, Assistant Principal

October 20, 2021

Dear Concerned Community Members,

Thank you for sharing our outrage at the recent incident that took place within our school community. This act by one young adult does not represent the beliefs and values that we hold and teach to our students. We appreciate your continued partnership in our efforts to educate and support our community. As I mentioned in my letter to families, we take this very seriously and have responded with a thorough investigation and appropriate consequences, working with Fairfield Public Schools' Central Office and the Fairfield Police Department. We have also reached out to impacted students with counseling and support. The class in which the incident occurred will have further conversations about respecting differences in the context of their current learning.

Fairfield Public Schools has a long history of educating students about the atrocities of the Holocaust, and it is part of our curriculum in English Language Arts and Social Studies in grade 8. In 2006, Tomlinson Middle School students spearheaded a project to support diversity. It began while they were studying the Holocaust and World War II and resulted in a powerful physical display of 1,500,000 toothpicks to visually represent the number of children murdered by the Nazi regime from 1933-1945. This display was dedicated and recognized by the town and Senator Richard Blumenthal.

Our current students pass by this display multiple times a day. Classes visit it during their study of the Holocaust to give students a chance to reflect on the magnitude of lives lost. In addition, we have Survivors come speak to our students about their experiences annually. We encourage a dialogue with pre-teaching activities and reflection activities to help students internalize and process the information. These visits were paused during the pandemic and will resume this year.

I welcome further conversation. If you would like to see the display I referenced, hear more about our curriculum, or work with us to continue to educate our students, please let me know. Here are the tools and links I shared with our families:

<https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources>

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/talking-about-racism>

<https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Parents-Guide-to-gangs.pdf>

Sincerely,

Anthony Formato, Principal