



Tenafly Board of Education
www.tenafly.k12.nj.us

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July 13, 2021

Dear Tenafly Families, Staff and Community Members,

We are writing with an update on our efforts to fully understand what happened this spring at Maugham Elementary School, and how we plan to move forward together.

Before providing that update, we know this has been extremely difficult on the student and class at the center of all of this discussion. We are incredibly proud of how the parents at Maugham have come together and supported the student and her family, and how the Maugham school staff, acting principal and community have faced this challenge together.

It is important to reemphasize at the outset that the student involved did absolutely nothing wrong. We have appreciated how engaged the community has been around this situation and have listened and taken seriously all of the input we have received at our Board meetings and in private conversations.

As many of you know, the Superintendent conducted an investigation into the assignment in question, which included interviews with the principal, staff, and parents. Her presentation to the Board of Education included a comprehensive account of what occurred and the context that informed her final recommendations.

After examining the facts, the Superintendent recommended to the Board that the principal be reinstated, subject to compliance with the terms and conditions required by the Superintendent for the principal's resumption of employment in the district. Last night the Board voted to accept this recommendation. The Superintendent and other district leadership will work closely with the principal as she resumes her duties to ensure a smooth transition, and to foster a safe and comfortable learning environment for all children at Maugham.

In addition, the Board acted on a resolution last night granting the teacher involved a personal leave of absence and accepting her resignation at the conclusion of her leave on January 31, 2022.

All of this has been hard on our community. There is nothing we and the community care more about than the education and well-being of our children. We also know not everyone will agree with the ultimate outcome. While some have expressed frustration with the process, we are required by law to protect the privacy of everyone involved. It is important people know that we hear you and we continue to take your feedback very seriously.

We were happy to learn that last night the Borough hosted a Holocaust survivor to speak to the Tenafly community. We know how valuable this experience can be as it is part of our 6th grade Holocaust curriculum. While last night's presentation regrettably conflicted with our previously scheduled Board meeting, a district representative did attend. We look forward to hearing about the discussion that took place, and the communities' views on this important topic.

This community has been through a lot. We will be a stronger, better, more inclusive, more caring, and more accepting community on the other side of this. Tenafly is resilient, and we look forward to working with all of you to make our schools and our community a better place for us all.

Thank you for all your support,
Superintendent of Schools and The Board of Education

Sauna DeMarco, Superintendent
Jocelyn Schwarz, President
Jane Juhng, Vice-President
Mark Aronson
Inbal Israeli-Miller

Michelle Merchant
Yelena Meytes
Paula Newman
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