

Greetings,

I'm not gonna front, this has been a draining week. Now I've always thrived when facing challenges and never have shied away from working hard. Still, dealing with hoaxes involving threats and the ripple effects they have is simply draining. There is some solace in knowing that we are not alone in this, I spoke to colleagues in upstate New York, Georgia, and Pennsylvania and all are reporting the same. Still, it's tough to manage.

For me, I do my best to separate it all. To compartmentalize it and frame it for what it is. These hoaxes are simply cruel and are totally intended to cause havoc. I also feel badly for our students who since kindergarten have engaged in lockdown drills and I can only imagine how impactful that might be to a small child - the idea that we need to be prepared for the possibility of some person coming to a school and causing harm; prepared because it actually happens. I know folks my age remember our bomb drills during the cold war, in preparation for a nuclear attack. New York City was always a target and while the United States, or any other country aside from Japan had never suffered a nuclear attack, it was still scary and anxiety producing. Unlike nuclear attacks, school shootings actually happen and way too often.

It's a difficult balance to strike between quelling fears because the threats are not credible and responding to the anxiety and fear they provoke because these threats bring school shootings to the forefront of our minds. I can't emphasize enough the need for us to be kind to one another, to be supportive and not invalidate people's fears or anxieties, and to all work towards promoting a safe and nurturing environment. I'm not sure there is much we can do about internet hoaxes and mean spirited people who engage in causing havoc, but we do have control over how we treat one another and respond. We'll push through, especially if we are there for one another.

Let's not lose sight of all of the happy and positive things that are happening. They are there too. Our schools are doing wonderful things and providing positive experiences for all of our learners and for that, I'm not only appreciative, but it helps me keep things in perspective.

Best wishes for a great weekend! As draining as it can sometimes be, it really is a privilege serving you as your superintendent of schools and I am truly appreciative of your efforts.

Tony Santana

#clipper**PRIDE**