

BERGEN COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

2017-2018

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

January 2018

PRESIDENT

ADAM D. FRIED

HARRINGTON PARK

PRESIDENT-ELECT

MICHAEL JORDAN

MAYWOOD

VICE PRESIDENT

BRIAN P. GATENS

EMERSON

SECRETARY

P. ERIK GUNDERSEN

PASCACK VALLEY

TREASURER

JAMES ALBRO

WALLINGTON

MEMBER EMERITUS

JOANNE MEGARGEE

LEONIA

NJASA REPRESENTATIVE

RICHARD KUDER

WYCKOFF

NJASA REPRESENTATIVE

KEN ROTA

FORT LEE

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

MATTHEW MURPHY

RAMSEY

INTERIM EXECUTIVE COUNTY
SUPERINTENDENT

JOSEPH ZARRA

PAST PRESIDENTS:

C. LAUREN SCHOEN

MAHWAH

PATRICK FLETCHER

RIVER DELL

DAN FISHBEIN

RIDGEWOOD

Dear Bergen County Families and Students,

The Bergen County Association of School Administrators, representing the district-level leadership of Bergen County's 76 school districts and 133,000 students, recognizes our role in helping all of our schools and their families work well together. Recently we have noted an upturn in increasingly negative online/Social Media behavior by parents and communities members. While we recognize that public comment is certainly within the rights of all, and we would never want to discourage input and feedback, we encourage everyone to publicly participate in a productive and solution-oriented way. We encourage all to read and consider the following:

Is what you want to share True, Kind and Helpful?

A common adage is that in order to say something out loud it needs to be at least two of the following three things. Is it True? Is it Kind? Is it Helpful? While it would be great to go three for three on those items, having at least two of them in place helps elevate the purpose of an online posting. The classic adage, "Children Live What They Learn," is never more appropriate than when it comes to how their parents behave on Social Media. Please take a moment to think of the effect of your statements. Your child will mirror your behavior and remember, there is no greater influence on a child than by the way a parent acts.

Spurious social media posts can interfere with an ongoing investigation

School personnel need to dedicate time to conduct an investigation, consult district policy and work towards a common-sense and reasonable solution. This process and practice is often delayed due to the need to address rumors, inflammatory online postings, and other items that distract from the pressing need to address and resolve the original situation. Avoid speculation on social media as it only confuses everyone as to what is actually a fact and what is an unsubstantiated rumor.

Managing information is one of our greatest challenges

While a situation is being addressed, everyone wants information as quickly as possible. Our goal is not to get information out quickly, but to get it out accurately. The pace of information distribution may be frustrating for some and appear to be a lack transparency for others. However, our work and training with law enforcement, security consultants, and other first responders has affirmed that regular, accurate information is essential to appropriately resolving any issue. Moving deliberately helps to prevent further confusion.

Please communicate directly with the school

People often forget that a child's teachers, administrators, and other staff who may face the brunt of an online post are working to do their best to educate all children. Respect them as adults and offer them the courtesy of being able to respond to your concern. Parents are asked to please work directly with their child's school. Our recommendation is to address your concerns by reaching out to the district staff member closest to the situation and working upwards from there. Even the most challenging situations have been addressed at the school level to the satisfaction of everyone involved. Please remember that every school is comprised of hardworking adults: teachers, aides and administrators who are working together to educate your child.

As always, the BCASA and its members are prepared to assist our students and their families as needed. Our goal is to foster a school climate that sets a strong example of appropriate behavior for our students and teaches them how caring and compassionate adults can work together to come to successful and effective solutions.

For further information on this topic, parents and community members are encouraged to visit:
<http://www.connectsafely.org/click-or-treat-a-parents-role-in-social-media/>

Sincerely yours,

The Bergen County Association of School Administrators