

WELLESLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Dr. DAVID F. LUSSIER
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. JOAN DABROWSKI
Assistant Superintendent, Teaching and Learning



CYNTHIA D. MAHR
Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Operations

December 17, 2019

Dear METCO Families,

We write to inform you of the cancellation of the scheduled meeting tonight for middle and high school families. At 11:59 AM today, due to weather conditions, Superintendent Lussier made the decision to cancel all after-school and evening activities for the Wellesley Public Schools. As a result, the meeting in Boston will also be canceled. We will reschedule the meeting as soon as possible after the holiday break.

This was a challenging decision for our team to make especially since we know that all of you were very much looking forward to discussing the important matters regarding bus safety. As you are aware, there was a verbal threat of violence made by a student toward peers yesterday, December 16, on the afternoon middle school bus. We deeply regret this incident, and want you to know that we take threats of violence, and threats of any kind to be a serious matter. We are living in a time where we are vulnerable to threats of violence in school communities across the country. We've all seen the headlines. It is not lost on us the fear, anger, uncertainty that these threats engender upon children, families, upon all communities where such threats occur. We are sorry that our children had to experience this.

When we were notified of this threat this morning, here is how we responded:

- We reported the incident to our school resource officer, Officer Kathy Poirer first thing this morning. She is assisting the school's administrative team with the investigation.
- Ms. Ward, sent a message to Middle School families this morning at 10:07 AM regarding the information received.
- We are committed to students' psychological safety during this process and are attentive to this critical need. Meanwhile, please be assured that we have provided the developmentally appropriate consequences necessary in this incident, adhering to our school's discipline policy. Students are in no immediate danger on the bus or in the school.
- We have been in close contact with parents and every precaution that can be taken has been taken to secure the bus ride and the safety of the students.
- We regret that we cannot provide extensive details in this matter in an effort to adhere to student privacy regulations on both the federal and state levels. It is our legal responsibility to respect the privacy of all students. Both FERPA and the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations protect the confidentiality of

student records by prohibiting schools from disclosing, either orally or in writing, personally identifiable information from a student record to a third party without the written consent of the parent or eligible student.

We continue to be grateful for your partnership. We cannot do our work without your support, so we thank you for standing with us during this difficult time. We want you to know that your children's safety is our utmost priority. We will continue to work to ensure that your child's safety on the school bus or in school is not compromised in any way. Please encourage your student to talk to Ms. Russell, the METCO Academic Counselor, their guidance counselors, our school psychologist, or any other adult, should they want to continue processing the incident. We are committed to the social-emotional wellness of our students.

Kindest regards,

Doreen Ward, *METCO Director*

Robyn Rease, *Assistant Principal, Wellesley Middle School*