June 14, 2017

Dear FUHSD parents, families and community members,

We are aware you may have heard recent reports in the media about an incident involving serious racist and misogynistic speech on social media that occurred during this last school year within the Monta Vista High School community. While we are not at liberty to provide specific details about this incident due to pending litigation and the privacy rights of those students involved, we do want to emphasize that this conduct goes against everything that is at the core of our beliefs as a school and district. When the incident was first brought to the attention of administrators at Monta Vista High School, staff immediately investigated and took appropriate disciplinary action. Administrators also immediately contacted the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, due to the seriousness of the speech, as we do with any issue where we believe safety is involved. Personnel from the Sheriff's Office investigated and interviewed the students involved, both those that had written the offensive language and those that were the witnesses/victims involved in the social media chat that occurred.

A second, completely separate incident, involving different students posting inappropriate hate-speech occurred this Spring. Here, law enforcement brought the incident to the attention of Monta Vista administrators. This incident also received the same swift action from school staff, including an investigation and discipline for the students involved.

We have no tolerance for harassment, bullying or hate-speech, and we take the safety of our students incredibly seriously. As such, we refer all serious safety issues and threats to law enforcement as soon as we learn of them. Incidents of hate-speech and harassment are hurtful to the entire school community. We are a diverse community that embraces individuals of all races, religions, nationalities, gender identities and sexual orientations.

Students are encouraged to report any offensive or inappropriate conduct and we would ask that parents remind their children that if they feel they have been subjected to harassment or inappropriate conduct or if they are aware of such conduct happening to others, they should report that to a school administrator so that appropriate action can be taken.

This incident was further evidence to us of the critical importance of the work we have been doing with both staff and students around combating hate speech, bias and bullying, which includes activities at each school site during Bullying Prevention Month, work with the Anti-Defamation League and the Positive Coaching Alliance, and anti-bias training for staff. Each school site also has individual equity initiatives underway, which will be complemented by all-staff work with a prominent speaker on the topic of equity at the start of the new school year and through an ongoing consultation with staff throughout 2017-18.
Please know that as a district we are committed to always acting immediately when we learn of any student that is the victim or target of hate, harassment or bullying, and we will continue to work diligently to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

Sincerely,

Polly Bove
Superintendent