



September 20, 2024

Good Afternoon Romeo Parents and Families:

While the start of this school year has been tremendously positive, unfortunately a shadow was cast on it for all school districts due to yet another senseless and tragic school shooting. Our thoughts and prayers should continue to go out to all in Winder, Georgia. Over the past two weeks schools across the country have experienced an increase in hoax threats on social media and reports of threats being made in specific school communities. There is no doubt this causes a tremendous amount of stress, fear and anxiety for all of us. Despite our comprehensive efforts in keeping our schools safe, we are not immune from this activity.

From time to time you may receive news from your building administration that is concerning. The principal's goal in these instances is to communicate with parents as quickly as possible with as much information as they are able to provide. They will then follow up with parents as additional information is available. It is imperative to remember that although these situations are alarming, the absence of communication does not indicate that there is a legitimate or greater concern.

Earlier this week, for example, we encountered a situation at Romeo Middle School in which families were notified of a report that there was a verbal threat made against the school. This report came in after hours which makes things more challenging. The administration and law enforcement immediately investigated the threat, which included implementing district threat assessment protocols. **The reported threat was deemed unsubstantiated.**

Unfortunately, rumors on social media and among students quickly circulated, resulting in the spread of false information, absenteeism and disruption to the learning environment.

There are two things I want all of our parents to know. First, had this instance been a credible threat and our administrators and experts in law enforcement believed it was not safe for our students and staff to be in school, we would have closed school.

Second, regardless of what we read and see in our national news, school is the best place for our students to be on a daily basis. Our responsibility as educators is to create an environment where students not only *are* safe, but *feel* safe. If your child heard something at school that is concerning, it should be reported to administration. If your child doesn't feel it's safe to come to school, reach out to school staff for support. Encourage your child to seek out an administrator, counselor or teacher to help them address their concerns. In all instances, we want to help.

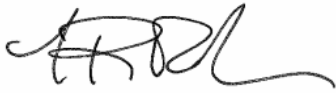
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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As your superintendent, I am always seeking to learn from each situation and do better in the future. Our leadership team will debrief this incident and use it to improve our response in the future. While we cannot rectify all the circumstances of this incident, we can address what may have led to the spread of misinformation that heightened anxiety among our parents and students. I echo the RMS administration in encouraging everyone in our school community to exercise caution when sharing information that has not been confirmed by school staff or authorities. Misinformation not only escalates fear unnecessarily, but also distracts from the facts and the ongoing efforts to ensure a safe environment for our students.

As always, feel free to contact your building administration or myself directly if you have specific questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DR. ROBINSON', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr. Robinson, Superintendent