



February 25, 2020

Dear Southern Middle School Families:

I am writing to let you know about an incident that occurred late in the day on Friday and which we have been investigating since that time and to implore you to talk to your child about this matter in a manner you deem most appropriate.

In one of our science classes Friday afternoon, students were working in groups to create pulley systems from ropes. One of our students began working independently and crafted a device that more resembled a noose than a pulley. That device, along with several others being fashioned by the student groups, was suspended from the ceiling.

The teacher in the class was alerted to the device yesterday morning by a student in another class, and in turn alerted our administration to it. The device was removed, and our administration launched an investigation that included interviews with the students and the teacher.

Our investigation showed that the student involved made an offhand comment about having created a noose to others in the class. While the intent may not have been to do so, the creation of a device that resembles a clear symbol of hate and bigotry is not something that can be tolerated in our school or our school system.

I want to assure you that we have taken appropriate action with regard to the student involved in this matter. I also want to be very clear: We will not accept bias-motivated actions such as this anywhere in our school.

I urge you to talk with your child and emphasize to them the critical nature of this matter. We cannot create climates of kindness, acceptance, and inclusion if we allow actions such as this.

Tomorrow, we will be having preplanned advisory lessons that focus on creating more accepting school climates. I hope that you will have conversations with your child tonight that will enlighten them and empower them to be active participants not just in tomorrow's discussions, but in the actions that should flow from that.

If your child feels the need to have more conversation surrounding this issue, please have him or her ask to see one of our school counselors.

Sincerely,

Kevin Buckley
Principal

KB/bm