

October 7, 2022

When our school doors open each day, we welcome over 4000 of the most amazing children in the world to our District. Our children come from 4000+ unique homes, families and backgrounds. They bring with them a wide array of talents, interests, questions and struggles. Some are excited to come to school each day. Some never want to go home. Regardless, our job is to welcome them all. To support them all. To teach them all. To love them all.

Our staff come to us with the same diversity in life experiences, backgrounds, questions, interests and struggles. Ours is not a staff where we lack diversity of thought. We do not all agree on every issue, whether that issue be a political one or who we want to win the Eagles game on Sunday. However, when we walk the halls, go into classrooms, and sit down in offices we do see something that unites us all. We see a group of talented professionals who would work tirelessly to teach and support your children. They work hard to spark our students' interests. They celebrate your kids in their best moments, and they support them at times when they are in tears because they think all hope is lost. This work is hard. It is emotional. It is not for everyone.

Our school and our community will always have some moments that are tougher than others. In those moments, it is easy to ask questions and make accusations, but it is hard to listen and look for solutions. In the past, we would have had conversations about this around our dinner tables. Now, we talk with our thumbs into a screen where negativity and pessimism are rewarded and hope and solutions are ignored. Some of these conversations unintentionally work to undermine our sense of Penncrest Pride and our RTMSD community. Others undermine these strengths purposefully. Either way, it is our students who suffer when the actions of adults erode our sense of community. We love your kids too much to watch this happen and not work to be the voice of the overwhelming majority of students, families and staff members who want to focus on what brings us together instead of what drives us apart. Let your thumbs rest and focus your attention on what our kids are saying. They know what they need. They walk our halls, learn from our lessons and help enhance the RTM legacy through their thoughts and actions. Do they all agree with each other? No. And that's a good thing. What they do well is disagree respectfully and focus on facts and not the noise that comes from the dark ends of social media. We think it's time to learn from them.

We have read a lot of things in the past couple of days that have upset us, disgusted us, or angered us. We understand that there are community members who feel harmed by the statements of this administrator as well as the ongoing social media responses. We understand that there are members of our community who empathize with the words of this administrator. Both are true. We believe that when we share our thoughts publicly we have a responsibility to listen when others voice concern, regardless of whether we agree or disagree. If we accidentally upset someone, we should own it and make amends. If we do it purposefully, we should know better. This is true regardless of whether you are a parent, teacher, or administrator. We are working with our community to hear the wide array of thoughts everyone has about what being part of our RTMSD community should stand for. For those who are a part of the conversation, thank you. Internally, we are also addressing issues surrounding the First Amendment protections and limitations of public employees and making sure that we are upholding our professional and ethical responsibilities. Internal processes are internal, and we understand that for some that will cast doubt on whether or not your concerns are being heard and addressed. Hopefully time will allow you to see that we are true to our words and committed to upholding the high standards that our students model for us every day.

Regards,  
Dr. DiMarino-Linnen and Mr. Edward Roth