

Dear Manchester Public Schools Community,

I'm writing to let everyone know that there have been a number of incidents in our schools this week including three separate fights at Illing today. The students involved in these fights are facing consequences that include lengthy suspensions from school.

I am asking parents and families to remind their students that if they are having an issue with another student or group of students to let an adult in the building know. While I understand that can be difficult at any age, that is the only way we can prevent fighting and altercations and collectively function as a safe and healthy school community. Parents who have concerns are also asked to reach out to the schools.

We will certainly continue to do everything we can to work to meet the needs of students who are struggling but we have no tolerance for fighting. As part of our efforts to help students transition back to school and continue to thrive in a world still impacted by the pandemic, Manchester Public Schools has hired additional social workers, behavior technicians, student engagement specialists, and student advocates and have contracted with Community Health Resources (CHR) to provide on-site therapists at the schools. We understand that this has been and continues to be a difficult time for students but we need students to access available supports rather than engage in unsafe behaviors.

I know that news like this can be troubling for parents and want you to know that we are doing everything we can to ensure our schools are safe and productive learning environments. There are more than 6,000 students in our district and the vast majority behave appropriately every day. We have many, many students who routinely and regularly exhibit acts of kindness and generosity. We appreciate their contributions to the climate in school.

Our Board of Education meeting on January 10 will include an update and discussion on school culture and climate. Parents and families will be welcome to attend in person or virtually. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to reach out to school administrators or me.

Sincerely

Matt Geary