



Educating for success in our diverse and changing world.

January 9, 2008

To Families of EPHS Students,

As you may be aware, photos were presented to us of some of our students in possession of, or consuming, illegal substances. Anytime we receive information that suggests a violation of school rules we investigate and take appropriate action based on the result of that investigation. We have not communicated with you on the results of this work until now because we did not conclude our investigations until today.

Upon receiving the photos, we worked to identify any current students. We consulted our district's legal counsel and the Minnesota State High School League to review the steps we should take. We interviewed every student in those pictures and based on the information we received, we took the appropriate action. The consequences students received depended on the information from the investigation and the rules governing the activities in which they participate.

In all, we worked with 42 students and administered some kind of consequence with 13 students. I share this detail with you because there has been so much misinformation regarding the scope of this issue.

Although, school officials did not go looking for these photos on student social networking sites, our interviews with students suggest that these may be posted on such sites. If that is the case, it gives me an opportunity to revisit some things I have shared with families in the past. These sites are not private places. Their content forms a permanent and public record of conversations and pictures. We do not go out looking at student social networking sites. We do however take action when we are given legitimate information about school or Minnesota State High School League violations.

This incident gives us a chance to have some important conversations with the young people we care about. We can talk about their choices around alcohol and drug use. We can talk about the conclusions people might make about them, their school, and their family based on how they are portrayed on social networking sites. We can tell them that there are consequences for the choices they make every day. While this incident has been a difficult one to work through, I hold out hope that the learning from these conversations will be what we carry forward.

Sincerely,

Conn McCartan
Principal