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Dear Members of the SOMSD Community:

Our primary concern continues to be the health, safety and well-being of all of our students, staff, and families. As a result of the teacher arrest last week at Columbia High School, we are informing you of what we are doing in response, and offering you some resources.

Rumors will always occur, and we will not be able to comment on the allegations, investigations, or any possible evidence.

What we are doing in school and in the district:

- We are fully cooperating with the prosecutor's office.
- We are providing ongoing access to school and outside supports – including the CHS administrative team, guidance counselors, student assistance counselors, school social workers, teachers, and our employee assistance program, CONCERN.
- We are keeping lines of communication open between parents, students, teachers, administrators, guidance staff, counselors, and social workers.
- We are addressing individual concerns as they arise.
- We are focusing on the essential work of teaching and learning, building a sense of community, and deeply engaging students in developing their academic and extracurricular talents.

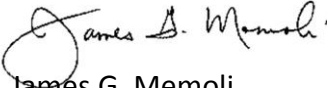
What you can do at home:


- Talk to your child. The nature of the charges are the most difficult that parents and children would ever have to discuss together. We therefore have compiled some resources on the attached page to help you support your child.
- If your child is showing signs of stress in reaction to the events or the investigation, please reach out to his or her guidance counselor or a member of the administrative team.
- If your child has information that might be helpful to the investigation, please reach out to the Essex County Prosecutor's Office Special Victims Unit at 973-753-1130.

We believe deeply in our mission to provide our students with a nurturing, healthy environment where they can do the important work of learning and developing as students, athletes, artists, and leaders. We ask that members of the larger community and the news media respect the privacy of minors and allow us as a school and a community to support our children by maintaining our focus on teaching and learning and all that that entails.

Thank you for the incredible outpouring of support and partnership in overcoming this challenge and building an even stronger Columbia High School community.

Sincerely,


James G. Memoli
Acting Superintendent


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