



Orange Township Public Schools

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.
Office of the Superintendent



April 18, 2023

Greetings Orange Township Public School District Staff, Families, and Caregivers,

As your Superintendent of Schools, I am writing this letter today to update the school and community about the threat that occurred last week at Orange High School. On Wednesday, April 12th, I received notification at 4:40 PM, that there was a threat of a potential shooting to occur at the volleyball game being held in the school's gymnasium. As you know, we take all threats very seriously. As shared last week in the letter I sent out late on the 12th of April, Orange High School and Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation went into immediate lock down. The students that were in the video shared by News 12 were in the locker room of the gymnasium within Orange High School. This was as a result of our training provided to staff and students during any active threat exercise.

As a result of our investigation, there was an update provided that there was also a bomb threat as well. Though students and staff were safely escorted from both buildings, the team of investigators had to walk both buildings to ensure continued safety protocols. I must reiterate the following: **News reports shared on April 12th stating there was gunfire in the high school were untrue and inaccurate. Further, there were no injuries to staff and students during the incident.** Further, there was a medical concern during this time, but this was not related to the reported threats or the subsequent investigation.

It is important to note that the Orange Police Department reported to Orange High School and Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation immediately. To add, there was a presence from the Essex County Sheriff's Department, as well as the Prosecutor's Office. The quick arrival and support that all of the aforementioned partners played in ensuring the health and safety of our staff and students is to be commended.

Considering recent school shooting and threats across the nation, the district and local authorities take each incident as priority. We must continue to put safety first at our schools. We will continue trainings monthly in the district as these allow us to equip ourselves with the appropriate safety protocols accordingly.

It is so important to take time to talk with children, ask those guiding questions, and provide them with a safe haven to share their concerns. As a school district, we are committed to doing the same. These times require us to work together on one accord to ensure that our children trust enough to inform us when issues arise amongst their friends or if they are aware of someone who sent inappropriate messages.

The district continues to lean on the Superintendent's Trauma Informed Team to provide resources to families and staff as a form of support. Below are resources for our school community to use during these times.

<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-after-a-traumatic-event/>
<https://www.apa.org/topics/gun-violence-crime/shooting-aftermath>
<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/violence/>
<https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/59143/war-crisis-tragedy-how-to-talk-with-kids-when-the-news-is-scary>
<https://www.common Sense media.org/articles/kids-mental-health-apps-and-websites-for-anxiety-depression-coping-skills-and-professional-support>
<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/school-violence-resources/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers>

We ask that you remain vigilant and notify the district of any threatening information that you may hear about or see. No concern is too small, as we want to hear all your questions or concerns. Continue to use reopeningofschoools@orange.k12.nj.us, as you will receive a response within 24 hours or sooner of receipt. In closing, I thank you for your belief and trust in our school district. We are certainly in this together.

Educationally yours,

Gerald Fitzhugh, II, Ed.D.

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Superintendent of Schools