



Orange Township Public Schools

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



April 12, 2023

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

I am writing this letter today to alert our school community about the threat communicated at Orange High School. Upon the message being communicated to my office, the district went into high alert. Both Orange High School and Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation (due to the proximity to Orange High School) were put on immediate lock down. The lock down lasted for over two hours to ensure that a thorough walk through of both facilities was conducted with precision. 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.

Considering recent school shooting and threats across the nation, the district and local authorities take each incident as priority. As a result, we must continue to put safety first at our schools.

Recent news reports shared this evening stated that there was gunfire in the high school and that was certainly not the case. Further, there were no injuries to staff and students during the incident. We must commend our staff who went into high alert and performed lock down procedures as practiced monthly to ensure their safety and that of our scholars.

We will have a delayed opening for Orange High School as well as Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation. Staff will report at 9:50 AM and students will report at 10:00 AM. Please note that we will have additional counselors on site for staff and students should the need arise. The mental and emotional health of our staff and scholars is paramount to our mission and vision.

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.

As shared previously, 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 SenseMedia.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 reopeningofschools@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