



GLENDALE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Strengthening & Unifying our Educational Community

Glendale Unified School District Launches “Communication, Not Confrontation” Awareness Campaign

“We are here today to ask our community to come together to bring unity and open, two-way communication to combat the threat of lingering disruptions, rumors, and misinformation that have been swirling around our schools for the past few weeks,” said Board of Education President Gregory Krikorian. “Fear, prejudice, faulty assumptions, and stereotyping have fueled animosity between various segments of our community. The leaders of GUSD firmly believe that effort will open authentic, responsive channels of communication to help us find common ground and common purpose.”

The campaign will take place over the next three months. It involves three crucial components: (1) rumor control and accurate public information, (2) strategic listening and dialogue with all segments of the community, and (3) capacity-building and training for staff, parents, and student leaders.

Question #1. What happened October 3? Hoover HS and the GUSD conducted a thorough investigation. According to students who were directly involved, there were two primary events leading up to the incident that resulted in frustrations and miscommunications.

Event #1 - Approximately a week before the incident a student was offended by a student using profanity in front of a girl. This resulted in a verbal argument between two groups of students.

Event #2 - The next week a rumor began about a student spitting on another student with special needs. This rumor was repeatedly proven false by site administration and later by District,

administration spoke directly to the student the parents and the student's aide - but students were being accused of it happening and the rumor was widely spread on social media.

These two events resulted in increased tensions between two groups of students, both of whom felt misunderstood and justified in their actions.

Connected to event #2 - A student had an argument with another student the day before the larger fight after being accused of spitting on the student with special needs again.

Administration worked with students from both sides of the conflict before the fights occurred and were assured by the students that they would act responsibly.

The student who was accused in the rumor was not on campus during the fight. However, another student chose to confront the students he felt were spreading the rumor at lunch and made it physical.

Students on both sides of the issues and other students who were not involved in the original issues, began fighting while being filmed by many student bystanders who refused to disperse and instead closed in around the students who were fighting. **That is what happened!**

The students involved received appropriate discipline and when they returned to school participated in restorative circles, which are our efforts to repair harm and build relations and community at school. Students made agreements and have honored those agreements.

Question #2. Why was the game cancelled?

We already had an incident that ended in violence. Hoover administration was hearing about a growing number of rumored disruptions, divisive behaviors, and angry rhetoric that could have incited more violence. With our previous experience from the incident on October 3, it would have been irresponsible for us to create an event that would enable more violence to happen. Families would have been on our doorsteps asking why we did not cancel the game if something happened.

Question #3. How do we move Hoover HS and the GUSD forward?

Our starting point is facilitating crucial dialog and strategic listening sessions with students, staff, parents and community stakeholders. We want to foster "Communication, Not Confrontation".

We need our community to focus on healing and communicating. We need to work together to break down barriers, build bridges of understanding, and defeat the stereotypes and prejudices that are dividing us."

For Students

Restorative circles proactively build the relationships and skills students need to support one another and collectively address the challenges they face. Restorative Circles build community and respond to harms through dialogue that sets things right. Community minded; you are less likely to hurt someone that you know.

For Staff

Training and Capacity Building: Fast track restorative circles training

For Parents

Strategic listening sessions

Quarterly assessment surveys to all students, parents, teachers and staff

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