

Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202

We prepare learners for the future.



Administration Center

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February 10, 2012

To All District 202 High School Students and Families,

This letter is being written jointly by the Plainfield School District, and the Plainfield and Joliet Police Departments regarding a recent situation involving potentially dangerous student behavior.

About 300 PEHS and PNHS students gathered at the north Plainfield McDonald's restaurant on Route 59 after the February 7, 2012 the varsity Boys Basketball game between Plainfield East and North high schools.

According to police, media and school administration reports, there had been some unsportsmanlike conduct in the last minutes of the game.

It appears that school spirit, mixed with some hard feelings over that on-the-court behavior carried over to the McDonalds where students gathered in the restaurant and parking lot. This gathering caused safety concerns, and police arrested several students before the crowd dispersed. Luckily, no one was hurt.

At District 202 our top priority is always for the safety and well being of our students and staff.

We certainly understand that school spirit and a reasonable sense of school rivalry -- built on a solid foundation of good sportsmanship -- are part of a normal, healthy high school experience.

However, in recent months this "school rivalry" and "school spirit" has turned into several incidents of inappropriate and unacceptable behavior among students at all four of our high schools, both on and off our campuses. School spirit and school rivalry are fine, in their place. But they must be expressed appropriately and left at the door when the game is over.

This problem is not unique to any particular school, or even to District 202. We have had reports of similar behavior at restaurants in the Plainfield High School – Central Campus and Plainfield South High School attendance areas as well. It can and does happen wherever large crowds gather, fueled by excitement over a game, anger over a bad call, or "disrespect" between players or fans. Everyone makes mistakes, and good people can make bad choices in the heat of a tense moment.

Still, we cannot and will not tolerate such behavior. It potentially endangers our own students, not mention innocent bystanders who may be at a restaurant only to get a bite to eat or spend time with friends and family.

The recent actions of a few hundred students gave a “black eye” to our schools and community, and painted a false picture of thousands of high school students, most of whom are respectful, mature and responsible young adults.

For this reason, the Plainfield School District will work with the Plainfield and Joliet Police Departments to educate our students about the potential consequences of carrying their emotions too far. That includes both on campus, and off. This letter is the first step in our educational efforts.

To be absolutely clear, students can and may earn school discipline – and be arrested -- if they are involved in public disturbances after school-related activities, including sporting events.

We need our parents to partner with us and share this important message with your students. Please take this opportunity to talk to your students and help them understand that their behavior has serious consequences.

Sadly, we no longer live in a world in which we can tolerate “kids being kids,” if doing so means people may be hurt by our kids’ behavior.

Thank you for your support and understanding of this important matter.

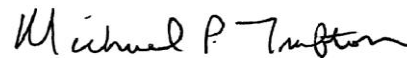
Sincerely,



Dr. John Harper
Superintendent of Schools
Plainfield District 202



John Konopek
Chief of Police
Plainfield Police Dept.



Mike Trafton
Chief of Police
Joliet Police Dept.