



REGION ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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November 14, 2019

Dear Region One Parents and Guardians,

I hope that this letter finds you well and keeping warm during this early bit of cold weather. I am writing to you today to provide you with some background as well as feedback about our first parent meeting regarding human trafficking prevention in the northwest corner and to encourage you to attend next week's meeting if you are able to do so.

Over the past year, the origin and purpose of the parent meetings has been shared with our Boards of Education and with our building administrators. To briefly summarize, two years ago, Connecticut Department of Education mandated that schools must educate all adults who work with children in the school district about the occurrence of human trafficking and how to recognize signs that our students may be victims of this horrible practice. When we first received the news of this mandate, we felt that this topic was surely something that we did not have to worry about in our corner of the State. However, in compliance with the mandate, Region One school counselors, school psychologists and the HVRHS PE and Health teachers came together to explore this issue so that we could create the required instructional practices. What we learned through our work with the staff at the CT Department of Children and Families (DCF) about the reality of human trafficking was horrifying and we were also shocked to learn that it is happening in our community. Thus, we collectively decided to move beyond the State mandate to include parents and students as part of the training and education about this grim topic.

Our plan has been to educate all of the teachers and educational staff this fall, to hold two presentations for parents this month and to begin to educate students sometime during the second half of this school year. All HVRHS students will receive instruction about this topic as well as students in seventh and eighth grade. Matt Eckstrand, who works in the Community Education department at the Susan B. Anthony Project will partner with Linsley Colligan and Jeff Tripp at HVRHS and Deanna Barry, Prevention Education and Volunteer Coordinator for Women's Support Services will be partnering with school counselors and school psychologists in our middle schools to educate our seventh and eighth grade students. Both of these individuals have experience and training with this topic and have worked with us to develop age-appropriate instruction to promote awareness, self-advocacy and sound decision-making for all of our students.

We held our first parent presentation last night (Wednesday, November 13th) and attendance was sparse. However, the parents who did attend remarked that what they learned was nothing like what they imagined human trafficking to be and they remarked that all parents should have access to this presentation. **Thus, I am writing this letter to encourage you to try to have one parent from your household attend next week's presentation, which will take place in**

Room 133 at HVRHS from 6:30-8:30. Anne Malisk, the Child Sexual Abuse Advocate from the Susan B. Anthony Project will be the presenter together with Matt Eckstrand. Virginia Gold, Program Manager for Women's Support Services will also be attending. These individuals will provide a deeper understanding of human trafficking as well as explain how we approach instruction about this topic with your children. If you are not able to attend next week, we have made a video of the presentation that will be published on all of our school websites.

I am saddened that we live in a time when we have to promote awareness of a topic such as human traffic to our students. However, after learning that human trafficking is a genuine threat, we feel that the program that we have created will provide you and your students and the members of our school communities with the tools required to combat this practice.

We hope to see you next week and, as always, I am available to answer any of your questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa Carter

Lisa B. Carter
Assistant Superintendent, Regional School District #1