



*Florham Park Public Schools*

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

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March 3, 2023

**RE: Parents/Guardians - District Needs Your Assistance "Power of Words"**

Dear **Florham Park Parents/Guardians**,

The Florham Park School District is asking for your assistance with speaking with your child(ren) about using appropriate words and statements while at school and outside of school so that they understand the power of words. It appears that this year, more than in others, students are using words or making statements in a "joking" or "frustrated" manner without truly understanding the power and impact that these words have. Two examples are; when it is reported to school personnel that words are used that involve the term(s) harassment, intimidation, and bullying, an HIB investigation must be conducted even if the student or parent did not mean to use the word "bully" when describing the event. When it is reported to school personnel that words used involve the term(s) killing, shooting, or other threats of severe violence, even if referencing actions from a video game, these are instances prompting a behavior threat assessment investigation involving the Florham Park Police Department. These items must be investigated to verify the situation to ensure the safety of our students, staff and school community. Conducting both of these investigations for statements made in jest or while frustrated takes an incredible amount of staff members' time and resources from the district. Therefore, we ask for your assistance in speaking with your child(ren) about the power of words. This communication will also be provided to the Florham Park Recreation Department since coaches and other recreational staff play a vital role in being role models to our children within our community. These behaviors are not just being noticed in Florham Park, but throughout the State; however in the Florham Park District, we would like to remain proactive in addressing these concerns with all of our community stakeholders; teachers, parents, coaches, and community members.

Sincerely,

*Steven Caponegro*

Dr. Steven Caponegro  
Superintendent

*Nicholas Steffner*

Nicholas Steffner  
Ridgedale Principal

*Christy O'Connor*

Dr. Christy O'Connor  
Acting Brooklake Principal

*Madlen Rizkalla*

Madlen Rizkalla  
Briarwood School

*"Alone, we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller*