



East Lansing
Public Schools

East Lansing High School, 509 Burcham, East Lansing, MI 48823

February 05, 2016

Dear ELHS Families,

I want to touch base with you to provide some information on school activities and plans since the tragic loss of two of our students. These have been trying times for everyone. I want to thank those of you who have reached out to the school, offered support, expressed concern, and provided input. I regret that I haven't had time to respond to everyone individually, but I hope this letter will provide answers to some of the questions you have.

First, I'd like to let you know what the school is planning. Everyone, whether within the school or within the community, feels a heightened sense of urgency to ensure that the mental and emotional needs of our students are met. Here is a quick summary of efforts thus far:

- The school has resources that are always in place for students in need. We have three counselors, a social worker, school psychologists, and other members of our crisis team. These team members meet with students who self-identify as struggling, who are identified by other students and/or staff as needing help, who have been identified through our crisis response process as needing additional support, or whose parents have simply requested that we check in on them. When the needs of students exceed the resources on hand at the school, parents are always contacted and the family is referred to a cooperating service provider. The school then works to ensure on-site follow up in conjunction with whatever outside services are received. This work is ongoing throughout the year, but because of the private nature of the issues involved, is not done in a way that draws attention. While it may not be visible, it serves the needs of a very large number of students.
- In addition, the school is coordinating with Ele's Place to make available a six week group counseling and intervention program. More information on this will be forthcoming early next week as we finalize plans with Ele's Place, but we will begin the sessions as quickly as possible.
- The school is also planning a schoolwide assembly during which experts in the area of mental and emotional health will address our students on areas of immediate concern. We are scheduling this assembly based on the availability of presenters, but anticipate that it will take place next week at the earliest or the week after at the latest. Parents are welcome to attend.
- We will be scheduling community forums in which parents and other interested individuals can access information from experts in the areas of youth mental and emotional well-being, including suicidal ideation and suicide prevention. This, too, is

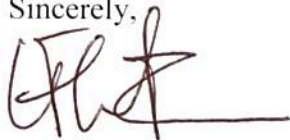
being scheduled based on the availability of presenters, but should take place within a two week timeframe.

We also have many groups of parents and students who are active in developing their own responses to our recent tragedies because they sense the need for more awareness around the mental and emotional well-being of children. We appreciate and welcome the initiative shown by so many people. As a school, we are working to the best of our ability to coordinate efforts, particularly with students, so that groups aren't duplicating work and are moving together toward a common goal.

I want to assure our community that we sense the urgency not only to respond, but to be proactive moving forward. I've alluded to it several times already, but I can't begin to say on behalf of the school how grateful we are that so many people have taken an interest in finding ways to make ELHS a better, more supportive and inclusive place for our youth. Behind all the emails, phone calls, visits, etc. that I have received, I know there lies a desire to act in the best interests of students and an intense interest in their safety and happiness. While we would all go back in time to avoid these tragedies if we could, I have also seen how they have brought out the generosity and goodness in students, staff, parents, and the larger East Lansing Community.

I look forward to communicating with you further as we solidify dates and times for the events mentioned above, as well as others that will surely take place as we plan for the long term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Coby Fletcher', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Coby Fletcher
Principal