





NILES

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

 **Superintendent's Office**
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March 10, 2024

Dear Niles Community,

I am writing to you today to follow up on my previous correspondence regarding the concerning incident that occurred on a school bus involving a fifth-grade student and a younger student. I want to reiterate and emphasize that we, as a school district, share your concerns regarding this disturbing event. The safety and well-being of our students are our top priorities, and any incident that jeopardizes these is taken with the utmost seriousness.

Since the incident occurred, our district has been in continuous cooperation with the local police department to ensure a thorough investigation is conducted. Concurrently, we have been diligently following our district's disciplinary procedures to address this matter appropriately. To that end, this Tuesday, our Code of Conduct committee will convene to review this incident, the disciplinary procedures that have already been implemented, including removal from the bus and school, in detail and provide a recommendation to the Board for their consideration.

We understand there have been questions and concerns regarding the bus driver's response during the incident. It is important to clarify that safety protocols require the bus driver to pull over as soon as it is safely possible to intervene. No assistant was on the bus to assist the bus driver. Immediate and abrupt stopping of the bus is not always feasible due to protocols and regulations designed to ensure the safety of all students on board. These guidelines are in place to prevent putting other students at risk of harm.

In response to the incident, I want to assure you that immediate actions were taken even before the student video was posted online. These actions included collaboration with the local police department and the initiation of our disciplinary process. Our buses are equipped with video cameras, which have been instrumental in our review of the situation. Both the school district and the bus company are actively evaluating additional measures to further enhance the safety of our students and prevent such situations from occurring in the future.

We are also mindful of the mental and emotional impact incidents like these can have on our students. To this end, mental health supports are readily available at our schools for any child in distress. Our counselors are also prepared to refer families to local agencies for more in-depth assistance beyond what the school can provide.

To reinforce a culture of respect and safety, I encourage all parents to engage in meaningful discussions with your children about the importance of appropriate behavior, both in school and on the bus. It is through our collective efforts that we can foster an environment where such incidents do not happen in the future.

Our commitment to the safety and well-being of our students is unwavering. We will continue to keep you informed of any developments regarding this matter. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to my office directly.

Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. We appreciate those who have contacted us to ensure we were aware of the situation. As a school community, we need to continue to work together to maintain a safe and nurturing environment for all our students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Applegate