



PALO ALTO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

50 Embarcadero Road Palo Alto, CA 94301
(650) 329-3701 Fax: (650) 329-3753

Kimberly Diorio
Principal

June 16, 2016

Dear Paly Parents and Students,

I'm writing to inform you of some troubling news we felt you should hear from the school.

Yesterday evening, I was notified by PAPD that a Paly teacher was under investigation in regards to inappropriate interactions with a student that police say occurred on campus last week. I immediately notified our Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. Later in the evening, PAPD confirmed that Ronnie Farrell was placed under arrest. This morning, the Palo Alto Police Department (PAPD) issued a press release about its investigation and arrest.

The victim is a current Palo Alto high school student. As many of you know, Mr. Farrell is a member of our science department and has taught biology and chemistry full-time at Paly since 2012. Like you, I was shocked and deeply saddened to first learn of this news. Of course, our heart goes out to the victim, and please know we have offered our support during this difficult time. I'm at a loss for words except to say how incredibly saddened I am.

For our students, I understand Mr. Farrell is well-liked and respected, which I suspect will make this news even more surprising and difficult to understand. Please reach out to your parents, relatives, friends and/or other members of your support network over the coming months, and know that the safety of our students will always remain our number one priority.

For our parents, we appreciate your help and guidance in discussing this news with your children as they struggle to make sense of the allegation and grapple with the negative press and/or possible rumors likely to result in it's aftermath. Since school is not in session, we are counting on you, the trusted adults in our community, to create time and a safe space for our children, especially those who had Mr. Farrell as a teacher, to process and discuss their feelings. Sadness, disbelief, anger, and surprise would be considered typical for both adolescents and adults given the circumstances. Should you feel your child needs professional counseling or support during the summer months, please see our comprehensive list of counseling and crisis resources located on the homepage of our website. When we return in August, I would encourage you to reach out to your grade level counselor if you feel your child needs support returning to Paly. We are here to help.

Finally, I realize as you read this you may be left with many questions, and I wish I had the answers. I'm sure you understand and appreciate that until Mr. Farrell goes through the judicial process, we are unable to provide additional details as the police department is the entity handling this investigation. In the meantime, I can tell you that the school district will place Mr. Farrell on administrative leave.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and most of all, thank you for your continued partnership and support of our school. We love our Vikings.

Sincerely,

Kim Diorio
Principal