

# Northfield

Public Schools I.S.D. 659 MINNESOTA

Middle School  
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Jeff Pesta, Principal  
Greg Gelineau, Assistant Principal

March 16, 2010

Dear Parents and Guardians:

This letter was distributed to students at the end of the school day while simultaneously sent via e-mail to our newsletter group list. The purpose of the letter is to provide our school community with accurate information about our response to a non-school related incident this past weekend. Ms. Susan Mwarabu, one of our 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers was charged with third degree assault in St. Paul. A family member notified us Monday morning that she was unable to make it to school and a substitute teacher was arranged. The school district only became aware of these charges when a reporter from the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* contacted the district at 5:00 p.m. Monday evening to verify that Ms. Mwarabu is an employee of our school district. Today, Ms. Mwarabu was placed on administrative leave while the school district conducts its administrative investigation. Once again, a substitute teacher was in place to cover her instructional duties.

We have focused on keeping our daily routines and have developed a plan for communicating this news to our students and their families. An administrator or counselor has met with the students in Ms. Mwarabu's classes at the start of each period to share enough information to reassure students. The heart of the message was that we will continue on together as a school in the most positive manner possible. Her students know that she is at home right now with her family and that I have spoken with her. Each 6<sup>th</sup> grade team of teachers has worked with our guidance staff to customize their approach for communicating this news to their respective students.

On Wednesday, I will begin our regular news program with a brief address to our school wide community. I am currently in the process of arranging a consistent substitute teacher to insure that our students continue to make academic progress. We intend to role model a respectful approach for students while we wait for the full story to be resolved. We have no intention of concealing any public information; however we must comply with all state and federal data privacy laws.

Despite the unfortunate nature of this news, we hope that our response becomes a shared learning opportunity with young people who will soon become adults themselves. Please review these events with your child and encourage them to meet with a member of our guidance staff if they would like to talk.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter,



Jeff Pesta

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all learners to participate in our dynamic world.*

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