

Friday, March 18, 2022

Message from Principal Swanson...

Good morning, Hingham High. Before we get on to the regular announcements and then the Friday Show, I wanted to take a moment to address the cancellation of the assemblies that were originally planned for today.

As many of you know, we intended to shorten all classes this morning in order to accommodate two assemblies. The purpose was to allow the whole school to see the play that will be performed by our Drama Club tomorrow at the annual festival competition. Those “drama preview assemblies” are a longstanding tradition at HHS, and they’ve been a source of pride because they offer a clear signal of our school’s commitment to the arts. The cancellation of today’s assemblies does not indicate ANY retreat from that commitment. To the contrary, the excellent performance many of us saw on Wednesday night proves the ongoing and growing strength of our drama program.

The decision to cancel the assemblies was made earlier this week when members of the Drama Club expressed increasing concerns about how the assemblies would be received by some of their peers. Those concerns stemmed in part from experiences during and after the walkout that happened last Friday. While the walkout experience was positive and affirming in many ways, it also fell short of what it might have been. We saw examples of what is best in our community: Many students stood up for their ideals, and for their friends, acting with courage, in solidarity and with sincerity. At the same time, though, we have to admit that words like “courage” and “sincerity” do not describe the behavior of everybody who participated. Nor can we say that our school fully lived up to core values like always showing respect for others. Alongside the many examples of courage and conviction, we were also reminded of the unfinished work that still lies before us.

As I’ve said many times, Hingham High cannot be a truly great school for ANY of us until it’s a great school for ALL of us. Until ALL of our students feel safe and accepted for who they are. Until every one of our students feels a genuine sense of belonging. We’re not there yet, but we can get there eventually. Today I call on students and staff alike to join me in working to build that kind of real community. When you see an act of intolerance or prejudice, take a stand. If you see something, say something. If you make a mistake and inflict harm, acknowledge it and ask forgiveness. At the same time, take proactive steps to make positive change. Speak with kindness and act with courage. This is what members of our GSA did last week, and we could use more of it. Let’s harness that spirit and build on it to become the community we’re meant to be.