

Monday, November 20, 2023

Statement to HHS Students from Principal Swanson

Good morning. Today is Monday, November 20th. Please rise and join me for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Today, despite the promise of a short week, and the approach of the Thanksgiving holiday, members of our community will engage in sad reflection about a threat that was made yesterday against Congregation Sha'aray Shalom. The threat against the Jewish temple here in Hingham offers vivid proof of the hatreds and divisions that continue to plague our society, and it represents an affront, not just to those who worship at the temple, but to every one of us. We are *all* wounded by this senseless act, and our whole school therefore stands in solidarity with members of Congregation Sha'aray Shalom.

History shows us that the only effective response to antisemitism, or bigotry of any kind, is the vigilance of citizens, especially young people, who are engaged, informed, and educated. So, yesterday's threat, as disturbing as it was, even though it was a hoax, lends even greater urgency to what we do here in school every day.

We live in a world that contains too much ignorance and its consequence: violence and hatred. But let us all recommit to building something better. Today, let us reaffirm our love and support for the Jewish members of our own community. And please do everything you can, today and every day, to make the very most of your education. In your classrooms: Read, think, debate, analyze, and reflect; choose facts over

fiction; learn to recognize propaganda; and become a powerful champion of mutual respect and love over hatred. At the same time, do all you can to spread kindness and show concern for others, pushing back against the things that too often divide us. In those ways, you'll honor the best ideals of our community, and you'll also help to move our society closer to what we all want it to be.

Thank you, Hingham High. And may today bring us one small step closer to that goal, both for our school and for our community.

Now, here's Isabel with the rest of today's announcements...