



September 8, 2020

Dear Arundel High School Families,

I am writing in regard to a question used in several of our United States Government classes today that provides a lesson for all of us about understanding the importance of the impact of statements or questions.

As part of an exercise to gauge students' current understanding of some elements of the course, students were asked to analyze a situation in which three people – a famous athlete, an everyday citizen, and a former elected official – were stopped by police. In the purely hypothetical example, all three were stopped by police and found to have narcotics in their cars. The former elected official was released. The item did not state the status of the other two, but it was implied they were not released.

As part of the course curriculum, students learn that justice should be blind to position or influence and that the rule of law should apply to everyone equally. In an attempt to illustrate how this can go awry, the question inappropriately used the name of a former elected official who is now a private citizen and remains a community member. While the intention of the question was pure, the impact was disparaging. For that, on behalf of our school, I apologize to our community and to those named in the question.

When I became aware of the issue, I contacted our entire social studies team and we talked through the inappropriateness of the example. The question has been removed from the Google classroom sites in which it was located and will not be used again.

Life is full of teachable moments, and this is one for our entire team. We pride ourselves on our ability to help students understand their place as global citizens. We have done tremendous work over the years to promote social justice and cultivate students who are compassionate, accepting, tolerant, and who work hard to help develop communities that exhibit those values. We are not perfect, and in this case we fell short. As we would expect our students to do, we will work harder than ever to live up to the high standards we set.

Sincerely,

Gina Davenport
Principal

GD/bm