

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Shepherd Hill Students:

One of the most exciting and memorable times of your entire life is here now. It's the time for Prom, the Senior Banquet, Graduation and many other activities that you will truly remember forever. While I know that reading a letter from the superintendent may not be high on your list of thrilling things to do right now (or maybe ever), I want to ask that you do me this favor and read this one through to the end. Some of you, I have known since you were little kids with the whole world before you. Others, I have only gotten to know over the past four years. Some I still don't know as well as I'd like, but we are all on the same team. As fate would have it, you seniors and I left middle school together and now we will be leaving the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District together. As Bruce Springsteen (Google him or ask your parents if you must) wrote, that's a "*tie that binds us.*"

You may not believe me, but when I tell you that the vast majority of the adults in our schools have spent their professional lives trying to make your school days enjoyable and successful, I mean it. Like family, we don't always see eye-to-eye. For whatever reason, though, call it fate...call it divine intervention...call it just plain luck...we all ended up in the same place at the same time in history, and I believe that counts for something. That, too, is a "tie that binds" us.

Most of the adults who care about you, me included, clearly understand the appeal of alcohol, drugs and other dangerous behaviors. We have been there, and we understand why some young people are tempted to make those things a part of their experience at these end of year events. We also know how dangerous that can be. Every single adult in this school district can name you at least one, and often more than one, family member, friend or acquaintance we had in our lives who are now dead, addicted or perhaps in jail as a result of not being able to keep alcohol and drugs in perspective. So whether you want to believe it or not, we care about you, and we want the best for you. We are not trying to be hypocritical or to judge you...we have made our share of mistakes, too. But we are asking that you really think hard about making good choices at this exciting, but pressure filled time in your life.

For some of you, this won't come easy. You may already have plans to make bad choices around these end of year activities, perhaps even to "sneak" something into the event(s). Of course we will have police, security and other safeguards in place. But, we are also smart enough to know that those safeguards are only part of the answer here. The only real answer is you making a sound decision not to mix drugs and/or alcohol with driving or school activities.

So, as you make your plans for the big events of this spring, please consider your own well-being as well as that of those who love and care about you. As you have done so many times in your still young life, make us proud by doing the right things...and help each other do the same. It's important to me that I have the honor of handing you your diploma as you walk across that stage on your graduation day. It's important to all of us that we get to watch you grow into the awesome adult you were meant to be.

With my best wishes for a happy and healthy end to the school year,

Mr. Desto

"...to advance the knowledge and well-being of our children and our communities."