

# 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 upon you. It's the time of year 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 is not exactly high on your list of electrifying things to do right now, I want to ask that you do me this favor and read this 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 three years. Most of you would probably be surprised to know how much the adults in this school district care about you.

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 agree or get along. We don't always stay in touch with one another. But for whatever reason, 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.

Most of the adults who care about you, me included, understand the allure 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 in jail as a result of not being able to keep alcohol and drugs at bay. And that's the main idea of this letter: we all care about you. We want the best for you. We are not trying to be fake or to judge you...we admit that we have made our fair share of mistakes, too. But we are asking that you really think hard about making good choices at this exciting, but pressurized 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). Yes, we will have police, security and other safeguards in place. But we are also smart enough to know that those safeguards are only a small 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 with 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. After all, we're all in this together. I often say, nobody can convince me that there are better kids anywhere in the world than there are in this school district. Prove it yet again, and allow me the honor of handing you your diploma as you walk across that stage on your graduation day.

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."*