

November 2015

It is hard as a parent or educator to see the recent tragedies that have unfolded in France or even closer to home in Stillwater without wondering why. I can still remember the events of April 19, 1995, when tragedy touched our state in such a colossal way. The events put forth that day by two assassins who bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, would change the lives of so many in Oklahomans. On that fateful day, 168 died, including 19 children. This is still the largest domestic terrorism event in our country's history. To me, it seems like only yesterday, yet none of our students were alive when this tragedy occurred.

On September 11, 2001, the United States endured the worst terrorist attack in U. S. history. There were 2,977 deaths and over 6,000 injured in the well organized suicide attack. Most of Guthrie High School's current Senior class were 4 years old. I mention these moments in time to better highlight the fact that our children were not shaped by these monumental events.

We are all products of the events of our lives. While our students have little more than a page in a history book for the events we saw firsthand, we have an obligation to help them understand the significance of such tragic events. The value of a human life is priceless and the desensitizing of tragedy through the media or other methods is self-destructive at best.

I share this because recently we have had some alarming cases of students making threats toward other students or staff members. I believe these threats to be isolated but they will not be tolerated in our school district. Further, I doubt the students making the threats fully comprehend the magnitude on their lives making such a threat could bring. Long-term suspension as well as criminal charges are possibilities based on the specifics of the situation.

Simply put, no student has the right to impede the education of another student and we will provide a safe environment for ALL students. If one student becomes a threat to the safety of others, all means necessary through our policies and state law will be utilized to deal with the situation appropriately.

Providing a proper base of what is acceptable behavior is a task of the community including the school, parents and of course other adults. Students assume their behavior is appropriate if an adult is present that fails to correct them. I've come to fully appreciate this with my own children as they copy the behavior they see from me. This places a burden on parents and teachers but also our entire community that we must always be aware of.

If a student threatens bodily harm on a teacher or fellow student that brings us back to the original question of "why"? Somewhere along the way, the student has been led to believe that harming someone else is appropriate. That generally has been conveyed by other adults either through their action or in

many cases inaction. It truly takes a village to raise a child and we (school and community) are in this together. That means YOU if you are reading this.

Finally, with the completion of the Fall extra-curricular activities, I wanted to say congratulations to the Softball team (state tournament for the first time in 18 years), Band (4th place in the State Marching competition) and Football team (11 straight playoff appearances). I wish each of you a Happy Thanksgiving!!!