

October 18, 2016

Dear Port Huron Schools Parents,

Over the course of the past two weeks, there was a Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MIBLSI) and Michigan Department of Education (MDE) survey presented to students at Central and Ft. Gratiot Middle Schools and Port Huron High School. This survey is an annually-posed questionnaire, designed to gather information on school climate. Some of the topics addressed are whether or not students feel safe and enjoy going to school. In total there are 15 questions on the survey to help our district ascertain the perceptions of school climate in our buildings.

Two of the questions in this year's survey were updated from the previous year. One was altered and one was new. They addressed the issues of gender identity and sexual orientation. Port Huron Schools was not aware that these two questions were presented at the time the survey was delivered. As a district, we understand the frustration parents may have felt from not knowing in advance that these questions would be posed to their middle school student.

We would like to express the following points of clarification:

- This is an annual survey that is not developed by our district.
- All questions allow students the option of not responding.
- The information collected is anonymous, aggregate (i.e. not individual responses, only percentages of answers) and delivered directly to our district.
- As soon as our district became aware of the change to the survey, we placed our participation on hold as it is always our objective to fully inform parents when sensitive questions or topics are presented in our classrooms. We feel this was not accomplished to our district's standard in this case.
- Future communication, regardless of its statewide status or source will be scrutinized in a more formal manner by district administration before being presented to students and/or parents. Parents will be informed of upcoming surveys with the option to exclude their children from participation.

The purpose of our partnership with MIBLSI is to help ensure we have information and tools to improve the school climate for all students who attend Port Huron Schools. The district administration understands the concern and questions we received from parents. All feedback is appreciated and valuable. Providing a safe and comfortable learning environment for your student continues to be our highest priority as an organization.

Sincerely,



Tracie Eschenburg, Executive Director of Employee and Student Services