



Smithtown Central School District

26 New York Avenue, Smithtown, New York 11787

Mark Secaur, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
(631) 382-2006

December 19, 2024

Dear Smithtown School Community,

Yesterday, a message was sent to the High School East school community regarding troubling social media posts that were made by an employee. Although this individual is no longer affiliated with the district, that letter can be accessed [HERE](#). We share the community's concern related to the content that was posted, and once we were made aware of it, we took immediate action. We take this and other similar matters very seriously, hence the swift response that included our local law enforcement officials.

The district's current hiring process includes an administrative review of applications, resumes and other documents that support the candidacy of each individual applicant. This is followed by interviews with administrators and other committee members, thorough reference checks, and fingerprint background screenings. It is important to note that our process must comply with all applicable laws.

Given a situation such as the one that unfolded yesterday, it is understandable for reasonable people to inquire as to whether or not the district vets the social media history of prospective employees. There are several concerns with doing so and these include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Social media activity is often private and only accessible to some.
- An employee's social media account(s) may not be easily identifiable (e.g. A social media "handle" that is not in the person's name).
- It is often very difficult to determine the authenticity of social media content and its source.
- What may be deemed as disqualifying by some can have significant legal implications (e.g. First Amendment protections).

We recognize the importance of continuously evaluating our procedures as they relate to hiring and the professional conduct of our staff and will certainly, in consultation with our attorneys, examine our current approach with an eye towards methods to improve it.

Sincerely,

Mark Secaur, Ed.D.
Superintendent