



December 6, 2021

Superintendent's Message: Update on Samohi Incident Today

Dear Parents, Guardians, Staff, Students and Community Members,

We communicated to you this morning about a social media threat at Santa Monica High School that was investigated with our law enforcement partners, the Santa Monica Police Department. The student who posted the threat was interviewed, a threat assessment was conducted and the home was checked for weapons. SMPD determined that there are no weapons in the home. The student was not in school today and remains out of school while we pursue our disciplinary process identified in District Policy and Education Code.

We understand that students and parents were fearful today and we can not emphasize enough how student and staff health and safety are our top priorities. We were confident that school was safe today or we would not have kept school open.

There were other threats in the area that were confused with the Samohi threat that was determined to be an isolated incident, not related to any other threats you may have heard about at Palisades, Hamilton or Fairfax High School.

Additionally, there was a threat circulating about St. Monica's School, which SMPD confirmed originated in the Elk Grove, CA area where there is a different school with the same name. St. Monica's School in Santa Monica has no association with this other school and there was no threat today. However, prior to this determination, in an abundance of caution, our local St. Monica's School made a decision last night to cancel in-person school today. Here is the [SMPD news release](#) that further explains this out-of- the-area threat. This news release also addresses the Samohi incident and outcome.

SMPD further investigated social media rumors around lunchtime at Samohi that used the original St. Monica's social media post to alarm students at Samohi. This was also determined to not be a credible threat.

Tonight, I met with Santa Monica City Manager David White, Chief of Police Ramon Batista, Lt. Rudy Flores, Samohi Principal Dr. Antonio Shelton and several support staff members. I'm pleased with our partnership and immediate response from SMPD this morning when this issue came to our attention. They, along with our Samohi administrative team and campus security officers, responded professionally and with the utmost care and concern for our students and staff possible. I can assure you that everyone has the best interests of the Samohi school community in mind.

Samohi will be open tomorrow according to the reg planned schedule. SMPD will have a presence around the campus tomorrow in support of student and staff safety.

This has been an extremely difficult year for everyone -- for teachers, students, families and our staff. The stress and anxiety of still being in a pandemic, along with last week's tragic school shooting in Michigan has worn many of us down and heightened concerns across the country. Our mental health services staff, along with school psychologists, outside support agency partners, and other support staff is working with many students and families during this difficult time and we recognize that more are struggling and need support. We encourage you to consider our webpage focused on [Mental Health and Community Resources](#) that may be helpful to students, staff and parents.

As I stated earlier, we do subscribe to WeTip and appreciate the reports that did come into us today through this service. Any threats of crime, vandalism, harm, threats may be reported anonymously: 1-800-78-CRIME or online at www.wetip.com. Please, if you see or hear something, say something.

We care about our students and want them to thrive and feel safe at school. You have my word that we have created safe and secure school environments with this goal in mind.

Please continue to stay healthy and look out for one another.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati, Superintendent