August 19, 2015

HEB ISD Parents and Community Members,

We are devastated by the news that a third grade teacher was arrested for possible inappropriate conduct with a student. Because of the sensitive nature of this case, we cannot comment on any of the specifics, but I want to assure you we have kept the safety and security of our students and our staff a number one priority.

What affects our District affects us all, but I do not want this news to somehow overshadow the beginning of a new school year for so many wonderful students, staff, and families. We have a long history of hiring extremely qualified people who want to be a part of this wonderful District. But we cannot ignore the fact that problems like this occur in our society. The public places their trust in us and, as educators, we are held to a higher standard. When these standards are challenged, HEB ISD will continue our practice of acting both diligently and swiftly to address any misconduct. Situations like this are unacceptable.

As much as I would like to promise situations like this one will never occur again, I cannot make that promise. However, I can assure you we take our responsibility of screening and hiring all HEB ISD employees very seriously. We go beyond the state requirement in screening applicants who are recommended for employment. In addition to the statutory background checks run through the FBI database, the District is part of the Region 11 consortium, with JD Palatine, which conducts a county-by-county background search on each individual screened. In addition, references and other sources are checked related to selected applicants. The District has confirmed that all appropriate screening processes were in place in relation to the hiring of the individual in this case.

Words cannot express how grateful I am for your support and understanding as we deal with the difficult issues before us. HEB ISD is committed to emphasizing the critical importance of our staff maintaining a professional relationship with students while creating a caring and nurturing learning environment. This remains the expectation of HEB ISD. We will continue to reinforce our current District expectations and implement additional measures to ensure the safety and security of our students. Please join me in supporting our students and staff as we continue to provide the best education for the children of this community.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Steven A. Chapman
Superintendent of Schools