



TRACY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"The future belongs
to the educated"*

Dr. James C. Franco
Superintendent
(209) 830-3201
(209) 830-3204 Fax

Dr. Casey J. Goodall
Associate Superintendent
of Business Services
(209) 830-3230
(209) 830-3234 Fax

Dr. Sheila Harrison
Assistant Superintendent
of Educational Services
(209) 830-3202
(209) 830-3209 Fax

Ryan Davis
Assistant Superintendent
of Human Resources
(209) 830-3260
(209) 830-3264 Fax

April 7, 2009

Dear Tracy Unified Families,

It is with incredible sadness and grief that we inform you of the loss of an important member of our school district and Tracy family. Jacobson Elementary School second-grader Sandra Cantu, who disappeared on Friday, March 27, 2009 was found deceased yesterday evening. Details of Sandra's disappearance and passing are still unknown at this time.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Sandra's family and friends during this painful time.

Our staff members, with help from a district psychologist and the school's counselors, talked with all students today about Sandra's passing.

Here are some talking points for helping your child through this experience:

- **Talk honestly about the incident** and share some of your own feelings about it. It is important for children to feel informed when they see their parents and other adults reacting to a crisis. Say you are sorry about Sandra's death and let your genuine caring and concern show.
- **Encourage children to talk about their concerns and to express their feelings.** Validate the child's feelings. Do not minimize his/her concerns.
- **Let children know that such incidents are not common** and that our schools and community are safe places.
- **Seek help when necessary.** If you are worried about a child's reaction, or have ongoing concerns about his/her behavior or emotions, contact your child's school to have the school psychologist speak with your child.

We would appreciate your family making time tonight to talk once again about the importance of student safety. Here are some tips and points to review:

- **Talk openly about strangers.** Don't assume that your child actually knows what the word "stranger" means. In a calm but firm manner, instruct them to never go anywhere, get in a car, or accept anything from strangers - even if the person seems friendly. If the person does try to abduct them, instruct your child to yell "you are not my mom/dad" instead of "help."
- **Help your child identify a safety net of trusted adults and places,** such as stores, schools, libraries, churches, synagogues and homes of neighbors. Discuss safe routes to use on the way to and from school and other destinations, as well as places to avoid.
- **When your child is old enough to go out alone, demand that they tell you the three Ws:** *who* I'm going with, *where* I'll be, and *when* I'll return home; and informs you anytime their plans change.
- **Make safety part of your routine everyday life.** Practice safety scenarios on a regular basis to reinforce safety concepts.

We appreciate your caring and concern for our students, staff and the community of Tracy as we mourn this unfathomable loss.

Sincerely,

James C. Franco, Ed.D.
Superintendent

JCF/jc

1875 W. Lowell Avenue
Tracy, CA 95376
www.tracy.k12.ca.us