



STATEMENT FROM DR. MIKE RIERA, HEAD OF SCHOOL

POSTED AUGUST 6, 2018

On August 18 of last year, the Los Angeles Police Department informed Brentwood School that Upper School teacher, Dr. Aimee Palmitessa, had been arrested on suspicion of inappropriate relations with a student. We immediately placed Dr. Palmitessa on administrative leave and subsequently confirmed that she would not return to school.

We took these shocking and distressing allegations seriously, cooperating fully with investigators at the Los Angeles Police Department and the District Attorney's Office. We care deeply about our students and all aspects of their well-being, individually and collectively. To that end, we worked closely with faculty and counselors to support our students, offered families resources as they helped their children navigate their reactions to the news, made special accommodations for the family involved, and communicated updates to our entire school community.

In September, Brentwood School retained Julie Yanow to conduct an internal investigation, separate from the police investigation. The information gathered by Ms. Yanow was helpful to the school's decision making process and resulted in the school separating Dr. Palmitessa. It also led to enhanced communication of the school's clearly articulated policies about boundaries and behavior as well as additional faculty/staff training.

The criminal proceedings against Dr. Palmitessa are still ongoing. However, the family has now filed a civil suit against the School and we are in the process of evaluating it. The School's legal counsel will respond as appropriate. Despite the litigation, we sympathize with the student and family for the pain this situation has caused them. We remain committed to all of our students and to respecting their privacy. We ask that you do the same.

The school's statement of purpose, core values, and policies guide our daily practices. With regard to the accusations made in the civil litigation filed by the family, the evidence does not support the allegations, among others, that faculty encouraged unlawful behavior between Aimee Palmitessa and the student or failed to meet their reporting obligations. As we have done to date, we will proceed with care and with the well-being of our students as our guiding principle.