



## Wall Township Public Schools

Office of the Board of Education  
1620 18th Avenue  
Wall, New Jersey 07719

Christine Steitz  
Board President

Dear Wall Township Public Schools Community,

The loss of a young person is heart-breaking. The Board of Education extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends, teachers, and staff who are grieving the passing of Laila Orjuela, an eighth-grade student at Wall Intermediate School. Our West Belmar School community is also directly affected. We recognize the devastating impact this loss will have on many individuals who have and will continue to love Laila and her family.

The Wall Township Public Schools District deeply mourns the loss of Laila's presence and her unique personal gifts that can never be replaced. We understand the need for many to mount a response signifying sympathy and support for her memory, however, we must remind the public that the district will be following a well-constructed crisis response plan that addresses this tremendous loss with the health of fellow students in mind. This plan has been crafted and is continually reviewed with mental health professionals, to be sensitive to not only this tragedy, but also the mental health and emotional stability of our student population. Please recognize that there are many variables, some not obviously evident, that must be considered.

The district website offers a multitude of online support services and will be offering a variety of in-person services for our students, families, and staff. Please visit the district website for more information, and read communications from our superintendent, Dr. Handerhan, as she will also provide additional information and opportunities to seek professional guidance.

Our community may best honor Laila by channeling our energy into supporting each other. It is critical we are mindful of the impact of words and postings on social media related to Laila's passing and practice the kindness and restraint we hope our young people will emulate. I hope we can demonstrate compassion and lend strength to those impacted by this tragedy and, as always, BE the example of the best qualities our Wall community offers.

With sympathy on behalf of the entire Board of Education,  
Christine Steitz