

Happy to hear you say that too, because a lot of students don't know that every high school in this country's not like this: to have the kind of athletic program and the extracurricular activities that we have going on at the school to have a planetarium. To have all of the things that we have. We are very fortunate and very, very, very fortunate to have all of these things in that way. And by the way, to have an outstanding academic program here as well. So you both serve on the community advisory council that I pretty much started and you initiated this year with our communications team here at the district. And why did you agree to serve on the council? Welcome to The Wildkit Way, a podcast that gives the mic to Dr. Marcus Campbell, the superintendent of Evanston Township High School. Join us on this audio journey as Dr. Campbell shares his stories and insights and has honest real conversations with people who make ETHS and our community the incredible place it is. Being the parent or guardian of a high schooler can be an exciting eye-opening and sometimes worrisome experience. Walking the halls at ETHS for students these days is quite different than 30, 20, even 10 years ago. On this episode of The Wildkit Way, ETHS, superintendent Marcus Campbell sits down with Evanston community members, two parents of ETHS students to gain perspective about their experience and learn from them as they navigate ETHS with their children. Let's begin.

**Marcus Campbell:**

Welcome. Gabriela Ramos and Steve Jones, two of our parents and community members. Gabriela is the parent of two ( )134(tbr)-23.31.3 (o )67T1 1e1 (el)-1 MC TJ0.012 Tw 13.670 Td(us)10.3 ( )-66.3 (about)-11.7 ( )-66.3 (y)-

Like, what's your goal for having conversation with a guy like me as a superintendent of 202? Like, what brings you here? Gabriela, why don't you start there?

**Gabriella Ramos:**

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**Steve Jones:**

So different. So you gotta listen. And kind of, the first instinct I think for most parents is to kind of hear a little bit and they go, okay, I'm going to, here's how I'm going to try to fix this. You know, but just the listening part of it is so crucial and it, I think you really need to kind of build that skill and have that opportunity to listen to them and then engage in conversation with them. And that is so not what my parents did with me. I mean, it's just generations, you know, and I think we're, I think we're getting better at this. But I think our kids can lead the way in this too. They're, they have so, I think greatly, taken on some of the ideas from social-emotional learning themselves and can teach us a lot about how to listen, how to support and how to be kind of partnering in their growth process through high school and not just kind of being, you know, quote unquote the parent.

**Marcus Campbell:**

Yeah. The student experience is vastly different. Last month's podcast, we were just sharing that, you know, they went to school through a once in a century pandemic, right? And have, are living in the world of social media and so many other dynamics that can make their experience very complex as well as trying to get an education through all of that. So I'm curious, Gabriela, what do you think about that? Showing empathy and how are you supporting your, your twins as they navigate a essentially a newer school or new school emerging out of a pandemic as freshmen?

**Gabriella Ramos:**

So the one thing that I can kind of tip that I can stress the most is validation. Validate their feelings. Validate, just giving the, showing them that, you know, you understand. Not even that, even if you don't understand exactly what they're going through, that you're listening to them. And then you can appreciate that they're sharing that with you. And I think cultivating that communication with your child is just so important. It's going to be something that you have to work on. It's not something that people know how to do immediately. You have to kind of train yourself and, and train your almost, you know, your relationship a little bit. That relationship is going to last. Your kid's not always going to be your kid. They're going to grow up one day. They're going to be, they're going to be an adult. You know, how you handle these situations, understanding them, their emotional health and, you know, their mental health is going to impact them as an adult as well. So we need to be careful and just make sure that, you know, we're validating their feelings. The world is vastly different than it was when we were growing up. We never had active shooter drills.

**Marcus Campbell:**

I think the most we did was like tornadoes or something.

**Gabriella Ramos:**

Exactly, fire drills, tornadoes. They're having active, active shooter drills and, and just with social media, they're constantly, constantly getting bad news sometimes. So we just have to be very sensitive to their emotional health and, and be a resource for them and encourage them to come to you. They can talk to you, you know, don't, don't judge how they're feeling, but just try to understand, listen to them.

**Steve Jones:**

And if you don't understand, you know, ask them for more, try to and tell them, right? You know, I don't...tell me in a different way or explain it. You know, try to elicit some more conversation from them. Because my, you know, my, my experience was always, you know, that was kind of a shutting down was, well, I don't get it. You know, and that was kind of end of story. And I think that's actually, you could use that in a positive way and say, well, I'm not really getting it. Tell me more. Help me out here.

**Marcus Campbell:**

Yeah. And so the school's been trying to adjust, right, to the world of this, you know, these threats and feeling so vulnerable, right? ye.7(hem)-56.7( fo )0.7(v)-56.4(ul)-1 (6.7(e )67(m)-56.7(o)-56.43 (y)-56.3 (.)-11ud (ay)-56.3 (y)-56.3 (o

students get back on track after the pandemic? And Steve, you probably got a little bit of context for this question. What do you make of the changes at ETHS so far?

**Steve Jones:**

I mean, I think the efforts have been great. I think in some ways you always end up being somewhat reactive. You kind of never know what, what's around the corner. The social media component of it is so difficult. High school is tough enough socially, and now you potentially have the whole world looking at you. And when I think back to my high school experience, if I had that sort of lens focused on me from potentially anywhere really, I think I would've completely freaked out. You know, I think the effort the school makes to try to get the students knowledge about how to deal with these things, but also to keep channels of communication open with social workers, with teachers and staff with safety folks, I think that's a key part of it right there too. And then bringing parents into that conversation and that mix is crucial because so much of what goes on in terms of, I think how safe students feel is not just when they're here, but it's also when they're out in the larger community, too. Yeah. And so it's, that's a huge conversation ongoing.

**Marcus Campbell:**

Yeah. Gabriela, what do you make of this shift or the changes- like what your twins are adjusting to, even academically- after the pandemic?

**Gabriella Ramos:**

Yeah, so, well, since my, my kids are freshmen, I, I can't speak to so many things from last year, but I know this year it just seems to have like a pretty good comprehensive plan that you guys have in place to kind of, you know, cultivate a safe environment and make students and feel safe. And I appreciate that. I feel like Evanston Township High School tries really hard to make students feel safe and provide resources for students that they might, we might not have at other, you know, schools. My students take advantage of a lot of the resources here, which is great. And as a parent, I couldn't have asked for more. It makes parenting that much easier to be in the loop with how my kids are, you know, feeling, doing day-to-day, working with the teachers, having that open line of communication. So, I think we're going

