

February 7, 2018

Dear Northside Family:

This year our Theatre department has decided to produce the landmark, Tony Award winning musical, RENT: School Edition. This musical does not come without controversy. The characters are individuals who are LGBT, suffer from drug addiction, and have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. It is a musical drama. However, at its core, this is a musical about empathy and kindness. RENT: School Edition is a musical that addresses many issues facing contemporary teenage life. It is our desire to address these issues in an academic, safe, and nurturing environment.

RENT: School Edition, was chosen in part because of the edits MTI (Musical Theatre International) and the Jonathon Larson estate made to the original production. Though the characters stay the same, and are representative of members of our student body, the text and lyrics have been changed to make this musical appropriate for a high school aged audience; most notably, a scene named, "CONTACT" has been edited out in its entirety to reach a PG-13 rating.

Some commonly asked questions concerning this musical:

Will there be drug use on stage?

No. Rent does not glorify drug use. It shows the ravages and consequences that can happen with drug addiction.

Can you explain how you will depict LGBT relationships?

This show is not about attacking sensibilities. It is about empathy and kindness to "the least of these." There are characters that are LGBT and their relationship is shown, however no contact will go beyond that of a hug.

Can you explain how you will handle the topic of HIV/AIDS?

Historically, HIV/AIDS changed the face of our world.

What type of language is in RENT: School Edition?

The language has been edited to typical "Prime Time" appropriate. The limited language that remained has been kept as a point of character development.

It is my sincerest hope that this letter addresses any concern you may have. Should you have any further questions, I encourage you to contact me at the school so that we may provide you with answers.

Sincerely,

Isiah Harper III
Director of Theatre

Martin Richburg
Principal