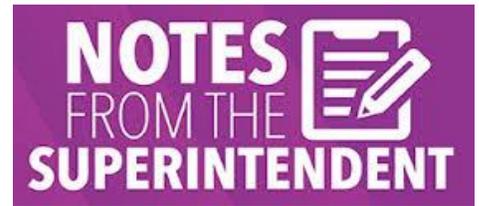


February 21, 2018

Dear Parents,



In an effort to convey what the district has done over the past few years to make our schools more secure, we are sending out this statement in light of what has been happening in schools across the country.

- Last year, specialists from the State Police visited the District to work with staff on Run/Hide/Fight tactics for active shooter situations. The training they provided was very relevant and very well received by the staff.
- Two years ago, State "Safe Schools" came to the District to conduct an audit to determine what the District could be doing better to be more prepared to help teachers and staff. They visited all 11 buildings and met with principals to review audit findings. Principals adjusted items in their buildings to be more in line with the audit and to help students and staff be more secure.
- Three years ago, we added approximately 35 cameras in our secondary schools, with images displayed on closed circuit televisions in principals' offices so that principals may monitor the inside and outside of schools at all times. Cameras also record what is taking place so that principals can check on things that have transpired inside and outside of the buildings at all times.
- Throughout the day, principals and custodians check school doors to make certain that they are locked and secured to the outside of the building.
- Students do not carry backpacks to classrooms. Backpacks are placed in lockers.
- In the past, there were no telephones in classrooms. All rooms now have telephones that will connect to both the office and the outside world.
- At East Juniata High School, we constructed a "secure vestibule," and visitors need to be buzzed in by office staff. Once in the vestibule, the office staff can view persons in the waiting area and buzz them into the office area. These are the same measures that we are putting into place in our new consolidated schools, as directed by the "Safe Schools" audit two years ago.
- Age-appropriate lockdown drills have taken place in 10 of our buildings, with a drill to take place at East Juniata High School in the near future.
- In most of our schools, we are using the PBIS system, which is proven to increase positive behavior.
- In elementary schools, we are about to embark on using the "Second Step system," which teaches students good social/emotional friendship skills and bullying prevention.
- "Life Skills" training in middle schools promotes good decision making and building good character.
- Appropriate staff members in each building are trained in Safe Crisis Management, and recertification is given through training when their certification runs out.
- Staff monitor students entering buildings at the beginning of the day and leaving at the end of the day, and making sure that anyone who should not be entering the buildings is directed to the office area.
- On our buses, we use the Zonar GPS system that allows us to track buses at all times. Many buses and vans are already equipped with two-way radios, and all vehicles transporting students must have them installed before the new school year. Most schools buses also have camera systems for safety reasons.
- The district uses the One Call system, the District website and Twitter to disseminate information in a timely manner after all of the facts have been gathered and we are certain that we are reporting accurate information.
- This year, State Police officers have been and will continue to be visible throughout our schools to build student/police communication. Officers have joined elementary students for lunch.
- In the very near future I will be reaching out to the State Police to invite them to our schools for a community informational evening session to give parents advice on how to talk with their children about school safety and the events that have been transpiring across the country.

We appreciate the information that we receive from the community that enables us to keep our schools safe and secure for students and staff and welcome any input and resources available to support that goal.

Sincerely,

*Keith D. Yarger, Superintendent*