

CENTRAL DAUPHIN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dr. Carol Johnson
Superintendent

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The impact of mass shootings each year in our country serves as a constant reminder of the need for schools to train students and staff alike on how to react during active shooter situations. While the thought of the need for such training is disturbing in itself, we cannot ignore the realities and the need to prepare as best we can for an event of this nature should it someday take place in one of our schools.

I assure you that the Central Dauphin School District has student and staff safety as its highest priority. You can be certain that in light of these ongoing tragedies, we continue to review our safety and security plans and to refine our practices should it ever become necessary to utilize them.

The following measures are currently in place throughout the district:

- ✓ All buildings now have secured vestibules with the exception of West Hanover Elementary School. (West Hanover Elementary School does not have the secured vestibule feature, but continues to have a security guard assigned there until the new building opens.)
- ✓ All buildings have a single point of entry during the day.
- ✓ All visitors must show identification upon being admitted to the schools and must report directly to the main office.
- ✓ Classroom doors remain locked during the school day.
- ✓ Ongoing staff training on enhanced measures and protocols relating to intruder and active shooter drills took place again during our August in-service training for all staff. This program was conducted by our Department of Safety and Security and our local law enforcement partners.

While we do not believe that it is advisable to be completely transparent about our plans and preparations, we do think it is absolutely necessary for staff to know exactly what to do during such an event and for students to have a very clear understanding of what they might be expected to do. We understand that each child is different and he or she may perceive the presentations differently. Please know that the purpose of discussing this information with students is not to alarm them or make them afraid to come to school. Rather, it is to make students feel comfortable and safe in our care.

Moving forward this year, plans for discussions will be developed for the following:

- ✓ Age appropriate discussions with students in kindergarten through Grade 3, reviewed by school psychologists, law enforcement partners, and school safety staff;
- ✓ Grade level lessons for Grades 4 and 5 students that will involve input from school psychologists, law enforcement partners, and school safety staff.

Presentations will be taking place in the coming weeks for older students as well, including:

- ✓ Instruction for students and staff in Grades 6 through 12 on options for reacting in the event of an active shooter emergency;
- ✓ Instruction for students and staff in Grades 6 through 12 regarding a program sponsored by Penn State Hershey Medical Center called “See Something, Say Something.”

Options for staff in the event of an active shooter incident focus on a protocol known as *Run, Hide, Fight*. This protocol is recommended by the US Department of Homeland Security, the US Department of Justice, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the PA State Police among others.

Schools continue to be very safe places to learn and to work. Yet it is important for all adults in our children's lives, including all school employees and parents, to work together and to reassure our children that safeguards are in place to provide a safe environment for learning in our schools. Should your child feel upset or worried about coming to school, please remind him or her that our school counselors are always available to talk. To further assist parents and guardians, we have parent resource guides on how to discuss such an event with your child. Those resources include the following:

To aid in your conversations with your children and families, please access the following helpful links by copying them into your browser:

- ✓ Talking to your students about school shootings:
<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2017/10/mass-shootings.aspx>
- ✓ In the aftermath, help your student manage distress:
<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/aftermath.aspx>

While we may never understand why these tragedies continue to occur, the Central Dauphin School District remains committed to protecting the safety of all of our students and staff through planning, preparation, and vigilance. If you have any specific concerns, as always, please feel free to contact your student's principal.

Sincerely,

Carol Johnson, Ed. D.