



SUPERINTENDENT'S Dash**b**oard

March 1, 2018

Dear Somers Community Members,

The safety and well-being of our students is always our first priority in Somers Schools. The tragic shooting in Parkland, Florida in February prompted many inquiries about the safety procedures and security protocols in place at our schools. We've created this special edition Superintendent's Dashboard - Safety Update, to keep you informed of the ongoing steps we take to keep the children safe. While there is a great deal of information below, there are some procedures and protocols that law enforcement officials ask us not to make public, so as not to jeopardize the safety of our students and staff.

Security Personnel and Partners

Our Chief Emergency Officer, Joseph Bernardi, along with our School Resource Officers and the PNW BOCES Safety Officer conduct regular security checks and review safety plans in each of our school buildings throughout the school year. These safety plans are filed annually with various law enforcement agencies. In addition, we partner with the Somers Police Department, NY State Troopers, Westchester County Police, and the Somers Fire Department to develop our safety procedures and to train staff and students.

Daily Security Measures

- Armed School Resource Officer (SRO) on each campus
- Single point of entry and check-in system
- SROs check all exterior/perimeter doors throughout the day
- Security vestibules at the intermediate school and high school (security vestibules at the middle school and elementary school awaiting approval from the State Education Department)
- Security cameras in multiple locations
- Night custodians sweep each school before they leave and set the professionally monitored, motion-activated alarm system
- Morning custodians look for and report anything unusual



Staff attending active threat training

Drills

We conduct many announced and unannounced drills throughout the school year at each of our buildings, including lockdown, lockout and evacuation drills. As a part of those procedures, staff conducts a headcount and accounts for each student by name. Law enforcement officers are active participants in those drills, and we debrief as a group after

each drill to review both the positive aspects and areas in which we can improve. To prepare further, the administrative team conducts table top exercises to strategize various scenarios.

Staff Training

- Every member of our staff participates in ongoing safety and security training. Recently we held an active threat "train the trainer" workshop, run by Westchester County Police. The staff members who participated in this workshop will assist law enforcement officers in the active threat training for faculty and staff during the two upcoming Professional Learning Days.
- We send some staff members to safety/security workshops offered by the PNW BOCES Safety Service or by law enforcement agencies.
- Our bus drivers and monitors receive training in how to respond to threats on the bus and at the schools.
- Next year, there will be eight half days incorporated into the school year for professional development, which will give us an extra opportunity to refresh teachers and support staff on safety procedures.
- Our staff members are trained to identify at-risk students and, if needed, to report such students to the administration.
- Anonymous Alerts Online System for staff and students, which allows for the anonymous reporting of information to school officials.



Bus drivers in health and safety training

Upcoming Security Projects

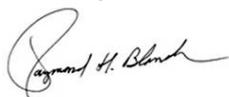
As part of the \$13.6M capital project that was approved by voters, additional security cameras will be installed on each campus. As mentioned above, we are also awaiting approval from the New York State Education Department for our plans to build security vestibules at Primrose Elementary and the middle school. We expect construction of the security vestibules to be started and completed during the summer of 2019.

Talking to children about violence

It is often difficult and frightening to raise the subject of school violence with children. For more information on how to discuss the subject with your children, please click [here](#) for a tip sheet from the National Association of School Psychologists.

Though I wish it weren't the case, we must continue to train, drill, coordinate with law enforcement, and improve our plans for safety and security in our schools. There is nothing more important than the safety and well-being of our students and I appreciate your support and partnership in this effort.

Sincerely,



Dr. Raymond H. Blanch
Superintendent of Schools