



Halifax Area School District

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February 23, 2018

Dear Halifax Families:

The events of the last two weeks remind us that we are in the midst of trying and turbulent times. The senseless act of violence that took place at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida and, locally, threats to harm school districts, give us reason to reflect, review, and respond.

You entrust your children to the employees of the Halifax Area School District every day and my team and I do not take that responsibility lightly. Please be aware that safety is monitored and supported in the district in a number of ways, including but not limited to:

- equipping school buildings with secure entrances.
- locking exterior doors during the day.
- requiring visitors to sign in upon entering the building.
- requiring staff and visitors to wear identification badges.
- enforcing the school volunteer policies.
- training staff in the use of safe crisis management techniques.
- practicing the safety and security drills as outlined in the district's *All Hazards Plan*.
- utilizing interior and exterior cameras to monitor and record video surveillance.
- collaborating with the area's Joint School Safety Task Force.
- partnering with the Pennsylvania State Police to create situational awareness through the officers' frequent visits to schools and their meaningful interaction with students and staff.

The strategies outlined above, along with the atmosphere of care and concern created by our Discovery Character Education program, help to create a positive school climate so all students can focus on learning. As we review the district's safety and security measures to determine what more can be done, I ask that you support our efforts by doing the following:

- listen to your child and take any concern seriously;
- avoid turning to social media to express your concerns. Often that mode of communication does not afford the school district the opportunity to address the issues and resolve the problems. Open communication and partnership between our schools and our families is the best means to ensure a safe learning environment;
- monitor your child's social media activity and report anything suspicious;
- talk to your child about personal safety; and
- never hesitate to report a safety or security concern to district administration.

As noted in a previous communication, the Halifax Area School District continues to work with the Pennsylvania State Police to keep our schools safe and secure. If you or your child see state troopers patrolling the school grounds or visiting the school buildings, do not be alarmed. Procedures remain in place to keep all members of the school community safe so everyone can focus on fulfilling the mission of the Halifax Area School District: empowering and inspiring our students to become prepared, engaged, and responsible citizens.

Sincerely,
Michele M. Orner, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools