

We Are Addressing School Safety in the Ocean View School District

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March 2018

Recent news about Parkland, Florida, affects all of us. As your Superintendent, I feel it is important to reach out to all of you, our families and employees, to share my condolences with those individuals directly impacted by this tragedy and to provide some kind of comfort to you as we all process these horrific events. I want to assure you that the Ocean View School District has structures, emergency plans, trainings, and collaborative relationships in place with our city and local law enforcement to promote school safety and maintain healthy learning environments for our students and staff. I hope you will take a moment to read about the many ways we approach school safety in Ocean View.

Each year, all of our schools are required to update their comprehensive Safe School Plans. These plans address our responses to various crises and are routinely rehearsed through a number of District- and school-level drills, including evacuations and shelter in place. Students and staff are involved in these drills to help everyone stay informed. Our District and school site employees are trained in current safety procedures, including First Aid and CPR/AED (automated external defibrillator), and “Run, Hide, Fight” techniques. Each school and District site has its own emergency plan for a variety of scenarios, and employees are assigned to specific emergency roles and responsibilities.

Ocean View is also a trained member of the Huntington Beach’s Safe Schools Coalition. This coalition, made up of local school districts, private schools and the Huntington Beach Police Department (HBPD), exists to provide an organized, effective response to critical school incidents, such as an armed intruder. Coalition members are trained to handle school evacuation to an off-site location, so that students and staff can be provided shelter and reunited with family members as soon as possible. The evacuation and reunification location is the Huntington Beach Central Library. [Read more information about the Coalition and emergency procedures here.](#)

We place a high priority on open communication and collaborative relationships with our local law enforcement and fire agencies. These relationships are important throughout the school year, but in an emergency, they are critical. We work closely with HBPD Chief Robert Handy and our School Resource Officers. These officers provide continuous contact between our schools, our Leadership Team, and the police department. Our principals and District administrators work collaboratively with HBPD throughout the year.

Although our physical campuses are set up to limit access to the public and monitor after-hours activities through a variety of mechanisms, including surveillance cameras, we can certainly do more. As we begin our Measure R bond modernization projects in 2018 under the guidance of our Facilities Master Plan, we are proposing improved safety structures at each of our campuses, including a proposed School Fencing Plan that provides for perimeter safety fencing at all campuses. Our Board of Trustees will be voting on proposed perimeter safety fencing at our March 20 Board Meeting.

Another important way that we support our students is through mental health resources. In addition to having school psychologists and a school counselor on staff, Ocean View contracts with counselor interns at all of our K-8 schools. Our school psychologists and counselor are trained in suicide threat

assessment and have trained our classroom teachers in suicide awareness. Our District's Board Policy specifically addressing suicide is updated to reflect new legislative and District policies.

Additionally, our District has a Critical Incident Team to provide support to our schools during a traumatic event. This team, comprised of school psychologists, nurses and the school counselor, is trained in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), a proven support model.

Finally, our school administrators and staff are diligent in their supervision of our campuses; however, we need everyone's help. As seen in recent news stories, shared information can be crucial to preventing potentially dangerous situations. We ask students, staff, family members, and neighbors to work with us to protect our schools. You can do this by always being aware of your surroundings. We often remind and encourage students and families to report any suspicious or unusual activity or persons in or around schools and our District Offices to our school staff. Tips and open communication are a vital tool as we move forward in today's environment.

As recently stated by our Orange County Superintendent of Schools Al Mijares, "This is a race that has no finish line—not now, not ever." In Ocean View, we will continue to improve and update our safety plans, technology and communication on behalf of our students and staff. I am dedicated to working with you to provide the best education and learning environments we can possibly provide as the stakes grow and dynamics change. Thank you for doing your part to support our children.