

Regarding: Student and Staff Safety

February 20, 2018

Dear Parents, Employees, Students, and Community:

The school shooting last week in Florida has reminded all of us of the horrific nature of these tragedies. It also brought to the surface fears, concerns, and a desire to see that this never happens again.

This morning, I returned a phone call from a parent who was curious about what Eastmont does to help prevent these situations. She was surprised to hear all that we do and suggested many parents may have no idea we do these activities.

Here is a list of what we do to ensure students are as safe as possible:

- 1) Fingerprint and conduct criminal background checks on all employees.
- 2) Conduct Washington State Patrol background checks on all volunteers.
- 3) Use standard emergency procedures in all schools and offices.
- 4) Practice both scheduled and surprise drills for an active shooter.
- 5) Invite local law enforcement and other first responders to observe our drills, evacuations, lockdowns, reunification procedures, etc. and provide concerns and suggestions for improvement.
- 6) Train employees and students to Flee, Hide, or Fight an armed intruder.
- 7) Limit access at schools ideally to just one exterior door. This is not possible at all campuses.
- 8) Invite teachers to lock their classroom doors.
- 9) All websites, emails, and cloud stored documents are monitored and scanned for specific words. If a word on the alert list is found, the use is reviewed and an investigation initiated.
- 10) Safety for students, employees, and community members on our campus is at the top of all agendas for District Leadership Meetings.
- 11) All supervisors are certified in Basic Incident Command.
- 12) A team of supervisors participate in regular training for Advanced Incident Command for School Emergencies.
- 13) Administrators meet monthly with lead supervisors from our local law enforcement and fire department to discuss emerging concerns and improvements.
- 14) All school and district supervisors carry emergency radios.
- 15) All school and district supervisors carry cell phones with the capacity to monitor the District's 200+ cameras, as well as lock or unlock some electronic doors.
- 16) Law enforcement has been given key cards to school electronic locks, as well as web access to District cameras.

- 17) Employees receive annual training that focuses on student safety as a primary responsibility for all employees.
- 18) A link (*Click Here to Report a Concern, Stop Bullying, Safe School Zone*) that allows someone to report information anonymously is on every school website. Incidents are reported regularly that are sent to administrators for immediate evaluation and investigation.
- 19) Any threats involving a student are reviewed using a threat assessment process originally recommended by the Secret Service. If we determine there is any evidence a credible threat exists, law enforcement is contacted and involved in the continuing investigation.
- 20) Students whose misbehavior continues to increase in severity and intensity are referred to law enforcement.
- 21) Use a website to upload all emergency contact information for supervisors, as well as emergency shutoffs, floor plans, etc. Local law enforcement and other first responders also have access to this site.
- 22) We work with our local law enforcement to provide ongoing training to employees and supervisors on active shooters.
- 23) Piloting a Community in Schools program to assist students and their families in connecting and accessing family support agencies, including mental health.
- 24) Local law enforcement is present when we search for any reported firearms.
- 25) Our Board President has asked that we research possible additional security measures to prevent an active shooter on a school campus and report back before the end of this school year.

Attached to this letter is an email I sent out to all employees following this latest incident. Below are two interesting articles on this topic:

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/02/14/why-security-measures-wont-stop-school-shootings.html>

<http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2018/feb/15/jeff-greenfield/mostly-false-18-us-school-shootings-so-far-2018-an/>

My prayers are with the parents and community in Florida and hope Eastmont never has an incident of this type.

Sincerely,

Garn Christensen
Superintendent



Garn Christensen <christenseng@eastmont206.org>

Florida Shooting

1 message

Garn Christensen <christenseng@eastmont206.org>
To: All District Staff <AllDistrictStaff@eastmont206.org>
Cc: Nevonne McDaniels <mcdaniels@wenatcheeworld.com>

Thu, Feb 15, 2018 at 1:18 PM

Good Afternoon,

This morning I have been responding to calls from concerned parents regarding the safety of students and employees in Eastmont schools. Unfortunately, there is no software, door lock, school design, etc. that will ensure this situation will never occur. Insurance companies send data showing that a student in a school is safer than being at home, safer than traveling to and from school in their parent's car and that being involved in a school shooting is less likely than being struck by lightning. Even with this data, I still ask myself if there is something I could do as superintendent so that none of us ever experience something this horrible.

I explained this morning to the newspaper that we have campus cameras, we lock doors, we train and practice safety procedures, and have switched from hiding during a potential shooter to flee, hide, or fight depending on the situation. Our law enforcement now has electronic keys to school doors, access to our cameras, and that we practice scheduled drills as well as surprise drills during transition times. We regularly search students for weapons if we get a student, parent, or anonymous tip through *Safe Schools* that we may have a threat. We use the Secret Service Recommended Threat Assessment Process once we have identified a student who may have made a threat. We always have law enforcement with us when we search a student for a possible gun to protect both students and employees.

Even with all these, I still worry and know there will be educators whose last day was yesterday. The Florida shooting was the last straw and they feel they can no longer enter a school and do the job of educating and protecting students.

The below link references a news article that came to me this morning.

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/02/14/why-security-measures-wont-stop-school-shootings.html>

After reading it, I am convinced the term *Status Tournament* for these shooters is real. Don't forget the Sandy Hook School had locked entrances that looked safe but did not stop the bullets from the shooter. The Florida school had an armed campus security guard. Urban principals and superintendents I know with gang shootings tell me their metal detectors, guards, and perimeter gates and fencing don't stop the student who has their buddy toss a gym bag with guns over the fence during the day or the student who cuts a lock or fence over the weekend to hide a gun on campus.

There is no easy solution or guaranteed fix to this problem. What we currently do in Eastmont is best practices. I believe our most likely means for heading off these tragedies is the relationships we have with students, their parents, grandparents, and our community. If these are strong, we have a much better chance of learning about and stopping a deranged young person, or adult than if we do not listen and learn from our community.

I thank all of you for showing up today, and for all your hard work and efforts on behalf of Eastmont students.

Sincerely,
Garn

PS: For those who are interested, Eastmont had previously been working with our local law enforcement to offer a voluntary training on school shootings in one of our school on February 28, from 3:45 - 5:15 pm. The location has yet to be determined as we have had other agencies and businesses asking today if they may also send employees. An email will be sent out once we confirm a location.

The article suggest the shooters achieve

homes, safer than r solution to a parents intentional

Garn G. Christensen, Superintendent

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