



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Avon Public Schools

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Gary S. Mala
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Weekly Message

January 1, 2013

Dear Parents and Concerned Citizens:

It is my honor to communicate with you once again as the holiday recess is about to conclude. On behalf of the Avon Public School faculty and staff, I wish you and your family a happy and healthy new year.

This past week, district staff reviewed emergency plans maintained at every school. Additionally, local and regional law enforcement officials completed high-level training exercises at two of our schools. Both of these activities were helpful in renewing and refreshing our thinking in light of the Newtown tragedy as well as the recent local events which received notable press coverage. This also allowed us to reassess and reaffirm our commitment to preparedness and the appropriateness of our existing emergency plans.

Tomorrow begins a new day filled with the hope and promise of a new time.

In keeping with preserving our heightened sense of awareness and diligence associated with maintaining safe teaching and learning sanctuaries for our children, faculty and staff, a number of recommendations are being implemented immediately in all of our schools. A detailed list of what has been reviewed and the recommendations to be evoked have been provided to each building principal. These recommendations are also the result of a systematic review of emergency protocols completed by John Spang, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, in collaboration with other district and school staff. Some of the recommendations are as follows:

Phase I Recommendations (as of January 2, 2013)

1. Request for continued supervision of the exterior of all schools by Avon Police at the start of the school day and dismissal.
2. Request continued random "drive throughs" of all exterior parking areas by Avon Police during school and non-school hours.
3. All exterior doors are to be secured daily at each school's starting time, including Avon High School.
4. Implement system whereby the front and rear main entrances to Avon High School are locked during school hours.
5. Implement system to identify visitors with the use of an auditory visual mechanism and electronic door release at all schools, including Avon High School.
6. Implement use of private, unarmed security at both front and rear Avon High School main entrances.
7. Maintain visitor sign in/sign out procedures and use of visitor identification badges at all schools, including Avon High School.
8. Maintain student sign in/sign out procedures for Avon High School students with senior privileges.
9. Implement use of visible identification system (ID cards) for all faculty and staff including but not limited to substitutes.
10. Implement use of private, unarmed security at Avon High School Gymnasium lobby entrances and locker room hallway entrances after school dismissal.
11. Principals are to review student pick-up procedures immediately and revise as necessary.

12. Principals are to review and document student pick-up protocols used by all after school groups (school sponsored and non-school sponsored).

The above list represents recommendations that reflect reaffirmation of current practices while others involve significant changes to existing practices and procedures. I would ask for your patience and understanding as we work to maintain safe and secure teaching and learning environments at all schools.

In the immediate future, various aspects of our emergency protocols will continue to be tested and assessed as they are routinely done in collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency response staff. These exercises may result in additional recommendations which you will be notified if and when it is appropriate to do so.

Given what I know and understand to be present in other communities across our state and nation each day, please join me in being thankful for our community, our elected officials, our police, fire and emergency response professionals and all who are charged with protecting and preserving both our personal and professional lives and those of our children and grandchildren. For this and much more, I believe we are truly very fortunate.

In closing, I wish to thank you for your continued support and again wish you the best for a safe, happy and healthy new year.

I remain very truly yours,

Gary

Gary S. Mala

Superintendent of Schools