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VOLUME XV
ISSUE I
.....

JANUARY
2013

Inside Three

Special Edition

School Safety – Our Unquestioned Highest Priority

Since 1998, the safety and well-being of our children and staff has been the unquestioned highest priority of our district. That year, we used Safe Schools America, a nationally recognized safety firm, to audit our security measures and help our schools and district develop detailed emergency plans. Since that year, our safety plans have been updated annually and made available for review and suggestions by our parents and community.

These national experts also provided training for our school and district leaders and safety teams. Working with a collaborative community team that included police, fire, EMS, and school personnel, we replicated different crisis situations so our employees would be better prepared for man-made or natural emergencies. We now conduct district and school trainings annually for safety teams and other staff. Various other experts have helped us assess and adjust our procedures to the point where we now have an array of procedures and

tools to protect our students and staff.

Each school and the district conduct precautionary drills throughout each school year. Our students and staff practice for evacuations, fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, chemical spills, bomb threats, and intruders. All staff and students take these drills very seriously, and we make needed adjustments to our procedures after each drill.

When visitors come to our schools, they see campuses that are fenced and buildings which are locked. To gain entry, they must push a video-monitored doorbell to be admitted into the main office and present themselves in the presence of additional video cameras with sound. They then undergo a law enforcement and national offender registry check by electronic scanning of their driver's license. Because doors leading to our main hallways are controlled by electronic locks, office personnel must approve a visitor's access to secure student areas. When visitors

are not approved, or pose disruption or threat, our staff then use emergency tools and procedures which are not publicized for security reasons.

High focus cameras monitor all key parking and student traffic areas and are viewed by personnel who are briefed on our emergency procedures. Two highly trained school resource officers provide protection for our schools and guidance to our administrators. In addition, we will have a trained officer available at every school during daily arrival and dismissal. Other local police officers and deputies are also used to provide security for a host of extracurricular and interscholastic events at all schools.

We enforce a zero tolerance policy for student bullying and are implementing the internationally recognized Olweus program to help our students become more caring, empathetic people. We also enforce zero tolerance policies for weapons and illegal

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Current Occupant or

substances on all District Three property and for disorderly behavior that disrupts our schools or any school related event. Violators are arrested and trespassed.

We require all exterior and interior doors of schools to remain locked at all times except when adult supervision is present. Also, special interior fire doors enable us to further secure student areas from safety threats. When needed, our personnel can simultaneously activate 911 emergency alarms, prevent access to student areas, and seek protection in a matter of seconds.

All classroom teachers have two-way communication devices with the main office personnel and are permitted to use their cell phones as needed for emergency circumstances. All school leadership, safety team, and support personnel have digital two-way radios enabling instant communications.

The greatest potential asset to the safety and well-

being of children and staff is the ongoing vigilance of our staff and parents. We always have our eyes and ears open to real or potential threats to safety. We ask our parents, guardians, and visitors to report any unsafe conditions or practices to a school or district leader.

We expect our parents, guardians, and other visitors to respect and follow our safety and check-in/check-out procedures at all times. These procedures include following parking and traffic rules on school property.

In conclusion, we precisely control the access and presence at all times of any person who is not an employee or student. We also communicate unapologetically that the safety of our children and staff outweighs any inconvenience to adults from our safety and security procedures.

Dr. Jim Ray
Superintendent
Spartanburg School District Three