

Putnam County R-I Schools

Heath Halley, Superintendent

803 S. 20th • Unionville, MO 63565 • Phone 660-947-3361 • Fax 660-947-2912
www.putnamcountyr1.net

Jeremy Watt
High School Principal
803 S. 20th

Andrew Garber
Middle School Principal
802 S. 18th

Donna Altiser
Elementary Principal
801 S. 20th

December 18, 2012

Dear Parents, Staff, Students, and District Patrons,

I am sure everyone is aware of the tragedy that unfolded Friday, December 14th, in a small Connecticut elementary school. Please continue to pray for all the victims and the families that are affected by this unbelievable tragedy. As a parent, I am sad and angry that this tragedy occurred. It is unthinkable. But, as your Superintendent of Schools I believe it is important to communicate to you what steps the school administration and staff have taken in regards to our safety program. First, we need to acknowledge that we are all sad beyond measure and angry that such an incident occurred, let alone in an elementary school. However, in the face of those deep emotions, we need to channel that energy to do whatever is necessary to ensure the safety of everyone on our campus. I realize that we cannot make guarantees, but I can guarantee that we have worked tirelessly to do everything humanly possible to ensure our children and staff members are in a safe learning environment.

Beginning with the 2009 bond issue we placed school safety and security at the forefront of our collective thinking and professional development. Fortunately, we annually review our safety plans, consulting with the following local emergency responders: Fire and Rescue, Ambulance district, Sheriff's department, City police, State Patrol, Centerville city police and we contract with a security company called Safe Plans to help ensure the latest safety procedures and making adjustments to school procedures based upon local safety professionals advice. Due to the sensitive nature of our safety plan I will outline the precautions we have taken:

1. With funds from our 2009 bond issue we did the following things; Thirty Security cameras were placed throughout the district; new outside doors were installed with magnetic locking mechanisms, which allows us to monitor the doors more closely; and finally all interior classroom doors had interior locking mechanisms installed
2. During that time we began working with Safe Plans to review our safety policies and procedures. We began with a Joint Planning meeting with: School officials, local public safety, public health and local emergency management. The purpose was to gather information from all the agencies. Next, we had a Site Security Assessment done. Then a Tactical Site Mapping was done which included pictures being taken and a new facilities map developed. Next was the Emergency Plans training, which had school administrators complete the National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliant emergency response plan. That was followed with a tabletop exercise with school staff and all local emergency personnel that allowed discussion regarding all agencies in the event of a school shooting. Finally, in August of 2012 we held an "active-shooter" training that permitted us and our local emergency personnel to put into practice what we have learned.

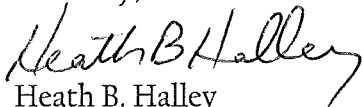
3. In coordination with Safe Plans we have developed an Emergency Response Quick Reference guide for our Safety Coordinator.
4. During the 2012 Christmas break an additional nineteen cameras will be installed on our campus.
5. During the school day only main entrance doors to the offices are accessible: High School Office, Middle School office and Elementary school.
6. Our counselors are available if students or staff members need to talk about the tragedy and how to effectively deal with the various emotions. As a parent or guardian, if you would like for your child to speak with a counselor please do not hesitate to contact their building administrator and we will be sure they will be connected with a counselor.

Chris Powell for Safe Plans states this: "From our company's perspective, there is nothing else to do. From your side, implement any changes that you need and pray that something never happens. Speaking from the fire fighter side of me, this is what we do; we train, train, train and hope we never have to use it. I can say that Putnam County R-1 is a great model for small school districts. The things that you've done and the training that you've had will be of great use to you."

John Roach Unionville City Administrator said this: "Because of the "active-shooter" training done with the school in August, we have upgraded our weaponry for our officers to ensure the best possible response if such a tragedy occurred."

Finally, I want to assure you that the Board of Education, Administration, and Staff are committed to providing our children a safe, positive, learning environment; however, we cannot accomplish this goal alone. We need all members of our school community to come together with the same single focus of helping to support the safety measures as those measures are implemented. Unfortunately, we live in a time where we must demand safety over convenience. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me by email at hhalley@putnamcountyr1.net or call my office at (660) 947-3361.

Sincerely,



Heath B. Halley
Superintendent