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February 13, 2023

Dear PRSD Students, Parents, Staff and Community,

At Pine-Richland, we recently shared information about two incidents connected to our high school. This message is designed to reflect on the topic of school safety at a broader level. Acts of violence in schools and other areas of the community have captured the attention of our country. The devastating losses associated with these events are difficult to comprehend. We know that anxiety and fear exist in our schools, our region and the country.



Effective communication is a priority at Pine-Richland. In the 2023 - 2027 strategic plan, we have a category focused on enhancing communication and strengthening community awareness. In those recent cases and as a standard practice, we send an initial message to the entire community for notice. This involves a rapid call to parents of students at the specific school and a regular eBlast for the rest of the district. When it is possible to provide a follow-up message, we do so as soon as possible and include as much information about resolution as we are able to share. We know that some individuals would like additional or more specific details about the incident and/or consequences. **We work very hard to balance community awareness (and right to information) and privacy rights (of individuals).** For serious infractions, it is possible that students are issued out-of-school suspension, potential expulsion for some period and/or referral to the police.

A safe, secure and welcoming environment serves as a critical foundation for learning. **The district engages in a wide range of proactive and responsive strategies to strengthen this environment.** The Emergency Operations Plan is approved on an annual basis. In addition, the district updates and reapproves a Memorandum of Understanding with the Northern Regional Police Department. Our plans are informed by best practice literature from the field (e.g., National Threat Assessment Center). It would increase risk to broadly share detailed descriptions of these plans. However, we want our community to be aware that our strategies include, but are not limited to: physical building improvements; technology systems; safety personnel; training; drill exercises; mental health services (internal and external); responsible reporting mechanisms; behavioral threat assessment and more. **A positive school culture fosters strong relationships between students, staff and the community.**

The immediate use of reporting mechanisms is a critical factor in school safety. **The idea of “see something...say something” is an effective best practice for enhancing safety.** In our recent situations, we appreciated the immediate reporting by our student body. If anyone has any information about a specific incident or any safety-related matter, please contact the tip line at 724-449-TIPS and use the Safe2Say Something application or [website](#). You can also contact an administrator or other trusted adult in the schools.

Thank you for your support of the Pine-Richland School District.

Respectfully,

Brian R. Miller, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Greg DiTullio
Board President

Website



Pine-Richland School District | 702 Warrendale Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044

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