



CHITTENANGO CENTRAL SCHOOLS
Michael R. Eiffe, Superintendent
1732 Fyler Road, Chittenango, NY 13037
Telephone: 315-687-2840—Fax: 315-687-2841

March 8, 2018

Jason P. Clark, Assistant
Superintendent for Instruction
315-687-2854-Fax: 315-687-2851

Scott Mahardy, Assistant
Superintendent for Business
315-687-2846-Fax: 315-687-2845

Mary Farber, Director
of Special Education/PPS
315-687-2844-Fax: 315-687-2851

Chittenango High School
Nicholas Fersch, Principal
Matthew Morkel, Asst. Principal
315-687-2900-Fax: 315-687-2924
Joseph Haven, Athletic Director
315-687-2905-Fax: 315-687-2924

Chittenango Middle School
Arnold Merola, Principal Grs. 5-6
Derek Sajnog, Principal Grs. 7-8
315-687-2800-Fax: 315-687-2801

Bolivar Road Elementary
Reneé Burgess, Principal
315-687-2880-Fax: 315-687-2881

Bridgeport Elementary
Jamie Durgey, Principal
315-687-2280-Fax: 315-687-2281

Food Services
Wendy Swift, Director
315-687-2866-Fax: 315-687-2861

Transportation
Connie Thorp, Supervisor
315-687-2870-Fax: 315-687-5823

Maintenance
Jeffrey Martin, Director
315-687-2863-Fax: 315-687-2861

Chittenango CSD Parents/Guardians and Fellow Community Members:

In the aftermath of the horrific events in Parkland, Florida, another national tragedy weighs heavily on our hearts and minds. Active shooter incidents at schools, colleges/universities, churches and public venues remind us that no community is immune to such tragedy. Further, in the wake of these events, no school district is invulnerable to insidious threatening statements which cause fear and disrupt the learning environment. As such, there is no greater responsibility than to err on the side of caution and safety in the protection of our school members.

The leadership team would like to underscore that behavior like this is taken seriously by all levels of school administration and law enforcement. When dealing with threatening behavior, whether real or perceived, the district acts in an abundance of caution to maintain the highest level of safety and security for our children and staff. Thus, protocol dictates that we collaborate with law enforcement officials, conduct a comprehensive investigation, levy disciplinary consequences through the student code of conduct and mandate mental health support structures to provide counseling services to those in need.

In the Chittenango Central School District, our greatest responsibility is the safety and security of our children, faculty and staff. Together, we stand as one to say with conviction and intentionality that we remain committed to this responsibility and to the preservation of a school culture built upon kindness, compassion and empathy. As you were informed prior to mid-winter break, months of planning by the CCSD and Village of Chittenango Police Department have yielded the implementation of a School Resource Officer within the CCSD based primarily at Chittenango High School. I am pleased to inform you that Officer Michael Thomas, a trained police officer with over 20 years of patrol experience in the Syracuse City Police Department and 7 years as a School Resource Officer in the Syracuse City School District, began working within the high school last week. Officer Thomas, also an honorably decorated veteran, is not only a deterrent to those who threaten our safety, he is an agent of building positive relationships and fostering positive engagement. His deployment in our schools, while at a very poignant and pertinent time, is representative of the resolve the CCSD has regarding student and staff safety.

The CCSD continues to conduct thorough reviews and real-time updates to our current building and district safety plans. Such an analysis, under the support of a District Safety Officer, is an on-going and organic process involving multiple first responder organizations. Likewise, we continue to plan and prepare for an impending self-initiated safety audit utilizing the professional expertise and knowledge of an accredited organization to review, assess and adjust district-wide safety measures. In fact, the tactical training/security firm we are using will be conducting a district-wide staff training on March 14 (Superintendent's Conference Day). This work exists parallel to the planning and preparation of a district-wide safety event, continuing our efforts from the fall, where district personnel will practice and prepare for safety threat scenarios under the collaboration and support of local first responders and the CCSD Leadership Team.

(Over)

While not all inclusive, below are some actions/protocols in place within the district:

All CCSD buildings have a single point of entry, locked doors (interior and exterior) throughout the school day and use of a visitor identification screening system called "Raptor". Raptor allows district personnel to scan a visitor's license or other state-issued identification which instantly screens for registered sex offenders and other trespassers. Approved visitors are provided an authorized name badge, indicating to all school personnel the verified presence of a visitor. Without a badge, staff are trained to report unauthorized people immediately.

Due to a recent building renovation project, each CCSD building possesses high resolution security cameras strategically positioned throughout the interior and exterior of each school. In non-student occupied hours, each building is also secured and monitored with a motion activated alarm system directly linked to local first responders and the head of maintenance and grounds.

School personnel, including custodial, maintenance, administration and office staff, make use of communication tools including walkie-talkies and cell phones for real-time communication. The District also deploys an emergency communication system, via text message and e-mail, immediately and directly sent to first responders in the event a building is placed in an emergency management lockdown or lockout. Instantaneously, any of our schools can be placed in lockdown with immediate notification to Chittenango Police, the Madison County Sheriff's Department and the NYS Troopers. All school personnel are trained and authorized to place a building in secured status given the presence of a threat.

District officials have conducted tabletop crisis drills in conjunction with emergency response agencies and are further seeking subsequent exercises in addition to active shooter and emergency threat trainings for staff members.

Chittenango HS has and continues to utilize the services of a professionally trained security guard who monitors security activity in our largest school building. In addition to a School Resource Officer, a professionally trained Chittenango Police Officer, the security guard is not only a deterrent but a proactive measure of prevention.

In partnership with the Madison County Sheriff's Department and Sheriff Todd Hood, Madison County Sheriff's Deputies have routine access to our schools (especially CMS, Bolivar Road and Bridgeport Elementary) and we are working with the department to establish an "out-post" office in our MS to increase presence and build relationships.

District personnel and students are always encouraged to report concerning and questionable behavior, in a "see something, say something" mentality. Every member of Chittenango Schools has a responsibility to uphold the culture of our school family and maximize the security of our school community. Therefore, as methods of prevention, school personnel remain dedicated to the facilitation of our character education programs, district-wide commitment to Rachel's Challenge and the "Chain Reaction" programming started in the fall.

Our Leadership Team is laser focused on increasing our efforts in staff training, reviewing discipline protocols to deter bullying and how to best reconnect disenfranchised students to their peers and trusted adults. Further, as the Board of Education and school administration prepares the budget for the upcoming school year, you can be assured that resources continue to be earmarked to address mental health issues, improve the safety of our buildings and harden our security infrastructure.

Again, while not all inclusive, I wanted to share some actions and protocols in place to give you peace of mind.

We understand the great trust you put in each of us every day that your child(ren) are in our care. Now more than ever, we need to come together as a community and I encourage anyone with concerns, suggestions or ideas to reach out to me and/or your building principal.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Eiffe
Superintendent of Schools