



Safety and Security Update Friday, July 20, 2018

Since the start of our 2018-2019 school year is only one month away, we are gearing up to reset our minds for new beginnings, new experiences and to make sure we are as prepared as possible for new challenges that inevitably lie ahead. It is easy to forget over the summer the numerous tragic school safety incidents that affected so many across our country in the K-12 school setting. From the tragedy in Parkland, Florida to the resounding statistic that a school shooting happens in our country once a week, it is critical that our district do everything we can to make sure our children are safe when they enter our doors. Sylvania Schools is not immune and we can't forget that we faced challenges with threats to our own safety as recently as last year.

Last March, a school safety forum was held in partnership with local law enforcement in Sylvania to inform the community of the work our district is already doing in this area and to field questions and concerns from hundreds of people who challenged us to do more. Since that day, our safety and security team has been hard at work surveying, researching and devising plans of what are appropriate next steps for our district. To enhance the safety and security of our Sylvania Schools, we need to move forward and accomplish the following:

- Increase visible law enforcement in our schools by hiring new additional school resource officers
- Address the mental health needs of our students in a hands-on way by adding mental health counselors at the elementary, junior high and high school level
- Increase security visibility with new and up to date digital internal and external cameras to monitor hallways, classrooms, parking lots, outdoor spectator areas and more
- Install an electronic school visitor identity system for check in and out of our schools
- Implement a new, secure communications network through an updated phone system allowing for direct access to police with increased reliability and digital emergency messaging

Through a partnership with school board members, administration, teachers and our own student leaders, we have worked with our legislators in Columbus to improve provisions within current law that allow for public school districts to request special funds to address safety and security needs. An amendment to House Bill 24 that passed in March 2018 now allows school districts to place a special safety and security levy on the ballot to gain dollars to address not only building safety improvement needs, but to have the ability to add school personnel such as law enforcement and counselors to address safety needs in a more immediate fashion to support our kids.

At the Monday, July 23, 2018 Sylvania Schools Board of Education meeting, a detailed presentation about the above mentioned needs along with a discussion of a possible 0.9 mill levy to be placed on the November 2018 ballot will be discussed in open session by school administrators and board members. We will be continuing to communicate the details of our plan and always welcome your feedback on the safety needs of our students. We encourage you to send us your thoughts on school safety to the email address; communications@sylvaniaschools.org

Our top priority in Sylvania is the safety of our children, our staff and our schools. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership of our school district in this ever-changing world we live in.

Dr. Adam Fineske
Sylvania Schools Superintendent