



Plattsmouth Community School District Central Office
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Working in partnership to ensure Academic achievement, responsible Behavior and Civic engagement.

To: Parents/Guardians/Patrons

From: Superintendent Dr. Richard E. Hasty

Re: Safety and Security

February 25, 2018

Student and staff safety continues to be a top priority for our district. In light of a credible threat and other unfounded threats in the Plattsmouth Community Schools and the Metro Omaha area, as well as school shootings in the United States, there have been questions about what our district is doing to keep our students and staff members safe. Based on past and recent events, there have also been questions about when a student that has been removed from school may resume attendance in the district.

PCS has a safety and security plan and protocols that were developed with renowned safety and security experts from Nesbitt and Associates School Security Services. The plan and protocols are not typically shared with the public, as doing so could compromise the safety of students, staff members, and first responders that implement them.

Each year our dedicated certificated and non-certificated staff members complete numerous safety training sessions that are provided by the Nebraska Association of School Boards (NASB). Some of the training sessions are first aid, child abuse identification and intervention, concussion awareness, sexual harassment, bullying recognition and response, personal protective equipment, student mental health, dating violence, and online safety. This is a partial list of the training sessions. The State of Nebraska also requires staff members to complete a one-hour, State-approved training session relative to suicide prevention.

We cannot underestimate the amount of time and attention that all staff members put into staying current on training such that they are properly equipped to prevent, or respond appropriately to, potentially unsafe situations. In addition to the identified safety training, building administrators schedule emergency drills and related training at their discretion or as required by law.

We have check in/check out systems for visitors at our schools. Background check screening is implemented for potential volunteers. Buzzer systems are used for monitoring activity at the front entrances. We have live video surveillance at all campuses. Staff members also have badges identifying them as school employees.

Due to the commitment from our Board of Education, PCS is fortunate to have a full-time school resource officer (SRO) from the Cass County Sheriff's Office. The SRO supports all buildings with preventing, or responding to, potentially unsafe situations.

In order to ensure that our students have adequate social and emotional support to effectively deal with unpleasant situations in their lives, our Board of Education made it a priority to employ three full-time school social workers/licensed mental health practitioners. Many schools of similar size do not have multiple social workers/licensed mental health practitioners. We have one at our elementary school, one at the middle school, and one at the high school. We also have a social/emotional consultant at our early childhood center with similar credentials.

The school social workers are extremely valuable as a preventive safety and security measure. They are trained to identify students in need of assistance and provide positive intervention that will help them respond appropriately in challenging life situations, before they might otherwise turn to aggression or violence.

Along with other staff members, our school social workers are also an integral part of our response (crisis) team. The response team is activated most often in situations involving a student or staff death, but they also assist school social workers with providing social and emotional support for students and staff members in other crisis situations. The response team may also be used in a preventive manner by providing social and emotional support for individuals. Our response team members are volunteers that choose to support others in challenging times.

Additionally, we have a PCS safety team that includes representatives from multiple departments in the district, food service, transportation, the Plattsmouth Police Department, and the Cass County Sheriff's Office. The team meets four times per year to review safety and security. In fact, members of our safety team, the Plattsmouth Police Department, and the Cass County Sheriff's Office will be meeting this week to discuss safety and security at PCS.

Notwithstanding, our Board of Education is currently involved in strategic planning for our district. Based on feedback from internal and external stakeholders, safety and security was identified as one of the top priorities for our district. As such, the team that is meeting this week will be discussing recommendations relative to safety and security, including training and drills.

If you have recommendations for improving safety and security in our district, please submit them to our virtual comment box called *Let's Talk*. Go to <http://bit.ly/2CI52bR>. Scroll down and click on Board of Education/Governance. Then, enter your suggestions relative to improving safety and security. We appreciate your feedback, as we seek ways to improve our safety and security.

The plan for communicating with parents/guardians regarding safety and security issues such as threats is to send an Infinite Campus message. The timing of the communication may vary depending on the specific details of each individual situation, as well as communication with law enforcement, in an effort to share accurate information. We appreciate your patience as we work through these difficult situations.

Lastly, based on past and recent events, there have been questions about when a student that has been removed from school may resume attendance in the district. Student removal from school for disciplinary reasons is determined by State statutes that are referenced in Policy 5101 Student Discipline (a link is provided under Announcements on the home page of the district website at

www.pcsd.org), with guidelines for expulsion in item 3.a. on page two. Offenses for which an expulsion may be extended are identified in items 17 and 18 on pp. 5-6.

As previously noted, student and staff safety continues to be a top priority for our district. We will continue to investigate any and all threats that are reported. Parents/guardians play an important role in communicating and reinforcing school safety procedures with their children, including talking with them, monitoring their social media use, and periodically checking their electronic devices. Please encourage your children to tell a trusted adult at home or at school, when they see a potentially unsafe situation.

Thank you for your support as we continually seek ways to improve safety and security for students and staff members in our district.

Dr. Richard E. Hasty
Superintendent