

Dear Parents and/or Guardians,

By now I am sure you are aware of the recent tragedies that have taken place in schools across our country. While no school or district can be totally prepared for such actions, I would like to pause and review some of our current district safety and security practices:

Preventive Measures:

- **School Safety Tip Line**
 - **Tip-line number: 1-800-585-3109**
 - Students, staff, parents and community members can call and leave an anonymous tip at any time by dialing this number.
 - Any information left at this number is immediately acted upon by the district, school and appropriate agencies.

- **Risk Assessment**
 - Anacortes administrators and counselors have received threat assessment training.
 - The District now has a highly trained *Threat Assessment Team* and our district participates in, and receives support from, a county-wide team.
 - The *Threat Assessment Team* reviews identified students for potential violent behaviors. Based on their assessment several intervening activities can and are implemented.

In addition, the following are some of the programs currently in place in our schools:

Anacortes High School

- ❖ Enforces Harassment policy protocols
- ❖ Link Crew Program: this program is committed to connecting incoming freshman with upper classmen who serve as their mentors as they transition through their freshman year.
- ❖ Peer Helpers
- ❖ Health units and assemblies designed to address issues of harassment and bullying
- ❖ Administrators are trained in risk assessment and safety procedures.
- ❖ Security measures at sporting events and extra-curricular activities include staff and administrator supervision, limited and supervised entrances/exits, etc.
- ❖ Full-time Substance Abuse Counselor
- ❖ Support and referral process to ARIS (At-Risk Intervention Services)
- ❖ High expectations for student behavior are clearly expressed and enforced

Anacortes Middle School

- ❖ Counselors provide classroom instructions in *2nd Step* Curriculum that addresses bullying issues
- ❖ Risk Assessment Training was completed by all counselors and principals.
- ❖ Defined system within our district, county and school that allows for the assessment of identified students for manifestation of potentially violent behaviors.
- ❖ Middle School Counselors have completed training on *Bullies to Buddies*. This program to help students deal with bullies whether students, teachers or parents.
- ❖ Full-time Substance Abuse Counselor
- ❖ Peer Mediators and Natural Helpers
- ❖ Support and referral process to ARIS (At-Risk Intervention Services)

Elementary Schools

- ❖ All elementary schools use the Kelso's Choice Curriculum which focuses on problem solving strategies
- ❖ DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) for grades 5 and 6
- ❖ Lessons in Character Education Curriculum
- ❖ Each school works diligently with counselors and staff to decrease negative school behaviors, discipline issues, and bullying.
- ❖ Counselors and administrators are actively involved and intervening with students who display bullying behaviors.

Transportation and Support Services

- ❖ On-going training for bus drivers in security measures and safety
- ❖ Safety drills practiced by all students
- ❖ Students are only released at stops with parent approval

School Security Measures

- **Training**
 - Prior to the beginning of school our staff spent a full day focused on the topic of school safety. In a meeting held at Brodnyak Hall the entire school district staff reviewed current district protocols for various emergency situations.
 - New *Emergency Procedure Handbooks* were placed in a visible location in every room in the District.
 - Many of our staff have received *Civilian Emergency Response Training*
 - Every school has a recently trained *Crisis Management Team* in place.
 - We will be providing training to *Building Safety Teams* this year regarding first-response training.

- **Practice**
 - Emergency evacuation drills, such as fire and earthquake drills, are practiced monthly in each of our buildings
 - This school year the Leadership Team and Building Safety Teams are focusing on lock-down procedures. In September a district-wide lock-down drill was simulated with the help, input and review of our local police force. In October the District will be conducting another lock-down drill with input and review from our Anacortes Police and Fire Department.
 - These drills are reviewed by the Leadership Team and adjustments made to enhance procedures and safety.
 - Further scheduled drills will continue through out the school year.
 - Note: Anacortes High School has been mapped by the city and county authorities so that they have a clear picture of the facility before entering an incident.

- **Facility Practice**
 - Each school limits access to the building and its students.
 - Visitors must report to the main office, sign in, and wear a visitor badge while in the building. In the event an adult is in the halls without a badge staff are to the notify main office of and ask the adult to report back to the front office.
 - All volunteers, parents and/or community members must be visually supervised by staff and complete a thorough background check.

- **Harassment/Bullying Policy and Procedures**
 - The district continues to take a focused look at anti-bullying and harassment programs and procedures
 - The district consistently reviews and revises its anti-bullying and harassment policies and protocols
 - All district schools have programs in place designed to prevent, mitigate and change bullying type behaviors. Character Trait Education is one district-wide effort to re-enforce productive and caring behavior.

- **Teachers, Counselors, Administrators and Staff**

- Caring and committed staff are always our first line of defense
- The skills and efforts of our staff are used on a daily basis to not only teach and model caring and collaborative behaviors, but they also intervene with conflict resolutions, counseling and mediation skills.
- Building teams are constantly reviewing efforts to change or intervene with students concerns
- These teams review identified cases and develop intervention strategies; when appropriate these teams refer cases to more therapeutic interventions.

It should be noted that *all our staff*, from drivers and cooks to teachers and administrators, make daily caring and listening connections with our students. These connections improve school climate and culture as well as keep a pulse on what is happening in the school.

As you can see, our District has taken several steps to ensure the safety of your child during the school day. However, we must continue to be vigilant and work to be consistent with our safety practices and procedures. Your help in this endeavor is critical. We greatly appreciate your willingness and understanding in following and practicing our school safety protocols. For further information please visit our website at: <http://www.asd103.org/>

Thank you, and if you have any ideas that can enhance the safety of our students, please feel free to discuss them with me. Your feedback is important and welcomed.

Sincerely,

Chris Borgen
Superintendent