



Blaine School District

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Recent events of school-related violence and tragedy in our nation have further reinforced concerns and expectations that we must remain diligent in the establishment, updating, and drilling of prevention, preparation and response protocols and procedures. Last Thursday night's misdirected email, originating as we learned later in the day on Friday, from a concerned parent in Blaine, Minnesota, is testimony to the fact that every school system and every community could at any time be susceptible to either intended, or unintended yet equally compelling, exposure to threats of violence.

While it is not possible to anticipate and plan in detail for every potential scenario, we are committed to remaining diligent in training to, and subsequently improving upon, the protocols that are in place, as well as additional protocols that should be taken into consideration. Safety of staff and students is our first priority and we will continue to work collaboratively with partner agencies, and other school districts, to consider and subsequently implement, procedures and protocols to best support this objective.

As we move forward, we will continue to consider this overall objective through four separate yet related lenses:

1. Prevention and Mitigation

We all understand that a vitally important part of any crisis-related plan is to do everything possible to enlist prevention and intervention related strategies, on behalf of our students, at all levels of the program. The list of current priorities in the arena of social and emotional needs monitoring and subsequent layers of response and intervention is long and ever expanding. [The most recent summary of priorities being addressed in the Blaine School District can be viewed by clicking here.](#) You will recognize that many of these initiatives involve collaboration with community based, third party resources. Consistently and effectively addressing the social and emotional needs of students, while also providing parallel support to families is a complex task, involving many entities. As we move forward in this work, we will continue to consider alternatives for a broader level of community collaboration.

As we summarize the general elements of our Crisis Response Plan on the Blaine Campus, it is important to reinforce that our Operations Department provides direct and streamlined support to Pt. Roberts Primary School in response to the unique needs of students and staff at this site.

Mitigation steps in place or evolving are inclusive of but not limited to:

- both non-automated and fully automated alternatives for campus-wide announcement of lock-down;
- both dedicated cell phone and recently upgraded two-way radio communication linkage to buildings and between buildings, with the dedicated cell phone linkage inclusive of Blaine Police Department Dispatch;
- recent implementation of an Anonymous Tip Reporting System for safety concerns, including threats;
- ongoing prioritization process for the improvement of both interior and exterior door locking mechanisms;
- continued expansion of video camera points across the Blaine Campus; and
- consultation with the City of Blaine on alternatives for expanding the current level of School Resource Officer presence on the Blaine Campus.

2. Preparation

The Blaine School District continues to plan and train (drill) for a range of potential emergency responses with the expectation that we are making every possible effort to best assure for the safety of students and staff. We are required, by the State of Washington, to initiate a set number of drills, of various types, over the course of each school year. We take this process very seriously and consistently seek to respond, post drill, to the concerns and recommendations of staff. We also remain diligent in assuring that the Blaine Police Department is aware of and present during lockdown drills, as their input and feedback is vitally important.

“Continuing Our Commitment To Excellence”

Our K-12 Alert System has allowed us to more effectively communicate with parents and staff, via telephone, in an impromptu and urgent manner. As this system is limited to a 30-second message, we have, as demonstrated on Friday, February 23, then moved to use of the website, for communicating updates to our families, staff and patrons. We are in the process of initiating a new website format, with the objective of assuring for more timely initiation of these messages and greater efficiency of access to our public.

Over the course of many years, law enforcement partners, including local, county and federal representatives, have used our actual school sites, outside of regular school hours, to conduct comprehensive drills specific to urgent and direct crisis response.

Each of our sites have been mapped, and are accessible electronically to emergency responder entities, including all levels of law enforcement, as well as fire/medic.

3. Incident Response

In the event of an incident precipitating a command for lockdown, it is our first priority to get students and staff secured, so that law enforcement and emergency responders can carry out their responsibilities.

No two incidents are the same and, as such, it is vitally important that the adults involved are adequately trained to respond to special circumstances in real time.

The movement of students and staff away from a given location will be determined by the nature and location of the direct incident.

4. Incident Recovery

The overall configuration of the Blaine School District Campus has to this point precipitated, as a default, the conclusion that reunification will take place on campus, as the movement of 2100 students and 250 staff members, particularly into the existence of impassable streets, creates compounding safety risks. At this time, we are networking with other school districts in Whatcom County in analyzing additional alternatives, in consideration of mass relocation and subsequent reunification of students and families.

Next Steps

As referenced earlier, the Blaine School District is in consultation with the City of Blaine regarding options for expanding upon our current level of School Resource Officer presence on the Central Campus.

The process of addressing improvements to both internal and external locking systems is in progress. The Blaine School District will continue to consider options for addressing entrance points for which the variables, including frequency of student and staff access, are more complex.

The Blaine School District will also continue the process of networking with other school Districts, and the Washington Schools Risk Management Pool, in considering options for expanding protocols for reunification to include off site alternatives.

As emergency response protocols are expanded, so too will the need for additional staff training. We must take into consideration time and financial implications for this added training, and assure that our overall budget planning process is reflective of this priority commitment.

In conclusion, the safety of the students, staff and patrons of the Blaine School District is the ultimate priority. Administrators will continue to review concerns and needs, so that refining and improving upon this process can continue. We appreciate our staff's commitment to the education of students and dedication to their profession. The Blaine School District is a great place to work and learn...every day.

Sincerely,

Ronald C. Spanjer
Ron Spanjer Ed.D.
Superintendent

