

April 14, 2023

Dear Parents, Employees, Students, and Community:

As you know, we were one of 35 school districts in the state who received an emailed bomb threat that was quickly determined to be a hoax by all law enforcement entities across the school districts. No specific school or district was listed by name.

I have only had a few parent calls/emails about this situation, and I don't fault any of them because school safety is of national concern, and certainly affects us intensely because the children in our care are our greatest treasure.

Through those conversations, it became apparent that we may not have shared the protective factors we have in place when it comes to school safety. School safety is not only about ensuring that we are protected from bad actors, but also includes tending to the mental health and feeling of belonging for each of our students.

Here is a list of some of the measures we take to ensure students are as safe as possible:

Employee Hiring

- Fingerprints and criminal background checks are done on all employees.
- We conduct Washington State Patrol background checks on all volunteers.

Emergency Planning

- We use standard emergency procedures in all schools and offices.
- Emergency drills are practiced regularly.
- We intentionally do not publicly share all of our safety measures (evacuation routes, secondary evacuation sites, etc.) to prevent an outside "bad actor" from pre-planning an attack.
- We are enhancing our preparedness for an active shooter incident with twenty district staff scheduled to become certified trainers and all district staff to be trained in ALICE <https://www.alicetraining.com/>.
- We build strong relationships with our local officials and law enforcement.
- Local law enforcement and other first responders are invited to observe our drills, evacuations, lockdowns, reunification procedures, etc. and provide concerns and suggestions for improvement.
- Access at schools is ideally limited to just one exterior door. This is not yet possible at all campuses.
- We have published a request for proposals to upgrade our alert systems as needed, such as: building intercoms, handheld radio upgrades, bus camera and radio upgrades, and panic buttons in classrooms. We are able to do this due to receiving one time federal funding. The goal is to ensure that every school has such systems.

- All websites, emails, and cloud stored documents are monitored and scanned for specific words. If a word on the alert list is found, the use is reviewed and an investigation initiated.
- All supervisors are certified in Basic Incident Command.
- District level administrators receive additional training in Crisis Management for School Based Incidents.
- Administrators meet with lead supervisors from our local law enforcement and fire department to discuss emerging concerns and improvements.
- All school and district supervisors carry emergency radios.
- All school and district supervisors carry cell phones with the capacity to monitor the District's 200+ cameras, as well as lock or unlock some electronic doors.
- Law enforcement from EWPD and DCSD have been provided key fobs to access all school buildings and are provided access to district cameras in emergency situations.
- Employees receive annual training that focuses on student safety as a primary responsibility.

Student Level Safety

- This [link](#) is on every school website. It allows someone to report safety concerns anonymously. Incidents are reported regularly that are sent to administrators for immediate evaluation and investigation.
- Any threats involving a student are reviewed using a threat assessment process originally recommended by the U.S. Secret Service. If it is determined there is any evidence a credible threat exists, law enforcement is contacted and involved in the continuing investigation.
- Students whose misbehavior continues to increase in severity and intensity are referred to law enforcement.
- Local law enforcement is present when we search for any reported firearms.
- We now have two School Resource Officers.

Additional Protective Factors

- We are partnered with Care Solace www.caresolace.com/eastmont to provide students, staff and families with support in accessing mental health and substance abuse treatment.
- Our newly formed Superintendent Student Advisory Council consists of representatives from both junior highs and the high school. They chose as one of their first actions is to survey all 7th-12th grade students on the topic of 'belonging', i.e., to what extent do our students feel like they belong in their school and why.
- We continue to build rich relationships with our students, staff and families so that our eyes and ears are open to potential areas of concern.

Although we can never be fully prepared for any type of emergency that may come our way, we can do as much as we possibly can on our watch to protect our children. I pray for the day when our schools, places of worship, grocery stores, and local events that help define our society are once again safe. Thank you for your vigilance and partnership.

In service,

Becky Berg
Superintendent