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March 5, 2018

Dear Guilderland School Community,

The Guilderland Central School District has always placed our highest level of priority on the safety and security of our buildings. In light of heightened concerns about safety following the recent tragedy in Parkland, Florida, I want to take this opportunity to share with our community the variety of measures the school district has taken in recent years to enhance the security of our schools. While the list of specific physical security measures is extensive, the majority of our efforts focus on building a stronger school community through communication, respect, and responsibility. We work hard to foster an environment where all are comfortable to say something if they see or hear something.

Security Systems

Every day, we use a variety of systems to keep our students safe. There is just a single entrance open in each building throughout the day; all other doors are locked. When visitors arrive, they enter through a controlled double point of entry system, which is staffed during normal school hours. These entryways have security film to prevent shattering and a panic button to lock doors even if they are programmed to be open. Visitors receive photo ID badges they are required to wear throughout their stay, and their names are checked against a national sex offender database. Inside of our buildings, the district recently installed "intruder cores" on doors so that every occupied space can be secured from the inside.

Relationships with First Responders

This physical security is enhanced by the relationships we maintain with our local first responders. First and foremost is a School Resource Officer (SRO) with the Guilderland Police Department who is stationed at the high school. The SRO is not only a visible presence at the school but serves as an important liaison between the school district and first responders as well as a valued resource for improving and enhancing the district's security protocols and response. In addition, throughout the district there is a network of 256 cameras, which can be linked with the Guilderland Police Department (GPD) or Albany County Sheriff's Office. In the event of an emergency, they have the access to view what is happening in our buildings in real time. Also, we have shared extensive and detailed information with first responders about our facilities. They know our buildings well and can access them easily since each GPD police car carries a key and swipe card to enter. To further assist our first responders, we have labeled every entrance to each of our buildings so they know precisely which entrance to use to respond to an

emergency. Law enforcement agencies have used our high school to conduct joint training exercises during unoccupied times. Finally, our District-wide Safety and Security Oversight Committee meets annually with first responders to review our safety plans and discuss important and timely topics. Building and district-wide safety committees also meet regularly to address issues and concerns and plan training and drills. The Guilderland Police Department regularly participates in and supports our drills and other safety related activities.

Safety Procedures and Protocols

Beyond those relationships, we know that the best security comes from within. That is why we perform regular announced and unannounced lockdown and shelter in place drills with all faculty, staff, and students. Safety teams in all buildings and the district office participate in annual table top drills, and then debrief to address concerns that are identified as part of the drill. In our two largest buildings, Farnsworth Middle School and Guilderland High School, we employ monitors to oversee the hallways, parking lots, cafeterias, and other spaces where students and others congregate. The district has also developed extensive emergency preparedness procedures that are available to all faculty and staff. An expanded version of those procedures is available for administrators in a flip chart binder and smartphone app.

In addition, all new employees, including teachers, are fingerprinted before they are hired and extensive background checks are done by the State Education Department and the FBI. While in school, all staff members are required to wear an identification badge at all times.

Next Steps

But even with these measures, we know that we can always do more and we are considering further security upgrades as part of an upcoming capital project.

As always, if you have questions or concerns about your child's safety, please do not hesitate to call your building's principal or my office. Together, we will work to ensure that our students are safe and secure while getting a rich, fulfilling education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marie Wiles".

Marie Wiles, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools