

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Office of the Superintendent

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Dear Parents,

We are writing to share some general information about the RSU 9 emergency preparedness efforts. We are honored that you share your children with us every day and we take the responsibility for their well-being very seriously.

Please know that we have long-standing plans that are focused on a variety of emergencies, and we update them frequently to improve our plans and keep them relevant.

Our district has a school safety committee made up of teachers, administrators, law enforcement, fire rescue, parents, and emergency medical services. This group meets on a regular basis to review emergency response procedures, helping determine the best steps possible to ensure the safety of our schools and community. As part of our planning efforts, we work closely with committee members representing our public safety agencies to develop procedures to be followed in the event of a situation at one of our schools. We have also worked with a representative from the US Department of Homeland Security this past year to conduct an onsite audit of our schools as well as a procedural audit of our district's policies and procedures, thus ensuring our schools are as safe as possible.

To ensure that our policies and procedures are effective, our schools have practiced serious and age-appropriate lockdown drills over the last several years involving students from pre-kindergarten through high school. These drills have proven to be very effective in clarifying our response to active threats and significantly reducing the questions and possible hesitancy our staff and students may have in responding in the event of an emergency. Additionally, we require all employees to be trained in *Avoid, Deny, Defend* (ADD), which is an active attacker response training used throughout the country.

To facilitate a common community understanding of some important terms at the heart of our safety plans, we provide the following explanations:

Lockdown: A lockdown may be called when there is a security issue in a school, on school grounds, or closely affecting the school campus that creates a situation where students, guests, and staff must stay put, get out of sight, and secure their location for us to deal with the situation most effectively. When a building is put into lockdown, **NO ONE, except Law Enforcement**, will be permitted access to the building.

Lock-Out: A lock-out may be called when there is an external security issue outside of a school building. A lock-out will keep staff and students within the building and limit access to the school.

Reunification: Involves student/parent/guardian reunification in the event of an emergency, a lockdown, or a lock-out. The reunification plan is district-wide and tailored for each building.

During a situation where student/parent/guardian reunification needs to take place, messages will be sent to parents/guardians through the *school/district's notification system using a BrightArrow announcement to explain where to report to meet up with your children.

*BrightArrow is a modern school/district-wide notification system used to keep parents/guardians updated during school incidents as soon as we have accurate information to share. It is unreasonable for us to keep up with the wide variety of social media platforms that can be used to transmit information. Using the school/district notification system allows us to speed up the sharing of accurate, vital information with all concerned. This system is only as good as the updated family information that we are supplied with, so it is critical for our schools to have updated email and cell phone information from every family.

Help us enhance our school safety plans!

- Ensure your contact information is up to date with your child's school or by you in Powerschool.
- Do not call the school immediately after learning of an incident involving the school. This will interrupt the procedures school staff need to be following to protect our students. We will communicate with you as soon as possible to ensure your/our children are taken care of.
- Do not come to the school campus expecting to pick up your child without an understanding of what is going on. The campus may be on lockdown and law enforcement will be prohibiting access to help ensure the safety of our students and staff. Having to deal with your presence could take much-needed attention by law enforcement away from the immediate, most pressing situation.
- Be prepared to receive a school/district notification message and follow the requests of the administrator. This may be an update on the situation, an advisement of the relocation of the students, or a request for assistance with the school reunification procedures.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our safety planning, please feel free to speak with your child's school principal. These conversations may be very helpful to keep you informed and understand the procedures we are taking to ensure the safety of everyone at our schools.

Thank you,

RSU 9 School Safety Committee