

MT. BLUE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHESTERVILLE – FARMINGTON – INDUSTRY – NEW SHARON – NEW VINEYARD – STARKS – TEMPLE – VIENNA – WELD – WILTON
129 SEAMON ROAD, SUITE 2, FARMINGTON, ME 04938
Phone (207) 778-6571 | Fax (207) 778-4160

“Public Schools not only serve the public, they make the public.”

TO: RSU 9 Students, Parents and Guardians
FROM: Christian M. Elkington, Superintendent
RE: RSU 9 School Safety Update
DATE: 12-16-2021

First, I want to assure everyone that all threats, either written or overheard, perceived or real are immediately investigated to determine their validity and if our schools, staff and district need to take immediate action, whether that be going into lockdown, keeping or sending students home, or calling in law enforcement for support or to help investigate. Also, it is important for you to know that all of our schools have trained personnel or teams available to address threats. This includes principals, counselors, and our SRO, who have all been given special training. RSU #9 uses the Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) which is a statewide approved procedure for dealing with threats. Please also know that we have an active RSU 9 Safety Committee in our district with members from local Law enforcement, the District Attorneys' Office and Juvenile Justice and RSU 9 Staff that meets regularly to discuss and review our safety procedures and plans.

Earlier this week we were made aware of some comments one of our students made to another student at Mt. Blue Middle School (MBMS) about a threat of violence potentially happening at the school. MBMS Administration immediately investigated and found that what was said was said out of frustration and there was no credible threat. The investigation included a parent coming to the school, the student being questioned, the student's locker & book bag being searched, and the student's friends and classmates being interviewed. Because this took place at the end of a school day, the investigation had to happen over two days, which meant some students went home before we could reach them and started sharing what they either heard or were told someone said before being interviewed by us. Please know that our School Resource Officer took part in this investigation, and nothing was found to be planned or being contemplated.

Unfortunately, this has happened at the same time as we continue to think about the Michigan school shooting and victims along with a national investigation regarding a Tik Tok trend/comment/sensation going around the US. This Tik Tok said that there will be a shooting in a US school this Friday, December 17th. Either a person or group is supposedly promoting violence at a school or schools in the US on Tik Tok. Schools in New Hampshire, Maryland and Illinois appear to be where the threats are based or focused on. **Please know that this Tik Tok trend/comment/sensation has been investigated by US Law Enforcement Officials at all levels and has been found NOT to be credible at this time!** Please also know that we receive threat assessments from the Maine Information and Analysis Center (made up of all levels of law enforcement officials), which sends out important *Situational Awareness* notices to school leaders along with to state and federal government organizations. The information I received on this Tik Tok item above, came from them.

As I think we all know in today's world when items like this are either shared or are combined with other circumstances and circulated on social media nothing positive happens and concerns are raised. We appreciate the fact that when either our students or our parents and guardians become aware of possible concerns that you will naturally be worried about your children's safety and that you will ask questions and want answers!

Please know that your RSU 9 Admin Team has previously discussed what the public and us know led to the shooting in Michigan and how we would act if a series of similar events happened here. I asked our School Resource Officer to investigate getting more information for us to see if there were any steps or adjustments, we needed to make regarding our

safety procedures, but no new info is being shared out of Michigan. Our strong belief is that by following our present expectations around student, staff and school safety, with what we know did or did not happen in Michigan, that we are prepared to deal with a similar situation if the events we know of started to occur here.

I want to assure everyone that your RSU 9 Administration takes threats to our students, staff, school, and district with the utmost importance. That STUDENT and STAFF SAFETY is our #1 PRIORITY! We will continue to be diligent with investigating all threats and that we will ask for when necessary additional law enforcement presence.

Lastly, please know that our Administrators and School Resource Officer will be working from a higher level of concern over the next several days to hopefully ease concerns by helping our students and staff feel more secure in our schools.