

February 25, 2013

School Safety Community Letter

Soon after the tragedy of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012, Stonington Town Officials and leadership from our Private Schools met to discuss plans for our schools. On December 19, 2012, a letter was sent informing the community of our plans to establish a task force that would examine our school's safety. Since then, this task force has met and a smaller group continues to meet on a regular basis again examining these issues in both the Public and Private Schools of Stonington. Below is listed some of the items we have been examining and/or have implemented in some form:

MEASURES CURRENTLY IN PLACE

Infrastructure/Technology

- Crisis response plans in place and a copy given to each staff member
- Lockdown drills are practiced regularly to educate students and staff
- Many schools are already equipped with camera systems that allow police access during an emergency
- Increased locking of exterior doors; hence, steering visitors through the main office areas
- All visitors must sign in at front offices. In some schools, a system is in place where driver's licenses are scanned
- In many of the schools, staff must wear ID badges for identification
- Classroom door locking mechanisms have been modified in many of the schools
- All staff are directed to immediately report unfamiliar visitors/suspicious persons

Police Personnel

- Police personnel have access to most of the school buildings using ID cards.
- Increased police presence in all the schools since Sandy Hook

Mental Health

- Eight police officers have been specialty trained in crisis intervention techniques with continued on-going training
- Rachel's Challenge program (anti-bullying program) has been in place in Stonington since last year

NEW MEASURES IN PROGRESS

Infrastructure/Technology

- Keying all classroom doors alike in some buildings so that all staff has access to any classroom in case of an emergency
- Developing police sub-stations within certain schools
- Installing devices that allow the police access to master keys and maps
- Installing a panic button system is in the planning stages at one school as a test site. This system would allow "Code Red" activation from any classroom. If activated, a message would be instantly transmitted through the building and also transmit an alert to the police department. System may also allow door closures. This system is similar to a fire alarm.

Police Personnel

- Additional visits by SPD officers on regular patrol
- Periodic duty assignment of SPD Officer(s) solely to visit schools for the day

Mental Health

- On-going specialty training of Police Officers known as CIT Officers (Crisis Intervention Training)

FUTURE MEASURES BEING STUDIED:

Infrastructure/Technology

- Increasing the number of cameras district wide, including exterior pan and tilt systems
- Installing glass treatment on exterior windows that will make them tempered and safety rated
- Constructing interior hallway walls, which will prevent direct access to classroom wings and restrict visitors to office areas only
- Replacing exterior glass doors with metal doors
- Installing general government radios in school front offices enabling instant access to police dispatch

Police Personnel

- Increased presence of Police Officers in all Schools on a consistent basis

Mental Health

- Examining the status and availability of mental health services in the schools and Town wide

In the upcoming weeks, the School Safety Committee will continue to meet and discuss options within our schools. The focus on improved technology and infrastructure, increased police presence, and examination of our mental health resources will continue. We are also closely monitoring what our State Government may do in these areas, as well as, our professional associations in education and law enforcement. As more information is gleaned on school safety measures, we endeavor to keep the

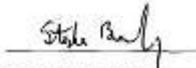
public aware of our efforts with the overriding goal of safety for our children, the staff, and the community as a whole.

Respectfully and Sincerely,



Dr. Van Riley

Superintendent Stonington Schools



Stephen Bennhoff

Head, Pine Point School



Chief Darren Stewart

Chief of Police



Daris Messina

Principal, St. Michael's School



Edward Haberek Jr.

First Selectman