

# Thoughts on School Safety

## Greetings,

The most troubling part of starting this message is that I have to write the words “once again” to describe the horrific shooting that occurred at the high school in Florida. On behalf of the entire Board of Education and all of our staff, I offer our most sincere condolences to the families of the victims of this terrible tragedy. Our hearts go out to all of the students and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida.

Today, I’m attending the National Superintendents Conference along with more than 600 superintendents from around the country. The discussion of school safety, violence in society, and what needs to be done to stop these tragic events has taken over and consumed this conference.

When these types of events occur it is not uncommon for organizations to evaluate their own emergency plans. There are two very important parts to consider; how we respond if there is an emergency and what practices we have in place to prevent the emergency from ever happening. I would like to offer the following.

## **How we respond if there is an emergency:**

We are very fortunate to be part of a community that dedicates resources to police and fire services. Response time for fire or police assistance in Dearborn is excellent, in most cases first responders will be on scene in a matter of only a couple of minutes.

We have an excellent relationship with the City of Dearborn, Police, Fire, and Emergency Management. That relationship allows us to share information and stay informed on the latest safety and emergency procedures.

All schools conduct “Table Top Exercises” where first responders and school personnel sit down together and work through what they would do given a specific emergency situation such as a fire, tornado, or even an active shooter. This spring, the district and the Emergency Management Team from Dearborn will conduct a live exercise at a Dearborn Public School.

All of our schools have emergency management plans in place and are updated yearly.

Per state law, tornado, fire and other emergency drills are practiced throughout the year.

## **What we do to prevent situations from occurring:**

One of the best ways to prevent the type of incident that occurred in Florida from happening here in Dearborn is by building relationships with our students, parents, and community.

There are several ways we do this:

- Dedicated Teachers who get to know their students

- Parent and Community Liaisons in schools
- Social Workers & Counselors
- Parent meetings
- Community partners working in our schools
- Student groups
- Programs designed to help students through the transition years
- School Resource Officers

We are very fortunate to have the seven School Resource Officers in our schools. Not only do they provide a level of security in case of a serious incident but more importantly they are in the schools talking with students and making connections that help them stop tragedy before it occurs.

All schools in Dearborn have a door locking system that only allows entry into the building after you have identified yourself and the door is unlocked by a staff member. This ensures that strangers are not walking into our buildings.

History has shown that these types of school shootings can occur at any time at any school. We can't make any guarantees but we can be prepared in the event that something happens and even more important take steps to prevent these types of events from ever taking place. However, we can't do it alone. The students are only with us six to eight hours a day and social media, family, friends and other outside factors all have a far greater influence on how people behave. Only by working together with our students, parents, community, and staff can we create a safe learning environment for all.

Thank you,

**Glenn M. Maleyko, Ph.D.**  
**Superintendent**