



Monona Grove School District

"Promoting Excellence for Global Opportunities"

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www.mononagrove.org

November 5, 2018

Dear Monona Grove School District Families,

The safety and security of our students, staff, and visitors is our top priority so that students and staff are able to focus on the important work of teaching and learning. We are always working to improve our processes and planning. I have a number of updates for you today.

State Law on Safety Drills

In addition to regular fire drills and tornado drills, Wisconsin state law also requires all school districts to "drill all pupils in the proper method of evacuation or other appropriate action in case of a school safety incident" at least twice a year. The Board of Education has also adopted the policy that "school safety incident action plan drills are conducted at least twice annually." Monona Grove School District is in compliance with both state law and our own board policy.

In my April 2018 memo to families, I let you know that MG schools have adopted threat procedures known as ALICE (**A**lert, **L**ockdown & **B**arricade, **I**nforn, **C**ounter, **E**vacuate & **E**scape). ALICE encourages individuals to make the best decisions based on their location and their proximity to the active threat. When we introduced ALICE to students in April, it was important to not rush into overloading the students with too much information at once. We continue to deliver ALICE in a deliberate way so that students will remember what they are taught and in order for learning to continue to build on the foundation that has been created.

How the drills will look: Drilling on school safety incidents will look slightly different based on school building and grade level. These drills could include "talking drills" (reading or age-appropriate activities), "thinking drills" (planning and idea-generating), or active practice drills (calmly practicing barricading or evacuating to a safe area). If you have questions about how your students will participate in these drills, please contact the school principal.

When the drills will take place: We are required to have two drills per year; it is up to the school principal to work with District School Resource Officers (SROs) and others to schedule and plan these drills. Some of our schools have already conducted their first drill of the school year.

Moving forward, as of November 1, 2018, we will not alert families in advance of drills; teachers and staff will be aware and will provide additional support to those students who may need it.

Because these drills are new to students and families, families can expect to receive a message from the school on the day of the drill once it has taken place. As we continue to weave this aspect of safety into our curriculum and process and plans in the coming school years, we will also revisit how often and when we notify families. Any potential change in the years ahead will be announced ahead of time.

Communication moving forward: From now on, families can expect a safety update from the District once per year near the start of the school year. This message will include a reminder about the drills and procedures, and any other important information families need regarding school safety.

Talking to your children about the drills: Reminders of safe practices help us to make good decisions about personal safety. You can help prepare students for ALICE by reinforcing the following concepts at home:

- Self-confidence comes from trying things that are difficult and get easier as we practice them.
- There are many solutions and options when faced with a problem.
- When we are prepared for difficult situations, we make informed decisions and have more control.
- Our children are smart and capable, when they have the knowledge about how to prepare and respond.
- Help your child identify and assess possible crisis situations.
- Have your child explain the different safety drills they practice at school and when they use them.
- Discuss the importance of following the teacher's directions at all times.

You can also purchase "[I'm Not Scared, I'm Prepared](#)," a book about ALICE procedures we use in school. More information regarding ALICE can be found at <http://www.alicetraining.com/>.

District and School Safety Plans

We have reconvened the District Safety Committee and are in the process of making comprehensive updates to the District and school safety plans. This includes an update to the terminology and definitions of emergency procedures. We will continue to update you on the committee's work when there is relevant information to share.

State School Safety Grants

Monona Grove applied for and received two grants from the State of Wisconsin Department of Justice, totalling nearly \$340,000. The scope of these grants is narrow but is nonetheless a welcome enhancement to our own efforts. The grants will pay for:

- Glass hardening material/shatter resistant films for selected windows in all buildings
- A video security management system, including some new security cameras
- Tactical trauma kits
- Additional staff training in the areas of mental health and crisis intervention
- An incident notification system

Messaging System

In September, I wrote to you to let you know we were investigating new messaging tools to communicate with families after a major technological outage from Infinite Campus. We have received information and pricing from vendors and have narrowed our selection. I expect to be able to announce the selected vendor--and how the transition to the new system will work--in the next few weeks.

Resources

We will be adding a new section to our website on school safety. This section will include much of the same information listed above but in greater detail, as well as other safety resources and emergency procedures, and will be updated regularly. We will send a message to families when that section of the website is launched.

Please continue to reach out to me, other district administrators, and school principals about District safety. We welcome your feedback on our efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dan W. Olson".

Dan Olson
Superintendent