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# Superintendent Update 5-24-2022 – School Safety

1 message

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Wed, May 25, 2022 at 3:22 PM

Dear Dexter Schools Community,

Our hearts are heavy for the Robb Elementary community in Uvalde, Texas after yesterday's tragedy, and we want to extend our sincere condolences to everyone who was impacted. As I continue to process yet another tragic school shooting and ponder how to keep DCS kids and staff safe at school, I cycle through emotions of sadness and anger at the situation that has become all too common across our country.

I've been a Superintendent for 14 years and according to the files I just searched, I've written at least 20 letters to families after a tragedy like yesterday's school shooting. As a school district, we have safety plans and measures in place (summarized below). However, these measures are local efforts to protect against a greater societal problem that we alone cannot solve. The fact is that we have safety plans in place. We have security measures in place. We run drills. We train staff. We meet with law enforcement and everything we do is "proactively reactive" in design because we have a societal problem that we, as a country, need to address. Dexter Community Schools will continue to do everything possible to ensure the safety of our students and staff while balancing this with maintaining an environment that is conducive to learning and welcoming to our families and students.

## **As a school district, here's a list of safety items and protocols we have in place:**

- DCS has a comprehensive Emergency Operations Plan that was created in conjunction with law enforcement and first responders. This plan is in each classroom throughout the district, staff have been trained on the plan, it is reviewed regularly, and is approved by the Board of Education regularly. The plan is not publicly shared in order to protect the contents against bad actors.
- We meet with county law enforcement regularly and met with law enforcement as recently as last week to again review short-term changes in plans as well as long-term needs.
- We have over 550 security cameras in our buildings.
- We have secure entrances at every building and security infrastructure throughout each building.
- Our teachers and administrators have been trained in ALICE protocols.
- We review ALICE protocols with staff and students on a regular basis in an appropriate manner for student age. Our students and staff are utilizing OK2SAY to report threats and every threat is investigated.
- We have a full-time Washtenaw County Sheriff's Department liaison officer housed at DHS with access to every DCS building on a regular basis.
- Our teacher classroom door handles are always locked with a mechanism that can quickly be removed to lock the door shut in a lock down.
- We conduct regular drills throughout the school year that include lock down drills at passing times, lunches, etc. We conduct threat assessments for any reported threat.
- Every threat, no matter how big or small, is illegal and will be investigated by schools and law enforcement. Threats against the safety of our schools are never a joke, and law enforcement and school leaders will take action to protect our community, including and up to prosecution.
- We have software that monitors communication on our network to search for threats and terms. We used software for social media monitoring but it is not effective with Snapchat and Instagram which is where most kids are sharing information.
- We've partnered with the county on expanded crisis and clinical mental health support thanks to our county's Public Safety and Mental Health Preservation Millage.
- We recently added two additional counselors and two social workers. DCS has one of the highest ratios of counselors to students and social workers to students in the state.

This is not an all-inclusive list but summarizes the systems we have in place. We're always hesitant to share everything we do because experts have warned us that someone who wants to harm others often utilize shared plans.

We know these terrible events affect students, families, and staff, we want to remind everyone that help and support is available to you and your family:

- **Washtenaw County's Community Mental Health 24/7 Crisis Line:** Call (734) 544-3050
- **Ozone House's Youth Emergency Services and 24/7 Crisis Line:** Call (734) 662-2222; or text "Ozone" to (734) 662-2222 M-TH 10:00 am-5:00 pm and Friday 10:00 am-4:00 pm; or [Click here to chat](#) M-TH 10:00 am-5:00 pm and Friday 10:00 am-4:00 pm.

Schools across Michigan continue to participate in [OK2Say](#), an anonymous tip line, should any student, family member, or staff person hear of something that may harm our school community.

As your child or student processes and reflects on this event, you may notice a change in their behavior. Incidents like these can profoundly impact children and students, even if they were not directly involved. If you are seeking support on how to talk to your child or student about what happened today, [here are tips](#) for parents, guardians and caregivers. Additionally, Sesame Street provides resources on [violence](#) and [trauma](#) for younger children. It is also important for parents, guardians and caretakers to talk with and support one another. Should you feel the need for extra support, please do not hesitate to reach out to a teacher, social worker, program supervisor, colleague or someone else you trust.

**Please know that we will do everything we can to protect our students and staff while maintaining an environment that is conducive to learning and friendly to our families.**

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Christopher Timmis, EdD  
Superintendent

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