



May 25, 2022

Dear Lamoille North Families,

Yesterday we heard about another horrific and senseless act of violence, this time at an elementary school in Texas. At last count, 19 children and 2 adults lost their lives. Our hearts are with the students, staff, families and all members of the community. These children, educators and families were eagerly awaiting the beginning of summer break and looking forward to end-of-year celebrations and a joyful dismissal on Thursday. The lives of these people, their families and community, will never be the same. This situation can happen anywhere, including small communities, and as we have learned, Uvalde, Texas, is a small community and the elementary school has just shy of 600 students.

Although there are many different opinions on how we can mitigate this kind of violence, the one universal and shared belief is the need to protect our children and all members of the school community and do all we can to keep them safe. We believe that the most important strategy to reduce risk of harm is for every student to feel cared for and valued at school. To that end, we build relationships and build community and ensure our students have peers and adults with whom they feel safe and can bring their concerns to. Our education professionals prioritize getting to know all students and are working to get to know our families better. One thing we do know about mass tragedies is that, 100 percent of the time, no one is surprised when they learn the identity of the person who inflicts harm. There are signs along the way. Our charge is to build a community that embraces humanity, purpose, safety and belonging, especially for those who might not otherwise feel like they are a part of any community.

On a similar note, LNSU schools have strategies to reduce the likelihood of a tragedy occurring here. Schools have been encouraging students and community members to report any concerning or suspicious information to staff. You may have heard your child talk about the "See Something, Say Something" campaign that encourages young people to tell an adult if they are aware of a possible threat. Additionally, we actively encourage the use of the State of Vermont's anonymous tip line.

Phone: 844-SAFE4VT (844-723-3488).

Text: Safe4VT to 274637

Online: safe4vt.org

We follow all school safety drill guidance from the Vermont School Crisis Planning Team and each school has an active threat assessment process to identify students or staff who might be at risk. As far as physical structures in place to ensure safety, we control access to all buildings and have multiple active exterior video surveillance cameras and interior systems on our main campus.

David Manning, Principal of Johnson Elementary School, is the Vermont Principals' Association Representative to the State crisis team and is a resource for the district. Contact information for David is dmanning@jesvt.org. Erik Remmers is Incident Commander for our school district and is also a resource for our communities. His contact information is eremmers@gmtcc.net. We

have contacted local law enforcement and counselors to enhance their presence. A member of our leadership team has been chosen to be a certified trainer for the State next year in threat assessment.

There is no greater agency than the gift of knowing our communities. It helps us do our jobs. There is no greater calling than being professionals who are entrusted with the safety and well-being of our children and youth. We encourage everyone to reach out if you have concerning information regarding safety. We know that schools, alone, are only one system that bears responsibility for the wellbeing and safety of children. We ask our community partners and families to continue their essential support of our youth through conversation and care.

We are including some resources ([NAEYC](#)) for you around coping with violence and trauma. Please reach out to any of us if you have concerns or if you would like an opportunity to have a conversation.

Warmly,

Catherine Gallagher, Superintendent, LNSU
Mary Anderson, Principal, Cambridge Elementary School
Betzi Goodman, Interim Principal, Eden Elementary School
Diane Reilly, Principal, Hyde Park Elementary School
David Manning, Principal, Johnson Elementary School
Jan Epstein, Principal, Waterville Elementary School
Denise Maurice, Principal, Lamoille Union Middle School
Bethann Pirie, Interim Principal, Lamoille Union High School
Erik Remmers, Director, Green Mountain Technology & Career Center