SAFER THAN SORRY SECURING SECURITY IN SAYVILLE SCHOOLS

Recent history has made us wary.

As a nation, we may have lost our innocence in the face of such unthinkable tragedies at Sandy Hook elementary school, the Boston Marathon, Columbine, and on 9/11, but if innocence is replaced by foresight, awareness, prevention, and practice drills, perhaps its loss can avert the loss of innocent lives.

While Sayville schools has long used standard safeguards to protect our students and staff from verbal and physical injury through the application of SAVE legislation, antibullying programs, DASA mandates, and code-of-conduct policies, times have changed. Responding to the heightened concerns about student and staff safety, Sayville Administrators, Educators, Staff, and Board of Education members have been working on a cohesive solution. The result is a new safety plan that raises the level of security at all our school district facilities.

The Sayville BOE's decision and the community's approval to utilize $500,000 for a capital improvements project has allowed the District to begin implementation of new technology that will ensure better security. Some of this technology includes external cameras, video-intercoms, alarms, and electronic visitor-management systems which would be in full operation during the school day. Parents may have already noticed not only the improved main entrances at the High School and Middle School which afford better views of approaching visitors, but also the new sign-in/out procedures and the ID-Visitor Pass requirements.

In addition, new security personnel, with licensed New York State Security Certification, are now present at the main entrances of each of our facilities. These individuals are trained for many different situations in crisis and emergency management. They know how to react, how to give directions while

avoiding disaster, as well as evacuation procedures. Most importantly, they provide a safe and secure environment for our students, staff, and community.

An environment conducive for student learning is the ultimate goal of all these changes; and while we hope and pray never to test the system, it is better to be safe *and secure*, than sorry.