



WORKING TOGETHER – with Hornet Pride!

November 19, 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We want to take a moment to update you on recent developments related to Section 31aa, a state program designed to provide funding for school safety and mental health supports. While the intent of the program is positive, this year the Legislature added new requirements that raise significant concerns for school districts across Michigan.

One of the most challenging changes is a mandate that districts waive key legal protections, such as attorney-client privilege, in the event of what the state refers to as a “mass casualty event,” a term that remains undefined in law. Several districts have filed a lawsuit challenging this requirement, and the case is expected to be heard in the coming weeks. Our hope is that the state will address this issue and remove the waiver-of-privilege requirement so that districts can participate in Section 31aa without compromising their legal integrity or safety practices.

After extensive review, consultation with legal and insurance experts, and thoughtful discussion, our Board of Education voted on Monday, November 17, to approve a resolution declining to opt in to Section 31aa unless the waiver-of-privilege requirement is eliminated. This action reflects our responsibility to safeguard the district’s legal rights, protect due process for our employees, and maintain local control over how we manage and improve school safety.

Requiring districts to surrender confidential legal communications carries significant risks. It could limit our ability to obtain candid legal guidance, expose staff to unintended liabilities, and undermine the integrity of internal safety reviews or investigations. Rather than strengthening school safety, this requirement could create hesitation in seeking the very legal advice that helps us enhance our prevention and response efforts.

Please know that this decision does not change our commitment to student safety and mental health. We will continue to invest in counseling services, prevention programming, and safety initiatives through local resources and alternative state and federal funding opportunities. Our priorities around safety remain the same: protecting our students, supporting their well-being, and maintaining strong, proactive safety practices.

We recognize that this is a complex and evolving policy issue. We will continue to monitor the legal proceedings closely and advocate for legislation that supports school safety without undermining essential legal protections. Thank you for your understanding, your trust, and your continued partnership in keeping our schools safe and supportive for all students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jay Larner'.

Jay Larner
Superintendent
New Lothrop Area Public Schools