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01/12/2026

Dear Southern Fulton Families, Faculty, and Staff,

I am writing to share important information about a new Pennsylvania school safety law that has taken effect and will impact how school districts communicate with families and employees.

Governor Josh Shapiro signed Act 44 of 2025, a new section of the Pennsylvania School Code titled "Parental and Employee Notification of Weapon Incidents." Beginning January 6, 2026, schools are required to notify parents/guardians and school employees when an incident occurs involving the possession of a weapon on school property, on school transportation, or at a school-sponsored activity.

The law requires notification based on where the incident occurs. Because Southern Fulton School District operates a split campus-with the elementary school and the junior-senior high school located on separate campuses-notifications will be limited to the specific school building or campus where the incident occurs. Families and employees associated with that building will be notified accordingly. If an incident occurs on school transportation or at a school-sponsored activity, the District will notify the appropriate families and employees connected to that setting. Notification is not required when the incident is not directly related to the activity or to the students or staff involved. Unless circumstances require otherwise, the District must issue the notification within 24 hours. Southern Fulton School District will use Blackboard services to deliver these required notices, which is the same system used to communicate school cancellations and other important information.

To comply with confidentiality requirements, notifications will not include personally identifiable student information. Notices will include only basic details, such as the date and general location of the reported incident.

In the past, the District exercised professional discretion when responding to situations involving inadvertent possession of items not intended as weapons. Depending on the circumstances, this included look-alike items (such as toys) or everyday tools (for example, a small pocketknife or multi-tool accidentally left in a backpack or jacket). Act 44 may result in more frequent notifications, including situations that do not represent an active safety threat. An increase in notices should not be interpreted as decreased safety; rather, it reflects a new legal requirement.

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SOUTHERN FULTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Families can help prevent accidental situations by checking backpacks, jackets, and sports bags and reminding students that prohibited items are not permitted on school grounds, buses, or at school-sponsored activities. Concerns can also be reported through Safe2Say Something at 1-844-723-2729.

Please know that Southern Fulton School District will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners, threat assessment teams, and safety and security personnel. The well-being of our students and staff remains our highest priority. Thank you for your continued partnership in keeping Southern Fulton schools safe and supportive for all students and staff.

Sincerely,

Ms. Meredith Hendershot

Superintendent, Southern Fulton School District