

February 15, 2018

Dear EGRPS Families,

Unfortunately, yesterday our nation experienced another tragic incident of school violence in Parkland, Florida. This event has everyone saddened and our thoughts and prayers are with the students, staff, and community of Parkland. As a district, our ongoing commitment is to provide a safe teaching and learning environment every day in our schools.

Over the years, East Grand Rapids Public Schools has conducted reviews of our safety procedures in coordination with the East Grand Rapids Public Safety Department, experts from the Michigan State Police, the Kent County Department of Emergency Management, and security consultants. The district's safety procedures include ongoing review, training, and practice exercises. With our community's support of the 2014 bond issue, we redesigned our school entrances to route all visitors through the main office during school hours while locking all other entrances. Additionally, all classroom doors are equipped with a new security locking mechanism in case of an emergency situation.

If you or your child have a concern, make an observation of something that just doesn't seem right, or hear/see something on social media that gives you pause, please communicate this information to a district employee. This open communication is an essential component to preventing something before it starts. I am confident in the emergency procedures we have practiced in coordination with the East Grand Rapids Public Safety Department and I am committed to identifying any additional steps we can take as a district to further reduce the risk of potential violence occurring in our schools.

Experts tell us that the most important and effective prevention efforts involve how we care for one another as people. The vast majority of school and workplace shootings occur by individuals who feel alienated and involve unaddressed mental health needs. In partnership with our families, the EGRPS staff members play a significant role in ensuring that every child feels cared for and connected to school.

I know it is difficult to contemplate these devastating acts of violence, and we all struggle at times processing this as well as how we might talk to our children about these events. Included below are some links to resources that can assist you and your family.

[Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers](#), National Association of School Psychologists
[In the Aftermath of a Shooting; Help Your Children Manage Distress](#), American Psychological Association
[Discussing Difficult Situations with Your Children](#), National Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

As a district, we also participate in the Silent Observer program where students can confidentially report anything that threatens their safety or the safety of others. Tips can be reported by dialing 616-774-2345, or you may download the Silent Observer App.

We are always open to recommendations on how we can improve the safety of our schools and in our continued work with security experts and our school community. If you have questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's principal.

Sincerely,



Sara Magaña Shubel, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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