



## BLOOMSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY UPDATE

As we begin the 2018-2019 school year, we must continue to consider ways in which we can increase the security of our school buildings. We understand that learning cannot occur unless our students, faculty, and staff feel safe within their surroundings. That said, there is a delicate balance to be struck between hardening our buildings and softening our position with students. We are committed to fostering the proper environment for all of our students to reach the district's vision of Success *and* Connection.

### STEPS ALREADY TAKEN IN 2018-2019

#### **Pennsylvania State Police Active Shooter Training**

As part of the district in-service activities in August 2018, Sergeant Ott of the Intelligence Division, Domestic Security Section of the Pennsylvania State Police provided an Active Shooter Presentation. During his time with the faculty, he reviewed response tactics and mental strategies necessary to react in crises.

#### **Capital Project Planning Based on Results of Risk & Vulnerability Assessment**

Recommendations from the Risk & Vulnerability Assessment were shared with the district's architect in order to include Best Practice Standards when applicable. The board-approved Capital Renovation for the secondary complex includes secure main entries for both the middle and high school as a result. Additionally, an after-hours entry to the swimming pool, wrestling room, and robotics area will be constructed. These improvements will be complete for the 2019-2020 school year.

#### **Grant Application to Improve District Surveillance Systems**

In an effort to upgrade all district buildings to the level of surveillance available at the secondary complex, a grant was written for consideration by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Office for Safe Schools. If the grant is not received, the district will budget for the upgrades to occur before the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

#### **Guidance Counselor Expansion District-Wide**

The number of district-employed guidance counselors increased to eight (two each at Memorial Elementary, Bloomsburg Middle and Bloomsburg High School, one each at W. W. Evans Elementary and Beaver Main Elementary). This move allows for ongoing support and training through an expressive arts program that not only provides

fundamental instruction in safety and security issues, but also fosters whole child development.

### **Columbia Montour Snyder Union (CMSU) Prevention Specialist**

The CMSU Service System provides mental health, drug/alcohol, and intellectual disability services within Columbia County. The district partnered with the organization to fund a Prevention Specialist, who is working in the Bloomsburg High School to provide group counseling and drug/alcohol prevention services.

### **School Security Personnel at the Secondary Complex**

Following the Bloomsburg Town Council Finance Committee's rejection of the proposal for a School Resource Officer (SRO) within the district, the Board of Education hired a security officer on August 20, 2018.

### **School Safety & Security Coordinator**

As per Act 44 of 2018, Governor Wolf signed into law on June 22, 2018, each district must name a School Safety and Security Coordinator. On August 20, 2018, the Board of Education approved Melissa Day, Director of Curriculum & Instruction for this role. Duties include, but are not limited to:

- Oversee school security guard(s);
- Review safety/security policies and procedures to ensure compliance with law;
- Coordinate training for students and school entity staff;
- Coordinate school safety and security assessments, as necessary;
- Serve as liaison with the statewide School Safety and Security Committee;
- Report to the school entity board (via executive session) by June 30 each year on school safety and security;
- Coordinate a biennial tour of the school entity's buildings and grounds with law enforcement and first responders to discuss/coordinate school safety/security matters.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

### **Board of Education Consideration of Armed Security Officers**

The security officer hired on August 20, 2018 is a retired corrections officer, who holds the Act 235 Certification to be armed. The decision to allow him to be armed will be considered by the Board of Education at its next scheduled meeting on September 4, 2018.

### **Community Forum**

An additional community forum for safety will be scheduled in September 2018 in order to review these steps with interested community members. Time will be provided for participants to share concerns and offer additional suggestions.

## **STEPS TAKEN PREVIOUSLY**

### **Community Forums**

Last fall, the district organized a series of Community Forums on Safety at which participants were encouraged to ask questions and offer suggestions. A final report was shared with the Board of Education in December 2017 and posted on the district website for review. The decision to pursue a School Resource Officer (SRO) in cooperation with the Town of Bloomsburg Police Department was part of this report.

### **Pennsylvania State Police Risk & Vulnerability Assessment**

The Domestic Security Division of the Pennsylvania State Police operates a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Team (RVAT) for use by public and private organizations to evaluate facilities for threat potential. Following the extensive evaluation, the team shares a confidential assessment with the entity that includes recommendations to improve the overall security of the facility. An evaluation of the Bloomsburg Area High School occurred in March 2018 and the results have been used to determine necessary security enhancements throughout the district.

### **Pennsylvania State Constables**

In order to provide more immediate security while the School Resource Officer (SRO) process occurred, Pennsylvania State Constables were contracted for the secondary complex. Two guards were present through the end of 2017, with one remaining for the rest of the school year. Guards were also contracted for extra-curricular events throughout 2017-2018.

### **Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS)**

Students in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 completed the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), sponsored by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD). The results of this survey were received in spring, 2018 and can be used to determine patterns in the community specific to risk factors such as access to drugs/alcohol and firearms, bullying, and mental illness. The district can use these patterns in order to determine the best means for prevention.

### **Safe Crisis Management (SCM) Training**

The district utilizes Safe Crisis Management (SCM) as its preferred training program for preventing and managing crisis events. Participating faculty, staff, and administrators are trained to prevent, de-escalate, and when necessary, respond to aggressive behavior. All 35 certified individuals receive recertification every year by one of two district trainers.

### **Secondary Complex Surveillance System**

The secondary complex received a surveillance system upgrade in order to improve the level of surveillance available to administrators and law enforcement. These upgrades

provided additional cameras in high traffic areas, many of which provide 360 degree recording and playback capabilities.

### **Social Emotional Learning Conference**

One administrator and one guidance counselor attended the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) conference in May 2018. As part of this conference, the participants learned additional strategies for teaching important social skills that are necessary for successful peer interaction in schools.

### **Conclusion**

Thank you in advance for your continued feedback and support of the Bloomsburg Area School District. On a human level, we want to assure each of you that the safety of our students and each of our staff is our paramount concern. We will not waiver on this fact.