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Stratford Staff and Community,

I write this letter to let you know that the Stratford Board of Education has been reviewing and enhancing our schools' security procedures since the tragedy in Newtown. Here is a summary of our evaluation:

- Key to this process was the assessment of our school facilities, which was conducted by the Stratford Police, Public Facilities departments, and the Schools' Facilities Manager. They toured and assessed our buildings, and have recommended some fine-tuning to our Schools' Security plans and procedures. A number of the recommendations have already been implemented.
- An ongoing meeting with the Mayor's School/Safety Task force, which includes the Police, Fire, EMS, Public Facilities departments, and BOE Administrators have taken place, and has produced some valuable courses of action. As a result, the Mayor's office has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an outside agency to examine the security/procedures at all of our schools. The selection of the consultant is underway.
- Practice lockdown drills in each building will be scheduled throughout the remainder of the school year. These drills will be observed by members of the Mayor's Task Force including police, etc. to provide feedback and suggestions to enhance each buildings emergency process. The first lockdown drill was held on Thursday, February 7, 2013.
- Building Principals at all schools have scheduled public information sessions for parents/guardians to discuss and receive suggestions related to security procedures at their respective schools.
- A review and consideration of the input and suggestions received from staff, parents and the community regarding security at our schools proved to be beneficial.
- Building Principals are meeting regularly with their staff to review and reinforce school procedures. Each school will conduct ongoing security drills, including ten mandated fire drills annually.
- All classrooms have a Crisis Manual that provides detailed instructions of what to do in various emergency situations. The manual describes the roles and responsibilities of staff. It is

"Tantum eruditi sunt liberi" - Only The Educated Are Free

reviewed annually with faculty and staff, with a strong emphasis on the Fire Drill, Lockdown and Stay-Put procedures.

- Staff has intensified efforts in screening visitors to their buildings.
- We have acquired a parental notification system (email, voice, text). We urge you to provide contact information to you principal if you have not already done this.
- The Police Department has increased presence in, and around all schools.
- Student focus group meetings with the superintendent are on-going in each school and safety is often a topic.

Based on communications we have received, I want to elaborate on the following procedures:

In an emergency situation, the school/district can enact response actions depending on the magnitude of an incident as follows:

Stay Put

- ✓ Primarily enacted when it is deemed students and staff should remain in their present location in the building. We use this procedure in an event where we have a special transport or when there is a potential danger in one part of the building.

Lockdown

- ✓ Primarily enacted when there is an immediate threat in, or immediately around the school. This action is serious and all activities within the building are placed on hold. The campus is closed, with no one leaving the facility or entering the grounds. Practiced monthly; scheduled at various times of the day to create different scenarios.

Evacuation

- ✓ Primarily enacted when locations outside the school are deemed safer than those that are inside of the building.

Unfortunately, we cannot share the details of some of our plans so as to not compromise our security procedures, please know that any resultant security adjustments will be scrutinized by knowledgeable and experienced personnel skilled in their area. As you know, there can never be a “full proof” solution that will address the many scenarios we may face.

I want to express my appreciation to all of you who have been involved in the process of strengthening our schools’ security measures. We hold the safety and security of our students and staff our number one priority.

Sincerely,



Margaret Lasek
Interim Superintendent of Schools