

Superintendent's Update



January 2019



The headlines catch our eyes and steal our breath. When someone enters a school with a gun, we are all left feeling somewhat shaken, even if the incident happened thousands of miles away in another part of the country.

Unfortunately, we don't have to look outside the state of Indiana in our search for these headlines. Twice in 2018, armed students brought violence to Indiana schools. One boy in Noblesville injured a fellow student and a teacher. And in Richmond, another boy entered a school and took his own life.

When violence erupts at any school, we all feel it. We want to help the students and staff in the affected school district any way we can.

And we want to learn from these incidents how we can best keep students here in the MSD of Wayne Township safe and secure.

During the last year in particular, we have become keenly aware that keeping our students safe is an ongoing and multifaceted process. I'd like to share with you some of the initiatives we've undertaken the past several years to create the safest possible environment for our students.

Securing our entrances: We utilized a grant from the Indiana Department of Homeland Security to add door buzzers to the front entrance of each of our school buildings. This allows our front office personnel to control who can enter our buildings. We have also upgraded the technology we use to screen visitors when we check them in and provide visitor badges in our front office.

School Resource Officers: The same state grant we used for our door buzzer systems has also helped us employ school resource officers throughout the district. These officers do many things to keep our buildings safe during the day, and often help provide security at extra-curricular events in the evenings. Most importantly, our school resource officers develop relationships with our students that allow us to create a culture of safety and responsibility within our school buildings.

Security Council: Some of the activities that help keep our school safe happen behind the scenes, but they are important all the same. We have created a new group called the MSD Wayne Security Council, which met for the first time in September of 2018. This council is composed of school district staff, first responders, and others from our community. It will meet twice each school year to advise us on various aspects of our security, including the safety plans we have in place for each of our school buildings. Our safety plan template was cited as among the best by an Indiana Department of Education representative who recently audited school safety plans in our region.

Keeping our schools safe takes a tremendous amount of intentional effort, and a serious financial commitment. A secure school system requires salaries for officers, and money for equipment and technology such as security cameras. We have been aggressive about seeking outside dollars to help pay for this commitment, including the Indiana Department of Homeland Security grants I mentioned earlier. We have applied for five such grants, and were successful with each application, totaling nearly \$200,000.

The safety of our children involves a collective effort from our schools and our community. This would not be possible without the support from our school board, our first responders, and our dedicated community partners. Thank you for all you do to help keep our students safe.

We Are Wayne!

*Dr. Jeffrey K. Butts
Superintendent*