



MONTICELLO COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT #25

VICTOR E. ZIMMERMAN, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Sage Community, Parents, Faculty, Staff, and Students,

It has been a difficult few weeks for school districts across the country. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those affected by the tragic situation in Parkland, Florida. The painful reality in this world is that no school district or public place can ever be completely immune from such senseless violence. I want to reassure you that the safety and security of students, faculty and staff have been and will remain the top priority in Monticello CUSD #25.

- **Emergency Plans and Drills.** All of our schools have emergency plans that are discussed several times per year. These plans are not publically posted or shared on our websites. Required drills are completed multiple times per year. The drills include evacuations such as fire drills, disaster drills in the case of a tornado or bad weather, and intruder drills. We use the A.L.I.C.E. Run-Hide or Fight system as our intruder response – this provides for options based on the specific situation.
- **School Safety and Equipment.** We have installed buzz-in systems at all schools. Visitors to school must use the front door once school starts in the morning. All other doors are locked and closed during the school day. Security cameras were installed in our elementary schools this past summer and will go into the high school and middle school this summer. We use an emergency calling system, as well as email, texting and social media to communicate as needed. We have direct communication with 911 in every school office and our administrators have local radios. All first-responders have building maps that include door and classroom numbering.
- **Social Media and Threats.** Several area school districts have been subjected to threats on social media or from rumors in the school since the Florida incident. We take all threats seriously and investigate them, along with local authorities, to determine credibility. Students are reminded to “think before you post” on social media. It is also important to “say something, if you see something” as we are all in this together. Students making threats will face disciplinary action including arrest by police.
- **Gun-Free Zone.** By law, schools are gun-free zones meaning that it is against the law to carry guns on school grounds or into our schools except for law enforcement officers. School policy also prohibits bee-bee guns, airsoft guns, paint ball guns, and toy guns from being brought to school as they are difficult to distinguish from real guns. Tensions are at a high level in schools at this time and violations of gun laws and school policies will cause students to face disciplinary action including arrests by police.
- **Demonstrations and Walk-Outs.** We are aware of several nationally organized student walk-outs being discussed on social media across the country. As a school district, we certainly frown upon events that could cause a substantial disruption to the education process. Our school administrators are discussing how these types of events fit into the school day and what positive and/or negative effects could come from such organized nation-wide demonstrations in the future.
- **Student Mental Health and Well-Being.** Our teachers, staff and administrators are concerned about the well-being of every student in our schools. We encourage students to become involved in school every day and we strive for them to have a connection with someone either inside or outside of the classroom. This connection could be a fellow student or a teacher, aide, secretary, supervisor, coach, administrator, cook or custodian. We have social workers, counselors, and administrators available to work with students who appear to be having difficulty. If you are a student or you know a student who needs assistance please contact our principals.

We know that because of the world we live in today, the scenario that happened in Florida could happen anywhere. All of us in the Monticello School District need to play a vital role in staying vigilant, aware, and reporting any concerns to the proper authorities. We ask that all staff and parents remain engaged with our school safety and security measures. We know that you share in our concern and our focus on safety and security.

Sincerely,

Vic Zimmerman, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

It's a Great Day to be a Sage!