



***For release the week of: March 5, 2018 (or as soon as practical)
For questions, please contact: Tammy Woller, 715-536-4581, ext. 10002***

Superintendent's Corner...

Poverty Simulation

I recently had the opportunity to participate in a Poverty Simulation Event at Merrill High School on Monday, February 26. The experience was truly memorable for each participant and touched each of us emotionally. This event firmly reminded us as educators of the sensitivity required to successfully engage our students in a quality learning environment. Our learners come to us from diverse environments and with a variety of experiences.

Student Safety

The recent tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida has all of us holding our children a little tighter each day. Such horrific events were not considered years ago but, unfortunately, must be considered as preparation for student safety.

MAPS has developed Crisis Plans for a variety of emergencies. Here are a few of the strategies we implement, depending on the type of threat we are experiencing:

- Immediate evacuation - Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc.
- In-place sheltering - Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- Evacuation - Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility and you will be notified where to reunite with your child. There will also be a notice posted on the entrance to the affected school providing information regarding the evacuation.
- Modified Operation - May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations.
- Armed Intruder - Our staff has been trained to use the A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) protocols during this type of event. The ALICE training is a research-based, proactive approach to an active shooter incident. This annual training informs and empowers those individuals involved to engage in events to increase the chance of survival. Our ability to prevent violence from entering our schools begins with a strong relationship with our staff, our community, local law enforcement and emergency response personnel. By working together we can keep our schools safe and secure for

our children. ALICE aligns with the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) recommendations for schools. While we hope that we will never have to utilize this training, it is important to prepare for crisis situations.

We ask that you not call our main number during an emergency. Our staff will contact you, or other emergency contacts indicated by you, as appropriate. The communication with you, or another identified emergency contact, will be at the numbers that you provided during the registration process. We ask for your patience in that effort since we will be ensuring the safety of all the children first and foremost; calls can then be taken as they are received. We specifically urge you not to attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties. We strongly encourage you to annually update your contact information to ensure that we have you listed correctly in our system. This plan is updated on an annual basis, as is required by our safety committee and crisis team.

Please Slow Down

Speaking of student safety, please remember to slow down in our school zones. Our Merrill Police Department has received a number of complaints and will be consistently monitoring traffic to ensure our student safety.

And finally, please remember that learning is second only to student safety. The safety of your children is our number one priority!

Dr. John Sample
Proud Superintendent