February 23, 2018

PSD Family:

I feel it is necessary for the district to communicate with our PSD family and community on how important we view school safety. It saddens me greatly that we as a nation have to recognize that the risk of others inflicting harm on our children is a very real threat and a problem that is sweeping this country. Last week on Wednesday, February 14th, the school board’s Facility and Policy Committees joined Mr. Greg Teems, Mr. Jeff Little, and myself in conducting a safety and security assessment of all schools. Little did we know that while we were assessing our levels of security, a real-life tragedy was unfolding at a school in Florida.

As a district, we have reviewed our findings from the safety and security assessments and have met with the leaders of our county and city law enforcement agencies, sheriff’s department, Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Emergency Management Agency, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to collaborate on the safety of our schools. From these meetings, a number of strategies will be employed. Implementing and listed below are a few of the efforts we can share. For obvious reasons, some of the information will be presented in general terms so that we do not openly provide information that could potentially be used to inflict more harm.

- Each school has extensive safety manuals and protocols. The administration at each school will be conducting an additional, thorough review of these procedures with all faculty and staff.
- All visitors are required to check in at the office and wear identification badges.
- All outside doors are to be kept closed and locked; requiring all visitors to enter at the front office.
- An alert notification system is being added to notify administrators, teachers, law enforcement and emergency responders of any safety issue immediately.
- One Call Now, social media and email will be used to share information with parents and guardians.
- School Resource Officers are armed and will monitor the high schools and middle schools on a daily basis.
- The local law enforcement agencies will be routinely monitoring and visiting all schools.
- A Secure Reporting Link will be added to the district and school websites for individuals to anonymously report concerns, suspicious behaviors, bullying, and knowledge of criminal intent.
- Administrators and district office staff have been trained by Redmond on “Stop the Bleed,” and school employees are being trained on “Stop the Bleed” by our Floyd nurses. This training provides individuals with the knowledge on how to quickly administer first-aid in case of an emergency. Schools are provided kits to administer these life-saving procedures. These skills give our employees the ability to respond quickly until the EMS arrives.
As one of our most valued partners, we encourage parents to:

- Talk with and reassure your children (age appropriate) that their school has extensive procedures in place to keep them safe.
- Encourage your children to pay attention to social media posts, YouTube videos or comments that threaten to harm or bully other students. These types of comments can indicate deep emotional problems that could possibly result in harmful situations and should be reported to a teacher or administrator.
- Periodically, check your children’s social media posts. This can allow you to monitor what your child and others are posting; as well as, possibly detect any concerning activity a child may not recognize as threatening.
- Caution your children to never cyber-bully or post anything that could be construed as threatening in any way.

As always, Polk School District places the issue of safety at the forefront of our efforts. While we cannot prevent every situation from occurring, please know we are doing our very best to protect our children on a daily basis.

Sincerely,

[Laurie Atkins'

signature]

Laurie Atkins
Superintendent