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Dear Hamilton Parents, Guardians, Students, and Staff,

Providing a safe and secure environment for our students and staff continues to be a top priority in the Hamilton City School District.

We continue to constantly instill a safety awareness mindset with all of our students, staff, and parents. Beyond that, we also continue with discussions between other districts, our schools, law enforcement, and emergency responders to better coordinate our safety protocols. We realize that we must be able to respond to many different safety issues beyond traditional fire, earthquakes, and tornado drills. We now train for violent intruders, angry school visitors who threaten or become violent, environmental threats like a chemical spill from a train or traffic accident, bomb and gun threats, and many others.

Following are some examples of what safety measures we currently use to protect our students and staff each and every school day:

Preparedness & Prevention:

1. Each of our schools meets the emergency preparedness drill standards set by the Ohio Department of Education. These drills occur a minimum of 14 times throughout the school year and include simulations involving active and aggressive situations, fire drills, and severe weather drills as required by law.
2. ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training is provided at the beginning of each school year to our staff and students. This training provides strategic methods against an active aggressor situation. Our district has building administrators who are certified ALICE Instructors.
3. The Hamilton City Police Department's S.W.A.T. team practices within our buildings, ensuring they are familiar with the layout of each school in the event of an emergency.
4. Each year we are required by the State of Ohio to conduct a table-top exercise with our local police, fire, state, and Butler County Emergency Management Agency to test our Emergency Operations Plan.
5. Our district is preparing for a Functional Drill this fall to evaluate our response and to implement our Emergency Operations Plan for reunification. This drill will be conducted in partnership with local first responders and the Butler County Educational Service Center (BCESC).
6. The District created a 24 member Safety and Security Committee that meets regularly throughout the school year to monitor, assess, and reinforce district safety and security protocols and programs. Members include administrators from each building, Hamilton Fire Department, Hamilton Police Department, Butler County Emergency Management Agency, the BCESC Director of Public Safety, and all of our current School Resource Officers (SRO's). Each building also maintains a safety committee as well to conduct training and to help modify protocols to best fit each individual school community.
7. The district provides annual training for specific school personnel on safety techniques like AED, Heimlich, active shooter with ALICE, and new to the district this year - Stop the Bleed training via our school nurses.
8. Information Liaison Officers have been trained from the Greater Cincinnati Fusion Center, sharing law enforcement information in real time as events occur locally, regionally, and nationally. This will help arm us with information to also deal with copycat situations that typically follow other events.

9. School drop off and pick up protocols for every building have been standardized to ensure the safest environment possible during these daily events.
10. Bus drivers have been trained in bus safety, including operation standards, student conduct rules, emergency situations and drills, accidents protocols, field trip safety, and conduct at bus stops.

Security & Safety Measures:

1. We have installed 820 internal and external security cameras throughout the district. These camera systems are monitoring 24/7 on all our school properties.
2. Individual school site physical assessments are now in progress with local first responders, emergency management providers and law enforcement, (i.e. the use of window film and security cameras to minimize vulnerable access and entry points).
3. All school exterior and interior doors are locked to ensure access is controlled. During school hours, visitors coming into any of our buildings must pass through a secured vestibule before gaining access into the building.
4. Each school uses Identiphoto, a visitor identification program, which requires all visitors to register in the main office before they can enter the building. A government issued photo ID is required for all visitors who come into our schools.
5. Detailed Emergency Operations Plans, along with other vital safety related information, are provided for every crisis situation through a virtual safety response tool called NaviGate. These plans are available 24/7 providing immediate access to this critical information if an emergency occurs.
6. Each school administrator carries a handheld radio for immediate response to any situation. In the event of a power blackout, our handheld radio communications, along with cell phones and emergency battery powered radios, allow us to connect to first responders.
7. An instant response system is in each school in the event of a school intruder. This system is supported through Butler County Emergency Management Agency.
8. Every exterior window in every school building is labeled for quick room identification by first responders in the event of an emergency.
9. Five School Resource Officers (SRO's) are employed through the Hamilton Police Department. These officers are on school property during school hours and after-hour events throughout the school year. Two additional officers are scheduled to be added before Winter Break.
10. Hamilton City School District's Emergency Operations Plans have been evaluated by the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Homeland Security. We achieved 100% on each assessment that evaluated our district's prevention, response, mitigation, and recovery plans.
11. Action has been taken to remove all potential hiding places on the outside of our buildings in an effort to help ensure safe walkways and parking lots.
12. We continue to advertise and encourage the use of our Safety and Security hotlines in case of threat or act of any violence or bullying. Please continue to report safety and security concerns to 1-866-listen2me (866-547-8362) or report on our district website at hamiltoncityschools.com.
13. This year we are advocating the use of a Safer Ohio reporting app that will allow anyone to report suspicious activity at school or anywhere in the state of Ohio. This app is sponsored by the Ohio Homeland Security Department and will channel information to the appropriate law enforcement authorities whenever it is reported via text or photos.
14. Hamilton City Schools enforce the Ohio CCW law. The law allows anyone who has successfully completed and received their CCW license the ability to carry a weapon onto school property; however it must be kept in their locked vehicle.

Support Programs, Student Services, & Communications:

1. Multiple anti-bullying programs are in place including Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS), Parent Project, Why Try?, along with character education programs in our elementary schools. Bullying can be reported on our website or by calling 1-866-listen2me. (886-547-8362)
2. Mind Peace Counseling, an outside counseling service, is currently assessing mental health needs in each of our school buildings. These counselors assist students with any mental health issues while developing relationships. These efforts enhance the well-being of our student population.
3. A staff of nurses, counselors, and school psychologists are available in every building to support the needs of our students' physical and mental health.
4. Response to Intervention (RTI) teams are in place in each school building to identify at-risk students and provide support.
5. We maintain an official Facebook Page (Hamilton City School District) and a Twitter account (@Hamilton_CSD) to allow for instantaneous communications. These tools are in addition to our district website and the One Command direct phone messaging tools.
6. New this year is the Safer Ohio phone app that we are encouraging all students, staff, and parents to download on their phone. This app is simple to use and will allow for anonymous reporting of wrong doings, dangerous situations or suspicious activities by text and by pictures. The app is co-sponsored by the Ohio State Patrol, Ohio Homeland Security and the See Something Say Something effort. Information submitted regarding school situations, as well as community concerns, will be channeled to the appropriate law enforcement agencies. If the situation involves one of our schools, local law enforcement will be notified and will contact school administrators. This is a great information tool for our SRO's to utilize in coordination with our school safety efforts. We encourage all to take advantage of this app to help keep everyone safe.

Our district is determined to ensure that the appropriate plans, systems, and processes are in place for our students and staff, but we need to ask our parents and guardians to play a role in the safety of their children. To that end, please talk to your children and make sure they know how important it is to say something if they hear or see something that causes concern. Please urge them to report it to a teacher or staff member.

We ask you, as parents and residents in our community, to also report if you see something or hear something to either call a building administrator or call 9-1-1 if it is an emergency situation. Providing a safe environment for all should be everyone's top priority.

In closing, as always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Larry Knapp
Superintendent

