

## **SCHOOL MATTERS** **DECEMBER 13, 2016**

### **KEEPING YOU INFORMED**

How Davie County Schools distributes information and addresses requests for information related to concerns in our schools.

#### **Public Records**

We conduct the business of our public schools and provide access to records according to the North Carolina public records law. Many of our records are public records and are open to inspection.

#### **Confidential Information**

We occasionally receive requests for information that we cannot share and we wanted to offer some feedback to our parents and community on this subject. I know it is frustrating to some when there are stories circulating in the community, and people are searching for an immediate response from the school district. We live in a day and time when we have all become accustomed to instant news and alerts. How many times have we all been fooled by false news reports? If something happens on the other side of the world, we can read about it on our technology devices and over the internet in a matter of minutes, regardless of whether or not the story is factual.

**How do we respond when there is an event of significance in a school or in the school district?** If there is an emergency or a situation involving the health or safety of students, we will notify the parents of the students involved as soon as possible. If the issue is affecting the entire school, parents of children in that school will be notified using School Messenger.

#### **How do we respond when allegations involve an employee or student who may have violated board policy or state or federal law?**

Unfortunately, we have experienced a couple issues recently related to alleged misconduct of an employee. As soon as such is reported, we begin to investigate. If the investigation involves specific students, the parents of those students will be contacted. We have an excellent working relationship with local law enforcement and if we are conducting a joint investigation, we will not release any information that might compromise that investigation. It would violate the law and would be inappropriate for us to share information related to a confidential personnel or student matter. Once an investigation is complete, we will release information, continuing to follow privacy law that protects certain information related to personnel or student matters.

#### **How should rumors and all of the chatter on social media be addressed?**

First, consider the source. We cannot continuously monitor, address, or control rumors or misinformation posted online. If you have questions about a specific matter, please call our office

and we will be glad to talk with you. If you have factual information related to allegations or rumors that we need to know, please contact one of our principals or call the superintendent's office to report those facts. If an individual inquires about a student that is not their child, we are never at liberty to discuss confidential student matters protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

We want to continuously improve our communications with parents and our community and we welcome your feedback. However, we are not a media outlet, so we will not be publishing information that is not yet verified to be factual, will not be responding to rumors, responding to anonymous emails or phone calls, or discussing matters made confidential by state or federal law. We will provide relevant information as quickly as possible to the appropriate parties without compromising any investigation or the privacy rights of our staff and students.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools!

Sincerely,

Darrin L. Hartness, Ed. D.  
Superintendent