



# School Matters

December 17, 2012

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Words cannot describe the tragedy that took place last week in Connecticut. In this edition of *School Matters*, you will find a letter that is being distributed to the parents of all students today. There are almost 5,000 recipients of *School Matters*; some are parents, others are citizens and leaders in our community. I want to take this time to thank you all for your support of our schools.

## School Safety

Dear Parents,

I write to you today with a heavy heart. The events of last week are painful reminders that we must be ever diligent in our efforts to protect our children. I, like many of you, have been through a range of emotions since hearing of the tragic news in Newtown, Connecticut. I hope you will join me in keeping that entire community in your thoughts and prayers over the coming weeks and months.

Over the weekend, I have been carefully reflecting on the way we handle crises if they arise in our own school district. As your superintendent, and as the parent of two children who attend our public schools, I want to ensure that we are taking every practical step to keep our children safe. You entrust us each day with your most precious asset, your child, and we have an awesome responsibility to keep them safe. I cannot share details of how we respond to every situation involving safety or security, but all of our schools have practiced procedures and conducted drills that are part of a crisis management plan, continuously used throughout the district. Law enforcement and emergency management personnel also have practiced procedures used to support our schools, and we value and welcome this relationship.

We will continue to review safety in our schools because we can never be too prepared. I am scheduling a meeting with our school staff and emergency personnel on Monday, December 17, 2012. We will begin a comprehensive review of all school safety protocols and communications plans, and brainstorm systems, practices, procedures, and physical changes we may need to implement to make our schools even safer places for our students and staff. School safety is a top priority for Davie County Schools. I want to assure you that our teachers and staff dedicate their lives to not only educating our children, but also to protecting them. You will also see additional law enforcement in and around our schools this week.

While we have systems and procedures already in place to protect our children, the best preventive measure we can use is basic communication.

If you are made aware of a potential threat to the safety of our students or staff, please contact a school administrator or law enforcement immediately and we will investigate.

When tragedy strikes and there is so much national attention, you may find it challenging to talk with your child about such issues. During this time, or at any other time, our school counselors are available to assist you and your family. You are our most valued partner in educating and protecting our children. If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions related to how to make our schools better, please don't hesitate to contact your child's principal or call my office at 336-751-5921. I hope you and your family have a safe and happy holiday season. Thank you for your continued support of Davie County Schools.

Sincerely,



Darrin L. Hartness, Ed. D.  
Superintendent

