

HAWTHORN SCHOOL DISTRICT 73

District Office Education Services Center

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All our thoughts recently have been about school safety and mourning the tragic deaths of the students in Florida. This has created important and difficult conversations surrounding violence in our society, and then the one that has always kept me up at night — keeping our students safe at school. This has always been true for me, not just in light of the most recent tragedy.

Hawthorn has a very good working relationship with the Vernon Hills Police Department. We have a school resource officer on campus every day. The resource officer works with all staff to monitor situations, communicate with the police department as needed and help work with families, staff, community, and students in a constructive manner.

It is important to remember that the issues of school safety don't fall just on one individual. It is all our responsibilities to work as a community to help prevent these unfortunate incidents. We are all part of the solution. It is vital that we all are active participants within our community. We must participate in the safety process and be willing to inform the proper people when we hear or see something that may be of concern. We don't want to wait until after a tragedy and think we could have done more.

Statistics show that almost every school shooting that has ever occurred were well thought out plans that had been planned for months and even years. The individual making the plans leave clues and hints and we must work together to pay attention and report when we have concerns. We must also work together to help all the children feel safe, welcome, and cared for at school and in the community. This inclusive caring environment is our biggest deterrent to someone feeling isolated and desperate for help.

Hawthorn reviews safety protocols regularly and have made upgrades to the safety of our campuses over the past few years. We will continue to work with Vernon Hills Police Department to review safety and continue to make any changes needed. Staff and students conduct regular safety drills. The office staff have been trained and will continue to be trained on proper protocols for allowing individuals into the school building.

We can't share specific details regarding our response plan, as that would compromise the plan and put students and staff at a disadvantage.

Most importantly, school safety is everyone's responsibility. It takes a multifaceted approach and the dedication of all staff, students, parents, and community members to make our schools as safe as possible. I can assure you that the safety of our students is our top priority and we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that we are doing everything we can as a school district to combat potential acts of school violence.

We continue to read, learn, collaborate with others and revise our plan as needed. Please continue to be part of our team and if you see something or hear something, say something!

Nick Brown
Superintendent