



# Jamesburg Public Schools

Celebrating Pride in Ourselves, Our Schools, Our Community

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Dear Parents, Guardians and Community Members,

As our nation heals from yet another school shooting on February 14 at Marjory Stoneman High School, we realize just how fragile life is and how things can change in a very short amount of time. The deaths and injuries from 150 school shootings and 250 deaths since the cowardly attack in Columbine remind us that little has been done nationally to address school safety, mental health, and gun safety policies that must be adopted to make our schools safe. As the politicians debate what to do, local school districts and Boards of Education are left to make schools as safe as possible. In the meantime, the intent of this letter is to update you as to what we do and will be doing in the district regarding safety.

The district institutes a plethora of actions aimed at maintaining safety within our schools. First and foremost, the district staff works very closely with local law enforcement to ensure that all aspects of emergency planning are coordinated in the event they are necessary. The district has a comprehensive crisis emergency plan which is reviewed by the local police department and updated each year. Many of our staff are trained in CPR, use of AED devices and first-aid. These AED devices (Automatic External Defibrillator) are easily accessible in each school. Both schools practice lockdown, shelter in place, fire or evacuation drills twice monthly. The local police are routinely on-site and play a part in these drills. They also practice their emergency drills within the schools so that they become familiar with the structures, hallways, and rooms. Other procedures and devices are used but will not be disclosed due to confidentiality and not wanting to expose these to non-staff members.

In addition to these ongoing practices, over the past few years, we have procured and initiated a number of additional safety resources including:

- A comprehensive district-wide security camera and recording surveillance system
- A modern phone system which allows each room across the district to dial 911 directly
- An emergency identification system outside our schools
- Enhance staff communication system
- Added security at JFK coming this summer by way of an access security window in the school's entranceway

As a parent of a high school student and as a school superintendent, I am quite aware how parents are feeling and the importance of school security in light of recent events. Starting immediately, the police will be much more visible in and around both schools. Also, the Board will be discussing a joint effort between the police, town council, and the Board of Education. The hiring of two (one for each school) full-time armed security police will be discussed at our next public meeting on March 13 at 7:30 PM at GMB. Please note that this meeting was originally scheduled as a budget meeting and may need to be moved to a later date depending on the release of state aid figures. Updated meeting information will be communicated to parents via social media, take-home notices, and our mass communication system.

Until things change across our country, it is up to local communities, our community, to ensure our schools continue to be as safe as possible for our children. I invite you to speak your mind in this regard at our March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting and to complete a school safety survey at <https://jamesburgschools.typeform.com/to/jycjBV>. By doing so, the Board and I can better serve the community and address this issue. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Brian J. Betze  
Superintendent