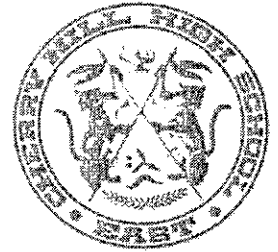


Cherry Hill Public Schools
Cherry Hill High School East
1750 Kresson Road, Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08003-2598
Phone (856) 424-2222
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April 20, 2018

Dear East Community Member

On this date in 1999, a horrific tragedy occurred at Columbine High School that changed the way that school safety was viewed. Overnight, the safe, comfortable feeling that families experienced as they sent their children off to school evaporated. Several school tragedies have occurred after Columbine that served to exacerbate our fears. The most recent tragedy, in Parkland Florida, has impacted the Cherry Hill East community in significant ways. Its similarities to East High School, coupled with personal connections and friendships that members of our student body have with students at Parkland has actualized any previously abstract notions of “safety” for our students.

Following the tragedy at Parkland, the students at East expressed their concerns about school safety and the administration and staff at East have listened. While district initiatives, such as armed police officers and wearing ID badges by all adults, are positively impacting school safety, East has taken the following actions to enhance the safety of our school community.

The following changes have been enacted:

- All exterior doors remain locked – previously, doors throughout the school building were unlocked at 6:30am to allow for staff to enter the building at the door closest to where they parked their car.
 - Now staff can only enter the building through a door that has a door-person.
 - This is a significant change in practice and a significant safety upgrade. Prior to this change, we could not monitor who was in the building prior to the start of the school day.
- Student can enter the school at the locker room door – previously, students would prop open an exterior door to allow their teammates to enter the locker room to store their gear.
 - Now a staff member is assigned to monitor the locker room door.
 - This is a significant upgrade to school safety because the exterior door is now secure at all times.
- Safety Drill procedures are being explicitly taught in Health class– previously, drill procedures were reviewed at the beginning of the school year and not revisited.
 - Now, in addition to teaching drill procedures during Health class, all teachers are reviewing drill procedures with their classes immediately following each drill.
 - This is a significant improvement to school safety because students and staff have a better understanding of what they are to do for each drill.

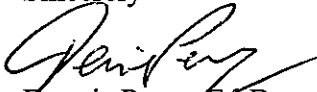
- Interior and Exterior Doors are monitored for proper functioning – previously, classroom doors were expected to be locked, but were not monitored.
 - Now, all classroom doors are locked at all times and kept ajar by the use of a magnet to block it from latching. This is monitored and is addressed when found not to be occurring. Additionally, facility work is currently being completed on exterior building doors to improve their functionality.
 - This is a significant aspect of maintaining a safe school environment.

- Student Voice is sought and welcomed. I have joined members of my administrative team in holding student meetings focusing on school safety.
 - These meetings have been fruitful and have informed the changes that have been outlined in this letter.
 - Having student voices heard and their concerns addressed are significant elements of a safe school environment.

I continue to be impressed with our students and their compassion, empathy and drive. I appreciate the eagerness with which they approach these issues and marvel at their capacity for learning.

I will continue to meet with students and solicit feedback regarding concerns and ideas to improve the security of our school. Please contact me to share your thoughts, to ask questions or to make suggestions. I want all of our students to be and feel safe in school and I want their families to know that their children are safe at East.

Sincerely



Dennis Perry, Ed.D.