

## CHESHIRE

### PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY STATEMENT

#### SCHOOL BUILDING SECURITY AND SAFETY

The safety and security of the students and staff of our school system is a paramount concern for the Board of Education and the Administration of our schools.

**Since the tragedy at Columbine High School in 1999, our school system has continued to make physical building improvements as well as implementing procedures and practices to ensure the security of all buildings. Certainly the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School led us to a complete a comprehensive reevaluation of our school facilities, procedures and protocols for emergency situations. That review included representatives from the Cheshire Police Department and the Cheshire Fire Department.**

As I am sure you can understand, for security reasons, the below information is intended to serve as a general overview and is not all inclusive of the measures in place or initiatives under way:

- The school system has enhanced the electronic access systems for entry doors at all schools. Interior doors and hardware on all instructional spaces (classrooms) has been reviewed and updated as needed to assure that all can be secured in case of an emergency. All classrooms doors have locks.
- Security cameras have been in place in our schools for over a decade. Camera locations were reassessed last year and cameras were added to increase security. Live feeds from our cameras are accessible to the Cheshire Police Department and the Cheshire Fire Department 24x7.
- Each school conducts safety drills on a regular basis. This includes not only fire drills, but also other safety drills such as lockdown and shelter in place drills. A very important aspect of security for our children is an excellent relationship with our Police and Fire Departments. Regular safety and security reviews are conducted with these departments.
- **The Cheshire Police employ a School Resource Officer who is assigned to our schools.**

As a general statement, we believe that we have the necessary and reasonable safeguards in place to assure the security of our buildings and safety of our students. We will continue to be diligent working to ensure their safety and security needs and striking a balance which is not overly restrictive so that our students can enjoy a healthy, productive environment in which they can learn without feeling threatened.

## NEWTOWN

### Newtown Security Committee

The Newtown Public Schools, in cooperation with the Newtown Police Department, has established a Security Committee to address immediate and long-term goals associated with building safety, personnel training, physical security measures, and recommendations for district security policy. The committee consists of members from local law enforcement, district administration, building administration, information technology, facilities, security, Newtown Federation of Teachers, educational assistants, teachers, and the Newtown Board of Education.

Members of the committee have visited each of the schools and have worked collaboratively with building principals to address immediate security needs. Procedures for emergency events, building access, and substitute teachers have been reviewed and updated to reflect increased levels of accountability and responsibility. As an example, all buildings already have a single controlled point of entry during the school day and this has been extended to include before and after the school day as

well. Specific building access procedures for non-school groups have been distributed, updated expectations for parents and students will be sent home, and appropriate signage will be put in place.

**Additional security personnel are being screened and selected so that at least one trained individual is at each school in the district. Newly hired security personnel will be trained internally before being deployed to their permanent post. As the additional personnel are activated, the presence of law enforcement officers at the buildings will be adjusted, resulting in the full-time presence of one police officer and at least one trained security officer at each building during regular school hours. This deployment is expected to take place shortly after the winter break.**

Newtown Public Schools has recently partnered with John Jay College of Criminal Justice in order to collaborate in the review and implementation of Safety and Security measures in the school district. Anthony L. Gentile who serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Private Security and Safety at John Jay has met with the District Security Committee and discussed areas of collaboration between the Newtown Public Schools District and John Jay College. With the Center's oversight, a team of industry experts will continue to assist the committee next year in making recommendations to Standard Operating Procedures and Policy changes based on assessment of effective practices for school safety.

## **WESTON**

### **Hurlbutt Elementary School – "1 Mile of Safety"**

**Arrival:** A Traffic Agent will be stationed on School Road at the intersection of the former Kinderland crosswalk and the bus loop at Hurlbutt to control vehicle traffic and guide the buses into and out of the bus loop. This will relieve most of the bus related congestion in this area. The parking lot at the Board of Education Central Office will be closed during this time to prevent traffic flow through this lot.

Barricades will be placed at the exit of the parking lot. Parents can no longer park in this lot and walk their children into the school. All student drop-offs must take place at the front entrance to the school.

**Dismissal:** Similar to the morning, A Traffic Agent will be stationed on School Road at the intersection at the former Kinderland crosswalk and the bus loop at Hurlbutt to control traffic and guide the buses into and out of the bus loop. The entrance to the front parking lot will be barricaded at 3:00 P.M. each school day. This will ensure that all traffic remains in the pick-up loop. A Traffic Agent will be stationed parking lot of the bus garage to ensure that the parents arriving to pickup their children are stage properly. This will allow us to maximize the available space in the bus garage parking lot and provide an orderly pick-up process.

## **RIDGEFIELD**

### **Security**

The safety and security of the school community is the priority of the district leadership and the Board. The school security accounts encompass the contracted services provided by Securitas, the two (2) Ridgefield Police Department School Resource Officers, and a security supplies account. As part of the budget realignment – the security supplies account was taken out of the Building Security object to gain better accountability and tracking of expenditures.

**For the FY 2016-17 budget – the Securitas contract, which includes the security guard staffing at each school's entrance, as well as the additional night guard at RHS, resides solely in the Contract.**

Services – Building Security object. The account was reduced by \$15,000 to reflect the realignment of the security supplies expenditures. The School Resource Officers object, which was moved over to Plant Operations in the 2014-15 budget cycle, will remain flat against the 2015-16 budget at \$328,620.

## **REDDING**

**Officials consider SSO option for school security at RES**

**By Kaitlin Bradshaw on January 22, 2015 in Police & Fire, Schools, Town Government · 0**

**A sign at the front desk of Redding Elementary School lets people know which Redding officer is assigned SRO duty for the day.**

**For the last two years, school resource officers (SROs) have been in John Read Middle School and Redding Elementary School every school day as a result of the deadly shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School.**

**Since the implementation of SROs in the school, town officials in Redding and neighboring towns have discussed what school security model works best. For Redding, it has been using SROs and enhancing physical security measures to the school buildings.**

**Officer Chris Vadas is the SRO for John Read Middle School and Sgt. Anthony Signore was the SRO at the elementary school. Sgt. Signore left Redding over the summer, so when school began in September, a Redding police officer was scheduled to cover the school each day, taking that officer away from town patrol and investigations.**

**After researching different models, town officials are proposing to use a special school security officer (SSO) at Redding Elementary School and keep the SRO at the middle school.**

**The SSO would work only at the elementary school and have full police powers, said Redding police Chief Douglas Fuchs.**

**“Some school districts and municipalities have an SSO as ‘armed security,’” he said. But Redding’s SSO would be “way more than that.”**

**The SSO at Redding Elementary School would be a sworn, special Redding police officer. The person would be an SSO with full police powers, said Chief Fuchs. The SSO, like the SRO, would have additional training, but the SSO would not be doing investigations nor would that person be available for outside patrol during other times, said Chief Fuchs. Per the police union contract, the SSO may not supplant a full-time police officer.**

**An SSO is usually a retired police officer who is hired as a part-time staff member with no benefits. Having the SSO in the elementary school would allow the current full-time, salaried officer to once again be available on a full-time basis and assist with patrol and investigations, said Chief Fuchs.**

During a Board of Selectmen meeting in December, Chief Fuchs said keeping Officer Vadas as the SRO at the middle school has filled more duties than just security. Chief Fuchs said school administrators want him there for more non-security functions. He does more resource officer tasks than just being security, he said.

“This position is far more than just a gun in the school,” said Chief Fuchs.

Based on the age of students, the elementary school has far fewer issues for the SRO to handle, he said.

Chief Fuchs said he will be meeting with the administration at Redding Elementary School later this month to discuss the SSO proposal.

“Talking with Chief Fuchs, the SSO concept of hiring a Redding police officer part-time that would exclusively serve Redding Elementary School is not an issue,” said Kim Ajavananda, Board of Education chair. “The consistency of the officer in the schools can serve a real benefit.”

Ms. Ajavananda said additional security changes to the school facility still need to be made, which are included in the capital plan again this year.

The process for discussion would be the same as before, including all stakeholders: the Board of Selectmen, police, and the Board of Education, as well as communication with the public.