



River Forest
Public Schools

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Dear District 90 Families, Faculty and Staff,

Among the many essential goals that school districts must prioritize are those relating to school climate and safety. For obvious reasons, these priorities are vital to protect the well-being of students and staff. Providing a safe and positive school environment includes addressing physical safety and ensuring safe school facilities. However, individuals must also be emotionally safe and free from bullying, harassment, prejudice, and exclusion. In District 90, our goal is to exceed these basic protections and provide learning environments that are inspiring, affirming, and accepting so that all members of the school community possess a sense of belonging and are able to grow and learn in fulfilling ways.

D90 conducted a comprehensive safety and school climate review in 2019 resulting in the Board of Education's adoption of 16 critical recommendations intended to improve our climate and responses to safety-related concerns. The team that conducted this review was comprised of local emergency response personnel (police and fire), social workers, school staff, and administrators. The multifaceted charge to this team included,

- Assess the safety elements that are already in place
- Investigate "best practices" in school safety and student support as recommended by reputable school safety entities and experts
- Determine appropriate recommendations that would markedly improve safety conditions within our schools.

Areas of specific focus included physical safety, the safety of facilities, protections for the emotional safety of individuals and groups, supports for emotional health and well-being, and programmatic structures aligned to strategic safety goals. The recommendations were developed through the efforts of three distinct subcommittees:

- *Campus Security and Strategies*
- *Emotional Well-Being*
- *Plans and Procedures*

Since 2019, the ongoing implementation of these recommendations has been vital in our efforts to foster an affirming school climate, build unity and community, and strengthen the foundation of our school safety response procedures. Below are just a few of the recommendations that were developed to maximize the physical and emotional safety of the D90 community:

Behavioral Threat Assessment Team – The District is in the process of implementing a new Behavioral Threat Assessment Team (BTAT) to serve all three schools. The behavioral threat assessment team model convenes individuals from diverse roles across the school district to hear concerns, review relevant information, and consider strategies to meet the needs of individuals who are experiencing extreme

stressors or in crisis. BTAT members are charged with developing and implementing proactive approaches that address aggressive and/or threatening acts against individuals, facilities, or the concerning individuals themselves. Teams typically include school social workers, administrators, faculty, and pre-identified community partners (i.e., mental health practitioners, school resource officers, etc.). It is anticipated that the D90 BTAT will be in place and operational by the end of the current school year (2021-22).

Communication Devices – New public address systems were installed at both Lincoln and Willard Schools to match the quality of the current system at Roosevelt. All three public address systems are now tied to District backup generators. The systems have a secondary access location to allow emergency access in each building. Two-way radios are assigned for dedicated use by key staff members (i.e., Physical Education, Lunch Supervision, Recess Monitoring, Nurses).

Shared Elementary Social Worker – To further support student and family needs, the District hired an additional full-time elementary social worker. The District is very fortunate to have an excellent social work team at both the elementary and middle school levels. Our social workers have addressed many issues that affect students, including anxiety, bullying, belongingness, eating disorders, equity, and inclusiveness. However, the proliferation of social work needs at the elementary level has been notable over recent years. As a result, additional staff was necessary to provide the targeted services intended to prevent or minimize subsequent mental health needs as students grow older.

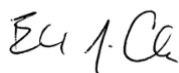
Exterior Door Monitoring – Under no circumstances may exterior doors be propped open when students are occupying school facilities. In addition, panic bars may not be toggled to the “always open” configuration (which allows unrestricted access to the building from the exterior). Only one entrance at each building is designated (preferably the main entrance) for visitors. This procedure must be followed for a variety of events, including parent/teacher conferences, open houses, and all evening events. When large-scale evening or weekend events require multiple entrances, they must be staffed at all times by designated “greeters” assigned to monitor entrances for safety.

To view the full District 90 School Climate and Safety Report, including the entire list of safety recommendations, please click this link: [School Climate and Safety](#)

With the ongoing implementation of these recommendations, District 90 continues to pursue our objective of providing a safe and affirming school environment for all individuals. A physically safe environment, along with one that is free from harassment, bullying, exclusion, prejudice, and other emotional harms, is absolutely necessary to fulfill our obligations to our students, families, faculty, and staff. Simply, classroom instruction is constrained unless both physical and emotional safety are present.

Thank you for your support as we continue to pursue our foundational objectives: to protect the health and safety of all members of the D90 community and maintain a high-quality, equitable program of in-person instruction for all students.

Sincerely,



Ed Condon, Ph.D.
Superintendent