



Miami-Dade County Public Schools

giving our students the world

Superintendent of Schools
Alberto M. Carvalho

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February 27, 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian:

On February 14, 2018, the Broward County community experienced a heartbreaking tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Through a senseless act of violence committed in the sanctuary of a school building, 17 students and staff members lost their lives. Dozens of others were injured, and many more have been left with emotional trauma from the events that transpired that day.

Our thoughts for healing and comfort are with the victims' families as we collectively stand in solidarity with the students, parents, teachers, and staff of Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). Members of our District Crisis Team, including psychologists, social workers, and family counselors, are providing additional support to BCPS students and families.

In light of this tragic event, M-DCPS has conducted a comprehensive review of its current school security and safety protocols. While our schools are among the safest places for children, we recognize that there is always room to make improvements, particularly when it involves protecting children. Therefore, we are identifying and implementing strategic enhancements on an ongoing basis.

Effective immediately, teachers have been instructed to lock their classroom doors during the school day to prevent unauthorized entry. Anyone entering a classroom after the bell has rung must have a key or knock for entrance. In addition, all students, teachers, and staff at middle and senior high schools will be required to wear school-issued identification. This will be phased in over the following weeks. All schools are being evaluated to reduce points of entry on campus, and protocols related to drills and school lockdowns are under review. All available law enforcement and mental health resources are being redeployed to school sites. Further, new and absolute directives related to school security personnel performance have been issued, requiring all security personnel – without exception – to wear identifiable uniforms to increase visibility on campus.

The Miami-Dade Schools Police Department takes every threat made against schools seriously, immediately investigating each one to determine its validity and identify the perpetrator. We are enhancing communication with parents through the use of text messaging to provide information on threats and notification once a threat has been cleared. Please check with your child's school to ensure that your contact information is accurate and up-to-date.

Local leaders, such as Mayor Carlos Gimenez and State Attorney Katherine Fernandez-Rundle, have joined School Board Chair Perla Tabares Hantman and myself in authoring a joint letter to lawmakers in pursuit of long-term solutions to increase student safety. Requests included an additional \$30 million in state funding to secure additional school resource officers and mental health professionals, evaluate and enhance facility infrastructure, and improve surveillance technology across law enforcement agencies.

The recent events in Broward County have undoubtedly devastated our community and entire nation. While we hold our loved ones close and attempt to heal from this tragedy, I want to assure you that the safety of students remains our highest priority. You can support us in protecting our schools by reporting any suspicious activity to 305-995-COPS (2677) or 305-471-TIPS (8477). Remember, if you see something, say something.

I trust that our collective efforts can help keep our children safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Carvalho', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Alberto M. Carvalho
Superintendent of Schools

AMC:ttr
L1059