



LINDENWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING • 801 EGG HARBOR ROAD • LINDENWOLD, NJ 08021

KRISTIN P. O'NEIL, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

April 17, 2023

Dear Lion Families,

Welcome back to Lindenwold Schools! Hopefully, you are returning from a relaxing spring break. Many of us took time over the break to honor our chosen holidays such as Easter, Passover, and Ramadan. Many of us spent time with family, friends, and loved ones and some of us even traveled. As we return feeling renewed, it is a good time to refocus and reflect.

While refocusing, we must take time to consider the many, very serious national tragedies happening across our country. While on our spring break, I watched the recent Louisville mass shooting at the Old National Bank unfold on television. Then as I was driving home this past Friday night, my children were getting messages and viewing “stories” from people at the Washington Township Carnival within mere moments of the chaos. People we knew, children we knew, were running and hiding out of fear. This shouldn't be the world any of our children grow up in, but it is.

Just prior to our spring break, many of us were horrified to follow the mass shooting that occurred in a Nashville, Tennessee School. And as we began the new year, in January, many of us were in shock learning about the shooting of a first-grade teacher by a 6-year-old child at the Richneck Elementary School in Newport News, Virginia.

As of today, there have been 147 mass shootings across our country in a total of 106 days in 2023. (citation: Gun Violence Archive) Mass shootings are defined as an incident in which four or more victims are shot or killed, and some information sources identify as many as 156. That is more incidents than there have been actual “days” in the year. There have been 14 school shootings in total thus far this year (in 106 days in 2023) which resulted in injuries and/or loss of life (Education Week 4/7/23). Last year, 2022, there were 51 school shootings which resulted in injuries and/or loss of life.



Being trained as a School Safety Specialist, holding the honor of Superintendent with extensive safety trainings, and being married to a retired law enforcement officer has provided me with a front seat to these tragic events and has resulted in many sad conversations with my own children. I have discussed how to hide and how to NEVER open a locked door during a crisis situation - no matter who is knocking on the outside - no matter what you hear. Teaching my own children to never open a locked door until a police officer arrives with a key may be essential in maintaining their safety, but it is one of the most disturbing and sad conversations I have felt required to have with them in 2023.

What have we done as a District to ensure the safety of our schools:

1. The District has continued its partnership with the Lindenwold Police Department, and at this time, we currently employ two School Resource Officers and one Class III Officer.
2. Representatives from The *New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness* visited our District on two separate occasions this year to review our drilling procedures in all of our District owned buildings.
3. Over the past year, the Lindenwold School District installed safety vestibules in all of our District owned school buildings.
4. The District is continuing to expand security cameras throughout the District in District owned and leased buildings.

5. All of our building maps are secured yet accessible in an emergency to all law enforcement throughout Camden County.
6. Vaper sensors are being installed in bathrooms this year, and Narcan boxes have also been installed throughout the district. (We received additional boxes from Lindenwold PD as a result of a grant.)
7. AEDs are located in every building, and designated staff in every building are CPR and AED trained.
8. The District has instituted new safety practices such as: an identification process for all staff, students, contractors, and guests, building entrance / exit processes and procedures have been modified, and we have added a vehicle identification process. (It's also why hood/hat coverings are not permitted. We need to see full faces on our cameras.)
9. Our new Early Childhood Building will be equipped with all of the most modern security measures.
10. Any time a concern is raised by a staff member, student, a police department officer, or a member of our community, it is investigated and addressed immediately. Depending on the circumstance, new procedures may even be developed to ensure the safety of all of our staff and students. It takes a village and many dedicated people to ensure everyone is safe each and every day.
11. Our District Safety Specialist continues to maintain her certification with up-to-date trainings on an on-going basis.
12. Finally, following school mass shootings, designated administrators, along with law enforcement members, attend trainings to learn from each event. It is traumatic and heart-wrenching, but critically important to learn and understand.

Important Information for Parents:

1. The District offers assistance to students, staff, and families in finding counseling services through a service entitled: Care Solace. The District also offers student counseling through on-site contracted therapists as well as guidance counselors, school social workers, and school psychologists.
2. Lindenwold has worked hard to align our crisis protocols and procedures in accordance with best practices through a two-year grant process called Life-Lines.
3. For the past year and a half, the District has continued to educate our staff and expand restorative practices with students.
4. The District has also integrated curriculum, known as Move this World, for students as early as preschool to teach coping, self-regulation and de-escalation strategies. We will be re-instituting Character Education in our middle school and revising our Freshman Seminar classes to meet these needs as well.

Student Behavior Information (The stuff we wish we didn't have to say):

1. Any student who brings a firearm into our schools will immediately be reported to law enforcement, and the student will be promptly and mandatorily arrested. Students who choose to bring a firearm to school should also know they are choosing to be arrested as well as choosing to never return back to Lindenwold Schools. (Policy 5611, 8467)
2. Weapons of any kind are not permitted in Lindenwold Schools including: tasers, pocket knives, butter knives, rocks in bookbags, cooking/gardening shears, etc. At a minimum, the District will notify law enforcement and a Superintendent's Hearing for re-entry meeting will be required with the parent and child. (Policy 8467)
3. A student who intentionally assaults a staff member will be suspended pending a Board of Education Hearing. Law enforcement will also be notified. (Policy 5612; N.J.S.A. 2C:12-1(a)1, N.J.S.A. 18A:37-2.1)
4. The District Code of Conduct will be applied to students who unintentionally injure a staff member during a physical altercation with another student. In addition, a Superintendent's re-entry meeting, with the parent and child, will be required. (Policy 5600)
5. A student who intentionally inflicts harm onto other students will be reported to law enforcement and will receive disciplinary action per the Code of Conduct. Such action may include a Superintendent's Hearing, with the parent and child, for re-entry into our schools. (Policy 5600)
6. If the District has any concern regarding the safety of a student, the mental health of a student, and/or a student's inappropriate, dangerous decision making, the District may require a student to receive a crisis evaluation or psychiatric evaluation. (Policies: 5350, 2417, 5512, 5610, 5600; Regulations: 5200, 5600 & 5610).
7. In the event the school District deems student behavior to be incorrigible or grossly negligent, an alternative learning placement may be recommended.

I thank you all for your support in helping us be the safest possible school District for all of our students and staff. The safety of all of our students and staff members must take priority at all times. Reviewing this information with your child, is another sad but essential step. Additional school safety information can be found on our website:

<https://www.lindenwold.k12.nj.us/domain/204>

Sincerely,



Dr. Kristin P. O'Neil
Superintendent