March 3, 2018

Carlsbad Unified Parents and Community,

As a follow up to the Superintendent’s Message on February 20, 2018, I’d like to provide additional information about the measures Carlsbad Unified is taking to ensure the safety and security of students.

As mentioned in the February message, staff is engaged in an ongoing review of safety and security processes and procedures, including the development of additional staff and student training and drills. We are working with the Carlsbad Police and Fire Departments, the City of Carlsbad’s Department of Emergency Preparedness, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In addition, the following measures are in place to minimize threats on our campuses:

Updated Comprehensive School Safety Plans: Our Comprehensive School Safety Plans are reviewed by local law enforcement agencies as well as School Site Councils, and include emergency procedures regarding an active assailant on campus. The plans are updated annually; they are also amended if there is an incident or a change in the physical site. At the February 28, 2018 meeting of the Board of Trustees, our Board approved updates to each school’s plan.

School Resource Officer (SRO) Program in Conjunction with the City of Carlsbad. Carlsbad Unified partners with the City of Carlsbad to provide three full-time Resource Officers to our school sites. These fully uniformed police officers are on campuses to provide a variety of functions, and are primarily focused on providing a safe and secure learning environment for students and staff. Carlsbad Police will dispatch additional officers in the case that we are advised of a potential threat.

We actively investigate all school related threats against students and staff. Staff works closely with Carlsbad Police and the Carlsbad Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) to immediately investigate all threats. This is a good time to remind your students that even “jokes” are taken seriously, and can have serious consequences.

Mental Health Services for Students. Services include on-site counselors, psychologists, and agency partnerships which provide support for students needing mental health assistance and support. Last week we met with representatives from Sandy Hook Promise, a non-profit organization that provides preventative training programs for students, staff, and parents. We look forward to providing additional information to you about this partnership in the future.

Recent national events highlight the critical importance of maintaining a healthy school climate and ensuring we meet the social and emotional needs of our students. Our teachers, staff, school counselors, psychologists, and administrators are committed to making our schools and classrooms safe and productive learning environments. We also rely on our students and parents to report any unusual or concerning activity or behavior. As always, please remind students: if you see something, say something*.

One additional note: as you may have heard, school walkouts and student demonstrations are being planned by a number of national organizations to (among other things) bring awareness to school safety issues. It is also possible that spontaneous walkouts may occur as the local and national conversations evolve on this issue. Carlsbad Unified School District neither endorses nor discourages students from participating. We will provide additional information about this to students, staff and parents in the next week.

Safety will always be a top priority in our schools. We will continue to provide additional information and updates.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ben Churchill
Superintendent

*WeTip Anonymous Crime Reporting Hotline: If any community member wishes to submit an anonymous report, we use the WeTip Hotline online at https://wetip.com/ or on the phone at 1-800-78-CRIME.