

## School Emergency Preparedness Drill

On Monday, March 11, 2024, we had the drug dog come in and walk through our school with the officer. This is a routine procedure we try to do once a year. We were under an "alert" status then, which meant teachers locked doors and continued teaching as usual; students were not allowed out of rooms. It all went very well, with no issues.

After the alert, Mr. Osterkamp went around to grades 5-12 and reviewed the alert situation with them. They explained an alert and gave students examples of when the school would go to alert (a drug dog, someone with a medical emergency in the hallway, etc.). Many teachers also followed up with students, discussing protocols and why having them was important. The elementary students were talked to by their classroom teachers.

Mr. Osterkamp then explained to students in grades 5-12 what a "lockdown" was. Middle school students were given a more scaled-down version appropriate for their age group. The procedures for a lockdown were discussed, and students were given examples of why we would lock down at school (examples: a person with a weapon on the playground, the street in front of the school with a weapon, an intruder in the building, etc.). We at school would not practice an actual lockdown; if we went to a lockdown, it would be an emergency. Discussed how to "avoid" the intruder or situation whenever possible and what procedures students should follow to make that happen, whether inside or out. Protocols for dealing with a worst-case scenario (if an intruder enters a room) were also briefly touched upon.

We considered the fact that many school assaults are done in passing times, before or after school, or even after the fire alarm is pulled. Students may need to show initiative, find safe rooms on their own, and take peers with them if teachers are not present in that area.

School personnel have had regular training on emergencies. We have multiple drills during the year, some with only staff and some with students present. It is essential to do these drills unannounced so we can find areas we may need to improve or had not considered previously. Our procedures are consistent with our emergency response plan and guidelines, which are posted around the school.

It was emphasized to all groups that this was not an attempt to scare anyone; we only want students to think things through and have a plan to follow through on. We are required to do at least one of these per year and report the results to the School Board. Just as schools have plans, individuals need to have plans. We also reminded students that most threatening situations do not happen at school; they occur in other public places such as churches, movie theaters, malls, concerts, etc. We want our students to be safe wherever they are. Sadly, we must practice and consider such situations, but this is the reality of our society today.

We hope that these school drills stimulate safety conversations at home. Please contact us if you have questions.