

# SOUTH BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Superintendent of Schools



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February 20, 2018

Dear South Brunswick Families,

I know that the events of last week in Florida have again put us all on alert. Like many of you, we are grappling with the most recent tragedy by asking, "How could this happen again in a school setting?" I have read the articles and posts including those around gun control, mental health, school security, and protest marches. The reaction to this tragedy should be large; as a society we should be outraged.

While gun control debates and protest marches have their place, and there is tremendous work to be done both in and out of schools regarding mental health supports, I want to discuss the area that we can most impact immediately: School Security.

As we consider the most recent events, I want to share with you what South Brunswick Schools have been doing as it pertains to long-term sustainable security measures. Our approach has been to make sustainable decisions that improve security in our schools for all occasions. Security is not something that we only care about after a tragedy, but rather it is a continued focus in how we budget and think about education. In fact, prior to the most recent tragedy the following were already in place:

- For this school year, we increased Police support to our schools by 33% and now have 4 full time South Brunswick Officers employed in our schools daily.
- Security improvements to further strengthen our entrances in all schools have been underway and are slated to be completed this summer. This work includes new entry ways for many of our schools, but even more importantly, improved entry protocols that will reshape how any person enters one of our buildings.
- Camera system proposals to add security cameras to all of our sites have been ongoing this year as we look to improve our capability of assessing our physical locations, including parking lots and recess areas and especially how this technology interfaces with entrance security.
- We work directly and continuously with our local police on all types of drills including active shooter, shelter in place, bomb threats and others. We are so fortunate to have this relationship and their onsite assessment and direction of all of our drills. This keeps the district current with best practices and aligned to the safest ways to manage our students and staff safety. These drills are documented, assessed and align with all state protocols and mandates. I believe we are ahead of the average district due to this relationship with our local police and their onsite presence.

The above are some of the more notable ways in which we have been focusing attention and dollars to improve the safety of all of our schools. Of course, the question we often ask ourselves is, "Can we do better?" I would say the answer is that we can always assess and look

to improve. Currently, as stated above, we employ four armed officers daily who work with all of our schools. We will continue to assess and work with our police department to make determinations on further security measures.

I will share that one area that we plan to impact immediately is to revisit our entrance protocols for visitors. You can help right now in the following ways:

- DO NOT hold the door open for another visitor when entering a school building.
- Call ahead and make an appointment to let the school know you are coming.
- Be patient with the front desk of the school you are visiting and make sure to check in, get your visitor badge and then SIGN OUT and return the badge when you leave.
- If you see something, say something. This phrase is popular, because it matters. If your child comes to you with information that you feel puts lives in danger, inform the school and the police.
- Remind your children to follow the guidelines and rules set forth by the schools when it comes to drills and threats. We work directly with the experts who guide us on the best way to manage threats.

I have received many emails in the last few days, and I appreciate every one of them. Your ideas and thoughts matter, and the respectful way in which each of you has communicated is a credit to this great community. Times like these require us all to work together.

Nothing is more important than keeping our children safe.

**OUR NEXT STEP IS TO OPEN A DIALOGUE WITH OUR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY. WE ARE TEAMING UP WITH OUR CHIEF OF POLICE, RAY HAYDUCKA AND THE POLICE DEPARTMENT, TO IDENTIFY A NIGHT WHERE THE COMMUNITY CAN COME TOGETHER TO FURTHER DISCUSS SAFETY AND SECURITY IN OUR SCHOOLS. THE DATE IS BEING WORKED ON AND I WILL BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH IT SHORTLY.**

I again thank all of you for your diligence and care as parents. As a father, these are the things that keep me up at night. As your Superintendent, my job is to make sure that you can sleep in confidence. There will be more to come as our plans move forward. You have all of our support in these efforts and beyond.

Sincerely,

Scott Feder  
Superintendent of Schools

**PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR A LETTER FROM OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Follow up letter from Chief Raymond Hayducka and  
Township Manager Township Manager Bernard Hvozdovic Jr. about school safety**

I wanted to provide an update on what is being done locally in the wake of the school shooting in Florida last week. I also want to ask for the communities continued assistance with reporting unusual or suspicious incidents or activity.

We continue to work with our County, State, and federal law enforcement partners to address ongoing and evolving issues. We have enhanced our security measures at all public and private schools in the Township. We have increased officers at all the schools, with 192 visits and checks being conducted this past week. We continue a constant dialogue with South Brunswick School District Superintendent Scott Feder on issues and concerns.

Over the past week there have been a number of reported incidents which have been investigated because they raised concern. I am committed to making sure all concerns and issues regarding safety are investigated to the fullest. We have used all our law enforcement partners in the past week to resolve all outstanding concerns. I ask the public to continue to report anything they believe raises concern.

Several of the concerns investigated came from social media posts. People posting things on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat need to be aware of potential criminal implications for threatening posts. Parents need to be vigilant of what young people are posting.

If you have any safety concerns or see anything suspicious please call us at 732-329-4646.

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