

Plan in place for safe school

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Includes strategies for emergencies

Because of the school shooting last Friday in Newton, CT, Dist. 20 officials want the community to know there are safety procedures in place locally.

Through a Monday night call and email to all parents of children in the district, Dr. Mike Teahon described the tragedy and aftermath as emotional, particularly for educators and parents throughout the country and world.

“We have all shed tears and asked ourselves how something this horrific could happen in a school full of little ones,” he said. “There is no answer to these questions.”

Teahon said it has become obvious that adults and some of the children who were in Sandy Hook Elementary School during the tragedy did everything possible to keep students safe.

“There were many heroes in that school,” he said. “Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone in that community.”

For the local district, the superintendent said safety procedures are in a board-approved Safe Schools Plan that includes information about what to do in all kinds of situations such as tornadoes, fires, dealing with intruders and more.

School officials review the plan annually with local law enforcement, emergency medical services and fire and emergency management personnel.

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The most recent review was in August, Teahon said, noting that school officials have continual conversations with local law enforcement and emergency personnel to determine if adjustments are needed.

Parents and patrons with questions about the plan, or other concerns, can contact school administrators by calling 537-3651.

Teahon said it's also important for parents or guardians to update phone numbers and emails by contacting the school so ConnectEd calls and emails can be received.

Teahon's message about the tragedy and the school's safety plan was repeated Tuesday night to parents who didn't receive it.

He noted that 91% of parents and guardians received the message Monday night.

Teachers or students having difficulty dealing with the Friday shooting are directed to school counselors, Teahon said.

"I ask that you continue to keep those who are in mourning and those who are less fortunate in your hearts during this holiday season," Teahon said.

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