

SCHOOL SAFETY INITIATIVES

In the light of recent national events, Dorchester School District Two has renewed its focus on the safety procedures and security measures that are in place in our own 21 schools. On Monday, December 17th all principals and district staff met to begin the process of reviewing school crisis management plans and to discuss areas where security could be tightened. School safety visits were begun that very week to identify areas for improved security. Over the course of the past two months the district has moved forward with the following safety initiatives:

- Safety audits were conducted at all school sites by a team of nine district staff members to identify any security deficiencies that could be corrected in a timely manner.
- Issues that were identified and addressed at various sites included but were not limited to adding and/or upgrading of:
 1. electronic surveillance equipment in and around school buildings
 2. fencing on school grounds
 3. lighting around buildings and parking areas
 4. electronic access controls (keypads) on doors
- Schools were asked to review all crisis management plans to be sure they were up to date
- Crisis management plans were reviewed with faculty and staff to ensure that everyone is familiar with their role in an emergency situation
- Every school was asked to conduct a lockdown drill with staff and students
- Procedures for signing visitors and parents into and out of the schools were reviewed to ensure there is controlled access to the building
- N. Charleston Police have provided school resource officers in the four elementary schools in the N. Charleston jurisdiction
- The superintendent met with local law enforcement agencies to discuss school security and ways that the district could work more closely with them

All of these safety measures have been completed or are in final stages of completion.

Future initiatives involve

1. Conducting a safety audit of all schools by a team led by local law enforcement agencies, members of the school board's safety committee, and school and district administrators to gather law enforcement's perspective on improving security. These will be conducted in March.
2. Developing plans to redesign entrance ways in some older schools that would improve visibility and monitoring of visitors. Some of these projects could be managed by the district facilities department during the summer months.
3. Explore the possibilities of providing a resource officer for the other eight elementary schools.

School safety and the welfare of our children is a community issue that requires collaboration of the school district with law enforcement, parents, employees, and our elected officials. Student safety is the number one priority in Dorchester School District Two.