

Update – 08/15/2022

Parents and Guardians,

Like I said, a lot of information is coming at you. This topic is extremely important, so please, please read the whole letter, it will not be short.

### **Building Security**

Please know this has always been a priority for the Blackfoot School District. Events late last spring, in another part of the country, emphasize the need for proper security planning and measures. First, I want to share with you the type of responses our schools have to address a variety of potential security issues. Please understand we will do our best to communicate what we can, when we can. We will do our best and please trust us when we say, “all students and staff are safe”.

**#1 – Shelter in Place** – This means that all is well within the school building, but we have been alerted of an issue in the surrounding area. When a “Shelter in Place” is put into effect, the school day continues on as planned, with the exception that outside activities are suspended AND entrance into the building will be highly controlled. Last year, we had a few of these due to a variety of incidents outside in the community. We are pleased to say these incidents were resolved quite well and did not move to any school campus. A “Shelter in Place” does not require you to retrieve your student from the building.

**#2 – Evacuation** – This means there is a threat to the safety of our students, and potentially the school building. The potential issues that could call for an “Evacuation” are: a fire, a threat, or an active situation. Each school has an evacuation plan as part of the security plan. We train for evacuations on a monthly basis through our fire drills. We also train with our buses at the start of each school year. Should an “Evacuation” be called, we will communicate with you the location for student pick-up. It will not, I repeat, it will not be at the school building. We will inform you of the alternate location.

**#3 – Lockdown** – This means there is an active situation occurring within the school building. This is the highest security level. During this process, staff will be in charge of the students in their classroom. We train our staff on the options they will need to consider. During this process, once first responders arrive on location, they will be in charge of the situation.

It is very important that our parents, guardians, and community members understand these three terms. Again, we will do our best to communicate. Please understand if any of these situations are in effect, our priority we will be working toward a resolution, and we may be a little delayed in communication.

### **Our Efforts**

**School Resource Officers** – We have increased the number of school resource officers from 4 to 5. These officers will primarily cover our 4 schools serving grades 6<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Two officers will be stationed at Blackfoot High School. We feel the extra officer at BHS will be a great benefit.

**Single-Point Entries** – Each of our schools has been modified for a single-point entry. This was done a few years ago. We have purchased material to reinforce the single-point entry glass. As such, we need to emphasize the use of the single-point entries in all our schools. Please forgive the inconvenience, but it is one of our best efforts toward increasing building security.

**External Doors** – We have emphasized, and emphasized, that no external door will be propped open during the school day. It may seem simple, but this will likely create some anguish. Sorry Blackfoot High School students, if you are late to school or late returning from lunch, we cannot have doors propped open for you to enter. Parents, please support us in this effort.

**Training** – As previously explained, we hold training every school year. We will continue to train our staff, and, where appropriate, our students on responses to active emergency situations. We discuss scenarios ranging from hide to flight to fight. We do our very best to be prepared, and yet still remain as an inviting educational entity. It can be a tough balancing act.

We wish to make it known that we did attempt to contract security guards for all our K-5<sup>th</sup> schools. Unfortunately, it was not feasible for the entity to fulfill that contract. We will continue to look for a company that can supply security guards for our K-5<sup>th</sup> schools.

Please know that we, I, have nothing but the best interests in mind regarding the safety and security of your children, our students. I have full faith in our local police departments and their ability to respond in a crisis. I have full faith in our incredible staff, who will take care of our children through any crisis that may occur. It is my hope and prayer that our preparatory actions will never be put to the test. Please speak with your children and let them know that school security is a serious matter and not something to mock.

GOD BLESS!!!!!!!!!!

Sincerely,

Brian Kress  
Superintendent of Schools  
Blackfoot School District #55