

CONNELLSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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CONNELLSVILLE PA 15425
Phone 724-628-3300 Fax 724-628-9002



January 16, 2020

Connellsville Area School District/ CAMS families:

Please consider this letter our opportunity to communicate general CASD / CAMS emergency procedures and to specifically address concerns brought to our attention by several students, parents, and concerned community members. The District recognizes acts and words in both the written and spoken form by students can present a danger to the safety and welfare of our students. As we receive notice of those acts, written words, or verbal expressions procedurally we conduct an assessment to determine if a threat is posed, if inappropriate language was used, or a situation outside of either of those two instances exists. Included in the threat assessment team are our administrators, School Police, counselors, teachers, and when appropriate outside mental health agencies, social service partners, and law enforcement on both the local and state levels. We consider school safety as one of our most sacred duties. We are keenly aware that if our students don't *feel* safe they will not be able to take advantage of the wonderful facilities, first calls technology, and dedicated professional & support staffs you as a community have so graciously provided. We are also aware, that research has shown schools "are among the safest places in the United States¹". We do not take our safety responsibility lightly nor do we take any report of fear, threat, or discomfort to any member of our student body dismissively.

With that said, throughout the week of January, 13, 2020 our administrative staff conducted an assessment and determined specific code of conduct violations may have occurred and no evidence of a founded threat existed at any time. Again as is best practices and due to confidentiality rights of students we cannot share identifiable information about the student(s) involved or those who courageously "saw something and said something". Likewise, we cannot share specific code of conduct violation consequences earned, enrollment in mental health services, or social services notifications. I can attest that we strive for consistency, impartiality, and help vs. punishment when appropriate.

Based on advice from the US Secret Service, CASD/CAMS employees a posed threat vs. inappropriate or threatening unfounded language/ graphics etc. model. In other words, in the event of an actual threat being assessed, we would immediately deploy our District or building specific communications systems and our in school emergency response procedures if occurring during the school day. Those official means of communication include our SchoolMessenger® parent notification system, press releases, website postings at:

¹ Column: Don't be misled by the publicity on shootings: For kids, schools actually are the safest refuges from gun violence
<https://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-fi-hiltzik-school-safety-20180316-story.html>

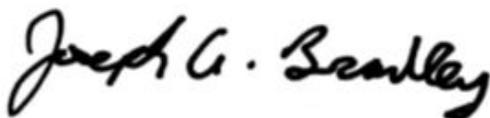
<https://www.casdfalcons.org/>, and media releases. CASD finds great value in the numerous social media platforms for general information pieces and celebratory sharing of the wonderful accomplishments of our students. However, in an effort to avoid increased anxiety and stressors on our students or cause escalated alarm in our communities, in emergency situations, to avoid erroneous information or misinformation, we do not utilize social media accounts to disperse information.

Our emergency response procedures include but are not limited to:

- Sequestering of students: shelter in place & lockdowns
- Dismissals/ cancellations/ delays
- Establishment Parent - Child Reunification Centers

In keeping with the social media utilization philosophy of general information and celebration, we are asking our families to continue the partnerships with us that we strive daily to maintain and communicate emergency or threatening information to us via phone calls to our principals, emails to our staff, or by stopping our buildings as a visitor. In doing so, encourage your loved ones to speak to their teachers, principals, or the District adult they are most comfortable. That adult may be a coach, a police officer, a member of our support staff, or whomever they have developed a critical level of trust. As always, we all have the ability to contact 911 when we individually deem necessary.

Yours in Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph A. Bradley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joseph A. Bradley
Superintendent of Schools²

² In compliance with CASD policies: 218.2, 805.1, adn 805 located at: <https://go.boarddocs.com/pa/conn/Board.nsf/Public#>