Welcome to the inaugural issue of "The NEWS Letter," my electronic newsletter. Each issue will address timely topics of interest to our school community. Over time, it is my hope that the newsletters - which will be archived on the district website at www.westfieldnjk12.org - will provide a valuable library of information and historical background on district initiatives.

We begin with the issue of security. The staff and I greatly appreciate the cooperation and support of our school community as we carefully considered and put into place tightened security procedures at all ten of our schools. In listening and talking to parents and other members of the community over the past several months, it became clear that some of our families, especially those new to the district, are unfamiliar with the years of due diligence performed by our Board of Education, administrative team, and staff in safeguarding our schools.

We do not make decisions in a vacuum nor do we base them solely on cost. For years, we have acted on the advice and recommendations of local, county, and state law enforcement and other experts in the field of security. State, county, and local officials have conducted unannounced monitoring
of our security drills and we've met on more than one occasion with the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning. As outlined below, the district has made a significant investment in the safety of our students and staff. We will continue to listen and learn as we consider additional measures based, as always, on a thoughtful and responsible review.

However, it's not just about physical safety. We are committed to the emotional security of our students as well. Every day brings meaningful examples of social and emotional learning and character education taking place in our schools.

I hope the information provided here will give readers a better understanding of the measures the district has taken over the years to help ensure the safety of our school community. As always, please feel free to contact me at superintendent@westfieldnjk12.org with any questions or concerns.

---

**PHYSICAL SAFETY AND EMOTIONAL SECURITY IN WESTFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**2012-2016**

- Security consultants hired and school audits conducted.
- Emergency Management Team meets regularly and includes representatives from Westfield police, district staff, and security consultants. (Ongoing)
- Cameras installed in all schools and administration building.
- Panic alarms installed in every school.
- Fire alarm systems upgraded in every building.
- Security system upgraded to enable building-specific access badges for staff.
- New clocks/PA system installed, allowing two-way communication between office staff and classrooms in case of lockdown or other emergency.
- Shatterproof 3M film installed on windows and classroom doors at each school, as recommended by security consultants.
- WPD School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned to Westfield High School.
- All staff at every school trained at

---

**2017 - Present**

- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative established to promote consistent, districtwide effort.
- WPD School Resource Officers (SROs) assigned to Edison & Roosevelt Intermediate Schools.
- Westfield PD makes twice daily, unannounced visits to each elementary school.
- Cameras with improved clarity installed in all schools.
least once per year by security consultants; training includes recognizing how to identify a person in crisis and other warning signs. (Ongoing)

- Superintendent/administrators receive additional security training from national, state, county, and local agencies (Ongoing)

- As required by law, regular security drills conducted, with students trained how to respond to a multitude of emergency situations including lockdowns, shelter in place, and evacuations. (Ongoing)

- Age-appropriate lessons provided on character education, anti-bullying measures and being an Upstander. (Ongoing)

- WHS Transition Program, middle school peer leaders, elementary buddies, & other student-driven mentoring initiatives introduced to provide student connections. (Ongoing)

- Counseling provided at each school, with special programs focusing on mental health and wellness in place. (Ongoing)

- Signage added to each school to enable quick access for first responders.

- Updated security protocols in all 10 schools including required appointments & proof of ID before access and drop boxes outside of each school for items delivered by parents.

- Digital record of visitors established, along with written log.

- Office staff trained on proper visitor vetting procedures; ongoing training for all staff with targeted training for office & custodial staff.

- New classroom/stairwell doors installed at high school and intermediate schools.

- Security gates installed at high school and intermediate schools to limit access at night when gyms and auditoriums are in use.

- New classroom/stairwell doors & security gates to be installed at all elementary schools.

"It's more than just security. This is a community. Kids talk to me. I'm a mentor, a counselor, a friend."

*Officer Ricardo Johnson  
Westfield High School SRO*

In my Opening Day remarks to staff on September 3, I stressed the importance of reaching out to a supervisor or myself with any concerns about a person in their lives. I now make the same appeal to you, as parents. If a student or family member is going through a difficult time, please do not hesitate to notify a counselor, a teacher, or any one of the many caring adults who work in our district so that we can help to provide support. Thank you for working together with us to ensure the physical safety and emotional security of your children.
We communicate with our school community in many ways. The district website – www.westfieldnjk12.org – is the single best source of factual information. Board meeting dates, agendas, and video recordings, along with the Superintendent's Synopsis of each meeting, are posted here, as are district calendars, school closing information, enrollment figures, curriculum by department, and other key information.

You'll find our Crisis Communication Plan and presentations on security, budget, district goals and other subjects on the website, along with family resources on mental health and wellness, food allergies, technology, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and much more. There also are compelling accounts of student achievement, community service, and innovative lessons taking place in classrooms across the district, as well as informative videos on SEL, our Standards-Based Report Card, and other important topics.

For those on social media, please follow us on Facebook @westfieldpublicschoolsnj and on Twitter @westfieldnjk12.org. For those not on social media, you can follow our feeds on the district website homepage.

The Parent Teacher Council (PTC) holds informative monthly meetings, which the Superintendent and a Board representative attend and answer questions.

For emergency situations, we send email, text, and voice alerts via our Emergency Messaging System. We also post alerts on our website and social media and send to local media outlets.
including our Crisis Communication Plan, Board of Education meetings, agenda, presentations, and information on mental health and wellness, Social and Emotional Learning, food allergies, and other important topics.

**DISTRICT NEWS**

The district website contains an archive of exciting school news detailing student and staff achievement, community service efforts, innovative classroom lessons and more. Visit often to read the latest on what's happening in the Westfield Public School District. Click on the images for a few examples.

**DISTRICT VIDEOS**

A gallery of district videos is available on the website under "District Information," including a series on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), an explanation of the Standards-Based Report Card, welcome messages, and much more. Click on the images to view these informative videos.
Students weigh in on SEL

Westfield Public Schools
302 Elm Street
Westfield, NJ 07090
www.westfieldnjk12.org

FOLLOW US

Facebook Twitter