



BELLEVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

This morning, we conducted unannounced lockdown drills at Belleville High School and School #7. These unannounced drills were facilitated through a visit by the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning as part of the Governor's K-12 School Security Task Force initiative. Representatives from the NJ Department of Education's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning are tasked with randomly visiting schools across the state of New Jersey to observe school procedures for a lockdown and provide best practices to our leadership team in promoting safer schools for all children and staff. The Belleville Police Department and I were made aware of today's scheduled visit, but we were asked not to notify any staff or community members about the visit.

Accompanying members from the NJ Department of Education's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning were representatives from the New Jersey State Police and the Belleville Police Department. Each agency was here to observe the lockdown drill procedures, provide targeted support, and share best practices which have been learned from similar efforts across the state.

Having lockdown drills in multiple schools around the same time is somewhat unusual and has the potential to cause concern. Therefore, I am sharing this information to assure you there was no real emergency today, and the occurrence of these drills was a way to increase our school security and preparedness efforts.

As always, the Board Trustees and I have placed the safety of our students, faculty, and school community as our number one priority in district. Partnerships with these agencies, as was witnessed today, is our way of ensuring that Belleville Public Schools remains in the forefront of school safety efforts.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding today's visit, please contact me or your school's principal.

Thank you for your understanding and commitment to our district initiatives.

Sincerely,

Richard D. Tomko, Ph.D., M.J.
Superintendent of Schools

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