

PROMOTING SAFETY

Recently, our school district, along with districts across the nation, observed School Bus Safety Week. Indeed, there are definitely precautions that need to occur in the operation of a school bus, and I am not just talking about the driver. There are procedures which students are expected to follow, and must follow, in order to promote a safer trip to and from school. These general rules are listed in the student handbook and a copy has been given to every student for review. A partial list of rules is posted on each school bus to serve as a reminder for students. These safety rules or guidelines should be common knowledge for all students. All of our buses are equipped with video cameras. This is yet another security measure on the part of the district to promote safety. Most of the time, these cameras are operable, and they are a big help to us in promoting safety and order on the buses.

According to Article 9.24 of Ohio School Law, boards of education are required to provide transportation for pupils in grades K-8 who live more than two miles from school. Notice that the law says “required to provide.” This doesn’t mean that this privilege should be abused. It is not a birth right. Certainly, disruptive students on our buses, regardless of K-8 or 9-12, cannot and will not be permitted to make the trip to or from school an unsafe one for others on the bus. As parents, you can help us greatly by stressing the need for good behavior from your child while riding the bus. This assistance would be greatly appreciated by all involved.

Recently, I mentioned to you that I attended a meeting with the law enforcement leaders in our communities, as well as the county level. This meeting was relative to the safety and security of students and staff in our buildings to make sure we already have plans of action in place to deal with building security. We conduct lockdown drills in our buildings, along with fire and tornado drills. Our high school buildings have better air quality control than our elementary facilities. Therefore, in our high school buildings, classroom doors are kept closed and locked during the day. We have reexamined the security of our exterior doors. During the day, all but one exterior door will be locked in most of our buildings. As you might have already guessed, our new elementary buildings will be designed and built with various security aspects in mind.

Our School Resource Officers (SRO), the sheriff's office, and our local police departments are a tremendous help to us in promoting the safety and security of our buildings for all who are in them. It takes the patience, understanding, and cooperation from all of us to make this work. Unfortunately, there is very little opportunity to promote common sense in the arena of school security. Anyone planning to commit a crime or an act of violence in the school setting is not utilizing common sense. Unfortunately, if an individual can capture an armored car, they can probably enter any building in the country if they want to do so badly enough. Look at the Pentagon. Safety and security is a 24/7 business. We need to work together to promote it. While you may feel that one or more of these measures is a nuisance and unnecessary, remember that we must promote safety and security even if it does seem to be an inconvenience at times. Remember that old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

NEW BUILDINGS UPDATE

To help communicate what is going on with our new building program, a new link on our district website has been created. At the present time, all of the information is in written form. When the time comes, I hope to be able to provide you with schematic designs for the new elementary schools. But, this is still some time down the road yet. For now, you can stay up to date by going to our website at www.ovsd.us . Once there, scroll down to District Documents and click on “Building Project Updates.” A chronological log of information should appear. You can click on any piece of information that you see. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 544-5586. Thank you.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent