



Newton Public Schools
100 Walnut Street
Newton, MA 02460

Telephone
(617) 559-6100

Fax
(617) 559-6101

David Fleishman
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Newton School Community,

Since I last wrote to you two weeks ago about school security, we have continued to focus on issues of school safety and security and are now preparing to make an important change in our procedures. In making this change, we have consulted with the Mayor, Police Department, principals, and our district safety team. We have also studied the safety procedures in other school districts and examined a 2008 security assessment of our schools conducted by the Newton Police Department.

In recent years, all of our schools have instituted changes designed to improve school safety. For example, all pre-K-8 schools have instituted keyless entry systems. In addition, all pre-K-12 schools have installed shades and locks on classroom doors. At the high school level, we have placed security cameras in key locations. Our principals continue to ensure that all staff are instructed and trained to respond to any crisis by implementing lockdown drills, shelter-in-place procedures, and evacuations. Further information regarding safety and security in the Newton Public Schools, including information on our emergency procedures, can be found at:
http://www3.newton.k12.ma.us/emergency_response.

We must continue to improve our safety practices and procedures in a thoughtful manner. There are sensible security measures that we can implement while preserving the sense of community that is a hallmark of the Newton Public Schools. We plan to install a buzzer and camera system as quickly as possible in our pre-K-8 buildings that will enable the schools to be locked during the school day through dismissal. We will maintain our current practice of keeping the front door open during drop-off time so that parents can take their children into school at the start of the day. While parents and visitors may still be able to enter during the school day, they will have to be allowed in after using the buzzer and being identified by school staff. We will communicate to you when our current front-door policy will change, and you will receive information regarding procedures for after-school programs after this issue is further examined.

Both the Mayor and School Committee are supportive of this decision. It is also important to note that a majority of our peer districts now either have these types of systems or have plans to install them in the near future.

In the coming weeks, we will continue to assess our safety and security procedures in all of our buildings, including the high schools. Please note that we will be certain to communicate frequently as we proceed. Thank you for your understanding and support.

Sincerely,

David Fleishman
Superintendent of Schools