

School Safety Questions

1. Will our police stand down or stand back?

No, law enforcement officers will respond to any threat to the school immediately. All officers are trained to go immediately to any threat within a school and engage with that threat. Prior to Columbine, law enforcement doctrine stated that law enforcement first responders would secure the outside of a school and wait for tactical teams to respond. The school shooting at Columbine changed this doctrine and law enforcement is trained to seek-out the active threat and engage immediately. Upon any indication of a threat, our School Resource Officer would be the first to respond and engage.

2. Does each school always have a police officer on site and are they armed and what is the main purpose of them being there?

All District 211 high schools are assigned a school resource officer (SRO), or sometimes referred to as a police consultant, from the local police department. The SRO, who is armed and identifiable as a police officer, is on the school campus during the school day and often times present for large after-school events. The SRO's main responsibility is to serve as the primary liaison between the school and the local police department. In addition to physical security and consultation, the SROs are directly involved in each school's emergency planning and response.

In the event of an active threat to the school, they will be the first responder and are trained to go directly to and engage the threat. In the event of an active threat, the SRO is also the primary point of contact with the police department. Additional police are immediately dispatched to the school and the response time for this support is typically under 3 minutes. More information on our police consultants is available here: <https://adc.d211.org/police-consultants/>

3. How do you work with the local police and fire departments in case a situation arises?

District 211 has established and continually updates emergency protocols with the input and assistance of multiple local law enforcement and first-responding agencies. Annually, district and school administration meet with local emergency response agencies to review all protocols. Emergency response agencies also are present during school drills, and assist in the evaluation of these drills.

4. How do police know there is an issue at the school? How fast can they get there?

Our School Resource Officers are part of each school's administrative team and they carry a 2-way radio and emergency notifications systems. They are also equipped with police radios and have direct and immediate communication with their headquarters and all police officers in the community. In the event of a threat to the school, the SRO is most likely the first police officer to respond and they likely would be able to respond in seconds. Additional support from community-based police units will arrive at our schools in less than 3 minutes. Because of the proximity of police headquarters to some of our schools and the number of patrol officers that are commonly in the vicinity of all schools, the response time is likely less than 3 minutes.

We continue to identify methods and technologies that allow us to communicate quicker and more efficiently with police if an emergency situation arises in our schools. The Hoffman Estates, Schaumburg, and Palatine Police Departments have each been issued a District radio that allows them direct access to our own 2-way radio systems and the communications taking place in our schools.

5. What should Parents do if there is an emergency at the school?

You will receive emergency communications from the District indicating what steps parents should take in the event of an emergency. Emergency events at a school have many layers of complexity. If there were an actual emergency at a school, everyone's priority is the safety of students and staff. This would involve a comprehensive response from police and fire personnel. All first responders need to have unimpeded access to the school and school grounds. In the event of any serious incident at one of our schools, our planning with the police has includes the likely shut-down of the main streets leading to the school and parents would be directed to avoid going to the school. In the event of a serious emergency, the District, village management, and police and fire personnel will work together to communicate frequently with families and inform them of reunification details.

6. Where will parents be directed to go if there is an incident?

Each school's reunification site may be different, and for security purposes, we do not communicate these locations in advance. Emergency communications will advise parents where to go in the event of an actual incident.

7. What is the protocol for parents should an active shooter be situated at one of the schools?

During any emergency situation, local response agencies collaborate with District 211 to ensure students and staff safety. The District uses its emergency notification system to provide information to parents, which can include phone calls, emails, and text messages, as well as postings to websites and social media outlets.

8. What is the difference between soft and hard lockdowns and what would be the case with an active shooter inside the school?

A soft lockdown would be implemented when there exists a potential safety concern outside of the school building, somewhere within the community. A soft lockdown restricts visitor access to the building and limits students and staff movement outside of the school, while regular school operations inside the school proceed normally.

A hard lockdown occurs when a discernible threat to student and staff safety exists within the school building. During a hard lockdown, students and staff take shelter within the school, limiting their movement and locking doors and windows. Under certain circumstances, if evacuating is a safer option, students and staff are encouraged to do so.

While all situations are different, the scenario with an active shooter within the school building would call for a hard lockdown, with the option to evacuate if the situation warrants.

9. Does the school district practice active shooter drills annually and how often?

Yes, each District 211 school practices a minimum of two lockdown drills per year, one each semester, which exceeds the state requirement.

10. What do the drills entail?

The drills are done in close collaboration with local law enforcement and test the District's emergency response protocols. These simulations are based on previous national or local incidents, and typically involve varying scenarios and conditions that help students and staff members to become familiar with emergency protocols and responses at different points of the school day. Lockdown Drills have evolved to include student and staff education on the Run, Hide, Resist model. We develop drill plans to include circumstances that simulate potentially real situations.

11. Are the results of drills disclosed?

The purpose of the drills are to test our current practices, evaluate our procedures, assess student and staff readiness, and identify areas of improvement. After each drill, school officials meet with police and oftentimes fire personnel to evaluate the drill. These post-drill reviews are invaluable for identifying our strengths and recognizing areas of improvement. We continuously adapt subsequent drills, and (if necessary) procedures to be responsive to evolving threats and concerns for safety. We do not publicly disclose “results” of safety drills, as the drills are not intended to be a “pass/fail” exercises, but are intended for practice, learning and continuous improvement.

12. Have there been relocation drills for the high schools? If so, do you have an estimate of how long that takes to move 2800 students and staff?

Our schools have practiced on-site relocation drills, but we have not practiced off-campus relocation drills. Based upon review of actual traumatic events elsewhere around the country, the process of evacuating students off-campus due to an actual traumatic event to a relocation site and subsequently re-unifying students and parents would take many hours to perform.

If an actual emergency event were to occur, the obvious first priority is the safety of affected students, but it is important to realize that the police and fire must (1) be certain that any threat to safety is contained and (2) a perform a comprehensive investigation which includes the interview of many students and staff.

13. In the event of an incident, is there a plan for a physical place (other than the school) where parents can go for information and in the event of a school evacuation, be reunited with children?

In the event it is necessary to evacuate students off-campus, each school has plans to relocate students. The District’s emergency communication systems will notify parents of the location and process for reunification.

14. When was the last time any school was on a lockdown and what was it for?

The last District 211 school to go into lockdown was Palatine High School in January, when upon hearing a loud noise in a school stairwell, a staff member called for an immediate lockdown. The School Resource Officer immediately ran to the site of the incident and notified other local law enforcement in the area. Within only a few minutes, the police and school officials determined that a student had set off a firecracker. Working together, administrators

and law enforcement ascertained that the situation was not a threat to school safety, and the lockdown was lifted shortly thereafter based on the determination of the police.

15. What is Run, Hide, Resist? Please define “Resist” in an active shooter situation.

For many years law enforcement and schools trained exclusively to shelter-in-place, lock doors and turn-off lights in classrooms and offices. In the past, we relied on locking down rooms exclusively. This narrow approach has shown to be restrictive and not always the best option.

Upon reviewing previous incidents, the police departments have worked with school personnel to expand our approach to include the Run, Hide, Resist response. If needed in a situation where a person cannot run or hide, we encourage students and staff to “Resist” We have elected to use the term “resist” instead of the more common phrase Run, Hide, Fight” because we do not instruct students or teachers to “Fight.”

The Run, Hide, “Fight” model was developed and intended as a general framework for adults and in workplace and public environments. We instead utilize the term “resist” to describe other actions that individuals can take to ensure their safety in the event of an actual threat to safety. This can include barricading classrooms, offices, and doorways and obstructing assailants.

Our emphasis with students has been on locking down and evacuating if this course of action will be safe. If circumstances are such that exiting and evacuating the building presents a higher degree of safety, students are empowered to do so.

We want our staff to (1) always be aware of their surroundings and the resources at their disposal and (2) take the most appropriate action to ensure the safety of as many students possible. All options to maximize safety, minimize threats to students and staff, and prevent injury or loss of life should be considered. Active threat scenarios are dynamic, fluid, and unique; they require everyone to choose a response that provides the greatest chance for safety and survival. The purpose of Run, Hide, Resist is to empower students and staff to do what they feel is most appropriate given the circumstances. This approach to responding to threats to safety translates to every environment where people congregate, including shopping malls, restaurants, movie theaters, and workplaces

16. Can communications be consistent across schools? Some schools send out messages that others do not.

Every situation that can occur in a school has varying layers of complexity and different implications for a school’s community. Incidents that clearly have implications across multiple school buildings will likely be addressed by District-wide communications. Incidents that

disrupt school or pertain to a potential safety concern undergo an extensive review between District and school administrators, as well as local police.

Building principals have the ability to communicate with their students and parents directly. In instances where there is an immediate need to communicate with parents, these communications are developed with the collaboration of District staff in conjunction with the building principals and police.

We have a group of parents that we meet with to help review communication practices and identify areas of improvement. Based upon feedback from this group and input from others, we are developing a communication system that will assist parents in sorting through District and school communications and varying levels of priority and urgency.

17. Why do we hear of information reported from our students that you don't tell us?

We work through a complete range of situations with students every year. We respond to student behavior with teams of talented people, including social workers, administrators, counselors, psychologists, police, and many other community resources. Every report of potential concern for safety is met with the same extensive degree of review, investigation, and assessment. When a report meets the degree of seriousness that necessitates notification of the school community, we leverage our emergency communications systems to do so and present relative information within the scope of what we can share. Our priorities are (1) the safety of all students and the school community, and (2) ensuring the operation of our schools and maintaining an effective learning environment.

18. Are you considering arming staff or teachers?

Current legislation does not allow for this. We do not advocate arming teachers and we feel strongly that working closely with law enforcement and having police consultants in our schools is one of the most effective deterrents to violence in school and the best resource for violence intervention in a school. By fostering an environment in which students feel encouraged to report any possible concerns, we can help identify students who may need assistance prior to the point of any serious behavior.

19. Are there cameras inside the schools like the one in Florida?

Each District 211 building has a multitude of surveillance cameras, located within the school and outside on school grounds. The cameras can be viewed in real-time and authorized staff has the ability to review previously recorded video. In case of emergency, police can link into

the District camera system in order to provide greater visual awareness even before a responder enters the school.

20. Has the district ever talked about metal detectors inside the schools to reduce the chances of guns coming into the schools? With the Florida situation, could that be a topic to soon be discussed?

Like all matters of security, this topic has been researched as well as reviewed with local law enforcement. There is almost unanimous agreement among law enforcement that metal detectors in and of themselves are not a solution to maintain safety in schools. Rather, one of the single most effective methods of maximizing safety within a school is through regular drills and practice of emergency protocols.

21. How do we balance safety with making schools feel like schools and not prisons?

Our schools are community schools and we have worked at developing school cultures and environments where students want to be.

Based upon input from our police partners, federal and state guidance, and experts in the realm of school safety, we have focused our attention on prevention, preparedness, response, and communication. These factors have proven to be most effective in preventing school violence.

There are many hardware and software products that promote security, but the most effective things schools can do to maintain safety is to include all approaches and continually work to improve school culture and students' connections to their schools.

22. Are you going to increase funding for school security measures?

Every year, the District budgets funds to account for facility safety and school preparedness. We continue to evaluate our needs and make improvements to our facilities, procedures, and resources every year. School safety continues to be a top priority and various enhancements are currently forecasted and have been budgeted for implementation.

23. How do safety and security planning personnel get information about actual traumatic incidents that occur elsewhere?

We work constantly with law enforcement. Much of the information we get about actual traumatic incidents comes from intelligence they share with us. We are also recipients of real-time incident sharing information from the Illinois Statewide Terrorism and Intelligence Center that is an extension of the Illinois State Police. We receive almost immediate updates on matters that occur throughout the country as well as professional development materials and general information on matters related school safety.

24. Can the PowerPoint be shared with PTA?

The Community Education School Safety Session power point will be made available on our website and shared with the schools.

25. Why are D15 and D211 (schools) open during voting days? We have strict rules on allowing visitors every other day?

School administrators work with election officials to offer voters access to polling places at some schools/facilities on election days. Every effort is made to locate voting access in a separate area of the building, away from the regular school population, in order to provide a safe and secure experience that is the least disruptive to the school day.

26. Is an anonymous tip made on-line really anonymous?

Reports made via the Safety Concern Center report mechanism can be made anonymously. Individuals who submit have the choice to include their name and contact information or the reports can be done anonymously. To work back to identify the source of anonymous reports is very difficult to perform. If the seriousness of the report warrants, and it is necessary to determine the source, law enforcement does have the means to assist with locating the source of a report.

When a report is made, the more specific, actionable information that school officials are equipped with, the more likely a situation can be resolved quickly. Having the ability to contact individuals that submit these reports can be invaluable however we do recognize that some people may wish to remain anonymous for various reasons. We want to encourage any exchange of information that can help to keep our schools and students safe.

27. During the presentations, there were messages that somewhat conflicted with each other. One was “see something, say something,” the other is “take what you see on social media with a grain of salt.” How do you recommend people decide what is worth reporting?

First and foremost, “see something, say something” is the priority. It is vital that reports are made to school administrators or the police in a timely fashion. We rely on the eyes and ears of our students and parents. We don’t want our community members to assume something is not a threat or feel the burden to make that decision. We investigate all reports of concern with the same degree of priority and leverage the same level of school and police resources.

The message surrounding the request to use caution in interpreting social media messages is based upon the experiences we have had at our schools and that which many other schools across the country have experienced. Social media messages can quickly evolve and create hysteria.

We encourage everyone to report information directly to school or police officials and to be aware that social media and media content can be modified, edited, and manipulated. While the majority of “threatening” messages on social media turn out to be false, we investigate every possible incident reported to us, including those from social media.

We encourage people to inform us when they perceive any possible threat or matter of concern. When we receive reports of concern, school officials work closely with police and every issue will be investigated thoroughly. The use of social media can be highly counter-productive to investigations and resolutions. Due to the nature of social media, we can find ourselves in a secondary crisis created through the posting and reposting of communications. These scenarios can pose a tremendous strain on school and police resources and ultimately divert attention from the actual, initial possible threat.

School will not be operated if the police or school administration has any indication that a threat is legitimate or if safety may be compromised.

28. What are the disciplinary procedures when students send or share false threats?

Students that engage in making false claims or threats against school face a variety of consequences. As with all student discipline matters, when determining consequences, school officials always evaluate each incident and assess them based upon their totality of circumstances. Students engaging in making threats against a school face responses up to and including suspension or a recommendation for expulsion or transfer to alternative settings.

In certain instances, students making false claims may face criminal charges.

29. Is there training for substitute teachers and staff in case an incident occurred when substitute staff is present?

Our substitute staff receives safety training in conjunction with the training we provide as a condition of employment. We continue to modify our practices to improve our preparedness and readiness.

30. How do students who need additional support but don't ask for it get help from counselors?

We have many layers of supports for students. For those students that do not seek out assistance, the most powerful tool is collaboration and communication between staff. All schools have problem solving teams that intercede when students are struggling. As academic and socio-emotional concerns arise, these teams collaborate to intervene and support their students. Teacher, support staff, student supervisor, other staff, or parents may refer a student to the team. Support staff and teachers have day-to-day contact with students and often form supportive, positive relationships with students. The connections our staff makes with students often allow us to identify matters of concern and subsequently connect with students to assist.

31. What is in place for students that have conflict with one another?

We have many resources to prevent, and, if necessary, intervene when students are in conflict. Our intervention offices and student services department have many practices in place to address conflict between students and our student supervisors are trained to intervene when students engage in conflict. Restorative justice practices are a means to connect members of the school community and solve underlying issues as opposed to isolating students and disconnecting them from the supports and trained personnel available in our schools.

32. What does, or can the district do to reduce these types of situations from occurring here moving forward?

The best way of intervening and minimizing potential threats to our schools is through our school and local communities working together. We always encourage people to bring concerns for safety to us directly rather than use social media outlets to communicate concern.

District 211 has a comprehensive system of support for students that includes counseling, therapeutic, and social/emotional interventions. The staff is trained and works extensively to recognize and intervene when students are struggling. All students are encouraged to seek

support for themselves or others when matters of potential safety exist. In addition to the many student support programs, District 211 provides several ways for students to report concerns anonymously. The District continues to work closely with law enforcement to identify and intervene when students or other pose threats to the school.