



Ronald C. Wilson, Superintendent
Adrienne Barna, Director of Finance

250 E. Tuttle Road
Ionia, MI 48846
616-527-9280
616-527-8846 (Fax)
www.ioniaschools.org

February 15, 2018

Dear Ionia Public Schools Staff and Families:

Many lives were lost yesterday at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, at the hands of a former classmate. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families, victims, and everyone affected by this tragedy. Unfortunately, school shootings and violence are in the news too often. While the reasons for these senseless acts of violence will continue to be debated, it is important that schools, families, and communities continue to work together to prevent such incidents from occurring.

Ionia Public Schools has worked hard to provide safeguards for our students and staff if something were to happen, but also minimize the chance of this happening at all. Accordingly, Ionia Public Schools has implemented a plan to provide information and resources to support mental health awareness and suicide prevention. We are actively working with other local school districts, local law enforcement and the Right Door to better protect our students and staff.

In light of recent events, I wanted to relay information about the safety protocols at Ionia Public Schools. Please know that above all else, student safety is our primary concern. All entrances are locked and monitored. Visitors may only access the building through the Main Entrances and may be required to show I.D. before they are allowed in by a staff member. You can support us in ensuring the safety of our staff and students by having your ID ready when you come to Ionia Public Schools for any reason. Additionally, our staff and students have participated and will continue to participate in multiple safety drills to ensure we are prepared in the event of an emergency. During these safety drills, teachers, support staff, and building administration are all available to provide guidance, supervision, and address the needs of students.

The many challenges our students face today often lead to stress and mental health issues. The best defense in the prevention of school violence may be found in a strong school/home partnership. Communication is the most powerful tool we can

Leading through Learning

use to keep our students safe. Together, as a community, we will continue to move forward and do what is best for our students.

The following resources may help shape our discussion and provide some talking points when dealing with and preventing school violence. You may also find the links on our website.

"Emergency Lesson Plans" for helping children cope with an emergent crisis.

<http://fg.ed.pacificu.edu/bailey/resources/papers/trauma/lessons.html>

Teaching Tolerance Website

<https://www.tolerance.org/>

American Psychological Association: Talking with Kids About School Shootings for Parents

<http://www.apa.org/topics/violence/school-shooting.aspx>

Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators

<https://wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u57/2013/child-trauma-toolkit.pdf>

Responding to Traumatic Events: Learn how to help children cope with trauma

<https://childmind.org/topics/concerns/responding-to-traumatic-events/>

Going Back to School After a Tragedy

<https://childmind.org/article/going-back-school-tragedy/>

Nine Tips for Talking to kids about trauma

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/nine_tips_for_talking_to_kids_about_trauma

Please know that we will continue to be proactive in our prevention efforts and in keeping our buildings safe and secure. You are my eyes and ears in our community and I am always open to suggestions on how we can improve. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions or suggestions. You may reach me by phone at [616-527-9280](tel:616-527-9280) or by email at rwilson@ioniaschools.org

Kind Regards,



Ronald C. Wilson