

Dear Tri-County Parents and Patrons,

The safety of your children, our students, is paramount in the daily functioning of each of our schools. The recent acts of school violence, witnessed in our nation, have heightened our awareness toward the continual process of ensuring a safe learning environment for all. At our latest monthly Leadership Team meeting we reviewed all of the safety measures and procedures we currently have in place. While the list is extensive, and we believe Tri-County Schools are safe, we asked ourselves “What more can we do?” The list below describes our current practices:

- School Safety Officers – Each school corporation in Indiana is required to have a trained School Safety Officer. Mr. McCracken serves in this official capacity for us. Mr. Hagan and Dr. Rowe are also trained and Ms. Hall has started the process. Administrators attend two trainings and/or seminars each year where they receive up-to-date information on the latest in school safety.
- Safety Drills – Indiana Code required schools to have the following drills:
  - 1 tornado preparedness drill each semester
  - 1 manmade occurrence disaster drill each semester
  - Periodic or monthly fire evacuation drills

Law enforcement has been invited to attend some of the disaster/emergency drills in order to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Our principals are annually required to file a certified statement that the drills have been conducted.

Our bus drivers are also required to perform one emergency preparedness drill each semester on their buses. One drill is with the driver conducting and the second drill is a mock situation with the driver incapacitated.

- Active Shooter Simulation – I, along with most of our administrators, have attended school shooting simulations. Last year we had the opportunity to send 14 staff members to participate in an enlightening and somber regional simulation.
- White County School Safety Commission – We are active members of the White County School Safety Commission which meets quarterly to discuss a variety of social, emotional and physical school safety issues. Members include administrators from all county schools, officers from White County Sheriff's Department, officers from the Monticello Police Department, the White County prosecutor, the director of WC Red Cross and others.
- Door Numbers and Maps – All of the doors in the corporation have easy to see numbers. Maps are detailed and reviewed with law enforcement and the fire department so they can readily get to any place in the corporation upon alert of a crisis situation.
- Visitor Buzz-In – All building doors are kept locked during the school day. Visitors, including delivery personnel, must buzz-in and stop at the office before proceeding to their designated area.

- Lock Downs – Each of our schools have procedures for SOFT and HARD lockdowns. All schools are on soft lockdown at all times. This is when the building doors are all secured and there is buzz-in system for visitors at the front doors. Our loading dock area at the Jr/Sr HS has a camera and buzz-in as does the cafeteria door at TCP. Classroom doors are locked and the educational activities continue within the classrooms.

A HARD lockdown is called when deemed necessary by school administration or law enforcement. Staff and students are behind locked doors and sheltered out of sight. Lights are turned out, students are quiet, and when done right it is like a ghost town in the buildings.

- Closed Circuit Television - There are currently 64 cameras integrated throughout the school district which allow us to monitor activity inside and out. This monitor system is loaded on the computer of every administrator as well as in a central location known only to our law enforcement.
- Emergency Access to Buildings -Law enforcement and fire departments have access to our buildings through Knox boxes.
- Controlled Access– Exterior building doors are remotely controlled and/or monitored. School staff have access to the building using assigned key fobs. Administration has the ability to remotely lock doors and shut down all key fobs during a crisis situation.
- Parent Notification – We have the ability through School Messenger and Facebook to notify parents immediately if there is a problem. After our recent rumor, we found that the only way to notify parents was to also notify students at the same time. We have since rectified this problem and have created a list of parents only.
- 24 Hour Security System –Each of our buildings are armed with a security system through ADT. This program immediately notifies law enforcement and the fire department if there is a door breach or fire.
- Updated Phone System – This past summer we updated to a NEC phone system throughout the corporation. We are now connected across all four buildings and not just within individual schools. This allows for one touch dialing and immediate response to anywhere in the school corporation. When a 911 emergency call is placed from anywhere in the corporation an alarm is sounded on all administrators phones noting from where that emergency call was placed.
- Classroom Door Locks – We ask our teachers to keep their doors locked, however, this causes a disruption with students/staff going in and out. Last year we purchased a slide system for every classroom door called LOCK BLOK. The slide prevents the door from being able to close completely. By moving the slide away from the edge of the door, the door will close completely and engage the locked latch.

- Teacher Bags – All teachers have a classroom bag filled with items they may need if their class is evacuated. They take this bag with them on all HARD lockdowns and drills.
- Red/Green Card System – Teachers use a system where they show a green card if all of their students are accounted for or a red card if students are missing during drills and emergency situations. This allows administrators and law enforcement to focus on the red card missing students.
- Safety Flip Charts – All Tri-County safety procedures are outlined in a safety flip chart. All employees have a flipchart and can easily turn to the situation to follow the procedure.

When we asked the question “What more can we do?” the following are being considered for the future:

- Secure Entry – We are scheduled to add a second set of security doors at the main entrances of TCP and the Jr/Sr HS this summer. These doors will provide a barrier between school visitors and direct access to student common areas. TCI currently has a door for this purpose and the mechanics and use of the door will be evaluated during the construction process.
- Visitor Protocol – We are evaluating our visitor, including parent, protocol to assure the safety of all students and staff. As new procedures are announced, there may be some inconvenience to visitors, which we are confident will be understood. We will work hard to keep a balance between being welcoming and keeping everyone safe.
- Security Film – We are investigating security film on the doors and windows around student common areas. This specific film is designed to increase the difficulty in gaining entrance to buildings and increase time we would have should an intruder try to gain access.
- Additional Security Cameras – As administrators find ‘blind spots’ in their buildings that our current cameras are not covering we will add units to our system.
- School Resource Officer – A School Resource Officer is a trained and certified retired or current officer of the law who is licensed to carry a weapon on school property. The SRO’s role is to build relationships with the students, be a presence to derail any unwanted student behaviors, be the first responder in any crisis situation, and be the liaison between the school and the law enforcement community.
- Anonymous Reporting Apps – We are looking at reporting apps which students and parents can download on their phone to make anonymous reports to the school about drugs, concealed weapons, suicide concerns, suspicious behavior, etc.

I trust you will agree we have the people, procedures, and infrastructure in place throughout our school corporation to help safeguard your children. You can be assured additional school safety

measures are under consideration by our school leadership team. If and when an emergency situation arises, our staff is thoroughly trained to respond in an accurate and timely manner. Tri-County Schools are so very fortunate to have a community who believes the community children are our most precious resource. Together, we can continue to create safe schools and safe communities to protect our future. I thank you for your confidence in us and your continued support for Tri-County.