

# The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough



**EDUCATE - INSPIRE - CHALLENGE**

*"Ten Schools, Three Districts, One Community of Learners"*

## Superintendent's Message Tuesday, May 24, 2022

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s):

I'm sure you have learned that there was a school shooting at an elementary school in Texas this afternoon. Parents send their children to school believing that our schools are among the safest places for children, which they are; however, horrific events like the one this afternoon erode parents' belief that schools are safe. The tragic event in Texas this afternoon is an important reminder that The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough must remain vigilant and constantly review and practice school and District-based safety protocols. I've asked all school principals to review the safety protocols with faculty and staff and ensure that they are implemented with fidelity. Lastly, I want to provide parents with an overview of the District's school safety and preparedness protocols. If you have any questions, please reach out to me or your child's building principal.

The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough place school safety and preparedness as its highest priority.\* The District takes a comprehensive approach to school safety by focusing on prevention, education, safe school facilities, and school disaster management. Our approach centers upon programs, policies, and practices that improve school safety and climate, focus on the school environment and enhance educational and other outcomes for students and schools.

This work requires a community effort and collaboration with safety officials, mental health care organizations, parents and guardians, town officials, and citizens. Our District partners with Northborough and Southborough safety officials and participates in emergency management training and workshops offered at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), federal, state, and local levels. Our protocols and practices are based on research and recommendations from safety officials at multiple levels. We all play a role in ensuring that students attending The Public Schools of Northborough and Southborough are socially, emotionally, and physically safe.

Safety practices that the District will continue to implement:

The District requires all visitors to our schools to identify themselves whenever they request access to our locked school facilities. All visitors must sign in at the office and wear a school-issued visitor's badge.

Our District partners with Sandy Hook Promise Organization and its Say Something training and tools. Say Something is an education and awareness program that provides tools and practices for our middle and high school students to:

- Recognize the signs and signals of a potential threat, especially on social media;
- Educate and instill in students how to take action; and,
- Drive awareness and reinforce the need to Say Something.

Our District embraces Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (ALICE) protocols to maximize school safety readiness. More information about our safety process review, ALICE, and other resources are available

on our website. Members of our Safety Readiness Team are formal "Train the Trainers" and all students and staff participate in multiple drills to ensure that everyone is familiar with the ALICE options.

Mandatory training for all staff and students, including fire and safety, is conducted annually. We appreciate the partnership with all safety officials, specifically our Police and Fire Departments in Northborough and Southborough. Our ongoing effective planning and collaboration on safety and multi-hazard issues support our focus on providing a safe and supportive school culture.

Our District implements both the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) background check on employees, including bus drivers, as required by the DESE, and the legislative mandate that all school employees be fingerprinted as a condition of their employment. The CORI system is an intrastate monitoring system, while the fingerprint-based check is a national, interstate Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) database verification. More information regarding both background checks is available on our District website.

Fostering a safe school environment is also about creating a setting free from harassment or bullying. Our [Anti-Bullying Plan](#) and a [form for anonymous reporting](#) of concerns are available at the School Safety Readiness link on the District's homepage. It is also accessible from the Families tab located on the District and school web pages.

Respectfully,

Gregory L. Martineau  
Superintendent of Schools