

Rebecca F. Thomas
Superintendent of
Schools

Johnson County Board of Education

P O Box 110
150 Lee Street
Wrightsville, Georgia 31096
478-864-3302
478-864-4053 fax

BOARD MEMBERS
Donnie Carter, Chairman
Kevin Brantley, Vice Chairman
Donald Smith
Marty Thompson
H. Bernard Young

February 29, 2016

Dear Parents:

We appreciate your cooperation with us as we work hard to continue to assure your child's safety at school. The safety concern we experienced on Tuesday has upset our entire community, including all of us in the system. We want you to know that we are fully committed to keeping your child safe at school. Along these lines, we are working on an action plan to address some of your concerns. I have spoken to several of you, and have incorporated many of your suggestions into our plan. Please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's school if you have any questions or something to report to us.

One of the most important things we have learned is that our students are hesitant to tell the adults around them what they know. A major component of our plan is a campaign to help our students to understand that it's okay to tell an adult if you know something that might affect safety. Please help us to convey this to our students by talking about it with them at home.

Here is our plan:

1. Anonymous "safety boxes" are now placed in each school building. Students who wish to remain anonymous are encouraged to place any information in them that they want to report. These will be checked at least daily.
2. An email address is now available for anonymous reporting. Anyone can email itsoktotell@johnson.k12.ga.us. This email will come directly to my office, and any identifying information contained in the email address will be kept strictly confidential by my office.
3. Teachers, counselors, bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers have all had training on our plan. Over the coming weeks, all personnel will be involved in training our students that, "It's OK to tell" an adult about a safety concern.
4. Various groups of students will experience some school assemblies and programs on subjects such as understanding the danger of weapons and the damage they can cause, how to behave in various emergency situations, participating in additional safety drills, and other topics.
5. A change in the requirements for book bags (such as use of clear or mesh) and the procedures for bringing items to school will be in place in the fall. School administrators agreed that we need to study this before making a decision, since there are many factors that go into what students need to bring to school (example: sports equipment), and how to store it during the day. Look for publicity about this in the early summer so that you will have plenty of time to purchase the appropriate items.
6. An audit and update of our parent contact information is underway. You will be receiving instructions and/or forms from your child's school today (in fact it may be stapled to this letter.) Please follow the instructions for the update carefully.
7. An audit of the school safety plans has also been conducted, and school officials are working to be sure that any corrections needed have been done.

Please call me if you have any questions!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Thomas, Superintendent