

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Perry Schools Announces Security Enhancements for Student and Staff Safety

Perry, IA — Perry Schools acknowledges and appreciates the Iowa DCI, the Dallas County Sheriff's office, the Perry Police Department, the FBI, ATF and all law enforcement for their diligence and skill in investigating the facts surrounding the tragedy of January 4, 2024. The District has refrained from public comment to this point in deference to law enforcement's apparent completion of their investigation and the recent release of a summary of that investigation

During this time, while not commenting publicly, the District has been conducting its own internal review of the security aspects of its facilities, its schools' safety and emergency response policies, and numerous other topics that potentially have an impact on school safety. This review has included consultation with and input from a nationally recognized school safety expert retained at an early point in this process.

Perry Schools, with the safety and well-being of its students and staff as its goal and priority, has identified and implemented a range of security enhancements across its facilities. The District remains committed to making our schools safe and welcoming learning environments.

Over the past nine months, a variety of safety and security enhancements have been implemented in the Perry Schools. Below are a number of the enhancements that have been accomplished with support from grant funds from state and federal agencies as part of the recovery process here in Perry.

Please know that Perry Schools' implementation of additional safety measures may not be limited to those listed. Perry Schools continues to study other possible safety measures, with input from its retained expert. Therefore, the following items are not an exhaustive list of safety policies or enhancements that are being studied or may be implemented.

- **Law Enforcement Officers:**

Perry Schools now has two dedicated law enforcement officers. One is assigned to

Perry Elementary School, while the second serves the Perry High School/Perry Middle School campus. This level of on-site protection represents an exceptional standard for school safety and which is over and above the typical national practice for schools of our size.

- **Recovery Coordinator:**

Dr. Mandy Ross has been appointed as the District's Recovery Coordinator. A former superintendent of Webster City Schools, as well as having served as a principal at Perry Elementary School early in her career, Dr. Ross brings experience and dedication to her role. She will lead the District Recovery Plan, manage grants related to the January 4 tragedy, and provide various supports related to recovery.

- **Enhanced Mental Health Supports:**

Perry Schools has introduced a Mental Health Coordinator, Jena Blize, who will facilitate the coordination of school-based mental health therapists, including an identification process for matching students and staff to therapists. These services aim to provide increased support for the emotional and psychological well-being of students and staff.

- **State Safe & Sound System:**

This statewide system provides students and staff with a confidential platform to report safety concerns. The State Safe & Sound System helps promote a secure school environment. More details can be found on the District's website:

<https://www.perry.k12.ia.us>.

- **Emergency Operations Plans:**

Perry Schools has thoroughly reviewed and updated its Emergency Operations Plans in collaboration with local law enforcement and Dallas County Homeland Security. Regular drills are conducted to ensure familiarity with emergency procedures.

- **ALICE Training:**

Staff members across Perry Schools have received ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training. This program equips staff and students with critical strategies to respond effectively during an emergency.

- **Communication Upgrades:**

Walkie-talkie systems are being upgraded to enable direct communication with law enforcement and across school buildings during emergencies. This is not common for school systems and is a desirable leading practice.

- **Classroom Security Enhancements:**

Classrooms at the middle and high schools have been re-keyed, allowing for quick locking from inside the room without the use of a key. Additionally, the expectation is that all classroom doors are always in the locked position. These changes ensure faster lockdowns during emergency situations.

- **Restricted Building Access:**

To maintain a secure environment, students will only be permitted in the building shortly before and after the school day. During club and athletic activities, students will be supervised by their sponsor or coach.

- **Raptor Visitor System Updates:**

Perry Schools is updating the Raptor visitor management system, which will standardize

visitor check-in procedures across all district schools. This includes buzzing in all visitors and visitor badges being worn at all times in each of the schools.

- **Staff Badges:**

Starting with the 2024-2025 school year, all staff members will be required to visibly wear their identification badges at all times to ensure that uninvited visitors can be quickly identified.

- **Protective Window Film Installation:**

Protective window film has been installed in the middle and high school buildings. This enhancement adds another layer of security, helping deter unauthorized access and providing additional protection during emergencies.

Perry Schools appreciates the community's support and shared commitment to creating a safe, welcoming learning environment for students and staff. With these measures in place, we are confident that our schools will continue to be a secure place for learning and personal growth.

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