

December 16, 2012

Dear Families,

In light of the recent tragedy in Connecticut, I want to reassure you that we are taking every measure to keep students safe at school. The Baraboo School District has worked for over 15 years with our local law enforcement and emergency responders in reviewing and updating our District's safety response plan. In order to effectively handle a crisis or emergency, a school safety response plan is developed and a building response team is organized at each school to deal with school emergencies. Educators discuss and practice procedures, including periodic lockdown drills throughout the school year. Safety measures over the past several years have been increased to include locking school buildings during the day and upgraded video surveillance equipment to improve security in and around each school building.

I have attached a resource document provided by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) for parents and teachers to assist in talking with children about violence and their safety (www.nasponline.org). "It is important to keep in mind that an event like this is rare. Schools are one of the safest places for children and youth during the school day, and an important place for them to receive support and return to normalcy. Communication and collaboration among schools, parents, and communities is critical to ensure that our students continue to view schools as safe, caring and supportive environments. Further, how adults react to this tragedy can shape the way children and youth react and their perceptions of safety." (NASP) Additional resources will be posted on the District's website at www.baraboo.k12.wi.us under "School Safety Resources" as they become available.

Because of the extensive media coverage of this event, children may need support to cope with this act of violence. Our counselors and school psychologists are available to help during this difficult time. It is also important to maintain regular routines which can provide a sense of normalcy and security for children. Please contact your child's teacher, school counselor or principal if you have any questions or concerns related to your child.

Let's continue to work together to provide a safe and positive environment for our children by promoting positive behaviors and keeping the lines of communication open between home and school. Our thoughts and prayers are with those families impacted by this horrific tragedy.

Crystal Ritzenthaler, District Administrator
Baraboo School District