

Sample Superintendent's Letter - Parental Notification on Continued Warnings about Potential Threats

The following is the text of a sample letter that superintendents and principals can use to notify parents and staff about emergency preparedness in their schools. Please feel free to adjust the letter according to your local planning efforts.

Dear Parents, Students and Staff:

Our school system is responding to the continued national warnings about potential terrorist threats by working to ensure two things: (1) that schools have crisis plans or comprehensive multi-hazard plans in place, ready for quick and confident activation; and (2) that school system resources are available to help with the mental health needs of children and adults during this time of crisis.

We are assisting principals and school staff in preparing for a variety of emergency response situations. We are taking proactive measures to protect the safety of all our students and staff members. In addition, we are coordinating efforts with local emergency management agencies, emergency responders, medical services, county and state safety and mental health officials. Depending on the nature of an emergency, we would respond according to our plans for potential threats and will follow directions from public safety officials.

The actions taken during any type of emergency situation depend a great deal on the specifics of the incident. For example, one or more school buildings may evacuate, lock down, or initiate a shelter-in-place response according to the nature of the threat.

Parents should know that access to schools during an incident may be restricted for a variety of reasons. In such instances, we will coordinate with the local media to get information to you. It is important that you remain aware of public notices on radio, television, and the Internet about emergency procedures and updates. In any case, student and staff safety is our first priority. All procedures are designed for their protection.

In the meantime, the stress of a crisis can be a problem for children and adults, and we have trained professionals ready to assist students and faculty in dealing with the crisis. The Pennsylvania Department of Education has gathered information resources for crisis response, terrorism, and mental health, including tips for parents. This information is updated frequently on the Department of Education's Crisis Response website. In addition, links to federal, state, and county safety information are available at this website.

The safety issues confronting our nation and community are serious. We know that parents, students, and staff will work together to help maintain a focus on teaching and learning in our schools as we address this continuing situation. Thank you in advance for your cooperation as we work together to ensure the safest environment for our students, staff and community.