



Livingston

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Matthew J. Block
Superintendent

11 Foxcroft Drive
Livingston, New Jersey 07039
Telephone: (973) 535-8000 ext. 8011
Fax: (973) 535-1254
E-mail: mblock@livingston.org
Website: www.livingston.org

November 14, 2019

Dear Livingston Public Schools Families:

There have been too many instances when we have had occasion to watch the news as a school shooting unfolds somewhere in the United States. One instance would be too many. Today, we once again watched with heavy hearts as the students at Saugus High School in Santa Clarita, California were cleared from their school by police officers and swat team members. Our thoughts and prayers are with the students, staff, and families in Santa Clarita.

These images impact me as a person, an American, a parent, and a superintendent. Knowing that an event like this is even possible is a challenge to all of our senses of well-being. I am all too aware of this as I drop off my own children at school each morning and leave them in someone else's care. Every day I think about you as well, as parents, leaving your children in our care. Understandably, hearing the news of today's school shooting and watching the images on television brings emotions closer to the surface.

Particularly at times like this, it is important to be reminded that Livingston has long prioritized school safety and has worked strategically, through training and resource allocation, to make our schools as safe as possible. We have multiple systems in place for dealing with potential threats and for providing support for members of our school community who might be struggling emotionally. We are regularly updating protocols and adding new equipment, including a state-of-the-art communication system, which was installed district-wide this past summer. We are required to conduct security drills, and to develop detailed plans for a variety of scenarios. We use every drill and every experience to learn and grow. Your support in complying with our security measures when you visit our schools also enhances safety.

We are fortunate to have an outstanding partnership with the Livingston Police Department who are in our schools frequently monitoring our facilities, providing training, and delivering input and feedback regarding our safety protocols. Regular coordination and communication between the schools and the police department

continues to be essential as we work to stay abreast of best practices, and ensure that our methods are highly effective.

We need to be prepared and vigilant, but we do not want to live in fear. Although schools like Saugus High School have been targets of violence, we know that statistically schools remain very safe places. We must continue to make safety a top priority, but we also have to focus each day on our mission of helping all of our students to learn, create, contribute, and grow.

Your partnership on this issue is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew J. Block
Superintendent of Schools