

February 23, 2018

Greetings Explorer Families,

If your home is anything like mine, you have been overwhelmed with information from national and local news regarding school safety. Our hearts go out to all who have been affected by violence in schools: a place where we should all be made to feel safe. With so much information circulating about schools across the country and how each has been affected by violence, I think it is important to take a moment to come together as our school community and discuss the measures we have in place to keep our own precious children safe everyday at Westlake Charter School.

First, in July of 2017, the WCS board authorized our school to work with a company named School Safety Operations to develop a full Hazard Assessment and Emergency Operating Plan that was custom designed for our school. These experts in school safety walked our site examining sitelines, gates locations, entrance and exit routes and assisted in designing our Comprehensive School Safety Plan (CSSP). Our CSSP contains scenarios, emergency actions, and training modules to ensure that our school is following the most current protocols and procedures for school safety.

During the January 11th, 2018 Board Meeting, the WCS board was presented with a new training schedule based on the recommendations within our Safety Plan. While California Education Code dictates that our school practice an evacuation drill at least monthly, we believe that we should practice each of our 5 Emergency Actions more regularly. Our drill and training schedule creates a cycle of continuous improvement with feedback included from each drill. Each month, we will spend a few minutes at the staff meeting discussing an upcoming drill, then hold the drill within the week, we will collect feedback during the drill, and bring the feedback back to staff so that we can improve before the next drill. This cycle will take place each month until our entire community are experts at each of the 5 Emergency Actions: Lock Out, Lock Down, Shelter in Place, Duck and Cover, and Evacuation.

This commitment to ongoing staff training is not new at WCS. This year, during our regular annual inservice days prior to the beginning of school in August, our staff participated in several safety related trainings. First, our staff participated in specialized training from retired law enforcement officers Jeff Kaye and Curtiss Kull of the Reno, NV PD. These two officers studied our campus and trained our staff on safety protocols in the event of an emergency. Furthermore, our neighborhood Law Enforcement and Fire Department teams have each walked our new campus in an effort to become familiar with it in case an emergency arises. Also during August, our entire staff underwent

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training in both CPR and the use of our new Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). We believe that these annual exercises coupled with regular drills, debriefs and the collaboration of our community, will make our staff the most prepared in the region to ensure the safety of our students.

Along with a commitment to training and continued improvement protocols, our school has invested in safety items that you may not know about. For example, during the construction of our new campus, the Natomas Unified School District agreed to upgrade our camera surveillance system dramatically to ensure that the entire campus can be viewed in real time from any device. Therefore, administration and local law enforcement could survey the campus remotely at any time in real time. Also, each classroom has been equipped with special door handles that can be locked from the inside, as well as blackout curtains that quickly mount over glass doors in the event of a lockdown drill. The clock and bell system in each classroom is a two way speaker which allows administration to communicate with a classroom without the teacher having to get to the phone. The campus has been outfitted with the latest sensor and fire sprinkler system eliminating the need for manual Fire Pull stations in each building. Westlake also invested in an Automated Evacuation Annunciation system, which allows staff to initiate an emergency action from any telephone on campus as well as the ability to initiate remotely from a cell phone if necessary.

All of the actions and items outlined above were put in place prior to this past week's national conversation on safety. However, since the recent tragedy in Florida, we have reached out to our partners in both the Natomas Unified School District as well as local Law Enforcement to seek any further pertinent information to aid in our continual improvement. I would just like to take this opportunity to remind our community that the opening phrase of our school's mission reads, "We demonstrate what is possible when school and community collaborate," therefore, I want to personally ask you each to commit to our mission.

If you have any information regarding a safety issue at our school, if you have a concern or a question, please, communicate with us directly. Do not hesitate to call our front office, or email myself directly regarding any matter of safety. Our school website also has an anonymous Bully Reporting Form should you ever feel the need to report unsafe behavior, but wish to do so anonymously. Most importantly, the relationships that our staff build with your children are our number one defense against school violence. When students trust and feel safe talking to a staff member, they are more likely to report important information they hear, witness or see on social media. Please, collaborate with our school by encouraging your student to partner with our staff, help your student to feel that they can communicate anything that concerns them without repercussion. This school belongs to our children, and it is our shared responsibility to empower our students to report anything that may affect their safety.

Our WAVE team regularly holds coffee talk meetings with administration where the topics vary from month to month. This month, our WAVE team is hosting a Coffee Talk on, Friday, March 2, at 8:30AM. I propose that one of this month's topics will be school safety. Please, if you would like to talk with our admin team about this important topic, we would love to see you there. However, if you can not make that time please, do not hesitate to reach out to our school or approach any of our team members when you are visiting campus.

Thank you, Explorer Families, for all that you do to make the collaboration between school and community so special at Westlake Charter School. While our thoughts and prayers go out to all those affected across the country by school violence, we are calling for our students and staff to remain committed to focusing on the daily operations of our campus to ensure the safety of our students every day.

Sincerely,



John Eick