



MERCER COUNTY SCHOOLS

"Great Kids Achieving Great Things"

December 2017

Dear Mercer County Families:

You may have heard me say before that your child's safety is my number one priority. This is absolutely true and the school board feels the same way! In September of this year, the Mercer Co. Board of Education continued the process of updating and increasing security throughout the district. We began by updating our camera system throughout the district. The previously installed camera system was not reliable. Some of the buildings had very limited camera coverage and others had none at all. It is amazing how often staff use these cameras. When students report items lost or stolen, administrators use the cameras to help locate these items. As much as we do not like to think about bad things happening in our schools, we must be prepared and the updated camera system allows the Harrodsburg Dispatch Center to monitor our buildings in emergencies to keep everyone safe. As we are replacing old buses, with newer models, the camera system in each bus is a much more up-to date system that allow us to monitor the inside and outside of the buses.

If you have tried to enter any of the school buildings recently, you may have noticed new door access controls throughout the district. These controls are much more secure than what we had previously and allow us to control who has access to each building. When you ring the doorbell to enter the building, the secretary will be able to see and hear you. Do not be surprised if she asks you some questions to try to determine how she may help you. She is asking questions of everyone who is entering the building in order to keep students safe. The security upgrades allow her to see whom she is talking with and increase the security of the building.

With the advancements in medical technology and communication devices, we realized that we needed to increase the number of wireless access points at Mercer County Intermediate School. Prior to this upgrade, we had dead zones throughout the building that would prevent a student's medical device from having access and would leave the students vulnerable. We also have many students who rely on use our wireless access to use their communication devices and other assisted technology.

I am very thankful to the board for designating resources for these safety measures for our students. As much as we rely on technology to keep us safe, I believe that our best safety feature is our students, families, and staff. We have principals in each building who all consider school safety their number 1 priority and are always continuing to think about how to keep children safe. All staff in the building are trained on how to respond during an emergency and we practice implementing our plan through our safety drills so they can keep your children safe. We have students and their family members that make us aware of concerns when they hear rumor or talk so we can address them. We are also very blessed to have the support and guidance from the Harrodsburg Police Department, Mercer County Sheriff's Office, Harrodsburg Dispatch, and Mercer Co. Fire Department. We work with them to develop and implement our emergency plans and they are always available when we need them.

Sincerely,

Dennis Davis, Superintendent
Mercer County Schools

Esther Hayslett, Safe Schools Director
Mercer County Schools