

# DCS LUMBERJACK LEDGER

March 2018



## Updates from the Superintendent, Denise Cook Focus on School Safety

Dear families,

In light of the recent tragedies affecting our schools in this country, I know you share my heightened concern for the safety of our community's most precious assets, our kids. I wanted to take an opportunity to give you a little background information about the current status of school safety in Deposit, and let you know what will be coming in the future.

On Monday, February 26th, I attended a safety summit with Senator Akshar and other local superintendents and law enforcement officials. The discussion focused on the resources that are available to schools and the barriers that block schools from receiving the resources they deserve. I left the meeting confident that Senator Akshar will take our concerns to Albany and work towards a resolution.

In Deposit, we are fortunate to have upgraded our facilities to include many state-of-the-art safety features. Some of these features include:

- Single points of entry for students and visitors in a secured vestibule
- Bullet proof windows and doors
- Safety cameras throughout the entire campus

In addition to our facilities, we have plans in place for all types of emergencies, and we practice those plans on a regular basis with students. Some of our drills include:

- Fire
- Lock Down
- Shelter In Place

These drills are practiced in cooperation with local first responders and State law enforcement. Following each drill, the administration meets with the first responders to debrief and identify areas for improvement.

Please remember that this is just an overview. There are many safety features in our district that will not be disclosed to the public, because we don't want to compromise the integrity of our plans. While we have many security features in place, we are constantly planning to add more as our capital projects allow. This summer, we will be installing new doors with electronic hardware in the MS/HS building. The plan to add new doors with electronic hardware in the elementary building is part of our Smart Schools Bond Plan which is being submitted to New York State this month. Also part of the Smart Schools Plan is an upgraded PA system and outdoor notification system. All of these features will add to the security of the campus.

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## Where do we go next?

After I meet with the officials in Delaware County in mid-March, I'd like to convene a small committee of students, parents, community members and staff to develop plans for a "Town Hall" meeting to take place at the school. The meeting would provide an opportunity for people to ask questions and have a meaningful discussion about the security of our campus. I'm hoping that some of our elected officials would be able to join us at that time.

Right now, there's a big push for Albany to fund a School Resource Officer for every school in New York State. As you can imagine, this comes with a very big price tag. As of yesterday, the State Senate passed a couple of bills that could help provide funding to districts who wish to employ a School Resource Officer. I also have some ideas about how this could be funded in Deposit if it is something that is identified as a need.

## How can you help?

Please reinforce with your children that they should follow their teacher's instructions during our safety drills. You can also remind your children that they should never open a door for someone who is trying to get into the school. They should be trained to ignore any and all people who stand at any entrance and knock—including their teachers and parents! If someone doesn't have the proper equipment to enter a door, he/she needs to enter through the main front entrance. This is difficult for kids, but really important.

Finally, You may have heard that some students in schools are planning walk-outs in remembrance of the 17 victims in Florida. Because we are concerned with the safety of our students, we will be working with them to identify a safe and meaningful way for them to express themselves if they choose to participate. Once a plan is in place this week, we'll communicate the specifics to you.

## OTHER NEWS



The district regretfully announces that our Middle School Principal and Director of Health, Athletics and PE, Ed Swartwout, will be leaving on 3/15 to take a new position with the Susquehanna Valley Central School District. Mr. Swartwout is a graduate of the district and has served as a teacher and administrator for over 20 years. We wish him well on his new adventure. For the remainder of the school year, Mrs. Karen Armbrust will step in as the inter-

im Middle School Principal. Mrs. Armbrust has 23 years of teaching experience, and 13 years administrative experience. We are confident that she'll do an amazing job!



## Capital Improvements

During spring break, the elementary cafeteria will be transformed with a much needed upgrade to the flooring both in the main area of the cafeteria and on the stage. New stage curtains will also be hung and should bring the room into the 21st century. The previous flooring certainly served its purpose but reached the end of its useful life after 26 years. This small capital project was approved by the voters last May with the approval of the 2017-2018 budget.

