

NIXON-SMILEY
CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
800 Rancho Road
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Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members,

Across the country, mass shootings and violence seem to be on the rise. Our nation has watched in horror as schools, shopping malls, movie theaters, concert venues, and even places of worship have been brutalized by horrific events. As experts analyze these tragedies, it is apparent that we need to do more to both prevent occurrences and learn to survive them.

To address those realities, Nixon-Smiley CISD has adopted new procedures for responding to an active shooter situation. We will be using the ALICE program, a federally endorsed safety protocol where students and staff are trained in different options for responding to a school intruder.

The letters in **ALICE** stand for:

- **Alert** – pay attention to your surroundings, overcome denial, notice unfamiliar sounds, take all alerts seriously. The sooner we understand the danger, the sooner we can save ourselves. A speedy response is critical.
- **Lockdown** – this is different from the traditional approach of passively hiding, which often made a shooter's mission easier. The ALICE protocol allows students and staff to choose lockdown and barricade or, if they determine that it is safer, to evacuate. If lockdown is chosen, respondents are then taught to prepare additional strategies (i.e. counter or evacuate) that might be necessary if the active shooter gains entry.
- **Inform** – pass on as much specific information as possible to others and to our First Responders, including calling 911.
- **Counter** – an effort of last resort, if an armed intruder is able to get into the space they are in, individuals can counter with distractions or other tactics. Creating a dynamic environment decreases the shooter's ability to shoot accurately and can provide the precious seconds needed in order to evacuate.
- **Evacuate** – If it is safe to do so or a better option than sitting still, ALL are encouraged to evacuate the building and remove themselves from the threat.

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These are not sequential steps, rather the idea is that people have choices beyond the traditional "lock the door and hide." If you would like more information on ALICE, you can find them at <https://www.alicetraining.com/our-program/alice-training/k12-education/>.

In order to implement these strategies, three of our administrators have become ALICE trainers. They have guided our faculty staff through the online portion of the program and several live simulations. We have all learned and practiced barricading doors, finding appropriate escape routes, and countering an attack. More importantly, we know we have options when it comes to survival.

Our principals and teachers are now preparing to introduce the ALICE protocols to our students in age-appropriate ways. We want to teach our children that they have options for survival in a variety of situations. And just as we do fire drills every month, we will practice and discuss some of the skills, such as barricading and countering, on a consistent basis. Our hope is that these tactics would benefit our students in any location where they might encounter an active shooter, not just in the unlikely event of an attack at school. We want our children to be safe and ready.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's teacher or principal. Community members can call Dr. Lauer or Mr. Van Auken at (830) 582-1536.

Sincerely,

Cathy L. Lauer, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools