



October 6, 2021

Dear students, staff, families and community,

I appreciate all the responses to the Family Communication survey I sent out last week. There were 102 responses. Over 80% of those who took the survey indicated that they want the weekly communication to continue. Over 90% said that the communication has been helpful all or at least most of the time. Thank you for all of the positive comments. Your support means a great deal to me. I will do my best to keep sending you relevant information on a weekly basis.

I want to take this opportunity to address safety that is not COVID related. The safety of our students and staff is a top priority and there are strategies we use beyond health and safety protocols to ensure safety and security on our campuses. First and foremost we know positive relationships that students and families have with staff members is the best way for us to prevent dangerous situations. When a student or adult sees or hears something at school or in the community through social media or word of mouth, you have all been great about sharing that information rather than assuming we are already aware of it. When a safety concern does arise, we investigate that concern as quickly as possible and do a risk assessment. Depending on the level of concern, we may involve our counselors, administrators, local law enforcement, and/or local agencies. When we are confident that we have accurate information, we share that information with families. If there is an imminent danger, we may react with anything from a lockdown to evacuation to relocation for parent pick-up. In these cases, the communication is immediate. This is why we have fire, earthquake, shelter-in-place, and lockdown drills to practice and be prepared for these scenarios.

In the past few years, we have increased many safety measures which I will list below knowing that our number one way to prevent harm is through relationships, visibility, listening, and observing.

- We have implemented some security surveillance systems and plan to increase them
- A front door camera system to greet visitors and electronically grant entrance once identification is verified is now being used at Harmony Elementary as a pilot. We plan to install these at all schools
- There is a focus on supervision at all levels and an increase in supervision staffing at the secondary level
- Technology programs/filters flag unsafe internet behavior
- Every school is staffed with counselors and we have District mental health specialists available to serve students. We have family service coordinators to support families

- Social Emotional Learning is a focus at all schools
- Trained and certified therapy dogs are present at two of our schools
- We work closely with the Whatcom County Sheriff Office regarding any situation that involves the physical safety of anyone in our school community. We are working with them to increase their presence on campus when needed
- We have an anonymous tip line at 360-383-2093. You can find more information [here](#).

Today was our first 90-minute release for staff professional learning. This is to support a district-wide system to ensure multi-tiered support for academic, social/emotional, and behavior needs of students. This work directly aligns with our [strategic plan](#) in the areas of teaching and learning as well as creating a culture of care for all students.

Be sure to visit our [website](#) as well as our [FB page](#) to keep up on fall fun happenings in Mount Baker School District.

Go Baker!

Sincerely,

Mary Sewright, Superintendent
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