

SHENANGO AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT



Office of the Superintendent

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March 10, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

With the event that occurred this morning, I wanted to give an update and provide information on how we are proceeding moving forward.

As communicated earlier via ParentSquare, a school van carrying 7 elementary-aged students was struck by an object which caused the side windows to shatter. After the van driver checked on the students, he immediately came to the elementary school and alerted the school administration. Once it was determined the damage may have been caused by a bullet, the Shenango Township Police were contacted. Within minutes of the police being notified, they had a suspect in custody off campus near the location where the van was struck by the bullet. As an added safety precaution, both the high school and the elementary school were placed on a modified lockdown. After a joint effort with our local law enforcement, including the Pennsylvania State Police, the area was searched for additional suspects. At approximately 11:30 a.m., we were notified by the Shenango Township Police that we were able to lift the modified lockdown and resume our normal school day.

As you can imagine, incidents such as this can cause stress and high anxiety levels for students. During the course of the school day, especially in the elementary school, we limit the amount of information shared with students. Today is no exception. However, anytime we enter a lockdown situation, students can become worried and begin asking why. Our goal is to keep students calm and allow them to have a normal day as much as possible.

Your child may come home asking questions and/or expressing concern regarding the incident today. A few suggestions to help with the conversation may include: Listen to your child; Remain calm; Limit or avoid media exposure; Maintain normal routines; Provide support, comfort, and reassurance.

Important factors to look for with your child:

- *Expressing fear of coming to school/riding the bus
- *Difficulty separating from loved ones
- *Lack of appetite, disrupted sleep
- *Showing signs of withdrawal, sadness, decreased interest in activities
- *Loss of focus and concentration
- *Crying easily and excessively/inability to cope

We will have additional counselors available to speak with any student that is having a difficult time coping or feeling stress about the incident. If concerns arise outside of the school day, please contact Human Services Crisis Team at (724) 652-9000.

We feel extremely blessed that all the students and the driver were unharmed. Additionally, we are thankful for our school police officers along with the Shenango Township Police and other local law enforcement agencies. The speed in which they responded to the call and kept open lines of communication with the district was remarkable.

Please feel free to contact me or your child's building principal if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Michael Schreck, Ed.D.
Superintendent