

Anthony Wayne Local Schools

Central Administration Office

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June 29, 2022

Dear Anthony Wayne Local Schools Community:

School safety is a topic of concern in our country, and one that Anthony Wayne Local Schools takes very seriously. You entrust us to maintain a safe learning and working environment, and I can assure you that providing secure, safe and positive schools is always one of our top priorities.

This letter is intended to inform you of the ways the District continues to provide physically secure and emotionally safe environments for all students, staff and visitors/volunteers by focusing on school climate, safety, security and maintaining comprehensive Emergency Response Plans.

A Collaborative Effort

The District is very fortunate to have a great relationship with our community first responders. We work closely with area law enforcement in taking proactive measures to prevent and prepare for emergency situations. We also seek opportunities for officers to engage directly with staff and students for community building activities, such as the recent Hero Day first responder workout hosted by the AWHs football team.

Emergency Response Plans

All school districts in the State of Ohio are required to submit Emergency Response Plans to the Ohio Department of Education. Anthony Wayne Local Schools developed our Emergency Response Plans in collaboration with local police and fire departments. These safety plans have been approved by the State.

Additionally, State law requires schools to review their plans annually and conduct emergency training drills so students and teachers can practice what to do in the case of a real emergency. We review our safety plans with first responders each year and collaborate with them to hold safety drills to prepare for a variety of potential emergencies.

Increased Security Measures

Over the last five years, the District has made a number of safety improvements in our schools and on our buses. These improvements include the installation of secure front entry vestibules, shatter resistant glass materials placed on windows, increased video surveillance in and outside school buildings and buses, more exterior lighting and internal emergency response systems.

Beginning with the 2022-23 school year, the District is adding a second school resource officer. This individual will work with the resource officer and safety officer currently located on Campus. Police surveillance by the Waterville Police, Whitehouse Police and the Lucas County Sheriff will continue at each of the primary buildings.

Student Wellness

Just like many schools across the nation, Anthony Wayne Local Schools has noted an increase in student mental health concerns. In Ohio, all public schools are required to have and implement a Positive Behavior Intervention

System that provides behavioral expectations to all students while creating a positive and safe environment within the buildings. Building administrators and staff work with students to support and encourage positive behaviors through a number of different activities and recognitions.

In an effort to further promote the well-being of Anthony Wayne students, we are increasing support services in the 2022-23 school year. The District will now have two full-time counselors at Fallen Timbers Middle School and Anthony Wayne Junior High, as well as a full-time social worker available to support families districtwide. The Director of Human Resources will also work with the building administration and staff to promote a positive climate in each of the school buildings.

New Gun Law

You may have heard in the news about a new law in Ohio that would allow less training for school employees to carry a gun while at school. While Ohio law already permits school employees to carry a gun while at school, the new law lowers the number of hours of training necessary to meet the carrying requirement.

The law was originally approved out of concern for schools that have a longer police response time, such as the extreme rural districts in Southeastern Ohio. Anthony Wayne Local Schools, like most schools in Ohio, does not have a policy to allow school employees to carry a gun while at school.

Collaborative Safety

Anthony Wayne administrators, staff and community first responders continually seek ways to ensure our facilities are as safe and prepared as possible. As issues or concerns arise, the District will continue to take a collective and collaborative approach to responding appropriately to ensure the safety of all students.

You Can Help

I also want to remind students, parents and community members that you are a part of this collaborative effort. If you see something, say something. You may contact my office, our building administrators or local law enforcement to report a safety concern. Ohio also offers an anonymous statewide reporting system. You can call or text **1-844-SAFEROH** at any time to report suspicious activity or safety concerns. If you hear or see something, report it.

The District continues to discuss and review additional safety system measures as we approach this upcoming school year. In addition, we continue our conversations with local and State officials on what we all can do to keep our schools safe. Thank you for entrusting us with the care of your children and for being a partner in school safety.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jim Fritz
Superintendent
Anthony Wayne Local Schools