



**Superintendent**  
Jonathan S. Patterson, Ph.D.

*Where Excellence and Creativity Merge*

**Board of Education:**  
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8 February, 2021

Dear Parents:

All of us are concerned about the safety of our families in these unprecedented challenging times. In the Fayette County Public School system our top priority is assuring the safety of our students and staff. We want both our students and employees to feel physically and psychologically safe and cared for in our schools. As a school district, we promise to do everything reasonably possible to protect your children against any threat that may arise while they are in our care. I want to inform you of the things that we are doing to honor our commitment to ensure that our schools and children in them remain safe.

Our safety/security focus is on three things: Effective planning, physical security and coordination with local emergency responders for potential emergency situations. This includes training our staff and students and conducting drills to practice our plans, and strengthening our security technology and infrastructure. Our school system has spent considerable time and effort planning and practicing safety and security measures appropriate for dealing with major critical incidents. We continue to have very close relationship and strong lines of communications with our local law enforcement agencies, our first responders and the courts.

In 2020 - 2021 our school district and community have been faced with an unprecedented safety challenge in the Covid-19 pandemic. The school district has worked closely with the state board of education, the department of public health, and other community support agencies to develop a comprehensive and flexible plan to return students and staff back to normal as quickly and safely as possible. Your support and cooperation in these efforts have helped to make this successful.

Every school has an Emergency Response Plan. These plans have been reviewed and approved annually. In general, each plan involves the designation of a crisis management team; development of evacuation, shelter-in-place and lockdown procedures; maintenance of a portable critical response kit that contains key information and supplies; designation of one or more evacuation sites; provisions for updating the plan; and resources for external assistance before, during and after an event. Our Fayette County Public School system (FCPS) Emergency Plan is reviewed by Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency (GEMA/HS) and approved by our Fayette County Emergency Management Director. All school personnel have participated in crisis response training. Fire drills are conducted monthly and both severe weather and lock down drills are conducted semi-annually. GEMA/HS has conducted a comprehensive security survey of each of our schools and provided recommendations on improvements. We have used the results of these surveys to prioritize budgeting for improvements at each school.

Entry into our schools are restricted using access control and security vestibules. Parents and other visitors coming into schools must check in at the main office, check in through the Check Mate Visitor Management System and receive temporary identification badges before proceeding. Visitors are also screened for Covid-19 symptoms through a questionnaire while signing in and fever screening using thermal cameras and/or handheld digital thermometers and the use of face coverings is required throughout our schools and

in our school buses. All adults who work with our students during and after school require background checks. Emergency communications continue to be upgraded in every school, including the recent implementation of the Centegix CrisisAlert emergency notification system, giving every staff member the ability to initiate a school-level staff alert or a school-wide emergency lockdown. Staff members wear photo identification badges.

In an effort to improve our school climate we have implemented the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program in all of our schools, ensuring that our students and staff feel engaged and connected. Our teachers and administrators are also being trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid.

We have a District Safety Committee with representatives of each school level (elementary, Middle and high), key district staff members and representatives from local emergency management. We have developed goals and set priorities, reviewed our plans and are coordinating our resources in response to any emergency. School-based student support teams and safety teams support this process at their level. Trained School Resource officers (SROs) are assigned full time to every high and middle school and in both Inman Elementary and North Fayette Elementary schools. Our elementary school 5<sup>th</sup> graders are supported by Peachtree City Police Department who presents the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program and the Fayette County Sheriff's Department who presents the CHAMPS (Choosing Healthy Activities & Promoting Safety) program. The school system works closely with our local law enforcement agencies, county and city Fire and Emergency Services, the Fayette County Juvenile Court, county Emergency Management Agency and the Fayette County Health Department in order to be prepared to mitigate and respond to any crisis.

Every school has a detailed plan for the reunification of parents and their children in the event of a major emergency that would require the evacuation of a school. School psychologists, social workers, and counselors have trained in crisis intervention are available to students and their families in all emergencies. We have conducted reunification exercises to practice this plan and we are applying the lessons we learned to our plans.

In an effort to provide timely, clear and accurate information to our parents and families in an emergency, FCPS will use the communications capabilities of our student information system Infinite Campus, local radio and television stations, local radio and television stations and local newspapers, as well as our web site [www.fcboe.org](http://www.fcboe.org). It is critically important that family emergency contact information is up to date in Infinite Campus. Parents can update contact information through the Parent Portal. For help, contact your school. Since communication is a two-way process, we are encouraging everyone in our schools to communicate with us if they have a safety concern. If you *See Something or Hear Something* related to school safety, bullying, harassment or any potential unsafe situation, please *Say Something* by using the 24/7 Toll-free School Safety Hotline (1-877-SAY-STOP), the *Say Something* Anonymous Reporting System (1-844-SAY-NOW) or by reporting it to a school administrator or School Resource Officer.

What can you do to help keeping our students safe? Start by talking to your child about safety issues and empower them to talk about their concerns and express their feelings. Communicate with your children's schools about what they are doing at their schools and get involved with building a positive school climate. The following website can provide some ideas on how to do this: <https://www.mhanational.org/talking-kids-about-school-safety>. For more information on emergency procedures and preparedness, please look at the [Emergency Preparedness FAQs](#) on this webpage.

Thank you for your continued support and for entrusting the safety of your children to us.  
Sincerely,

Ted Lombard, Ed.D.  
Coordinator for Safety and Discipline