

Question of the Week

Q: “The recent tragic events in Colorado and Pennsylvania schools have brought school safety issues to national attention. What steps or action plans are in place at the local level to ensure my child’s safety and that of other LISD students and staff?”

A: Safety and security are prime concerns of Leander ISD – students simply cannot learn if they don’t feel safe in our care.

Leander ISD has had an emergency response plan in place for several years, and trains on this plan throughout each school year. LISD is one of 13 local school districts that are members of the Central Texas School Safety Consortium, which allows us to address safety issues with the help of law enforcement and other emergency response agencies. Our District safety and security plan is a better, more-comprehensive plan due to their input, and our District Emergency Response Plan includes incident command systems to help us to organize and work with emergency responders in any crisis situation.

As mentioned, training on crisis planning and emergency response is conducted with administrators and campus staff, with all crisis situations divided into either evacuation or lockdown scenarios. This allows individual classroom teachers to be prepared in any situation, allowing us to provide two simple drills for students that are practiced and used to meet any potential crises.

Access to all Leander ISD campuses is now provided through a key card system, which enhances security and allows immediate removal of access that would be caused by a lost or stolen card. This also provides for immediate lockdown of all external doors if needed.

Leander ISD added a new level of protection at our elementary campuses this fall, adding the Raptor software system that requires visitors to show a driver’s license or state-issued ID card prior to accessing our campuses. Elementary campuses keep all exterior doors locked, except for the front entry, once our school begins, causing visitors to enter via our main offices. Campus staff members are instructed to stop and redirect any unbadged individual to the office for proper identification.

Leander ISD has also used outside auditors to test our campus security systems and advise us on any needed improvements. This team also trained district staff to continue our own internal security reviews.

LISD runs criminal history checks on all staff, substitute teachers and volunteers, and contracts with the cities of Cedar Park and Leander to provide uniformed School Resource Officers at our secondary campuses. (These SROs are available to support LISD elementaries as needed.) Leander ISD also conducts randomly scheduled drug and weapons dog searches of our campuses and parking areas.

Leander ISD has multiple systems in place to protect our students and staff, but any system is only effective if the people who work within the system are attentive, ensuring that these systems work to their designed potential. We have, this week, reminded our administrators, teachers and staff of the importance of remaining vigilant in all security areas. We ask that

our parents and visitors willingly comply with our security measures, especially the requirement to check into the campus office before going to their destination.

We want our children to have an environment so secure that they can focus on learning to their maximum abilities.