

SANTA FE ISD

SAFETY MATTERS

Santa Fe ISD Safe and Secure Schools Update

December 14, 2018

Safety is our highest priority, and we continue to work diligently to provide a safe and supportive learning environment in our schools for our students and staff. The healing and recovery process is difficult in many ways, and we want to reassure you that the District continues to take actions to improve safety and security. In today's 15th issue of Safety Matters, which began on August 24, we just want to reflect on the progress being made to improve safety and security for our students, staff and our community.

We want to again thank the Santa Fe Strong Safety and Security Committee who met over the summer to develop safety and security recommendations that our Board approved to have ready for the start of school. Our staff, which included substitutes, continues to receive extensive training for the 2018-19 school year and some of the training is highlighted in a [news release](#) issued when staff returned to prepare for the new school year.

Our first edition of Safety Matters on August 24, 2018, coincided with the start of school - [What Went Well](#). Since that first edition, 14 other editions provide updates on our work to improve safety and security. [Safety Matters archives](#).

In addition to all of the work performed to improve safety and security in Santa Fe ISD schools, some of the services provided for students impacted by May 18, 2018 include:

Prior to student return following the events of May 18:

- Provided Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) counseling/debriefing for all faculty and staff.
- Collaborated with mental health providers to establish a plan for the return of students.
- Collaborated with mental health providers to establish lesson plans for the return of students.
- Our Local Mental Health Authority, Texas Children's and the Gulf Coast Center, provided informational session on how to speak with students about the incident, trauma and grief identifiers for the purpose of referral to mental health support.
- Both verbally and by an email invited high impact students to attend mental health support prior to their attending the reunification day at the high school.
- Provided mental health support and comfort dogs on each campus.
- Provided mental health support center provided at SFHS for student support on the day they returned to school.

Summer 2018:

- Through a grant, assigned a Victim Advocate Counselor who contacted families of the deceased, students injured, and those who were in high-impact areas to keep them informed, establish relationships, assist them with making connections with the Santa Fe Strong Resiliency Center for counseling services, and to assist with the preparation of students for the return to school.
- Multiple campus and district personnel contacted students and the families of those most highly impacted by events of May 18.

- SFHS invited students to participate in round tables regarding their thoughts about important considerations in their return to school.
- Prior to the start of school, SFHS provided specific times for students and families to walk the campus prior to their return and provided counselor and mental health support should students need to support during this time. Additional times were provided for those highly-impacted students, along with mental health support.
- Email correspondence was provided by the SFHS principal regarding plans for the start of school and mental health support that would be available upon their return.
- Worked with Texas Children's Hospital Trauma and Grief Center to provide training in Adolescent Trauma and Grief Cognitive Therapy for some SFISD counselors who were available to attend.
- Through a grant, SFHS hired four licensed professional counselors who are full-time campus personnel providing mental health counseling support for faculty and staff.

Return to school in August 2018:

- Comfort dogs were provided for each campus; comfort dogs continue to participate at SFHS during specific events, as well as, on regularly scheduled, routine visits.
- All students not returning or enrolling in a different school were contacted by campus and/or district personnel providing options and encouragement for their return to school. Some of these students were able to remain enrolled in Santa Fe schools through these efforts.
- A Licensed School Psychologist continues to contact students who were highly impacted through the May 18th event. Through these efforts, multiple students who had originally dropped out of school have been recovered and are currently enrolled in SFISD.
- Teachers are required to contact students following multiple absences; district administrators are responsible for oversight.
- Campus and district attendance committees monitor student attendance and efforts to increase student attendance. Each campus has attendance incentives to encourage good attendance.
- Provide home visits as warranted for poor attendance or non-attendance.
- Through a grant, Region 4 Education Service Center is providing four licensed mental health counselors (two at Santa Fe Junior high, one at Dan J. Kubacak Elementary, and one at Roy J. Wollam Elementary - still to be hired).

We thank the students, staff, parents and community for their prayers, their support and input, as we work together to restore the positive learning environment in our schools. Our work continues even as we break for the holidays.

The Resiliency Center is open except for Monday, Christmas Eve (12/24) and Tuesday, Christmas Day (12/25) We are grateful for the counselors at our schools and also for the Resiliency Center that provides free long-term services at no cost to Santa Fe community members and is open to serve the Santa Fe community. The Center's caring professionals provide a safe and supportive healing environment dedicated to everyone affected by the May 18 events. As a referral hub, the Center works with partner agencies that provide spiritual care referrals, training, advocacy, legal aid, equine therapy, recreational therapy, and more. The Resiliency Center is open daily except for designated holidays such as Christmas, and for more information, contact the center directly at 409-218-7129 or email the Director, Carol Gaylord, at cgaylord@ci.santa-fe.tx.us.

Questions?

Please submit any questions you may have to the Santa Fe Strong Interactive Web Portal at:

santafeupdates.com/contact-us

United, we are Santa Fe Strong!