



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Superintendent's Office
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Acton, MA 01720
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Glenn A. Brand, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 2016

Dear Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

As you know, a fundamental responsibility of the Acton-Boxborough School District and the Acton and Boxborough Police Departments is to ensure the safety and well being of everyone in our school community. The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District is updating its District Safety Plan to include two (2) specific changes: i) the introduction of the ALICE program, and ii) a change to our exterior door locking practices. Further information on both items is below.

ALICE

ALICE is an acronym that stands for:

- Alert Get the word out!
- Lockdown Shelter in place when it is appropriate.
- Inform Communicate to allow for the best decision making possible.
- Counter Apply skills to distract, confuse and gain control.
- Evacuate Move students and staff to a safe location.

ALICE training is designed to provide comprehensive preparedness in the event of an intruder. The goal is to utilize infrastructure, technology, and human action to increase overall student and staff safety. Currently, more than nine hundred schools, businesses, universities, hospitals, and municipalities have adopted ALICE procedures.

Last spring, at the conclusion of the work of the Superintendent's *Safety Task Force* for the 2015-16 year, two presentations were made to the community that highlighted the rationale for shifting to this approach. A presentation was made to the School Committee on May 19, followed by a separate community meeting on May 31. The slides used for the presentation, and the video of the actual presentation, can be viewed at <http://www.abschools.org/home/emergency-info>.

During the 2016-17 school year, school personnel, with the support of trained law enforcement, will provide training to staff and students that is based on the most current research in support of the implementation of ALICE. This training will begin with all staff over the course of the first two professional days on August 29 and 30.

A few additional things to note:

- Student training will be completed throughout the district by Friday, October 7. Just prior to the training in each school, the principal will send out a letter to parents/guardians with further information about the training itself.
- The first drills for students will begin the week of October 10. Parents/guardians will receive communication from the school principal on the day of the actual drill that will provide additional information.
- All drills and training will be age appropriate. At this time, there is no plan to have simulated intruders in our buildings while students are learning about ALICE. All learning will be staff-directed and student-centered.
- Parents are welcome to contact one of our School Resource Officers or their school administration with any specific questions or concerns.

Our Mission is to prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society.

Contact information for our School Resource Officers:

Keith Campbell
ABRSD School Resource Officer
Acton Police Department
Email: kcampbell@abschools.org

Michael Eracleo
ABRSD School Resource Officer
Acton Police Department
meracleo@abschools.org

Pat Colburn
Boxborough School Resource Officer
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Building Access and Door Security

As many of you know, most of our schools currently lock all exterior doors, with the exception of the front door(s), which serves as the main entry point for visitors. Exceptions to this practice include the Blanchard Elementary School in Boxborough, where all exterior doors have been locked since before regionalization, and the high school, where a number of exterior doors are kept open to support the junior and senior privilege of leaving campus during the day.

While we seek to maintain school facilities that are welcoming to our community, this practice of leaving the front doors unlocked has become part of a debate surrounding growing concerns about school security in general. There is a growing belief that, in order to better control entry while monitoring visitors to our facilities, we should lock all exterior doors.

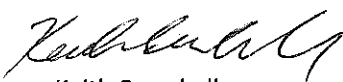
As Superintendent, I have further reviewed this matter, closely studying our building designs and entry areas, as well as best practices and recommendations in the field, including the *2014 Massachusetts School Safety and Security Task Force Report* commissioned by Governor Patrick. After careful consideration, I have decided to put into place a requirement for our district that all exterior doors at all school buildings must be locked while school is in session. The one exception to this will be at the high school, where the intent is to continue to support the 'privilege' system for junior and senior students, allowing them to come and go throughout the day. It should be noted that the high school administration is planning to limit the total number of exterior doors that are open during the regular school day, in conjunction with this change in procedures. Further communication from Dr. Campbell regarding these changes will be forthcoming.

This change in procedure will go into effect **Tuesday, October 4** to allow sufficient time for community notification, for schools to ensure that the technology we already have installed is fully operational, and to provide the time to develop internal procedures at each school facility. As the Superintendent, I also intend to provide additional insight and my underlying rationale for this decision at the next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting on September 1. While we recognize that some might find this decision disappointing, our School Resource Officers and I all believe that it is prudent and an important way to provide one more mechanism for enhancing student, staff and visitor safety in our schools throughout the district.

Sincerely,



Glenn A. Brand, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



Keith Campbell
ABRSD School Resource Officer



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