

## MARCH 2018

Greetings to everyone in the MBS community! Although I typically like to focus these articles on exciting events here at school, I feel that it is important to address the issue of school safety and security. The most recent tragedy that occurred in Parkland, Florida, has caused all of us to take a hard look at our own practices that we employ to maintain a safe and secure environment for our staff and students each day. As I have stated many times, we are fortunate to have such a collaborative working relationship with the Monmouth Beach Police Department. Chief Walsh and I meet on a regular basis to review and discuss our procedures and identify areas that need improvement. The day after the shooting in Florida, Chief Walsh came over to meet with Mr. DeSantis and me for just this purpose. During the course of that conversation, we all agreed that this incident has created even more unrest among staff and parents, which is why we decided to schedule the “*Superintendent’s Coffee*” sessions for Tuesday, March 13. At both the 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. meetings, the Chief will join me to facilitate a dialogue where we will answer questions and address concerns about our safety and security measures. Additionally, we will also be open to suggestions from the staff and the parent community that can be considered and shared with the Board of Education and entire police department.

For now, I can assure you that our staff and students participate in at least two safety drills every month in order for us to practice our response procedures. For many of these drills, the MBPD sends over available officers to be part of the drill and/or to observe and provide us with valuable feedback. For those of you who are not aware, there are armed, uniform officers that conduct unannounced security walkthrough visits every morning and afternoon during the school week here at school. This is one of the distinct advantages of being in a small, tight-knit community where the local authorities are literally a regular presence in our school. As the security experts will tell you, it is virtually impossible to be 100% ready for every possible scenario, but I am proud to report that our staff and students take our efforts very seriously, and we all work together to help remain ready for emergency situations.

As a fellow parent, I realize how difficult it can be to discuss this topic with children, especially following the type of incident that occurred in Florida. Our goal is to help children of all ages feel safe coming to school each day. In the event that my fellow parents are looking for a resource to help give you some guidance for talking to children, I offer you the following article, [How To Talk With Kids About Terrible Things](#). In my opinion, the article provides some helpful ideas on how to address the various aspects of horrible events that have happened in schools. In addition to your child’s teacher, we have staff such as Mrs. Sullivan, our Guidance Counselor, who are available to speak with students if needed about their feelings being at school.

As with everything else at school, it is important for us to work together to help give the children what they need each day. Please know that we prioritize social and emotional learning just as much as academics with the goal of helping all students to become confident and empathetic individuals. As always, don’t hesitate to contact me directly with any specific questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
**Michael E. Ettore**  
Principal/Superintendent