



# WOODBIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

40 Beecher Road – South  
Woodbridge, Connecticut 06525

**Gaeton F. Stella, Ph.D. – Superintendent**  
**Sheila Haverkamp – Special Services Director | Alfred Pullo, Jr. – Director of Business Services/Operations**

December 16, 2012

Dear Beecher Road Families:

We are all trying to process the horrific event that took place Friday in Newtown. We join with the Beecher Road School Community and the citizens of Woodbridge in expressing our grief and distress. Our thoughts and prayers go out to everyone affected by this painful tragedy.

We can't praise our faculty, staff, district office staff, extended day staff and administrative team enough. On Friday, everyone went above and beyond to assure that our children felt safe and well cared for. We also wish to acknowledge and thank the Woodbridge Police Department which responded quickly to our needs as soon as the tragic events started to unfold.

Here is a summary of what happened at BRS on Friday. When we became aware of the gravity of the situation in Newtown protocols for handling this type of situation were activated. Actions included the following:

1. We were in on-going communication with key officials throughout the day. Our police officials, in turn, were in touch with police officials in the Newtown area. After the situation was assessed, Deputy Chief Ray Stuart advised us that there was no imminent danger to BRS and that a lock down was not advisable. However, we agreed that we would keep a proactive focus on security which included a police presence at and near the school. Officer Lynch, our DARE officer, was in the school and a police car was sent in the afternoon.
2. The administrative team and office staff were on high alert all day.
3. Our district crisis team worked with me and operated out of the district conference room. Members of the administrative team, safety committee, counseling service, custodial staff and recreation department were all represented.
4. Staff was directed to do the following: a. avoid exposing children to media coverage of the events happening in Newtown; b. be discreet in adult conversations; c. maintain normalcy including dismissal routines; d. alert administration to any needs.
5. Doors were secured. Perimeter checks were made. Cell phone networks of communication were established.
6. Extended Day was kept in session to provide support for parents and to maintain a sense of normalcy for children. There was heightened security in the Extended Day Program. Doors were secured. Perimeter checks were made. An extended day desk was set up in the north lobby to assure that the front doors were not left open and that children were safely picked up.

Some immediate plans for the coming week include:

1. There will be a police presence. Officer Lynch will be made available to us and a police car will patrol the school area at key times during the day.

### *Woodbridge School District*

2. Doors will be secured at all times; visitor protocols will be followed. Perimeter checks will be made throughout the day.
3. Our school counselors will be circulating through classes throughout the day to support students and staff in any way that is necessary.
4. The Superintendent will meet personally with the police chief and deputy chief to review what security measures we have put in place and to get their professional opinion on what other measures should be taken.
5. My administrative team and I will meet with staff and with the safety committee to review safety issues.
6. Administrators and staff will be on high alert throughout the day, especially during ingress and egress. Parents and staff will be sent suggested guidelines on how to speak with children about this tragedy.

Please be aware of the following:

1. There is a District/School safety committee that is chaired by Mrs. Prisco. The committee includes representatives from the administration, faculty, and staff, and meets twice a month. The committee has developed safety plans and procedures, which I have reviewed and approved, in key areas such as fire drills, shelter-in-place, lock downs, lost child, and intruder and evacuation procedures. In addition, the committee assists administration in facilitating monthly drills.
2. We have excellent and on-going communication with the police and fire departments as well as key Town departments on matters of school security and safety.
3. The Board of Education, administrators, faculty, staff and I care deeply about our children. Their safety has always been and will continue to be our highest priority.
4. "It is important to remember that how we respond to this tragedy can shape the way children, youth and parents react and how they perceive their own level of safety." (*President of New Haven Board of Education*)

Thank you for the support you have given us in helping to create the safe, caring, and supportive environment that exists at BRS. The Newtown tragedy has created a new reality for us. After we have a chance to learn the full extent of what happened, we will come together to reexamine our existing practices, plans and policies and come up with recommendations for any needed changes.

Sincerely,

*Guy Stella*

Guy Stella, Superintendent

*The Woodbridge Board of Education*

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