

From the Mayor's Desk...February 16, 2018

Parkland

The tragedy in Parkland, Florida is beyond my comprehension. Although incomprehensible, the events are a sharp reminder that this sort of violence can happen anywhere. There are many factors that enabled this devastation to occur: lax gun laws, poor mental healthcare standards, missed signals from law enforcement, etc. I do not have the answers on how to fix this national issue in the short term. However, I can assure you that the Irvington Police Department continues to work closely with the Irvington Union Free School District to ensure our children, including my two children, are as safe as possible. Our police department has extensive training on school-based emergency responses, regularly practices responses to simulated school incidents and works closely with the Irvington UFSD. I am also very proud of our youth officer program that provides a police presence in the schools that goes well beyond a mere deterrent, but rather making our officers a real part of the school community. The type of dialogue and awareness that our youth officers have with our students is the type of intelligence that can potentially thwart disaster. Despite all of the great work already being done, I have urged Police Chief Cerone and Fire Chief Tarricone to review and update, if necessary, their response plans to all types of school incidents.

The Village first responders, the Village Administration and the Board of Trustees are always thinking about these types of events. Additionally, I am in regular contact with Irvington Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kris Harrison and he shares my concerns and desire to ensure we are doing all we can to keep our students, faculty and staff safe. Dr. Harrison and I have spoken today and we will be meeting again in the coming weeks to review our policies, procedures and to ensure we are doing all we can as a community to reduce the threats to our schools.

I would like to share Superintendent Harrison's letter that he sent yesterday:



IRVINGTON
UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

A message from the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kristopher Harrison

February 15, 2018

Dear Irvington School Community:

I am writing in the wake of the tragic school violence in Parkland, Florida, which has heightened concern in every parent across the nation. It goes without saying that our community's thoughts and wishes are directed to those affected by this incident.

In our schools, we remain dedicated to providing a safe learning environment for our students and staff. To this end, we have comprehensive emergency plans that are practiced on a regular basis.

We also have a close partnership with the Irvington Police Department and other school security professionals to support our emergency readiness.

It is also important to remind everyone in our school community that safety is a partnership. If you see or hear something out of the ordinary, you have to *say something*. Please bring any such concerns to the attention of school staff or our law enforcement partners.

The incomprehensible events that occurred yesterday will certainly impact us all. With this said, our school staff members are prepared to assist any students that are in need of support. If you have a question about how to best discuss matters such as this with your child, please feel free to review the resources that are posted on the District website www.IrvingtonSchools.org or contact a school administrator, guidance counselor or school psychologist, who will be glad to lend assistance.

We often speak of how fortunate we are to live and work in such a tight knit, supportive community. Together we will support one another and find strength during every difficult time. Today, let's go out of our way to be kind to one another and to give our loved ones an extra hug because we can all benefit from it.

Sincerely,



Kris Harrison

Superintendent of Schools

Final Thoughts

Gun related tragedies have become all too common in our nation. There are many causes and many of them touch on areas that we find difficult to discuss as Americans. I believe that we have to start talking, respectfully, and putting all the issues on the table. We are the only nation on earth that allows these tragedies to occur again and again. I repeat DR. Harrison's suggestion to hug your family, hug your neighbors and let's work together to keep each other safe. I pledge to do all I can in this area and I welcome your thoughts and suggestions, as always.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Smith, Mayor

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