



OUR SCHOOLS AND SAFETY: A FACT SHEET

Fact: The district is responding to the complex issue of school safety with a *variety* of strategies, and many of them are proactive. The Albany High School security staff has undergone additional training in the past year. Security staff members work with hall monitors, social workers, a school resource officer, guidance counselors, probation officers, and a psychologist and an attendance officer. This safety net, comprised of professionals who know our students well and are on-site to assist them, is complemented by a new Community Resource Center and the Albany High School “Report It” phone line program, in which any individual can report information to our staff at any time.

Fact: Students who are documented, following the district’s adjudication process, to be in violation of the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy by way of assault or possession of drugs or weapons are removed from their school.

Fact: The district’s current security measures at Albany High School include uniformed and trained hall monitors, a School Resource Officer, random student searches with metal-detecting wands, and security cameras. In addition, the district stepped up safety measures at the beginning of the year, and has continued to do so in recent weeks under the direction of new Director of Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Harry Corbitt, a retired State Police colonel. At Albany High School, a lunch period was added and a wall was removed to ensure improved student monitoring and less congestion. It is the district’s expectation that students will not bring hats into the building and their shirts must be tucked in. These are efforts to limit the possibility of concealed weapons entering the building, as well as promote a respectful, orderly atmosphere.

Fact: The district is anticipating the use of metal detectors in Albany High School this fall. However, metal detectors must be used in a smart and sensible way, as part of an overall safety strategy that does not impede upon the school day. Research indicates metal detectors should not be considered a cure-all for the complex issue of ensuring school safety.

Fact: The district has had and continues to have alternative education programs. These programs primarily take place at the Adult Learning Center, and include Tutorial Opportunities for Students (TOPS) for middle and secondary students who violate the Student Conduct and Discipline Policy. The programs at the Adult Learning Center are not limited to those for violators of the policy. The district is evaluating its alternative education programs now to see how they could be strengthened or if more are needed. It is important to keep in mind that educational research has shown that students with the most needs often do the best in smaller educational settings.

Fact: All the students who left Harriet Gibbons High School last year did not go to Albany High School. Some graduated from high school, while others continued their academic careers in a variety of settings or pursued a GED. Of the 160 students who attended Harriet Gibbons High School at the end of last year, approximately 30 were scheduled to attend Albany High School this year.

Fact: The new program at Harriet Gibbons offers intensive academic and social supports to help prepare 9th grade students for Albany High School, and thus, is a pro-active solution to a problem that plagues schools across the country. It is a fact that students who finish 9th grade with the most academic credits have the best chance of receiving a diploma from high school. The former program at Harriet Gibbons was more reactive in the sense that it served many students after they had been unsuccessful in 9th grade at Albany High School.

Fact: The program at the University at Albany was not a place for those who severely violated the district's Student Conduct and Discipline Policy. The program was a great opportunity for our students, and it was not solely a safety measure. From the start it was a pilot program meant for approximately 15 students who were not reaching their potential in a traditional classroom setting.

Fact: The district swiftly, decisively and effectively deals with incidents that do occur. The lockdown at Albany High School on Sept. 22 was lifted 45 minutes after it was initiated and students proceeded to their next class and all other school activities.

