

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA  
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To: All School District of Philadelphia Personnel

From: William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D. 

Date: December 20, 2012

**Re: Action Steps to Ensure Safety in all School District of Philadelphia Schools**

In light of the recent tragedy that took place in Newtown, Connecticut, it is imperative that school administrators and school district personnel review and reinforce School District of Philadelphia safety practices and precautions. To ensure all students and personnel are protected and secure, action steps are in progress to detect any weaknesses in current practices. Chief Inspector Cynthia Dorsey has taken the following steps:

- (1) Ordered school police officers to physically inspect all schools, paying particular attention to locked doors, perimeter security, functional surveillance cameras and utilization of audio-visual entry phones after morning arrival.
- (2) Requested school police officers to immediately report any security deficiencies to principals and subsequently to Chief Dorsey and my office through their commanders.
- (3) Requested school police officers and supervisors to reinforce the necessity of daily door checks – ensuring that they are locked from the inside – during school hours.
- (4) Directed Building Engineers to ensure that doors are kept locked. In addition, no doors are to be propped open or left unlocked, as this creates an unsafe environment for both students and staff.

In addition to these steps, it is imperative that personnel immediately notify School Police and Philadelphia Police whenever they encounter suspicious persons in and around the perimeter of the schools, so that apprehensions are made in a timely manner.

Lastly, by January 7, each school leader is asked to review evacuation plans and safety measures with school personnel and students to ensure that safety practices are clearly understood.

The findings from this review will become part of the School District of Philadelphia's action plan to continuously evaluate and improve, when necessary, safety within schools. The safety of students across the school district is our priority.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.