

## **District Security Enhancements**

In the aftermath of the Newtown, CT school shooting tragedy, school districts across the country have been implementing additional safety measures in their schools. Council Rock is no exception. Citizens For Education sat down with CR Superintendent Mark Klein to talk about the security measures put into place in Council Rock.

Currently 14 of the 15 CR schools have office areas designed or redesigned so that visitors must pass through the office area before being permitted into the rest of the school. CR North will be the last school to undergo renovation to the main entrance area. Once in the office area, visitors are now required to swipe their driver's license through the RAPTOR visitor management system. If the visitor is cleared through the RAPTOR system, which scans criminal activity databases, they receive an adhesive badge with their driver's license picture on it and purpose for visit, which is required to be worn while in the school. Then an office staff employee will buzz them through the secure door so they can proceed into the school building. The RAPTOR system will also alert the CR staff if there is an issue with the visitor and he/she will not be permitted to enter the school. First time visitors without a license will not be permitted into the school. Once a visitor has successfully been cleared to enter the school, their information is stored in the system and they do not need to swipe their license each time they visit that particular school. So, frequent visitors to that school, such as PTO officers and volunteers, will not have to swipe their license at every visit.

As with any new system, says Mark Klein, there have been a few minor glitches but these have been quickly corrected. Because CR has one point of contact with RAPTOR problems, they are resolved in a timely manner. There will also be upgrades to the system as time goes on.

A key fob system has also been installed in all 15 schools. A key fob is a small security hardware device with built in authentication used to control access for security purposes. All CR staff members have one and it allows them to swipe their key fob to enter only the school in which they work. In the schools where modulars are still in use, a staff member can take a group of students back into the school building from the modulars using his/her key fob. There are also key fobs on lanyards that the students can use if they need to leave the modular to get into the building for any reason (rest rooms, nurse, etc.). Recess aides also have key fobs on lanyards for students to use if they need to return to the building. No door is ever left unlocked.

All key fobs are programmed to allow a staff member access to a certain building/buildings only during set times. For example, a teacher would not be able to gain access to his/her school at 2:00am or gain access to a school in which they did not work. CR Security employee, Matt Barrett, is responsible for all the key fob programming. Each key fob has a registered number. If one is lost Matt can easily have it deactivated and a new one issued. So, if someone found a lost key fob they would not be able to gain access to any CR school building. All key fobs are turned in at the end of the school year unless the staff member is a 12 month employee. New key fobs will be issued at the start of each new school year.

Another facet of the increased security measures has been the installation of cameras in all schools. Each school has 8 or 9 cameras placed in various locations throughout the building. The two high schools have considerably more cameras. Principals or

designated employees may monitor any camera whenever they feel it necessary. The Superintendent and a few others have remote access to the cameras.

It wasn't very long ago that fire drills were the only drills practiced in schools. Today districts all over the nation, including CR, also practice Shelter in Place drills, hurricane/tornado drills and interior/exterior lockdown drills. Staff is continually trained in all of these drills that are practiced at various times during the day and year. Active shooter drills are conducted by our local police departments and the Mid County S.W.A.T. team at our two high schools. Every school building entrance is numbered both inside and out in order to identify a location in an emergency, and local law enforcement has building plans of the CR schools. Additionally, panic buttons that link directly to the police have been installed in various locations at each building.

Even the buses that transport our students have become more secure. All buses are equipped with a GPS so that CR knows where every bus is at all times. Security cameras can be installed in any bus whenever necessary. Bus drivers receive training as well.

Much thought has gone into implementing these changes. Mark Klein brought in all four local police chiefs to help determine what CR's security needs were so that the proper decisions could be made. The district has spent \$1.2 million on security enhancements in the schools. According to Mr. Klein, keeping all students and staff members safe is the primary goal of the district. That seems like money well spent. Nobody wants to see a tragedy strike our district. These measures will help bring some piece of mind, but it is up to all of us to be aware and if you "see something, say something."