

Dear Parents and Guardians:

I am sorry that we are living in a time where we are required to think about people coming to our schools to do harm. As much as this scares and frustrates all of us, hoping it never happens is not enough of a plan. The security and safety of our students and staff is of highest importance, and the Abington Public School Department is committed to providing the safest possible environment.

We are continuously reviewing and updating our policies and practices, in cooperation with the Abington Police Department, School Resource Officers (SROs) and Abington Fire Department to incorporate the most recently recommended best practices and strategies. The US Department of Homeland Security, US Department of Education, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, FEMA, and FBI all recommend that active plans be in place that include decision-making and options rather than the traditional school lockdowns in the unlikely event of an intruder. You may be aware that schools have traditionally used the "lockdown" method in the event an unauthorized person enters the building or grounds. This method instructs staff and students to lock their classroom doors, turn off lights, remain quiet, and hide within the classroom until the situation is resolved. However, it has become a more widely held belief that we must provide staff and students with situation dependent options in the event they are confronted with an intruder. These options provide the best opportunity to be safe and save lives.

The Abington Public Schools is adopting ALICE this year, a nationally recognized program. ALICE is a situation based universal set of options to an armed intruder. ALICE stands for:

- **A** - Alert - Get the word out in clear, concise language (who, what, where in plain language)
- **L** - Lockdown - a good starting point (lock doors, lights out, barricade, silent phones)
- **I** - Inform (internal and external communication to keep everyone informed)
- **C** - Counter (distract, gain control and take down if necessary)
- **E** - Evacuate - as soon as it is safe to do so (how and where to exit; CRP - Community Rally Point)

To be clear, we are providing staff and students with options, which if faced with a life or death situation anywhere, can be applied to greatly enhance their survival. Statistically, the majority of these acts of violence do not occur in schools. Therefore, the ALICE program is for businesses, schools, malls or wherever it might be needed. Again, they are universal strategies.

The implementation of ALICE is being provided cooperatively with the Abington Police Department and the SROs for all Abington Public School staff and students in different phases. The first phase consisted of individual online e-learning and presentations that took place on May 11 for all staff. The next phase occurs on June 11 where staff will conduct scenario drills within school buildings. The last phase has two parts. First, a Parent Informational Night to be held on Wednesday, June 13, at 6:00PM in the Middle/High School Auditorium to discuss ALICE. Second, a Student Introductory ALICE Training will take place in school on Friday, June 15, during the regular school day. The student training will take the age of the students into consideration and be age-appropriate. For the future school years, additional training and drills will continue annually. This is not a one and done training.

If you have questions or would like more information, please consider joining us at the Parent Informational Night to learn about ALICE on Wednesday, June 13 at 6:00PM in the Middle/High School Auditorium (201 Gliniewicz Way).

More information about ALICE is available at: <https://www.alicetraining.com/>

Sincerely,

Peter Schafer,

Superintendent of Schools