



SANTA FE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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www.sfid.org

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July 31, 2018

Dear Santa Fe Parents,

In three weeks, school will begin for the 2018-19 school year. While we are very busy securing our schools by making safety and security improvements to our schools, we always need to remember that a crucial part of prevention is to strengthen and restore the positive school learning environments at each of our schools. In schools built on a culture of safety, respect and emotional support, students feel empowered to share their concerns with adults if anything or anyone makes them feel uncomfortable.

Expanded Support Services

As we prepare for the first day of school, mental health and wellness services are being expanded throughout the summer and for the 2018-19 school year. These services include social and wellness activities, as well as transition support for all students. As difficult as it is for us as adults to accept the tragic reality of what we have lost, we know it is considerably harder for our students. As teachers and staff return to school they will be receiving multiple training sessions in trauma and mental health first aid, as well as mental health for self-care, Stop the Bleed first aid training, developing healthy relationships (anti-bullying) and others.

Last night, our Board approved the hiring of two new high school counselors who will help provide additional counseling support for our students and staff this year. Two more high school counselors will also be on board before school begins. With the additional counseling support, we want to build positive trust and trusting relationships with our students by actively listening to them and guiding them through the process of healing and recovery.

The District is also developing Threat Assessment Teams as part of a comprehensive targeted prevention plan that will be in place at all Santa Fe ISD schools for the school year. The teams will work in conjunction with the SFISD Police Department to identify students with concerns, assess their risk and identify intervention strategies to provide the needed assistance to the students. The SFISD Police have expanded the Tribal Tips which is an anonymous reporting system. Students are invited take part in keeping our schools safe by reporting any incidents or suspicious activity through the system which can be found on the police departments or by using a bar code reader to immediately access the [website](#).

District-wide parent information night set for Thursday, August 16

Prior to the start of school, the District will host a Santa Fe ISD parent information night regarding school safety at the Santa Fe High School Auditorium on Thursday, August 16, at 6:00 p.m. Please submit any questions you want to be addressed at this meeting online. Go to the Santa Fe Strong Interactive Web Portal to submit questions at: santafeupdates.com/contact-us

Be involved and continue to let us hear from you

Many opportunities are available for parents to be involved with their children at one of our schools. At the parent information meeting on August 16, as well as upcoming Meet the Teacher Nights, parents and community members will have the opportunity to sign up to volunteer at one of our schools.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- The PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) of Santa Fe is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization at the elementary level that provides financial, as well as volunteer support to the students and staff at Roy J. Wollam Elementary and Dan J. Kubacak Elementary Schools.
- At the junior high and high school levels, parents and community members are encouraged to participate in the Santa Fe Texas Education Foundation and the Parents on Patrol program. And, many parents also volunteer in FFA, fine arts and athletic booster club programs as well.
- Volunteer to serve on a parent involvement committee or campus improvement committee at one of our campuses, or volunteer for the district parent involvement committee or a district education improvement committee.
- Parents on Patrol (POPS): Through the SFISD Police Department, parents can sign up to volunteer their time to assist school district police officers at the campus level. Interested parents are encouraged to obtain campus volunteer applications from the [SFISD Police Department webpage](#). For additional information concerning this program or any other safety and security initiative, please email the SFISD Police Department at police@sfnisd.org or call (409) 927-3310. The 2018-19 Orientation Dates are Tuesday, August 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 pm and Thursday, August 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

With the exception of POPS, to sign up as a volunteer, parents and community members can also go to the Santa Fe ISD homepage at www.sfnisd.org.

The work of the Santa Fe Strong Safety and Security Committee has been very important in determining the community priorities for improving safety and security in the District's schools. We worked for several weeks to initially establish the Committee and for the Committee to meet to determine priorities that were brought to the Board as recommendations. The Committee is continuing to meet in subcommittees to address safety and security priorities for the 2018-19 school year and will bring any recommendation forward for consideration throughout the year.

Building a culture of safety, trust and emotional support for students and staff is a high priority for Santa Fe ISD. Campus visits, parent meetings and communications, and other district-wide meetings are planned over the next three weeks. The campuses are in the process of communicating directly with parents to let them know about important safety information and changes for the 2018-19 school year. We will be sending a **communication preferences survey** to parents after school starts to learn the best ways to improve District and campus communications.

Metal detectors and other donations

On July 18, representatives from Garrett Metal Detectors along with Chief Braun, Assistant Chief Gary Forward, Bob Atkins and his team walked all four schools to designate the placement of donated metal detectors. Campus administrators were also present during the site visits. The Security Assessment team determined the count and placement of the metal detectors, the flow of students entering the buildings, and the rate in which each detector could scan the students or adults entering the schools. To that end, Garrett recommended a total of nine metal detectors at the high school, six metal detectors at the junior high, and two metal detectors (a total of four) at both Roy J. Wollam Elementary and Dan J. Kubacak Elementary Schools.

The Board also approved the donation of 19 metal detectors, which also includes the assessment, installation, training and support to have them delivered and set up for the start of school. The principals will send more specific information to parents about the use of metal detectors at their respective campuses. We are grateful to Garrett Metal Detectors and Lt. Governor Dan Patrick who have offered to donate the metal detectors.

We are also grateful to the Houston Astros Foundation for generously donating protective vests and other safety equipment for our police officers, as well as the community members who provided patrol rifles, equipment and training for our additional police officers. Longhorn International also made a generous donation to the SFISD Transportation Department.

Dress Code Policy

Through surveys, we heard from the majority of parents that they did not recommend modifications of the dress code, and we ask for your help as the schools work with students to make sure they are dressed appropriately. The dress code includes wearing student IDs at all times. No requirements were established for backpacks. [View](#) the 2018-19 Student Code of Conduct including the dress code.

Let us hear from you

Thank you for coming to our Board meetings and visiting the Santa Fe Strong Interactive web portal linked to the District's website at santafeupdates.com. We are committed to providing opportunities to listen to our community and collaborate on the critical issues that face our District. Throughout the summer, our administration has gathered feedback from students, parents, staff and the community. Your ideas, suggestions and concerns provide us with valuable information that continues to help us plan and improve our safety procedures.

We welcome your voice in these important conversations, as we work together for the growth, empowerment and success of all of our children.

United together, we are Santa Fe Strong!

Dr. Leigh Wall
Superintendent of Schools
Santa Fe ISD