



HOPEDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING
25 ADIN STREET
HOPEDALE, MASSACHUSETTS 01747

KAREN M. CREBASE
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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February 28, 2018

Dear Families:

In the wake of the recent school shooting in Florida, I have been attempting to process this event while also trying to focus on our students, staff, and families. I have been involved in many conversations, meetings, and presentations related to the events in Florida. The focus has continuously been on the safety and well-being of students, and how to ensure we maintain focus on this.

It is with a heavy heart that I would like to recognize our fellow educators and all of the students, families, community members, and officials in Parkland, Florida. My thoughts are with the community as they attempt to begin the healing process.

Reflecting upon this tragedy and having had time to meet with town departments, school administrators, and our health and safety committee, I wanted to send communication to our families regarding school safety. Our fire department, police department, and school department work collaboratively to routinely review our Emergency Preparedness Plan. We jointly work to plan and practice emergency procedures and meet to debrief these emergency practice sessions. We continuously work to refine and improve all safety procedures and attempt to keep our community and school committee updated.

As much as we prepare for emergencies and review our procedures, an event such as this forces us to thoroughly review all safety issues that impact our schools, our students, our staff, and our families. I want to assure our community that this thorough review has already begun. Town officials and the police department have been supportive and instrumental in looking at ways we can improve upon our existing Emergency Preparedness Plan since the safety of our students is our first priority.

In conjunction with the physical safety of our students, it is important to focus on the social and emotional needs of our students. We need to work together to reinforce the importance that students report any safety-related concerns. We also need to provide continuous education about the importance that children remain mindful of what they say. We need to work together to let students know that educators take reports of safety seriously and that all safety issues will be addressed. Our students, staff, and families need to feel both welcome and safe when entering our schools.

In addition to the work being done in regards to school safety, our JSBS students have become active in supporting our efforts. Our Student Council and National Honor Society students have joined forces to find ways in which they can support students in Florida, while also supporting our efforts to improve school safety in Hopedale.

Although this has been a difficult time for everyone involved with school communities, I am hopeful that our schools, parents, and community will continue to work together as we address the issues within today's society and the need to focus on school safety. It is critical that we work together in educating our children about school safety in a stress-free and supportive manner.

Please know that you are a valuable connection to the school community. It is important that we work together each day to support our students. I am a district leader who is committed to building relationships and keeping our students and staff safe. As we plan for the future and continue to address safety and security, I would value and appreciate your perspective on it. I would welcome the opportunity to speak with anyone interested in sharing their thoughts and input. I have reserved time in my schedule on Friday, March 2nd from 12:00-2:00, Monday, March 5th from 10:00-12:00, and Wednesday, March 7th from 2:00-4:00. I would suggest that you call 508.634.2220 or email me at kcrebase@hopedaleschools.org to reserve a time to ensure that you are able to speak with me upon arrival. I truly look forward to collaborating with you.

Thank you for all that you do to support our schools and our children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen M. Crebase". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Karen M. Crebase
Superintendent