

Active Shooter Notice

Superintendent Raquel Reedy, September 24, 2018

Dear APS Families,

As some of you may be aware, we are in the process of training APS teachers and staff on how to respond to an active shooter on campus based on national data and federal and local police agencies. They will then train students through age-appropriate drills and, at the secondary levels, class meetings.

As much as we wish we didn't need to provide this training, we have no choice. School shootings are a reality, and we have an obligation to make sure our students and staff are prepared to protect themselves if the unspeakable were to happen.

We are no longer training students and staff to quietly hide in a locked room if someone with a gun is reported on campus. While each situation is unique and there is no one-size-fits-all solution, the training we are providing recommends a much more active response, with a focus on evacuating the building and running from danger when possible.

We want our students to be aware of their surroundings, take note of possible escape routes, listen and follow instructions, and take drills seriously.

This new approach also changes the way we identify emergency situations. If there is a potentially dangerous situation near campus – a police investigation, reports of gunfire, a suspicious looking individual, even a bear – we will place our schools in “shelter in place.” During a shelter in place, the school building is locked and no one may leave or enter, but normal activity may continue inside.

“Lockdowns” will no longer mean hiding quietly behind locked doors. Instead, if we call for a lockdown, we will be implementing the new procedures that may call for staff to evacuate the campus with their students.

In both of these situations, we will notify families in a timely manner. This normally will include phone and email messages through our school to home communications tool, SchoolMessenger. It is vital that your child's school has up-to-date contact information on file so we can keep you informed. If you change your number or email address, please let your child's school know.

We also will post updates to the school and district website, APS.edu, and to Twitter (follow @ABQschools).

While this training may make you uncomfortable, Albuquerque Public Schools has been working closely with the Albuquerque Police Department and the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office to develop the best plans for keeping our students and staff safe.

In addition to the active shooter training, we have been working on updating school safety. For example:

- We are installing locks that allow staff to safely secure classrooms.
- We are improving and adding fencing to restrict access to schools.
- We are limiting entrance points at schools.
- We are updating our alarm and camera systems.
- In some cases, we are installing systems that require visitors to be buzzed into the building.
- In order to keep track of who is on campus, we are requiring all volunteers and visitors to sign in, provide some form of identification, wear a badge while at school and return the badge at the end of the visit.
- We are keeping school hallways clear as much as possible.

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- We will not allow locked doors to be propped open.

All of these changes will take time, but the process has begun. We have secured local funding and have applied for state matching funds to see how much we can do quickly.

These changes might prove to be inconvenient as well. You might have to walk a little farther or wait a little longer to get into the school. We appreciate your patience in the name of safety.

There are many resources for families on how to talk to children about school shootings. We encourage you to find the resources that best meet the needs of your family and to talk to your child. Of course, you can always contact your school's counselor, teachers or administrators if you have questions or concerns.

We all have a role to play in ensuring our schools continue to be a safe place for learning, and it is incumbent on all of us to be vigilant and prepared.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's school.

Sincerely,
Superintendent Raquel Reedy
Albuquerque Public Schools