

[Parents],

I understand that you had some questions regarding what type of disaster planning we have here at the MECC as well as in the district. We have an extensive emergency planning system in place and as the Director I meet monthly with the Director of Buildings and Grounds and my colleagues from throughout the district to discuss emergency plans and possible scenarios.

As a student here at the MECC, [your child] will participate in 2 drills each month and they vary in type and duration. We have a fire drill every month that is done with the actual alarms and the fire fighters on site with a truck. They time us to see how quickly we evacuate the building and make suggestions for improvement if needed. I have been told repeatedly that our children and staff are much better at drills than the students at Seton Hall University!

The second drill each month is one that addresses different disaster situations. We can choose which one to do and I vary them to keep everyone on their toes. We have an evacuation drill in the event that there is something occurring in the building (gas leak) that requires everyone leaving the area. The children leave the building, head across our back yard and head to one of two gathering areas. We use the train station on Meeker as one or the field house at the corner of Meadowbrook and Clark. If a disaster occurred, the police would direct parents to either of these spots to pick up their children.

We also have a Code Yellow drill that requires us to lock ourselves in our building and resume activities as a normal day. No one can enter or leave the building. This is used in the event of a criminal identified loose in the neighborhood or a wild animal on the property and keeps everyone indoors and secure. This drill does not have an alarm, but is made over the room loud speakers

We also have a Code Red drill. That drill uses an alarm that sounds very different from the fire alarm and we have the Police in the building who fully participate in that function with us. A Code Red indicates that there is an armed intruder in the building. Classrooms are on full lock down and the

children hide silently with their teachers out of the sight of doors or windows. The teachers have a “go” bag that would include epi pens, bottles of water, a first aid kit a long lasting flash-light and some calming, quiet toys. The children and staff stay hidden until released by the officers who make the rounds of every classroom and area in the building.

I run the drills during the course of the day and sometimes even at lunch or recess so that the adults are current on what to do to best protect all of our students. As you may be aware, all exterior doors are locked at all times and most doors are equipped with a camera which we can view from the Main Office. All exterior doors are also wired with an alarm and when exiting, you are asked to hit the green button to disarm the system. If not disarmed, the alarm goes off at the secretaries desk and the school map lights up red to tell us which door has been exited.

As you can see, we take the safety and security of your child and all of the children and staff in the building very seriously. Practice is the best way of preventing disasters and talking about scenarios helps us all to stay prepared for whatever can happen in the crazy world in which we live. Please also know that all of these drills are practiced on a monthly basis in every one of our buildings from preschool thru the high school. I hope this helps you to feel more secure about having [your child] in the building with us.

If you have any questions regarding any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Renée

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