



LINDENWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING • 801 EGG HARBOR ROAD • LINDENWOLD, NJ 08021

KRISTIN P. O'NEIL, ED.D.
Superintendent of Schools

November 8, 2023

Dear Lion Families,

During a time of Thanksgiving, it is important for us all to take a moment to recognize what we are thankful for in our daily lives. I am thankful for many things, including the range of support services offered in our school district.

The school district offers a significant amount of support by way of: in-school counseling through contracted therapist services, district staff mental health counselors, guidance counselors, resources for families to assist in finding family and/or student mental health services. **If your child is struggling emotionally or you are noticing some uncharacteristic/concerning behaviors with your child, please reach out to your child's Guidance Counselor.** We can assist you and your child with service options.

We are also seriously committed to a restorative support system where we look for opportunities to educate students and guide students through the repair of relationships when difficult situations arise. However, this process does not mean there are no consequences for student conduct. Rather, it means we really focus on creating ways to embed education into disciplinary encounters and provide opportunities to grow as individuals through the process of repair.

Recently, our administration and teaching staff have dealt with some disappointing student decision making. **The District's mental health support system is a resource to all of our families** in these situations. I am THANKFUL we have a village within our own schools and families (along with students) who keep the school informed with critical information.

As educators, we are dedicated to growing our schools to be the place where all students can receive the best education while having that "school" atmosphere which all children and adolescents deserve. But during those teenage years, the school can definitely not do it alone. We want the best schools in our district and that means WE NEED YOU, TOO, to want us to be the best schools. Please help us out by working with us.

- **Please take time to speak with your children about the following as they need to hear this message as often as possible.**
 - Use of substances such as alcohol, vapes, and drugs are unhealthy for children and adolescent use. Use of illegal substances are prohibited on school property and students are NOT permitted to be under the influence of illegal substances. Even if some substances are legal for adults (ages 21 and older), they are STILL considered ILLEGAL for students.
 - Fighting, violence, or threats are never an appropriate response to conflict. Students and staff need an environment where they come to school safely and leave school the same way.

- Injuring staff (intentionally or unintentionally) will never be tolerated. Appropriate action will be taken to protect our staff from bruises or injuries.
 - Possession of weapons: knives, stun guns, air guns, BB guns, actual firearms, etc.... are all considered weapons. Any student in possession of a weapon will be reported to local law enforcement.
 - Policy 8467: "weapon" means anything readily capable of lethal use or of inflicting serious bodily injury. "Weapon" includes, but is not limited to, all firearms, knives, dangerous instruments intended to inflict harm, components that can be readily assembled into a weapon, explosive devices, and imitation firearms.
 - The posting or SHARING of texts / social media posts may result in the school needing to intervene. Posing with weapons, illegal substances, inciting or promoting emotional/physical harm to others through social media or through the sharing of social media will be addressed by the school district in order to maintain the safety of every student.
 - Threatening the safety of our school is considered a terroristic threat, and the school will treat threats in that manner.
- **How can you help to support our schools to continue to grow them into the schools of the future?**
 - Parents – We NEED you! You may have noticed the Lindenwold School District currently does not have a Parent Organization similar to a PTO or PTA in our schools. This is the 23 – 24 goal of our Community & Inclusion Coordinator. It is important that we embrace families who want to ensure ALL students are educated to the best of our ability while creating childhood memories to last a lifetime! However, WE NEED YOU! If you are interested in helping to form a positive group of families to support our students, please contact agresik-callow@lindenwold.k12.nj.us. In the meantime, be on the lookout for more information in the coming months.
 - The District is in the process of organizing student assemblies to educate children on good and safe decision making. However, it is really important that our students understand the consequences of their choices, too. Even though our students are considered children, there are some VERY ADULT consequences for really poor decisions.
 - Please continue your open line of communication with the school. I am so proud of our students who put the health and safety of their friends above all else and communicate directly with us through email, in-person, notes, and our Stop It App.

I truly enjoy spending time with your children each day, and I am grateful that you share them with us. However, there is so much more we can do to promote learning and build that overall “school experience” for every child. We just need to be on the same team – even during the rough times. Our messaging needs to be a common message we all share. It takes a true village, or in our case, it takes a true Lion’s Den to come together for our kids.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kristin P. O’Neil
Superintendent