

Monday, Nov. 12, 2019

BPS families and community,

Ensuring a safe learning community is of utmost importance within the Birmingham Public Schools. We have worked diligently to not only address immediate concerns through new safe vestibules at each school and video camera installation (in progress), but also to review standing procedures through the lens of today's environment. This deep dive into safety procedures and our work with local law enforcement has led us to partner with the ALICE Training Institute.

ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate) is the nation's leader in preparing everyone with proactive, options-based strategies for a violent intruder event, while remaining age and ability-appropriate. ALICE is a program designed to allow individuals or groups to make informed choices in instances of a violent intruder.

ALICE Training uses a Blended Model of eLearning and hands-on training by ALICE Certified Instructors for long-term learning retention. Already, our staff members have participated in 45-55 minutes of eLearning centered around ALICE modules (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter and Evacuate). This was followed by an intense, two-day training of liaisons from each of our buildings. Professional development continued with an all-staff, in-person meeting with the Birmingham Police Department to deepen our understanding of the program. This work will be ongoing and built into our professional development each year. It is not a one-time course, but a living, breathing part of our safety procedures within the district.

Our rollout to students will be thoughtful and deliberate, and will not take place overnight. Our priority today is ensuring our staff members have the understanding and training they need to support the next phase of implementation. We will continue to focus on informing our community, so that we can form partnerships of understanding in our work with students. We will be sure to communicate in advance about this transition with students.

As a district, we are aware of the sensitive topic and deep emotions associated with student safety conversations. Already, we have addressed myriad responses to our adoption of ALICE; from great relief and eagerness to move to the next phase, to anxiousness and hesitation to move forward. It is with all of these responses in mind that we continue to move at a thoughtful pace and work to bring everyone along on this journey.

We encourage you to ask questions and share your thoughts as we approach the community session. Reach out to us at alice@birmingham.k12.mi.us with questions, concerns or encouragement. This is not a system that will be fully implemented in haste. It deserves thought and various perspectives in order to be successful.

Sincerely,

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