

## **Safety Requirements For All Nebraska Schools!!**

**By Dan Bird, Superintendent**

For a school to remain accredited in the state of Nebraska it requires that they meet all the guidelines that are outlined in Rule 10. Burwell Public Schools is fully accredited by the Nebraska Department of Education. Each year, as superintendent, I send an "assurance statement" that guarantees the state of Nebraska that the school district is meeting its requirements as pertaining to Rule 10. The Nebraska Department of Education will visit schools to make sure they are in compliance with the various rules. The last time the Nebraska Department of Education did a Rule 10 visit to Burwell was in 2007.

All public schools in the state are required to have a safety plan. The safety plan addresses the safety and security of students, staff and visitors. For safety reasons, the plan is not sent to the Nebraska Department of Education or a public document. At Burwell Public Schools, our safety committee consists of: Julie Tetschner-chairperson, Susan Goochey, Dave Owen, Amy Cassidy, John Hogmire, Bob Lee, Lori Hughes, Brandi Hodges, Ben Hughes, and Rita Snyder. Student representatives: Elaina Eddy and Hanna Christensen. The board of education is updated throughout the year on issues that pertain to the safety committee.

The safety committee is required to meet annually to review the school's safety and security plans and procedures. This year the committee's goal has been to update and unify the safety plans and procedures into one district-wide safety plan. Each school has had a plan but the committee felt it was important to more closely tie those plans together. On January 23 & 24, 2014, Burwell hosted a two-day training session with local law enforcement, first responders and fire department officials. Representatives from other schools also participated. The purpose of the meeting was to review our plans and procedures and to strengthen communication between emergency officials and the school. This training session was sponsored by the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and School Security Services. The safety committee will have a third day of training later this spring.

In the past, the safety committee has invited local fire department and local law enforcement to meet at the school and to provide input in how to respond to emergency situations. One of the changes that was recommended at the high school was moving students to a common area to better account for students. These emergency officials have held training sessions at school. They also have maps of the schools to identify emergency areas and key emergency shut-offs valves.

Each year the school district's safety plan must be reviewed by one or more persons not on the school district's safety committee and not an employee of the school district. This review will include a visit to school buildings to analyze plans, policies, procedures and practices. After the safety audit, recommendations are made to the superintendent of schools which is then forwarded to the board of education. This year that safety audit was conducted by Sheriff Larry Donner.

The situation we have been dealing with for the past three weeks reinforces the importance of safety and it sent a real direct message that unexpected situations can happen anywhere. This time it happened in our closely knit community. The safety plans that we have in place are continually changing. The school has already started the process of determining how we can better deal with this type of emergency when it arises. We thank you for your continued support.

**Updated Information on the ADT Alert  
Mass Notification System  
By Dan Bird**

We began using the ADT Alert Mass Notification System three years ago. It provides the school with the ability to communicate with parents in a very timely manner. It utilizes technology to send messages in a timely manner. Like with all technology, there are times when it does not work as advertised. In the past few weeks we have found a few limitations with the ADT System. It is important that you keep your information up to date. Remember, each family can have up to three phone lines, one text message and email. The key for the system to work is that we have updated information. Amy Cassidy (high school secretary) and Brandi Hodges (elementary secretary) are in charge of updating information to make sure we have the most up to date information in the system. If you change phone numbers please let the school know.

\*Several of you have communicated that you are not receiving the ADT alerts. The first thing that needs to be done is double check with Amy Cassidy and Brandi Hodges to make sure we have your up to date information in the ADT system.

\* If you receive an incomplete ADT alert message, please call the school for clarification.

\* Last week, I contacted the company that owns the ADT alert system and I shared with them that we have a number of families where they receive the call but no message. According to ADT, the problem may stem from the fact that many of us have "blocked" these type of calls on our cell phones because we do not want to be bothered with companies trying to sell products over the phone or we block calls from political ads. The school's alert system may also fall in that category.

\*In the ADT system, text messages are cut off after 145 characters

The ADT system is a valuable tool and it is important that we keep working to get some of the bugs ironed out. Thanks for your patience in helping to strengthen this program.

**Counselor's Corner** by Miss Tetschner

HAPPY SPRING!!! The calendar says it is spring. Anxious students are a hint of spring, and the weather has decided to be spring-like. However, there is still much to be done before the end of the school year.

Spring also means scheduling. Mr. Owen and myself have been working diligently on next year's schedule and hope to have it complete by the middle part of April. As scheduling is always a challenge, Mr. Owen and myself make the best effort possible to offer several academic options for all our students based on the information the students provided at pre-registration. As colleges are becoming more selective, and entrance requirements are increasing, students need to be academically solid in their choice of classes as well as their academic performance.

After the schedule is complete, I will start meeting with students to plan for their 2014-2015 school year. After meeting with each student and discussing their schedule, the student will bring the schedule home for parents to also consider. Please discuss your student's schedule and call or make an appointment if you have questions or concerns.

**8<sup>th</sup> GRADE:** The 8<sup>th</sup> grade students went on a College Visit Day sponsored by a grant through EducationQuest Foundation. The students visited Wayne State College a 4-year college and Northeast Community College a 2-year college. The students had the opportunity to tour both campuses, eat at Wayne's cafeteria, and visit with current students. Thank you to Mrs. Schott, Mrs. Mann, Mrs. Jeffres, and Mr. Simon for going along to help supervise.

**EMAIL:** I started an email list of seniors, senior parents, and juniors, and junior parents to provide up-to-date as it comes through my office. I have had positive responses to this resource and found that students check their email better than they listen to the daily announcements. Many times students and parents would email me questions, essays to proof read, etc... this instant way of communicating has been a wonderful tool. If you would like to be included on this email list for the 2014-2015 school year please email me your address at [jtetschner@esu10.org](mailto:jtetschner@esu10.org)

**JUNIORS:** Now is the time to start attending college "Junior Days." These are college visits especially for high school juniors. If you have a college of interest, I highly recommend going to visit, researching their admission and scholarship requirements, and in some cases apply. It is easy to explore colleges on line and gather information – Just do it!! Also take advantage of days we don't have school to schedule a college visit. Don't wait until your senior year to start the pursuit of a college career. It is important that you take time to look at your options because if you wait your options might not be available (especially at a two year school).

Juniors interested in programs that require a waiting list should apply NOW and get your name on the list. Many programs at Milford and Northeast, for example, have at least a year wait for some popular programs. It is important that you get your name on the list if you are interested in attending. Also don't feel obligated to go there if your name is on the list. It is just to help secure

a spot and remember you can always change your mind. To find out if there is waiting lists simply call and ask.

Take the ACT in April and/or June. Students are advised to complete the ACT Academy. It is to your advantage to take the ACT test this spring, so you know where you are at and plan for where you want to be by December your senior year. Register at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) and enter BHS school code 280-375. Also if you qualify for free/reduced lunch or other programs you may take the ACT test for free and just stop by my office for that information.

Students only interested in attending a two year college should plan on taking the COMPASS test this spring as well. This test can be taken at the Central Community site in Ord and several juniors have taken advantage of this opportunity already this spring. The COMPASS is used by two year colleges for academic placement in to classes, as well as scholarship dollars, and admission to certain programs of study.

### **Junior To Do List:**

Plan to take the ACT test or COMPASS test

April 12<sup>th</sup> – ACT Test

May 9<sup>th</sup> – deadline to register for the June 14<sup>th</sup> ACT Test

Start looking at colleges and go on college visits

Start looking for a summer job or volunteer work

Are you on Miss T's email list? If not email her so you can get the latest and up-to-date information  
[jtetschner@esu10.org](mailto:jtetschner@esu10.org).

### **2014-2015 Test Date**

### **Registration Deadline**

### **(Late Fee Required)**

September 13, 2014

August 8, 2014

August 9–22, 2014

October 25, 2014

September 19, 2014

September 20–October 3, 2014

December 13, 2014

November 7, 2014

November 8–21, 2014

February 7, 2015\*

January 9, 2015

January 10–16, 2015

April 18, 2015

March 13, 2015

March 14–27, 2015

June 13, 2015

May 8, 2015

May 9–22, 2015

### **SENIORS: Finish the year with purpose.**

Keep on top of scholarship deadlines, deadlines for housing, deposits, etc....

Submit your FAFSA. College have financial aid deadlines – look online or call.

Continue applying for scholarships and notify me of scholarship awarded.

Notify me of colleges you are planning to attend.

Scholarships are hot, hot, hot!!! This is the time of year when most scholarships are posted and deadlines are due. This is also the time of year that many local scholarships are posted. Check your email daily as I have been emailing you scholarship information as soon as it comes across my desk. However, not all scholarships come across my desk, so sign up with [www.ScholarshipQuest.org](http://www.ScholarshipQuest.org) and check with organizations or businesses that either you or your parents are associated with. There are several scholarships out there but you must apply. The people that receive scholarships are the ones that do the work (many are online), write the essay,

get letters of recommendation, and put a little time and effort in to completing the needed information. You can't be awarded anything if you don't try.

It is also FAFSA time!!! Remember the FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID is FREE. Never pay to have your FAFSA completed. Steps to take to complete your FAFSA: 1. Apply for a Department of Education PIN for you and a parent to file the FAFSA on-line [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov) (this is your electronic signature). 2. Complete student and parent 2013 tax returns. 3. Gather all needed information to complete the FAFSA. I emailed you a check list, but you can also go to EducationQuest.org and look under the FAFSA tools for the list and tutorials. 4. Complete the FAFSA [www.fafsa.edu.gov](http://www.fafsa.edu.gov).

If you need any assistance with completing the FAFSA or have questions, please contact the Education-Quest Foundation. This is a free education service and they are well informed and trained on the FAFSA. You can call the Kearney office at 1-800-666-3721 or go to their website at [www.EducationQuest.org](http://www.EducationQuest.org).

By completing the FAFSA (remember to do it as soon as possible as some funding runs out and is on a first come first serve basis) and the financial aid process you will be notified of scholarships, grants, work-study, and loans. This will all help you in the decisions you will need to make on how to pay for a college education. After you complete the FAFSA you will soon receive a SAR (Student Aid Report); please bring me a copy so I can record any scholarship and grant money you may be awarded for my records.

Seniors, when you are awarded scholarships please bring me a copy of your award letter so I can keep a record as well as start planning and preparing for your graduation ceremony.

It has been a pleasure working with the seniors. I am very pleased with your accomplishments and wish you the very best in your future. Please keep in mind that if you need anything in the future let me know.

### **Senior To Do List:**

Narrow your college choices.

Notify me of the college you are planning to attend and any scholarships you have been awarded

Continue to apply for scholarships

Complete the FAFSA

Start looking for a summer job

May 11<sup>th</sup> – Graduation J