

## **Keeping our School Safe - Increased Oak Park Public Safety presence throughout the schools each day!**

### **Oak Park School District Family:**

In an effort to continue to increase safety and security, you will notice an increased presence of Oak Park Public Safety each week visiting schools (walking throughout the halls, cafeterias, etc. in each school throughout the district). They want to have a greater presence within the schools each day in an effort to get to know more students and staff. They want to be visible. They want everyone to know that they are here and are in support of and responsive to our needs. They want everyone to know that they care about the students, staff, and community. They love what they do and they stand with us in solidarity as it relates to wanting all of our schools to be safe.

The visits started this week, so if there was a sighting at Oak Park Freshman Institute, Oak Park High School, Oak Park Preparatory Academy, and/or Pepper Elementary School, it was because they are starting their community policing partnership with the visibility throughout the schools during the day. We know that they support our arrivals and dismissals, but now there will be a greater presence of Oak Park Public Safety throughout each school building. So, when you see them, there isn't anything wrong. They are part of the Oak Park Family!

Again, there may be a sighting every day in a different school, as they will pick one school each day to show up to and walk the halls in a coordinated effort. Just know they care! In light of the recent school tragedies and copycat threats being made everywhere, the presence is welcomed, in an effort to show that we want our schools safe each and every day. We want everyone to know that we have an awesome partnership that works.

Also, don't be alarmed if you see or hear of the narcotics search unit visiting our campus. As you know, periodically, there are narcotics and weapons searches that take place at various schools, which includes a few dogs on campus and several units to conduct the search. Don't be alarmed if you see or hear this is happening. This is all in coordination of keeping our schools safe. We are ramping up our efforts to make sure that the only thing happening at Oak Park Schools is teaching and learning. We are encouraging excellence at every level, which includes safety and security.

We want this notice to serve as a welcomed communication to all families, community members, and staff so you are aware of the increased presence as part of our ongoing partnership to keep our schools safe and to keep the focus on teaching at learning throughout our educational campus.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanks for all you do to make Oak Park a great place!

**Daveda J. Colbert, Ph.D.**

**Superintendent**

**Oak Park School District**