Safe schools make for an environment in which students can learn and staff can work effectively. Creating a safe and caring environment is one of the four pillars of our mission and vision. Making our schools safe is an on-going, never-ending effort to analyze injury data; reassess our procedures; research and follow best practices; maintain effective communication systems; and practice our responses to a variety of scenarios and situations that could potentially arise and threaten the safety of our students, staff and community.

Routine safety concerns are evaluated in the district’s Safety Committee. The Safety Committee is comprised of varied personnel from each school, building and department. This committee is charged with reviewing and evaluating all student and employee incidents and accidents. The committee looks for injury trends, unsafe conditions, reviews Snohomish County Health District inspections of schools and kitchens. Based on this information, the committee recommends new procedures and improvements to improve safety for students and staff. Recent work by the Safety Committee has resulted in the addition of AEDs in all district facilities, infant/child pads for AEDs, updating procedures for 9-1-1 emergencies occurring for evening and weekend events, and management of Safety Data Sheets (formerly MSDS).

Arlington Public Schools has a quick link called Reporting on SafeSchools Tip Line available on every building’s website. Parents and students can go to report a concern related to harassment/intimidation/bullying or any safety issue. These reports can be made via cell phone text, email, web or telephone. District officials are immediately notified when a report is turned in and can respond or forward the message to the school to be handled there.

Training of staff is another important way we provide a safe environment in our schools. Our district uses SafeSchools, an online training system, for training staff in HIV/AIDS awareness, bloodborne pathogens, child abuse, boundary invasion, diversity awareness, bullying and general safety. Our bus drivers receive specific state-mandated training every year on a variety of areas related to transporting students. Special education staff receives specialized training in respect to our special education population. First Aid/CPR/AED trainings are made available throughout the year. Some staff members are required to take these trainings if they work with fragile students or are working with student athletes. Training related to emergency management includes triage, search and rescue and inspection of buildings following an earthquake. There are formal trainings offered and staff who are trained have an opportunity to practice their skills during fire, earthquake and shelter-in-place drills. Arlington Fire Department has provided training for district staff on Search and Rescue and has participated in several drills with individual buildings and district-wide drills. Some of our staff members
have volunteered to participate in the national Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training where they learn how to effectively respond to help others following a major disaster.

In 2012, an Emergency Management and Response Team (EMART) made up of building and district leadership, as well as representatives from local fire and police, was formed for the purpose of:

- Developing and reviewing emergency procedures
- Establishing communications systems
- Planning and coordinating drills to practice procedures
- Providing training for staff

As a result, the procedures for many of the potential incidents such as fire, earthquake, shelter-in-place and intruder alerts have been reviewed, updated and practiced district-wide. We have also made modifications in our buildings to make them more secure based on input from EMART representatives.

In addition to improving channels of communication within the district and local First Responders, Arlington Public Schools is part of a countywide grant to implement a program called the RAVE 9-1-1 Panic Button Application. This program will allow district employees to download a 9-1-1 phone application to their smart phones that can be used in an emergency situation to contact a 9-1-1 operator from anywhere on the campus, including playgrounds. Any staff that have their mobile phones registered in the system will receive notification that 9-1-1 has been contacted and from which building in the district. Furthermore, the 9-1-1 operators can push out the latest information via text to those phones as well. This gives staff the most recent information to make the best decisions on how to respond in the situation. Everett Public Schools has been piloting this program for this past year and has kept the other districts in the county informed along the way of the progress made in implementation. It is anticipated that the Arlington Public Schools will implement the program within the next school year. We are excited about the potential this program allows for immediate information in an emergency situation that can assist in helping staff keep the students as safe as possible.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve this community by educating the children of the community. Providing an environment in which students and staff feel safe is critical for quality learning and working to take place. Thank you for entrusting us with the safety of our most precious resources.