



Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools

Patrick McGrath, Jr.
Superintendent
pmcgrath@bhbl.org

50 Cypress Drive, Glenville, NY 12302
(518) 399-9141, ext. 85002 voice
(518) 399-1882 fax

August 12, 2013

Dear Parent or Guardian of a BH-BL student:

This letter is a follow-up to the student safety letter I wrote to you last December. I want to let you know that since that time, as promised, we have been working diligently to upgrade the safety and security procedures in our schools. These improvements will include small, but significant, changes for parents entering any of the five BH-BL schools during school hours.

New security equipment is being installed at the main front entrance of each school. All schools will have an electronic entry system, improved camera surveillance, and an electronic visitor record system. To enter a building during school hours, adults will need to use the front entrance and to show a form of photo identification (i.e., a driver's license). A monitor will buzz you into the building and give you a visitor badge.

To assist with this, the vestibules at the front entrances of Charlton Heights, Pashley, and the High School are being modified this summer. New front vestibules for the Middle School and Stevens are planned as well but will require more extensive renovations, time, and money than could be accommodated this summer. (We are including redesigned entrances for these two schools in the Renovations Referendum scheduled for October 22, and more information will be available later.)

Showing identification when entering your child's school during the school day will require a few more seconds of parents' time, but is now commonplace among many area school districts. Over the past year, I have heard from many more parents about security concerns than about any other topic affecting our schools. I believe that the enhanced security that our new procedures will provide is well worth the extra time.

In addition to physical and procedural changes, we have hired retired NY state trooper and school resource officer Philip Poitier as our district director of safety and security. Phil has already proven to be an excellent resource. He has worked with our principals to institute changes, helped us tremendously in implementing the new entrance procedures, and shared his expertise in helping everyone become more security conscious.

No security system is foolproof. However, there is a growing body of knowledge regarding "best practice" in the field of school security. Guided by this expertise, we will continuously review and update our facilities and procedures. I am confident that our schools can remain the warm and inviting places they have always been while we also take reasonable precautions and take advantage of the best security practices for schools. Enjoy the remainder of your summer. We are looking forward to a great 2013-14 school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick McGrath', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick McGrath
Superintendent of Schools