

As this school year gets underway, I want to address an issue that continues to affect schools across the nation, including here at Bay District Schools: threats of violence, often made online or shared through social media.

We want to be clear: every threat is taken seriously. Each report is investigated thoroughly, and law enforcement is involved whenever necessary. Making or sharing threats is never a joke; it can result in serious disciplinary action at school and legal consequences beyond it.

Even when these threats turn out to be unfounded, they create unnecessary fear, disrupt learning, and place a heavy burden on staff, students, and families. Parents, here are just ways we are working to keep students safe:

- **Dedicated Safety Personnel:** Every school has either a deputy or a school safety officer assigned to campus; some of our larger campuses even have two.
- **Technology Upgrades:** More security cameras than ever are in place across our district, providing continuous monitoring.
- **Secure Campuses:** Doors and perimeters remain locked during the day, with visitor entry limited through secure front offices.
- **Visitor Background Checks:** All visitors must complete a background screening before being allowed into schools.
- **FortifyFL Anonymous Reporting:** Students, staff, and community members can report suspicious activity quickly and anonymously.
- **Regular Safety Drills:** Students and staff practice emergency procedures with guidance from law enforcement.
- **Fencing Where Possible:** Additional perimeter fencing has been installed around campuses to add another layer of security.
- **Additional Protections:** We also have many safety measures in place that aren't shared publicly for security reasons.

In addition, Sheriff Ford, State Attorney Basford, and I will be visiting all middle and high schools in September to talk directly with students about this important issue. Parents and guardians, we ask you to reinforce this message at home by reminding your children how seriously these threats are taken and how damaging they can be to our school community.

Safety remains our highest priority, but it takes all of us: schools, families, and our community working together to maintain safe and supportive learning environments. Thank you for your continued partnership in protecting our students.