

May 25, 2022

RSU 16 School Community,

We know events like we witnessed in Texas yesterday can impact the physical and mental well-being of our students, staff, and families. We encourage you to connect with your children, friends and family, supporting each other and seeking help as needed. We want you to know that you are not alone and that support is available at school and in our community.

Many of our students and staff will likely want to share their emotions to feel the support of our caring community. The National Association of School Psychologists has some [useful resources on how to talk to children about violence](#) to engage children in developmentally appropriate ways.

We have used federal grant funds (ESSER) to focus on social-emotional health. This year Poland Community School hired a second school counselor to serve our largest elementary school. Next year, we will use grant funds to increase our staff to include an elementary Behavior Specialist, elementary Social Emotional Learning Dean and hire an additional high school Social Worker. All of our schools engage in advisory programs such as Roundtable and BARR at HS/MS; Morning Meeting, PBIS and Second Step at the elementary. Each school has a school counselor(s) and access to the district School Resource Officer.

We continue to review our building's exterior shell and entryways and the district Emergency Plan to make sure we are taking all precautions necessary to keep our buildings safe. Each building has a series of cameras on all exterior doors with surveillance screens in the office to see who is coming and going. All exterior doors are locked throughout the school day and all visitors or students must use the buzzer system at the main doors to be allowed in any building during school hours. Remain vigilant and if you see something, say something.

We want to assure you that every single person in RSU 16 is committed to the social and emotional health and well-being and safety of our students, staff and schools. We love your children like they are our own. Schools where all students are known and feel connected to each other and the adults is the most proactive thing we can do to create safe learning environments.

Sincerely,

Ken Healey and Amy Hediger