

REFLECTING ON A TRAGEDY

It has been a few weeks now since the overwhelming tragedy at Virginia Tech University. We have all had time to mull this situation over in our minds. No matter how much you reflect on this, it still comes back to the concept that safety is a state of mind. The truth of the matter is that there is very little that can be done when there are persons in our midst who are bent on inflicting harm on others. What makes this even more difficult is that often we have few or no clues that the perpetrator(s) of such actions can be so close to us as a friend or a roommate.

When it comes to our schools, we want to believe that our young people are safe. We have safety and emergency action plans that we practice regularly, sometimes in the presence of law enforcement officials. We have School Resource Officers (SROs), but not enough of them in my opinion. We used to have more SROs, but that was before the state and federal governments either cut back or eliminated some of the funding sources to support this need. I am not pointing fingers because we all have to make our budgets work the best that we can. You don't spend money that you don't have. And, the truth of the matter is that we could have an SRO in place in every school building in the nation and there would still be no guarantee of safety for all just by having a uniformed officer in place.

I have grave concerns regarding people who perform such random acts of violence. They are really nothing more than another form of terrorists in our midst. But, I also have concerns for the perpetrators. How did they get to this point? What was it that pushed

them over the edge? These are the bigger questions that we often don't reflect upon. Can these future acts of random violence be prevented? Possibly, but it will take more than just an armed SRO in uniform stationed in each building. We need to be more observant regarding "unusual" behavior, and report it to the proper authorities. We also need to practice the Golden Rule in dealing with others. Just doing this one thing (treating people the way we want to be treated) might eliminate a lot of problems.

FAREWELL TO A FRIEND

By now, our community is well aware that Treasurer Eric Toole will be leaving us on May 31st to accept a similar position with the Georgetown Exempted Village Schools. Though we have known and worked with each other for only a couple of years, I can tell you that Mr. Toole will be missed. He is thoughtful, dependable, hard-working, and not the least bit shy about rolling up his sleeves to get the job done. Beyond that, I consider him to be a good friend.

Speaking on behalf of the Board of Education, I want to thank Mr. Toole for his dedication and service to our school district these past two years, and extend to him best wishes as he assumes his new position at Georgetown on June 1st. To our taxpayers and citizens, the Board of Education is in the process and will continue to seek a fully-licensed, competent replacement for Mr. Toole until one is found.

GRADUATION DATES

Graduation ceremonies for 2007 are just around the corner. The last day of school for seniors will be Wednesday, May 23rd. Graduation ceremonies are scheduled as follows:

- Friday, May 25th – West Union High School – 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, May 26th – North Adams High School – 2:00 p.m.
- Sunday, May 27th – Peebles High School – 2:00 p.m.

Graduating from high school or college is one of those milestone events that occur once in one's lifetime. Graduating from high school or college is also supposed to be a time of joy and celebration. This joy and celebration of this milestone can continue for years to come if we all remember to celebrate safely and responsibly. Congratulations to all of our seniors who will be receiving diplomas this month.

Charles P. Kimble

Superintendent