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**SCHOOL SAFETY & SECURITY COMMUNITY CONVERSATION
CESAR BATALLA SCHOOL
MARCH 7, 2018 @ 5:30 p.m.**

March 2, 2018

Dear Bridgeport Public Schools Family,

The tragic school shooting in Florida has caused a wide range of emotion from fear, disbelief, mourning, and overwhelming sorrow. Our schools are safe havens where students should be able to learn, grow and flourish without worry or fear. During these times of uncertainty, it is critical that schools, parents, staff, and community stakeholders remain unwavering and ever vigilant in our efforts to ensure the safety of our school communities.

Education is defined "as an enlightening experience" and our goal is to create individuals who are culturally responsive and civically engaged to be productive, contributing members of our society where they have a respected voice. The inspirational students in Florida were propelled into activism and it has been amazing to witness their strength, courage, and resiliency during this unsettling time in our country as it relates to school violence. Students from across the nation have organized a National School Walkout for March 14th at 10:00 a.m. to recognize and honor the 17 victims who lost their lives in Florida. BPS plans to support our young people and staff, while also maintaining safety as the priority. Our high schools are working with their student councils to collaborate on the most thoughtful approach to allow our students' voices to be heard and respected during this time. We will also support student assemblies and encourage students to compose letters addressed to our legislatures, which highlight their concerns related to school safety.

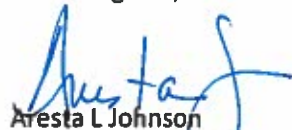
In collaboration with the City of Bridgeport's Emergency Management Team and the Bridgeport Police Department we are swiftly addressing any and all comments or social media posts that may be perceived as a threat to the safety and well-being of students and/or staff. As such, we ask that any perceived threat be reported directly to the Bridgeport Police Department and school officials....*If you hear/see something, say something.* We are consistently reiterating this message with our students and need your help at home.

- **Reassure children that they are safe** and talk with your child about recent local and national incidents. Explain that feelings such as sadness, anger, disappointment, and fear can be normal responses to tragedies for children and adults.
- **Know what websites and social media sites your child is using** and observe their posts, who they are following, as well as their followers
- **Stress that making a threat is not to be taken lightly** and that there are severe consequences
- **Watch for changes in behavior** and seek help if your child needs assistance dealing with anxiety or feeling safe.
- **Keep an open line of communication with your children** and encourage them to tell you or another trusted adult if they become aware of a threat or rumor of violence.
- **Maintain updated power school contact information**, enabling the school to contact you in the event of an emergency

- **Talking to Children About Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers** – This article provides information for parents and teachers to support discussions surrounding school violence. Several key points for discussion and emphasis are listed. Please note the emphasis on limiting television viewing of the events. Thus, monitoring of social media is also an important factor to consider as viewing such images may put students at risk for trauma or psychological distress. Additional translated documents, in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, French, Amharic, Chinese, Portuguese, Somali, Arabic & Kurdish are available on the NASP website if you scroll the bottom left of the page. <http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers> & <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/social-media-and-school-crises>
- **Managing Strong Emotional Reactions to Traumatic Events: Tips for Families and Teachers:** This article provides an overview of common reactions to trauma, anger responses and coping strategies, and warning signs for serious emotional trauma. Children who have suffered trauma previously may have stronger reactions to such events and show more significant signs of distress. <http://www.oleyvalleysd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Managing-Strong-Emotions-to-Traumatic-Events.pdf>
- **211**
2-1-1 is your one-stop connection to the local services you need, from utility assistance, food, housing, child care, after school programs, elder care, crisis intervention and much more. 2-1-1 is always ready to assist you find the help you need
<http://uwc.211ct.org/about/>
- **Child and Family Guidance**
Provides children and families with culturally-informed mental health care and complementary supports.
Bridgeport Clinic and Administrative Offices
180 Fairfield Avenue
Bridgeport, CT 06604
Phone: (203) 394 6529
<http://cfguidance.com/>
- **LifeBridge**
LifeBridge helps adults, youths, and families by providing the tools that strengthen their ability to cope, adapt, and overcome challenges. Their comprehensive services support people struggling with personal issues, family challenges, domestic violence, trauma, loss, and unemployment in their walk-in behavioral health clinic in the Greater Bridgeport area.
Behavioral Health Program
203-368-5540
Behavioral Health Service Information
203-368-5598
<http://www.lifebridgect.org/>

Thank you in advance for partnering with BPS as we work together to maintain safe school communities.

Warm regards,



Aresta L Johnson

Bridgeport Public Schools Superintendent