UNITED SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Preparing our Students for Tomorrow ...Today!

January 8, 2026

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members:

The safety of our students and staff is always our highest priority. We are writing to inform you of a new Pennsylvania state law that affects how public school districts must respond to and communicate regarding weapon related incidents.

In November 2025, the Pennsylvania Legislature amended the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 through the enactment of Act 44 of 2025, titled "Parental and Employee Notification of Weapon Incidents." This law adds Section 1303.2-A to the School Code and establishes new statewide reporting and notification requirements for school districts. These requirements took effect on January 6, 2026. To be clear, the school district has always notified parents as it relates to weapons violations, however, this new law simply codifies in statute what the internal procedures have been for the school district.

Definition of a Weapon
Under School Code § 1317.2(g), a "weapon" includes specific items such as knives, cutting instruments or tools, nunchaku, firearms, shotguns, and rifles. The definition also contains a broad catchall provision for "any other tool, instrument, or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury."

What Act 44 Requires
Under Act 44, when a school district becomes aware of a weapon incident occurring on school property, at a school sponsored activity, or on a school vehicle, the district is required to:

- Notify the parent(s) or guardian(s) of students enrolled in the affected school;
- Notify school employees assigned to the affected school; and
- Provide this notification as soon as practicable, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours, as required law.

All notifications must include general information about the incident while fully protecting student confidentiality and privacy rights in accordance with state and federal law. No personally identifiable student information will be released.

What this Means for Families
This law is intended to ensure transparency and timely communication with families and staff while continuing to prioritize safety and confidentiality. Act 44 does not change the school district's existing safety procedures, disciplinary processes, or our long-standing commitment to working closely with law enforcement.

Please note that not all reported incidents involve an immediate threat. Each situation is carefully assessed by school administration in coordination with law enforcement and other appropriate authorities.

It is important for families to understand that the definition of a weapon under the law may include what is sometimes referred to as "accidental" possession. For example, a student who inadvertently brings a pocketknife to school after a hunting or outdoor activity would still fall within the statutory definition of a weapon under School Code § 1317.2 and 18 Pa.C.S. § 912(a).

We ask for your assistance as parents and guardians in reminding students that possession of a weapon, even unintentionally, can result in disciplinary consequences. These consequences may include police involvement, suspension/expulsion for up to one year, and placement in an alternative educational setting, as permitted by law.

If you have questions about Act 44 or the United School District's safety procedures, please contact me, Dr. Richard E. Lucas, Superintendent via email or phone as provided below my signature on this correspondence.

Thank you for your support and assistance as we continue to seek to provide the highest quality of education to our students while maintaining a safe and secure environment.

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Richard E. Lucas, Ed.D.

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