



SAFE SCHOOL INITIATIVES

The goal of Rutherford County Schools is to create a safe and nurturing environment for students, staff and the educational community by promoting initiatives that prevent violence and the presence of drugs and weapons; by providing support services to the homeless and at-risk students; and by promoting security measures at all school facilities and school functions.

We believe that the key to preventing violence is a systematic approach that fosters healthy beliefs, feelings, attitudes and skills of expression before violence becomes habitual and that help students replace misguided notions after violence has gained a foothold.

There are three components which comprise the Respect and Protect initiatives at Rutherford County Schools.

- Programs
- Services
- Policies and Procedures

Classroom based education and skill building programs are designed to address the needs of the individual student. Programs utilized under the Respect and Protect umbrella include:

- STARS (Students Taking a Right Stand) – a counseling program designed to serve the needs of student's affected by their own or someone else's use of alcohol or other drugs, violence, anger management or other issues.
- No Bullying – a K-12 curriculum program aimed at prevention of physical, emotional and social harm.
- Character Education- a K-12 program designed to give students the opportunity to learn and demonstrate core character traits and moral values including caring, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, citizenship and fairness.
- Protecting You, Protecting Me; Grades K-5
- Life Skills Training; Grades 6-8
- FISH! For Schools
- Partner, Inc.
- Conflict Resolution
- ATLAS: McKinney Vento Act
- Respect and Protect Teams at every school

Personnel are provided to promote Safe Schools by providing counseling, health and law enforcement services. Services include:

- Counseling and Student Services program which is comprised of individual and group counseling services, Comprehensive School Counseling Program, 504 Liaison, School Safety Liaison, Juvenile Drug Court liaison, Parent Involvement resource, Respect and Protect Program Monitor, SAT team resources
- School Resource Officers (Rutherford County Sheriffs Department)
- Health Services program that coordinates all health related issues and concerns affecting our system.

All school employees have been trained in Incident Command consistent with the philosophy of the Rutherford County Schools Emergency Plan flipchart. The basic principle of Incident Command Training involves the delegation of authority to coordinate resources and problem solve during times of emergency. A Crisis Response Team is assigned at all facilities and is updated yearly. Emergency Plan flipcharts are assigned to each school employee and first responders receive basic first aid and CPR training annually.

Throughout the school year, all schools are required to perform safety drills as specified by the Director of Schools. At this time drills include two fire drills in the month of August and one fire drill per month thereafter, one tornado drill per semester, one lock down drill per semester, one medical drill per semester and one target scenario drill per semester. A sign-off sheet listing all of the drills performed is submitted by the building principal to the Central Office at the end of every year. Holland Employment, our substitute provider, provides a review of our safety procedures at each orientation session. To prevent intruders from entering the schools, exterior doors remain locked and vestibules have been installed in most lobbies.

Equipment such as handheld metal detectors, megaphones, two-way radios, wheelchairs, security cameras and medical jump bags have been purchased to help improve school safety. Additional Safe School funds have been allocated for various conference fees, materials and supplies.

What's next for Rutherford County Schools? We are currently studying the use of GPS communications on school buses and continue to evaluate our training procedures as they pertain to school safety.