January 10, 2020

Dear SJRCS School Community,

Happy New Year!

I am writing to give you an update on the security improvements you will begin to see around campus as we begin 2020. Since last year, we have been working with local law enforcement, Maryland Emergency Management, and Homeland Security to develop an up-to-date security plan for our school. Nothing has happened that created a need for this process other than what we hear in the news on a regular basis about school shootings and general concerns that parents have shared with us.

Last year, police officers from the Frederick City Police Department did an assessment of our campus and made recommendations for us to help make SJRCS more secure. In the past year, there has also been a need to update our safety policies and procedures based on current best practices. Best practices have been shared with us by both the Archdiocesan Office of Risk Management and Frederick City Police.

Last spring, at the H.S.A. meeting, we shared these new procedures with parents with the help of Sergeant Rebecca Carrado and Captain Dwight Sommers of the Frederick City Police Department who also have children who attend SJRCS. While a “lockdown” is still a viable solution in the case of an active shooter and there is no other way to be protected, our new protocol is to “Avoid, Deny, and Defend.” Teachers have received training on this and have also participated in table-top discussions on how they would implement it. This new procedure was also explained at the H.S.A. meeting last May.

We are pleased to let you know that SJRCS has been awarded school safety grants through the Maryland Center for School Safety and The Maryland Emergency Management Agency. They have awarded SJRCS a total of $195,000 through a “Hate Based Crime Grant” to protect our school against acts of terrorism. We were able to secure this grant because of the many attempts of hate based crimes in the area as reported by the Frederick City Police and Homeland Security. Funds from the SJRCS Annual Appeal will be added to the grant money so that we can complete these projects. There were hours of research, coordination, planning, and assessments with these agencies to finalize this security plan.

As the New Year is upon us, you will start to see the updating of our new security plan. A new security system with state of the art technology, adding additional target hardening features, installing exterior LED lighting, fencing around our playground area, and replacing our phone...
and school wide warning systems. These upgrades will be started as we return to school and completed over the summer.

These grants speak volumes about the commitment that state and federal government agencies have towards school safety and the importance of this project. As a school community, we should be very thankful for God’s grace upon our school.

Looking forward to a great 2020!

Happy New Year,

[Signature]

Karen [Name]