

**Response to Voice of the Public comments made at the 6/7/22 BOE Meeting
(specific to the high school)**

1) When an emergency situation occurs, who is in charge?

We follow the incident command structure that details roles and responsibilities when an emergency occurs. The Building ERT meets and discusses the primary person assigned to each role as well as who is 2nd and 3rd in the event that the primary individual cannot carry out those responsibilities. This is an ongoing conversation about what makes sense in terms of individual skill sets and experiences. We reevaluate those assignments annually. Each building is required to create and submit a plan to the state including those assignments and it is strictly confidential to ensure that a possible offender cannot exploit the plan to circumvent our response.

2) Do police have keys to buildings/classrooms?

SROs have access to buildings and classrooms. They are an integral part of our ERT and all 3 SROs support our lock-down drills to the greatest extent possible. Additional Vestal PD have also joined our ERT to support our assigned routes to clear the building during lock down drills. Michelle Tuetken addressed this concern at our faculty meeting in addition to explaining that other police officers may be in the building when she is out or accompanied by her and this is to ensure they have familiarity with our building layout in the event of an emergency.

3) If an intruder wears body armor and SRO has a pistol, should SRO have a more powerful weapon?

In the event of an armed intruder, SWAT would be called in and the SROs and police officers would respond with the appropriate levels of force.

4) When a student makes a threat, draws pictures of guns, etc., how come teachers are not informed so they can watch students and identify potential violence?

When a student makes a threat, draws pictures concerning violence, that is (or should be) reported to an administrator. Administrators investigate the report, connect with the student's counselor and our at-risk counselor, consult our SRO (and other law enforcement as needed), contact parent(s), complete a threat and/or safety assessment for the student, refer to CPEP, refer to counselling, assign consequences, create a re-entry plan. Any of the above steps may be implemented depending on the individual situation. A team approach is used to ensure that the safety of the student as well as the school and community are at the heart of the actions taken. Teachers may or may not be informed depending on the "need to know." If there is a conflict or threat between two students in a teacher's class, we regularly ask the teacher to supervise the two students and report any suspected escalation between the two. It is our professional responsibility to protect the privacy of individual students as well as safeguard against being labelled or targeted as a "threat." It is not a teacher's job to identify "potential" violence. Teachers are however, encouraged to consistently observe students and report any concerning behavior so that administrators and/or counselors can proactively work with the student.

5) During a lockdown, we feel like sitting ducks waiting to die. Why can't we all just run? Our SHELL plans are outdated.

There are over 1000 people on any given day at VHS. In an active shooter situation, our lock down procedures are intended to provide as much time as possible without casualties for law enforcement to neutralize the threat. Staff and students would not know whether they were running towards or away from the threat. With 1000 people running, the crisis would quickly turn into chaos effectively inhibiting law enforcement from their primary task—taking out the intruder. In addition, there have been situations when assailants have coordinated to be both inside and outside the building, allowing those who run to be targeted by a second offender. SRO Tuetken addressed this at our faculty meeting as well explaining that an active shooter is typically looking to create as much damage as quickly as possible. Creating barriers and making entry into classrooms makes it difficult for a shooter to reach their goal.