

**ARE WE NOT DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE SURE
OUR SCHOOLS ARE SAFE?**

Enlightened by recent nationally televised events and tragedy in our neighboring City of Buffalo that culminated in the tragic deaths of 10 people and wounding of three others, not to mention the most recent shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, that resulted in the tragic deaths of 19 children and two adults, which marked the 27th school related shooting this year, I think immediate action should be taken to revisit strengthening security in our schools which might include revisiting the topic of our police.

Each school day, our nation's schools are entrusted to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for approximately 55 million K-12 students in public and nonpublic schools. Families and communities expect schools to keep their children and youth safe from threats and hazards. In collaboration with their local government and community partners, schools can take steps to plan for potential crises. Lessons learned from school emergencies and school shootings highlight the importance of preparing school officials and first responders to implement emergency operations plans. By having plans in place to keep students and staff safe, schools play a key role in taking preventative and protective measures to stop an emergency from occurring or reduce the impact of an incident. They also work with their community partners, i.e., governmental organizations and officials that have a responsibility in the school emergency operations plan to provide a cohesive, coordinated response. Families and communities expect schools to keep their children and youth safe.

Therefore, I am urging my colleagues and those that agree and disagree with my professional belief to open your eyes, hearts, minds, and souls to help assist in strengthening our school capabilities necessary to avoid, deter, or detect an imminent crime, threat, or actual mass casualty incident. Having an existing plan, revising, and adapting that plan in alignment with approaches used across the nation are critical. I am strongly urging constructive conversation amongst my colleagues to strengthen our current Safety Plan and to provide additional training and support to our teachers. While I totally support Restorative Justice, the truth is we're falling short in this area.

As elected officials, if we fail to respond to this urgent need and national trend of school shootings, I'm afraid that we are not fulfilling our responsibility to maintain building security and our promise to keep staff and our children safe.

James L Patterson Sr.

Commissioner

Rochester City School District

131 W. Broad St.

Rochester, NY. 14614

District Cell (585) 333-4549

Email: james.patterson@rcsdk12.org