

**FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

by Dr. Barry Harding  
Public Schools  
of Robeson County



We join in the pride felt by four schools in our system who were honored a week ago Monday in Raleigh by being recognized as winners of the Triple "S" Award. The schools - Rex Rennett, Rosenwald, West Lumberton, and Tanglewood - were among 25 schools across the state who received the "Super Safe School" Award - making the PSRC the only system having that many schools recognized.

Decreasing the incidence of school crime and violence and maintaining safe, orderly, and caring schools were among the criteria for being considered. Applications were sent to the Department of Public Instruction in the form of portfolios which included such things as standards and consequences for school board behavior and goals and measurable objectives to ensure safety and order.

The portfolio also had to include a comprehensive crisis management plan which had as a component well-

rehearsed procedures for responding to a crisis along with training for implementation of the plan. The plan had to address a crisis team and natural disasters, suicide, crowd control, bomb threats, dealing with the media, fires, and other emergencies.

It was also necessary to include items like ABC test scores, students referred for remediation or intervention, students referred to outside agencies, and the percent of students referred to outside agencies. The portfolio also called for the percentage of students at risk of academic failure or experiencing behavioral difficulty, dropouts, attendance percentages, number of incidences of disruption, crime and violence, and number of suspensions and expulsions.

Additionally, there were surveys completed by students at the applying schools which answered questions about how they felt about the security of their schools - where and

when they didn't feel safe, whether they had had anything stolen from them and whether they had ever been threatened or actually had someone put hands on them. The survey also asked whether they had seen weapons or fights at their school. While the general information about the schools was about the same for all schools, the student surveys varied in their questions according to the ages of the students enrolled at the particular school.

Though we obviously would've liked for more of our schools to have been recognized, to have 4 of 25 schools recognized statewide to be part of our system was an accomplishment in itself. It is, after all, a goal of all systems to provide schools with safe atmospheres - atmospheres which are conducive to learning. We're proud of our 4 and we know that others will be working hard to reach the goal of being a "Triple 'S' School" next year.

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