

To whom it may concern,

I have served as a public school employee for more than forty years. I was a building principal for eighteen years and was the Superintendent of Springport Public Schools for eleven years. I retired in 2018. During my years of service, many things changed in our society. The focus of education is to develop students to become lifelong learners and successful members of our society. Our students should spend their time in successful learning experiences as they work in their classrooms. Our teachers' focus is to identify effective instructional strategies to promote the success of their students.

In 2012, Sandy Hook Elementary, in Newtown Connecticut impacted us forever. Since then, numerous incidents of violence in schools has continued to impact the teachers and students in the learning process and derailed the feelings of safety and security in our public schools.

As a school superintendent I believe one of my roles was to ensure the safety and security of the students and staff in my district. Public school budgets have become very challenging, but we all continue to work and develop security plans and safety protocols in attempts to keep our schools safe. We still were vulnerable to violence, due to high numbers of staff and students in locations throughout the district. I was told about the Boot by the Eaton County Undersheriff. He had seen the Boot demonstrated and told me that it would be a device that would improve our district's safety for students and staff. When I saw it demonstrated, I was sold on the value that it keeps up to 16,000 lbs. of force on the outside of classrooms to protect staff and students while waiting for law enforcement to arrive on site. The district was limited in funding, but when the first State Police Safety Grant was available, I applied and was able to provide this life-saving device for the students in our district. Working closely with local, county and state law enforcement is critical to school security.

In 2017, once again, the Eaton County Undersheriff saw the Smart System demonstrated, that would connect our entire district using the Boot, Smart lights, and Shot detection with the 911 County Dispatch office. I immediately contacted the Lockout Company. This system connects the building, in 1.5 seconds and alerts law enforcement to identify where the issue originated. This response is critical and would save time and lives in the event of an active shooter or major crisis. Following the demonstration, I brought it to our Board of Education. This system is now in place in Springport.

In our schools today, I believe such a life-saving system is essential to connect our school districts with First Responders that have been trained and can be provided appropriate information to strategically work to quickly address the problem and save lives. This connectedness allows our teachers and students to focus their efforts on the teaching and learning process, knowing that their environment is a safer place for them to learn. I hope in the future, our State provides additional funding for all districts to be able to properly address school safety.

I encourage all districts to have systems in place with such comprehensive integrations with First Responders.

Respectfully,



Randall J Cook
Retired Superintendent, Springport Public Schools