

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**Kathrine Francis  
Executive Director  
ESE & Support Services**

**Michaelle Valbrun-Pope  
Task-Assigned Executive Director  
Student Support Initiatives**

**Signatures on File**

December 18, 2012

TO: All Principals

FROM: Kathrine Francis, Executive Director  
Exceptional Student Education & Support Services

Michaelle Valbrun-Pope, Task-Assigned Executive Director  
Student Support Initiatives

VIA: Desmond K. Blackburn, Ph.D.  
Chief School Performance & Accountability Officer

**SUBJECT: SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRAGEDY**

On December 14, 2012, news of the tragic events on the campus of Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut hit the nation. As we reflect on this national tragedy, we would like to extend our thoughts, prayers and condolences for the families and the entire community of Newtown, Connecticut.

In response to the tragedy, crisis personnel from Student Support Initiatives and from Exceptional Student Education and Support Services will be providing support to schools. School psychologists, school social workers, and family counselors will begin their day, Monday, December 17, 2012, poised and ready to address the needs of student, families and staff.

In addition, we will have emergency crisis teams available to respond to specific request. We will also have the ESE support teams going to the schools that have cluster & ESE Pre-K programs to assist where needed.

Below, are some critical resources for District and school staff to reference in proactively addressing this National tragedy. Please share these resources with appropriate staff.

National Association of School Psychologists on [Talking to Children About Violence](#)

- [The American Academy of Pediatrics on School Shootings](#)
- [Explaining the news to our kids](#) from Common Sense Media.
- Florida Department of Education Safe Schools Web site:  
<http://sss.usf.edu/respondingtotragedy/default.htm>

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- Exceptional Student Education and Services Web site:  
<http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/STUDENTSUPPORT/psychologicalservices/html/resources.htm>.

Attached is a document to be shared with parents that will provide direction on speaking with their children about this tragedy.

In addition, you will need to review your school's safety plan. It is key to include parents and students as you address your plan. Contact Broward District Schools Police Department if you need assistance with your plan.

Finally, it is imperative your faculty and staff understand the importance of establishing a safe environment where students feel comfortable bringing information forward and know trusted adults will act. Research has shown that human connection and a positive school culture is the key to violence prevention.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

**For additional information, please contact Joaquin Eljaua, Director, Support Services for Crisis Support at 754-321-2245 or Amalio Nieves, Curriculum Supervisor, Diversity, Cultural Outreach & Prevention at 754-321-2568.**

DKB/KF/MVP:tj  
Attachment

c: Senior Executive Leaders  
Cadre Directors