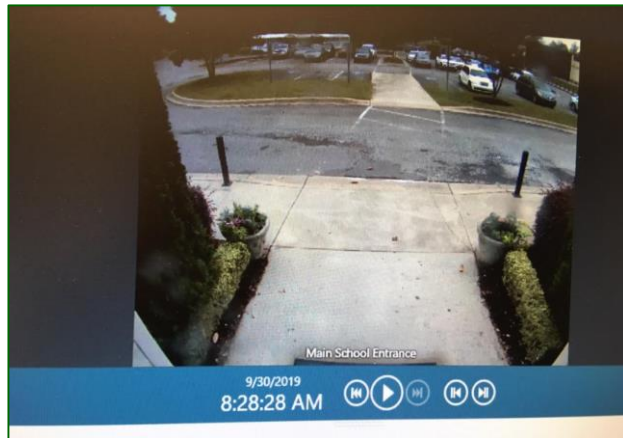
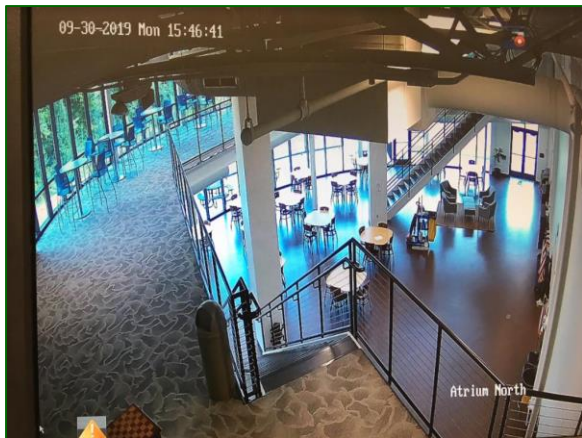


Safety at MCA

In his list, “Ten Signs of a Great School,” former Secretary of Education and author of *The Educated Child*, William J. Bennett noted the most important factor for a school is to have a safe and orderly atmosphere. This is certainly what we strive for at MCA. Prospective parents and other visitors, when touring the school, often remark about the atmosphere, as to how pleasant it seems, how friendly the faculty and students are, and how orderly the classrooms are. As you might imagine, this is not by chance. At MCA, we take the idea of a “safe and orderly atmosphere” very seriously, striving to keep the school as safe as possible, while maintaining a warm, open, and inviting atmosphere for our students, faculty, and visitors. For us, safety factors range from employee preparedness, arguably the most important, to communication systems to the campus’s physical features.

All faculty and staff train to handle various emergencies. Many faculty members serve as first responders, being certified in CPR and first aid. Thanks to MPACT, we have Automatic Electronic Defibrillators (AEDs) which are located near the lower school gym, the upper school office, and the upper school gym. The Mount Airy Fire Department, which acts as a first responder for Surry County Emergency Services for medical emergencies requiring ambulatory service, can arrive at school in two to three minutes.



These two images are from school security cameras. The image on the left is of the high school atrium, and the image on the right is from the main lower school entrance.

Employees also train for what to do in the event of fire, weather, or violence related emergencies, knowing their specific locations for sheltering in each type of emergency. We practice fire drills monthly, tornado drills in the spring at the outset of tornado season, and we practice lockdown drills each semester. For safety’s sake, all exterior doors and windows are locked, and employees sit at each of the three main entrances, where they have the ability to remotely unlock the doors, or to keep them locked as needed. Substitute teachers receive training in school safety procedures, and furthermore, emergency information and specific instructions are posted in all classrooms, meeting rooms, and labs. Per administrative training from a few years ago, our landscaping is planted and trimmed with safety in mind. Traffic patterns, when followed, and the outside presence of school personnel also provide for a safe drop-off and dismissal.

The facility itself is constantly reviewed for safety. Hallways are kept clean and clear to reduce accidents and to provide safe egress in the event of an emergency. We check all outside entrances on a monthly basis to ensure no doors stick or drag making them difficult to open in the event of fire, and we check all exit signs and emergency lights monthly. The school hires a professional firm to inspect all emergency lights, fire horn-strobe lights, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and alarm panels annually. All rooms have at least two methods of egress. We have numerous cameras mounted inside and outside the school, which can be accessed remotely and which



save video for several days. Our rooms are numbered from the inside and outside for easy identification by the emergency crews. The Mount Airy Fire Department does a thorough inspection of the entire facility twice yearly, and the school always scores extremely well. In fact, we received a perfect score at their last inspection.

The Mount Airy Police Department, which is very instrumental in our safety planning, does unscheduled and frequent walk-throughs of the building, ensuring officers have familiarity with the building layout, and maintaining a good presence in the building for staff and students to see. They even carry a map of our growing school in their cars. Key police officers meet with administration multiple times per year to review and enhance our safety plan, as well as conduct a debriefing session after every lockdown drill, at which MCA has always received favorable comments. In the fall of 2018, again in conjunction with the MAPD, we strengthened our response to lockdowns, adding additional procedures to ensure speed, confident faculty knowledge, and back-up plans.

In the spring of 2019, the school formed an Internal Threat Assessment Team (ITAT), made up of school administration, Mount Airy Police Department officers, and local mental health counselors. ITAT provides help for those students who are inclined to harm others and strives to provide a safe environment on the MCA campus. While this team collects and analyzes information regarding internal threats to the school's safety and security, we depend upon local law enforcement to investigate all external threats to the school.



Special horn strobe lights are in all hallways to notify school personnel and students of a lockdown.



All exit and emergency lights are tested on a monthly basis by school personnel, and professionally tested, along with all pull stations, smoke detectors, horn-strobe lights, fire extinguishers, and alarm panels, annually.

As of this fall, to ensure instant communication and location of key personnel, school administrators have the ability to talk with each other via walkie-talkies from any location on campus, whether it's on the soccer field, in the upper school gym, or in the lower elementary building. The ability to communicate immediately across the entirety of the campus provides faster and more accurate responses in the event of any emergency.

By December, yet another safety feature will be available. MCA will implement the Say Something-Anonymous Reporting System (SS-ARS). Through the Sandy Hook Promise organization and the NC Department of Public Instruction, we will provide an application system in which upper school students (grades 6-12) can anonymously report safety threats. The SS-ARS phone app and associated website will provide a 24-hour crisis

hotline. Through either of these avenues students may anonymously report concerns about intimidation, assaults, threats toward an individual or school, or potential self-harm or suicide. School administrators have already received training, and all upper school students will be introduced to the program by the end of November. If you'd like to know more about this program, please visit <https://www.saysomething.net>.



SS-ARS will be rolled out to all upper school students by December.

In summary, MCA is a very safe school, receiving high marks from local authorities regarding our facility, campus, and procedures. It is impossible to predict and cover every type of emergency situation that might arise; however, we will continue to review and strengthen our safety and security as needs and strategies change. With good protocols and preparation, beneficial technology, and wisdom, MCA will remain a warm, welcoming, and safe place for an education that goes above and beyond. If you'd like to discuss any of these safety features or offer any suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact the school.