

February 5, 2009

Dear Whittier Families:

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the emergency drill we had during intermediate lunch on Wednesday, February 4, 2009. First of all, the purpose of the emergency drill was for all Whittier students, staff, and visitors to practice an evacuation in the event of an emergency. Overall, the drill went very well. There are a few areas that surfaced that will require some adjustment for our next emergency drill/evacuation.

First of all, all persons are to exit the building from the nearest exit. The students were directed to exit either from the back door (north) of the lunchroom or the front entrance to the school from the lunchroom. The children and staff generally exit to the playground. Since this drill was during lunch, about half of the students were in the front of the building. Four adults were armed with two way radios so that they could communicate one with the other following the emergency evacuation. With more time, and in a real emergency situation, (during search and rescue), we would have identified the location of each student, staff, and visitor. The goal this time was simply to ensure that ALL persons inside the building evacuated appropriately and safely. This was accomplished.

We will have additional safety drills throughout the school year. If you have any questions, concerns, and/or ideas please will you let me know? The primary teachers have been asked to think about how we could make adjustments for K-2 students during the next lunch time evacuation as this will occur during their lunch. Please know though that I discussed emergency evacuations with the fire department and am well aware of what should occur in these instances. Therefore, children will exit from the nearest exit to them which means that some will evacuate from the front lunchroom door and others from the rear of the lunchroom. They will remain in place until the, 'all clear' sign is given. Again, if it were a real emergency, we would account for all children and adults during search and rescue.

Please will you remind your students that during drop and cover, they are to remain quiet for instructions? I told the children that if they talk, laugh, and play in a real emergency they would not hear the directions. The students were truly outstanding (from pre-school through 5<sup>th</sup> grade).

Thank you all for your support of our emergency evacuations. I will provide you the date of the primary lunch emergency evacuation. It will likely not occur until the spring when it is nice and sunny. We will also have two full emergency earthquake evacuations at some point. It is during this time that we actually perform the search and rescue operation.

Sincerely,

Cothron L. McMillian, Principal