

Bluejay Strong – January 5, 2024

Today we reflect on the pain, sorrow and grief following Thursday's horrific act of violence at our high school. Our grief is immeasurable as we understand lives are forever changed and our community will never be the same.

Our thoughts are with the sixth-grade student who was killed, and high school principal Dan Marburger and the four students who are recovering from their injuries. We keep them and their families in our prayers.

"This is an extremely painful and difficult time for our entire school community, and in our grief, we will take time to remember." said Clark Wicks, Superintendent of PCSD

Our focus is on our students, families, faculty and staff as we begin the process of healing. Therefore, we have made the decision there will be no classes for high school students next week, and elementary and middle school students will not return to class until Friday at the earliest. Any updates on this timeline will be shared directly with parents and guardians, and on the Perry Community School District website.

Although school will be closed, a grab and go lunch will be available for pick-up at Perry Elementary School from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. each day.

There are many resources available as we begin the process of healing over the next weeks:

Perry Schools, The City of Perry, Heartland Area Education Agency, and community mental health providers have been working together to support school staff and students with the following services:

- Assessing and supporting immediate needs of our students, staff and school community.
- Supportive sessions for school staff by trained Critical Incident Stress Management counselors.
- Counselors for school staff and students, as well as referrals to community resources as needed.
- Referral resources for students, parents and school community members are being shared in sessions.

“We are deeply appreciative of law enforcement, first responders from Perry, and the entire state as they responded in a rapid and highly coordinated manner,” said Perry Mayor Dirk Cavanaugh. “We are a small town, but we will pull together in a big way to get through this.”

“The staff, students and community of Perry are resilient. We will walk through this difficult time together and focus on the hope and promise of the future.” said Wicks.

If you or anyone you know may need help, resources are available.

- Crisis Intervention & Advocacy Center 24-Hour Helpline: 1-800-550-0004
- Your Life Iowa: 855-581-8111
- Text NAMI to 741-741

Iowans are generous and supportive in times of need, and many have asked how best to show their support. Therefore, a fund has been set up at Racoon Valley Bank for monetary donations under the Perry School Foundation. If you are interested in making other types of donations, please email joyce.scott@g.perry.k12.ia.us.