MCA Learning Community:

Act 44 of 2025, which creates a new section of the School Code titled “Parental and Employee Notification of Weapon Incidents,” was recently signed into law. This new law took effect on January 6, 2026. The law requires all school districts to notify parents, guardians, and school employees of an incident involving the possession of a weapon on any school property, school transportation, or at school-sponsored activities. Under the new law, unless the circumstances of the incident necessitate otherwise, notification to parents, guardians, and employees must be made within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.

The District will use the same communication method to provide the required notifications. Due to state and federal confidentiality laws, these notifications will not disclose personally identifiable student information. Instead, they will provide very basic information regarding the date and location of a reported weapon incident.

In some ways, this new law does not represent a major change, as MCA has always had a practice of notifying families and employees of incidents of this nature. At times, however, depending on the situation, we have used our discretion when responding to situations involving look-alike items (such as toys) or tools not intended to be used as weapons (such as multi-tools or pocketknives inadvertently left in a backpack or article of clothing). The new law may result in more frequent notifications, even in cases that do not pose an active safety threat. This does not mean there is any increased danger in schools; it simply means we are now required to send more frequent notifications than we have in the past. Again, an increase in notifications should not be interpreted as a reflection on the safety of our schools.

As always, all our students will enter through our Open Gate Metal Detection system daily. Please be assured that the safety of our students and staff remains our highest priority.

Finally, also in regard to school safety, we have discussed the seriousness of any threat (both in person and online) many times with our students and have asked for parental support as well to discuss these dangers with their children. We will never take “I was only kidding” as an excuse. To obviously maintain a safe earning environment for all students and staff, no weapon or weapon look-alike will ever be allowed on our campus.

*We ask again that parents speak with their children about their role in school safety, threats, and the seriousness of possessing weapons and weapon look-alikes.*

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued partnership in maintaining a safe learning environment.

Pete Cheddar