MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Pam Stewart

DATE: October 26, 2018

SUBJECT: FortifyFL School Safety Awareness Program

In March of this year, the legislature passed, and Governor Scott signed Senate Bill 7026, which outlines new requirements for the procurement of a “mobile suspicious activity reporting tool that allows students and the community to relay information anonymously concerning unsafe, potentially harmful, dangerous, violent, or criminal activities, or the threat of these activities, to appropriate public safety agencies and school officials.”

Section 943.082, Florida Statutes, requires the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to collaborate with the Departments of Legal Affairs and Education on the procurement of this tool. FortifyFL is now operational; there is a web-based administrative portal as well as an application that can be downloaded to mobile devices. The application provides a mechanism for students, parents and the community to submit tips regarding public or private schools to designated law enforcement and school officials throughout the state.

Superintendents and district school safety specialists were advised on September 21, 2018, that the email invitations would soon be sent to school principals and that school safety specialists should work with their schools to ensure that each school could receive tips submitted through the FortifyFL application.

Email invitations granting access to the administrative portal were sent to school principals and school safety specialists beginning on September 25, 2018. The public FortifyFL application launched on October 8, 2018, and was made available for download for both Android and Apple devices.

The application is free to all public and private schools in Florida. Districts who have similar tools may continue to use them in addition to the FortifyFL app. Even in cases where district level tools exist, district and school-level administrators will receive tips from FortifyFL and will be expected to respond. Administrators are expected to register to receive tips through the FortifyFL administrative portal as instructed in the emails for the safety and well-being of their students and staff. Any tips submitted via FortifyFL are sent to local school, district and law enforcement officials, and the designated officials are contacted until one or more of them take responsibility for taking action on the tip.
Each district school safety specialist is designated as the FortifyFL administrator for their school district and can manage the district’s list of school-level and district-level FortifyFL tip recipients. School safety specialists are asked to work with all of the traditional public schools and charter schools in the district to make sure that they have the appropriate access to the FortifyFL application. Tip recipients are district employees, who will receive notification of tips and who will have access to see all relevant tips that are submitted in their jurisdiction (district-level tip recipients will see all district tips; school-level tip recipients will only see tips related to their school). The principal is the primary school-level point of contact for FortifyFL and can create additional recipients for their school, such as members of the school’s threat assessment team.

The FortifyFL “welcome” messages are sent through FDLE from FortifyFL@fdle.state.fl.us. School district IT Directors should ensure that this email is not blocked; principals and their designated tip recipients should add this address to their safe senders list and check any spam/clutter/junk folders for messages from this address. Once logged in, from the administrative portal, users will be able to view tips which are specific to schools under their jurisdiction. Those in an administrative role will also be able to create new tip recipient accounts for other district staff as appropriate. Within the portal, video training on the use of the FortifyFL system is available under “Help” in the left menu.

Since principals are the primary school-level points of contact for FortifyFL, it is important that school district MIS Directors maintain a current list of principal names and email addresses via the department’s Master School ID file.

If schools or school districts have any questions or need assistance with FortifyFL, you may contact FortifyFL@fldoe.org for assistance.

PS/jc
cc: School District School Safety Specialists
    School District Public Information Officers
    School District MIS Directors
    School District IT Directors