

New policy may save students' lives

By Alisa Raufeisen

Students no longer have to sit silently in the shadows when it comes to protecting themselves; they are empowered to fight back with a new emergency plan.

Code red drills aren't cutting it anymore, according to **David Stalcup**, chief of the Perry Township police; and **Sarah Brewer**, safety director and assistant principal. This "lock the door, turn the lights off, and hide" policy wasn't forceful enough.

The Perry Meridian Police Department has been working to implement a plan district wide that gives students the tools and decision-making they need to survive — Run, Hide, Fight.

Armed school shooters have killed about 90 American children and educators nationwide since 1999, according to the CNN library. Three weeks ago, a 15-year-old student opened fire at a Washington state high school, killing one and injuring three other students.

Teachers will explain the pro-

cess and precautions on Nov. 15 during Blu63, Brewer says.

"The more you talk about it, the more comfortable you'll be with it," Brewer said. And by practicing this drill and putting it into students' heads, more people will have the right mindset and be more inclined to survive in the actual case of a life threatening situation during school, she adds.

Biology teacher **Nikki Knight** refers to the program as "a much more proactive plan for something we hopefully never have to use."

The new drill operates under an order-of-importance system. The first option for students and staff will always be to consider whether they can run to safety. Students and staff should find any exit from the building, far from the sight of the shooter and run to the nearest safe place. Perry Meridian Middle School and St. Barnabas are two safe places to seek shelter.

If there's no safe way out, the next step is to hide. Those in a school room should lock and barricade the

door with anything available, such as filing cabinets and desks, to make it hard for a shooter to enter. At the same time, students and teacher should review their next steps if the barricade fails. Then, they hide and stay quiet.

Once a shooter breaks the door, it's time to fight back. Students, teachers and staff may start with hurling heavy objects, such as paperweights, Chromebooks and books, at the intruder.

"Fight" means to go as far as you have to in order to protect yourself, Stalcup said. "There are no parameters. You

do what you have to do to survive. Fight with everything you have."

Police have been working on implementing "Run, Hide, Fight" for at least a year. Stalcup says the new procedures are "empowering students and teachers to make the decisions. They have choices."

Stalcup also urges students to let teachers and administrators know if they suspect someone has brought weapons to school or talks about hurting others.

"If you see something, say something," Stalcup says. "We want students to say something."

Tell as many adults as you need to until you feel safe or take it to the dean's office. "Every case is taken seriously," adds Brewer.

If you don't have an adult you can talk to or would like to stay anonymous, send a tip to the Perry Meridian Bully Hotline; 317-789-4499.

"The ultimate goal is to get every student home and keep them safe, everyday," Brewer says.

		
RUN/ESCAPE	HIDE	FIGHT
IF POSSIBLE	IF ESCAPE IS NOT POSSIBLE	ONLY AS A LAST RESORT



From left to right, back row is sophomore Claire Marlatt, principal Kert Boedicker, and senior Raul Moreno. Front row is junior Deborah Kui-Hoen and freshman Abby Ney (Photo provided by Erin Brewington).

September students of the month

Question: What has been your most memorable moment(s) at Perry thus far?

"Marching band competitions." -Freshman Abby Ney

"Homecoming week and going to football games." -Sophomore Claire Marlatt

"I love English class because I am learning to speak better." -Junior Deborah Kui-Hoen

"My favorite moment was when the senior class won the Homecoming class competition." -Senior Raul Moreno