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Random metal detector screenings in effect for Lancaster County schools: What to know

Screenings to occur until weapons detectors arrive



Random metal detector screenings are being implemented in the Lancaster County School District as schools wait to receive weapons detectors, officials report.

By [Cassidy Johncox](#)

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LANCASTER, S.C. (WBTV) - Random metal detector screenings are being implemented within the Lancaster County School District as schools wait to receive weapons detectors, officials reported this week.

The district shared its safety initiatives in an email sent to parents and families on Thursday, Jan. 16. Included on that list of initiatives was a plan to install weapons detectors at all schools in the district.

In the meantime, random metal detector screenings will take place at all elementary, middle and high schools, officials said. When the weapons detectors are installed at the schools, they will be used every day.

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The district did not yet have a timeline for when weapons detectors should be installed at all schools.



The Lancaster County School District. (Source: Morgan Newell, WBTV)

Lancaster County schools are implementing the following actions, as written in the email to families:

- Conduct safety audit in collaboration with law enforcement (all schools/district buildings).
- Meet with vendors to install weapons detectors.
- Use metal detectors until weapons detectors are installed.
- Improve the emergency and notification response processes by enhancing how we use Saferwatch or similar technology.
- Review school and district plans regularly with district safety staff and law enforcement.
- Implement national best practices in school safety continuously.

Officials told WBTV on Friday that the district secured grant funding and money from the district budget to support their safety plan. The district's "safety improvement plan" was in place before the start of the school year, officials said.

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Metal detectors are still relatively rare in schools, but have come up more and more frequently as a response to violence within schools. There is an ongoing national debate over the effectiveness of metal detectors in schools, which some say creates an environment that feels more like prison than school.

"Metal detectors and clear backpacks are more likely to cause young children to be fearful and feel criminalized," Amanda Nickerson, a school psychology professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo, [previously told](#) the Associated Press.

"Many of the strategies being suggested do not have any research evidence, and they may actually erode a healthy school climate," Nickerson [said](#).

The [K-12 School Shooting Database](#) -- which tracks every time a bullet is fired on school property in the U.S. -- found that 2024 saw the second-highest number of school shooting incidents when looking at annual data from the past several decades. Even more incidents were reported in 2023, the database [reports](#).

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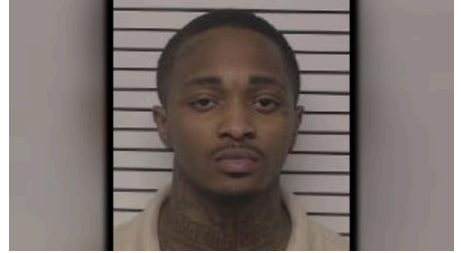


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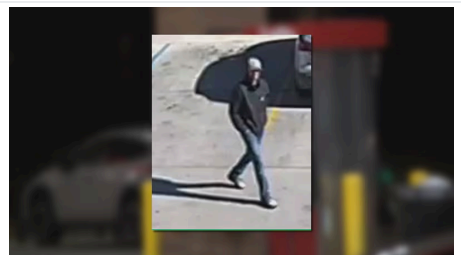
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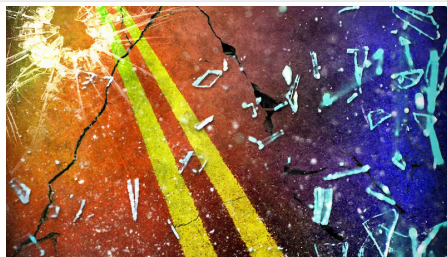
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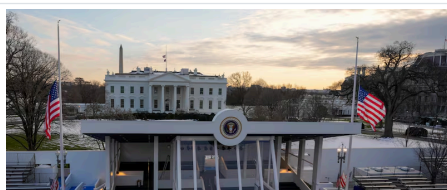
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