

Safety Committee Meeting – Public Input Session at the Coralville Public Library
Monday, August 6, 2018

Committee Members:

- Mira Bohannan Kumas
- Ben Stammeyer
- Dasia Taylor
- Tyson Landgard
- Travis Voshell
- Jeff Barnes

General Questions from the Public

Short term plan this fall and long term plan?

>>First, we will make more short-term recommendations (immediate action). Then, during in the spring of 2019, we will present a longer-term plan to the Board (2-step process).

How many members are on this committee and how often does the committee meet?

>>About fifteen members. The committee currently meets twice per month and will likely meet once per month after the first round of recommendations.

What particular concerns do you have about safety and security?

GROUP 1

Mental health is a key concern; prevention more than anything

Sandy Hook Promise: offers free training that the organization would bring to the District, wide scope

Students express that they are unaware of where to turn for help

Parents are concerned about locked entry and students being buzzed in without being seen

Involve guidance counselors more often; students only see them when they are changing their schedule, maybe [counselors] can be part of the prevention plan.

Portable classrooms, huge safety concern, students being buzzed in/out

Class size is brought up by many elementary teachers; what are they suppose to do with 26 6-year-olds when they have a safety issue?

The LGBTQA community needs to be heard more, safety issues, [community] should be more involved and interact like everyone else

Do ALICE training at the high school level; they talk about it but don't do it

GROUP 2

Talked about controlled access, hardware

Bullying is a concern

Mental health resources and access to them

Educating parents and students about the resources already available; people at table didn't know about mental health people/resources available in their schools

GROUP3

Concerned about communication; about the threat assessment process when a concern is identified

What are emergency procedures?

What are the follow-up communications if students are involved in reporting a concern?

What is the risk assessment and ongoing supports for students that might need them?

Issue of balancing access to schools with security needs

Issue of public spaces on school grounds

Talked about review of student climate and how students are feeling about their safety, that all students feel welcomed and valued in the building, appreciated, and a sense that all students are supported and valued.

What are your thoughts on school resource officers in the schools?

GROUP1

Pros/Cons

Pros:

Officer could control daily fights

Build relationships with kids who need it; positive connections might help later in life (breaking down stereotypes of law enforcement)

Assist teachers (with respect to fights)

There could be grant money available out there for this so it might not have to come out of the District budget

Peacekeeper

There was a lot of interest in whether or not this individual would need to have a firearm.

Cons:

Expensive

Some students might feel unsafe around an armed officer

In Parkland, the officer didn't react in the way that people expected he should have reacted

False sense of security

Heightened senses/tension

Look at it on a school-by-school basis

Statistics about what is going on in schools, tensions, should something be considered a "fight" if it isn't being defined that way by the school (when tensions are so high that something should be considered a fight when it isn't)

GROUP2

What is the definition of a SRO? Police officer? Retired police officer? Armed or not? Employee of the city police department or not? What kind of extra training would they have? Personality and other things beyond just police training?

Who has the authority in a given situation (school or police)? Who makes the ultimate call? The group thought that when there is a fight, the school should make the call according to how altercations should be handled rather than criminal charges? Concerns about the "school-to-prison pipeline." Implicit bias may affect their [students] lives.

SRO could give a sense a safety.

Armed officer could be very intimidating and off-putting, which could outweigh the positives of having one.

GROUP3

It [this question] has been very well covered from other tables.

Needs to be a well-defined role.

Need to incorporate restorative justice practices rather than a general police model.

What are your thoughts on metal detectors in schools?

GROUP1

It's hard to say if metal detectors would make schools safer.

What would it be like for students knowing that there would be metal detectors?

Would it be effective? Would it be part of an effective solution?

We weren't against it, but will it prevent anything? How preventative will it be? It will be a deterrent.

3D printers provide the potential to make plastic guns.

Creates a false sense of security.

There are so many different access points (particularly in high schools), it would be challenging to put them up everywhere. What about events?

GROUP2

Pros/Cons

Pros:

Weapon-free protection

Safe zone

Allowing kids to know when they come to school it will be a zone without weapons where they can feel safe and secure

It sets a clear standard that weapons aren't tolerated in school

Cons:

Not sure of the cost

Time: it takes time for students and whoever is monitoring it

Who would monitor it?

Might increase tensions and make the school feel like a warzone

Might cause privacy issues that students might not want to disclose (they might have to show/disclose things [medical devices/equipment] to other people in order to get checked in)

How would this work with portable classrooms and when people are encouraged to be outside or eat outside more?

Is it worth it?

Where would the money come from to pay for it?

Is it really working? Thoughts that it might work in certain settings but skeptical that it works.

Students at table were half no, half yes. Concerned about the logistics of getting to class on time

GROUP3

Consensus of the table is that we don't really support metal detectors for a variety of reasons:

-Damaging to school climate

-Not the message we want to send to children

-Don't want to send false sense of security to parents

-Would be inconsistent and inconvenient (some schools has 47 access points).

Would have to reprioritize access points.

Which grades/where do you start? Where is the biggest risk?

Financing? What would we do away with in school budge to promote this?

We need a lot more information to see what is going on with the use of this equipment; we are not sure that this is the right way to go.

We cannot blanket say that it won't work. We must look into it to see the pros/cons and what the community thinks. The stakes are very high.

If it takes money away from arts and music, where certain students find their sense of community, it will cause students to feel left out.

>>If there was research proving that [metal detectors] work, parents might be willing to support and fundraise, but we don't want to do it if there isn't research backing it.

What do you think the committee needs to consider in regards to school safety and security?

GROUP1

Prevention is most important.

Mental health.

Look into the Sandy Hook Promise.

District wide, we want a whole encompass approach.

Bullying prevention.

Inclusiveness. Including everyone and making them feel like they do belong. They do belong.

Include everyone in the process. More listening sessions.

Student leadership.

How are we communicating this with our youngest students? We don't want to cause them trauma. How do we communicate this with them without scaring them?

A diverse staff is needed. Where [students] can connect with someone. There is a concept called mirrors and windows. When you have a diverse staff, you can see yourself in the staff and realize your own potential. Raises student morale.

Need more research from the committee. Need to know if metal detectors are working. Same thing about police dogs. What about therapy dogs?

Parents have concerns regarding discipline. Why aren't rules being enforced in high schools? Communication is important. Keep them involved. Be as transparent as possible. Keep including people in committees.

This is a building-by-building issue.

How do doors lock? Training concerns for teachers, substitute teachers, etc. Fix some of the easy issues.

GROUP2

Do a comprehensive, through review. Research and assess needs. What should be priorities? What is feasible? Be proactive. Prevention piece. Look at early interventions, PBIS, de-escalation training, and mentorship programs, crisis intervention. Focus on what needs to happen to change the climate and improve the climate of schools, beyond the structure of schools. Get student feedback for a needs assessment, which can guide programs and interventions.

GROUP3

Where are we asking for school safety and security? Home, bus, and school.

Home. The issues surround gun safety storage. Access to guns is the number one indicator. Talk to parents: do they have guns? Do they know how to lock them? Do their students know how to access the guns? How do parents ease into the conversation with other parents that own guns?

Bus. Safety and security issues on the bus. There is a gap in the bullying policy. Bystander training. Will require peer/bystander training. Could train children to become active in preventing situations involving rape, alcohol abuse, bullying, etc. It is training students for life. There is a pool of resources out there.

School. Teacher safety and burnout when they are working in dangerous and/or stressful environments. Response to their stress? Restorative justice; cannot ignore it. Positive reinforcement. Cannot exclude students who are bullying, we need positive reinforcement. Gold stars in K-8, need something in high schools (age appropriate).

Our success is going to be built from a sense of community. The community needs to be engaged collectively and feel benefited.

Circles with different communities of interests. If you remove a circle or program to fund something else, you eliminate an area for students. What are we doing to bring a social environment to schools? Need to work on educating parent populations.

There is a group in Iowa City called Mom's Demands Action. SMART. Storage – how to get into conversation.

END