

Safety Committee Meeting – Public Input Session at the Iowa City Public Library
Tuesday, August 7, 2018

Committee Members:

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 - Tyson Landgard
 - Travis Voshell
 - Jeff Barnes
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General Questions from the Public

N/a

What particular concerns do you have about safety and security?

GROUP1

Lack of a prevention program.

Consider the Sandy Hook Promise

--About recognizing the signs and knowing the signs about violence, including suicide. Training students to know what they are looking for (“Say Hello” program). Safety and intervention program to train the entire District to know what to look for in students at risk.

--There would be no cost for the District. They [the Organization] will bring people in to train everyone.

Access to schools. Would like to know if there is any urgency? [At one school] students must ring the buzzer at the front door to get in but can enter through the back door that is completely open. We know that there are renovation plans, but what can be done in the mean time?

GROUP2

Student training and staff training related to intruder events. A plan in place and make sure people know the plan. Also include medical interventions as well.

Internal safety. Want students to feel safe. Want the community to feel safe. Bullying situations. Also, people that are undocumented and feel unsafe – addressing their concerns so that they feel safe, secure, and valued.

Restorative justice. Addressing systematic safety internally and externally.

(GROUP3 was created after this question.)

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

GROUP1

Should SRO be armed or unarmed? Not a concern. A firearm is part of their toolkit.

Pro

Extra security

Cons

Might be intimidating to students

GROUP2

What is a SRO? Is it a police officer? Is it someone that is armed or unarmed? What is the actual role for that individual?

Discomfort of change. Could be a perceived “police presence.” What is their intention of being there? Concerns about the potential escalation of a situation that doesn’t need to be escalated. De-escalation with proper people in place. Psychological impact of having a SRO, depending if they are identifiable or not, armed or not.

Want to see more evidence-based research behind the use of SROs? Can we find out more about what the response has been like from communities with SROs?

Different cultures have different reactions to what an SRO might be/why they are present. That will need to be looked at and considered before something is done.

GROUP3

Positive reaction to SRO. Not necessarily at the elementary school grade levels. Might be needed at further levels. Idea of having a gun is concerning at the elementary level. SROs may have positive relationship building. Will everyone be treated the same? Will there be an intimidation factor that impacts student and parent involvement in schools? Hope that communications could alleviate some of those concerns, particularly with immigrant populations.

What is the educator reaction to having a SRO?

What is the cost? 7 secondary buildings. Who would share that cost with the District?

What are your thoughts on metal detectors in schools?

GROUP1

Practical situations. How practical would they be in different cases? Research would be helpful regarding this.

Time?

False positives?

Would they have to be staffed by someone?

Weigh against whether or not they would prevent incidents.

Sadness that we need metal detectors in schools.

Cost?

What are the effects on students? What if there is a false positive? Maybe it makes someone that feels picked on even worse. Alienation of someone who triggers an alarm.

Maybe metal detectors would have other preventative effects? Reduce fights, etc.?

GROUP2

9/11 changed airports. Maybe recent events should change schools.

Wouldn't be desirable at the elementary school level.

Students are in and out [of school buildings] all day. Parents attend many events too.

Someone would have to monitor metal detector from 8am to 8pm.

If we had an SRO, they might need to be stationed there all day. Extra security may need to be brought in. Cost?

Research is needed. Focus should really be what leads up to an event; the prevention aspect, rather than the hard tools.

Someone raised the idea of 3D printers. Would weapons even be detectable?

Is this how we wanted to spend limited resources?

GROUP3

Would it be on the main door only?

West High has 11 doors that could be entered. They could probably find a way around the metal detector. SRO would be a better investment with limited funds.

Metal detectors seem more realistic in places where people are walking through the same entrance (airport, concert, Disney land, etc.).

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

GROUP1

Not just focusing on the school building. Need to focus on school bus safety. Just one adult there. How are they trained to deal with fighting or bullying? Some parents said their children have awesome bus drivers that handle situations well too.

What programs can help students find their niche? So that they don't feel alienated at schools.

--Example: [an exercise can be used where] all staff sitting down and [map out to visually] see which students the staff members feel connected to. The staff would then discuss what the students that don't have any connections and what they could do to change that.

A student lead program that makes sure no students ever sit alone at lunch.

School counselors are trained in crisis intervention. A lot of their time is used for scheduling, but they don't get to use other skills, even though they are right there in the building.

Training students to be able to identify peers at risk and what to do about it. One staff member used a 2 ½ minute video that teaches the students this concept well.

GROUP2

School IDs always being visible. Having school IDs so everyone is aware of who a student is, since some students might be unknown to teachers at other ends of a buildings.

Cultural awareness. Focus on education and prevention rather than the fear of what could happen. Get students involved in the prevention part of it. Have staff train. Maybe empowerment might not be so scary. More proactive rather than reactive approach.

GROUP3

While committee shouldn't neglect plans to deal with shooters and other items that get a lot of attention with school safety (hard systems), please consider systematic approach to feeling safer; safer with each other. How can students build connections between themselves and their teachers to make the schools a safer place?

Use a restorative justice model: managing conflicts, deescalating conflicts, and building community.

Value of counseling services, which were cut recently. Counselors tend to be shared between schools. Small number of counselors with large number of students. Needs are underserved when focus is on academic counseling.

Focus on preventative measures.

General lack of knowledge of hard and soft systems and what can be done to make a school safe. Parents might not know that counselors go between schools and that there are so few.

END