



District 23

SAFETY & SECURITY AUDIT

Summary Report

February 8, 2023

Presentation to the Prospect Heights Board of Education
Prepared by: Don Angelaccio, Ed.D., Superintendent



Safety & Security Audit Team

The following individuals participated in the audit process and we thank them for their time and contributions:

Carol Botwinski, BOE President

Don Angelaccio, Superintendent

Amy McPartlin, Asst. Superintendent

Amy Zaher, Asst. Superintendent

Mike Ziaja, Director of Operations

Stephanie Gage, Asst. Principal

Chief Drew Smith, PH Fire

Chief Bill Caponigro, PH Police

Stacy Balla, Eisenhower Representative

Bob Miller, Ross Representative

Betsy Yager, Sullivan Representative

Carolyn Collins, MacArthur Representative

Carrie Petrellis, ESP Representative

Parents: Joanne and Harry Petruleas, Alma Ciobanu, Alena

McCarthy, Laura Stueber, Patricia Lonosky, Ann Lenz, Lucy

Bailey, Anna Cook, Julie Boettcher, Kelly Haufle, Megan

Poulos, Sarah Wojtowicz, Shannon Swierczek

We also thank the Sullivan and MacArthur students who participated in focus group discussions to share their input and valuable insights.



Summary

Safety and security is a foundational priority for District 23 and, especially in light of continued tragedies, an essential part of our planning. One element of our Strategic Plan is to work collaboratively with our first responders in evaluating our plans and provide support to staff. While we continuously monitor and refine our practices, an audit provided an opportunity for a more comprehensive review.

This safety and security audit was conducted in the summer and fall of 2022 and included physical inspection of all buildings and grounds, focus group discussions, interviews with each front office, and discussion among the administrative team. The goal of the audit was to bring "fresh eyes" and multiple perspectives together to gather data and generate the considerations included in this report.

Overall, the sense of safety and security in District 23 is positive with average respondent scoring a 7 out of 10 when asked about current conditions. It is important to note that we are not working from a deficit, but rather, seeking opportunities to refine and improve conditions.

There are both short and long term considerations provided that are intended to generate further discussion and investigation as components of the next Strategic Plan, currently under development.



Background

The framework used for this safety and security audit was based upon three resources:

- U.S. Department of Education - A Guide to School Vulnerability Assessments (2008)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security - K-12 School Security Checklist (2013)
- Delaware Department of Education - School Safety Audit Checklist (2002)

It is critical to recognize that safety and security are not static or linear concepts; rather, they are essential components of a process that we implement when planning and implementing decisions related to physical plant, personnel, materials, policies, procedures, and practices.



Our mindset must be a continuous loop considering:

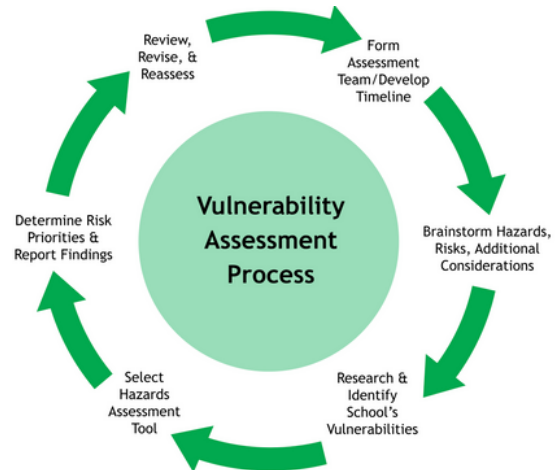
- Prevention-Mitigation
- Preparedness
- Response
- Recovery

Further, our approach must be collaborative and inclusive of all of the stakeholders and our first responders to strengthen our planning and response.



Process

In the Summer and Fall of 2022, a Safety and Security Team was assembled consisting of staff, parents, first responders and students. As the graphic indicates, we utilized a process of issue identification and data gathering, resulting in the considerations included in this report.



Using a comprehensive checklist developed by the Delaware Department of Education, our team assessed three areas:

- Physical Plant
- Policies
- Practices

as well as safety through both physical and emotional lenses.

Visual inspections, 1 on 1 interviews, procedural spot checks, Regional Office of Education audit, and targeted focus groups were used to gather data and assess current conditions and develop considerations.



Considerations

Throughout this report we utilize the term "considerations" rather than specific "recommendations" because of the complex and interconnected nature of our planning and decision making processes. It is the intention of administration that the data gathered in this audit will provide both short (ST) and long term (LT) solutions that will be integrated into the ongoing Strategic Planning process.

Physical Plant

Improve signage around campus to inform passersby of restricted use and access. (ST)

Improve pick-up/drop-off, parking, and traffic in Eisenhower parking lot. (LT)

Standardize and replace all door signage, including directing all visitors to main entrance. (ST)

Improve exterior and interior security camera coverage and visibility. (LT)

Position building secretary to face doors. (ST)

Improve exterior lighting at doorways. Consider motion sensors. (LT)

Maintain trees and shrubbery to improve sight lines. (ST)

Clearly designate all main entrances. (LT)

Inventory and plan for key replacement and new cores/masters. (ST)

Replace exterior doors and windows. Utilize safety enhanced products. (LT)

Improve cleanliness, including removal of graffiti in restrooms. (ST)

Repair/replace fencing behind Eisenhower play area. (LT)



Considerations

Physical Plant Cont.

Investigate method of expediting locking of interior doors. (LT)

Improve reliability of intercom and office buzzer systems. Determine one or two door locked system. (LT)

Maximize vestibule space for parent waiting area and delivery. (LT)

Policies

Implement "Safe at School" protocols and resources to improve reporting and access to support. (ST)

Embed cybersecurity practices and language in procedures and policies, including training and password parameters. (ST)

Improve design and appearance of restrooms, including gender neutral accessibility. (LT)

Investigate clock and announcement systems as replacement and enhancement. (LT)

Investigate gate installation for Ross playground. (LT)

Implement revised Emergency Response protocols and update all training, communications, and procedures to reflect updates. (ST/LT)



Considerations

Practices

Close and lock all custodial and maintenance doors while students are present. (ST)

Align practices for reporting behavior concerns and response timeline. (ST)

Improve presence of staff in hallways during passing periods and at end of day dismissal. (ST)

Ensure all supervisors wear vests and carry walkie-talkies. (ST)

Improve staff spacing during PE and at extra-curricular events. (ST)

Seek opportunities for student participation in behavior and safety planning discussions. (ST)

Improve training for supervisors to ensure triangulation and visibility. (LT)

Improve consistency of key distribution to substitutes and screening of volunteers. (ST)

Develop schedule for resetting badge access and alarm codes. (ST)

Develop schedule for radio testing and training. (ST)



Considerations

Personnel

Consider additional lunch/recess supervisors, including parent volunteers or paid staff, to accommodate for revised indoor recess supervision. (LT)

Consider bus aides to monitor behavior. (LT)

Investigate shared School Resource Officer position for District 23 and Prospect Heights Police Department. (LT)

Communications/Curriculum

Educate students, parents, and staff on anonymous reporting mechanisms and procedures. (ST)

Review practices for "debriefing" with students following crisis response. (ST)

Maintain cycle of SEL Curriculum review and mapping. Reinforce alignment of "Respectful, Responsible, and Safe" expectation. (ST)

Review health curriculum for reinforcement of day to day safety. e.g. bike, crossing the street., etc. (ST)

Develop and implement Behavioral Response Committee to update handbook. Educate community on expectations and accountability. (LT)



Strengths

While the the focus of the of this audit was to identify areas of improvement, it is important to note the many strengths that were identified and shared during the process as well.

Focus group participants and Audit team members noted the well-kept and clean facilities. Improvements to the buildings and grounds over the year have put us in a very good place, with few needs. Existing camera coverage is a good start and vestibules, intercom, and raptor systems all help enforce a safe entry.

Safety practices, drills, and trainings are in place and will only be improved with more frequent or specific reinforcement. Parents and students alike recognize and appreciate the care and concern, responsiveness, and communications routinely demonstrated by staff.

Most importantly, students feel safe at school and parents trust that the schools are on top of security concerns. Our Social Emotional Learning curriculum and behavior support systems have created a culture and climate that are welcoming, inclusive, and respectful.

Like all Districts, we have work to do and must remain ever vigilant to the changing needs of our students, staff, and families; but overall, District 23 is a community with a "family feel" that supports and provides a positive learning environment.



Next Steps

Upon review and comment from the Board of Education, this report will be used to inform the Strategic Planning process currently under way in the District.

Expected to be completed in May or June, 2023, the next Strategic Plan will utilize these considerations when developing and prioritizing goals and objectives.

Short term goals will range from immediate implementation to 2 years while long term goals will range from 2-5 years of research, planning and implementation.

Evidence of these considerations in action will be found in the annual staffing plan, budget, facilities planning, curriculum enhancements, and policy adoptions.