



...the educational prism through which students realize meaning and purpose in their lives...

**TO: Members, Board of Education**

**FROM: Dr. Constance Collins, Superintendent**

**RE: Middle School Video Camera Follow up**

**DATE: January 26, 2010**

December 1, 2009 the board was presented with a detailed memo outlining a proposal for installation of video cameras at Brooks and Julian Middle Schools. This memo and accompanying PowerPoint presentation focused on the philosophy, rationale, benefits and details of the proposal. Prior to the proposal development the district worked with a security firm to identify possible safety/security improvements at the middle schools, Director of Buildings/Grounds Norman Lane attended a national security conference, comparative analysis was obtained from area schools and a staff survey was completed—all of which was delineated in the December 1, 2009 board memo. From the onset of this discussion, the proposal has been and will always be about the safety and security of our students, staff and facilities. Our middle schools are community buildings which are highly used before/after school hours and on weekend/holidays. Due to the nature of their use, these buildings are far more susceptible to before/after school vandalism, graffiti, incidences in the parking lot and the perimeter of the building. There are literally hundreds of people that come through the middle schools who are not employees and are not students, but still have access to the buildings for various community events. As the quote from the presentation stated: *"Exercise those plans. Don't put them on a shelf and let them collect dust. When the crisis happens, that's not the time to figure out all the details,"* — Gregory A. White, U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Ohio

Below are answers to questions from board members with input from the superintendent, the two middle school principals, the director of buildings/grounds and the assistant superintendent for finance/operations.

1. What is the increase in discipline issues/suspensions/expulsions in the District during the past several months?
  - a. *Please refer to the student behavior report which is included in this board packet.*
2. How many theft and property damage incidents have occurred in the schools during the past year and what is the estimated dollar amount of the incidents?
  - a. *For this fiscal year to date, replacement of broken windows has totaled \$5,850; two key pads were vandalized and cost \$500 to fix. Additionally, there have been thefts of LCD projectors, a computer and other electronic devices. Please note that some incidents occur outside of the school day which would also include the multiple occurrences of graffiti tagging.*
3. Is PBIS really working and how do we know? In other words, what is the exact size and shape of the problem that we are trying to solve?
  - a. *Regarding PBIS – yes, the number of discipline incidences have decreased since the implementation of PBIS. Research, however, tells us we have correlations and not “cause and effect.” There are incidences that require investigations, which can be very time consuming, and others we are not able to resolve due to lack of information.*
  - b. *PBIS does not resolve the inappropriate behavior, thefts, vandalism (i.e. graffiti) of other groups using our building or intruders that may strike after hours.*
  - c. *The administration remains excited about the current and long-term impact of incorporating the PBIS philosophy. However there are instances of misconduct still needing swift and accurate investigation.*

- d. The PBIS initiative can be strengthened with the ability to discuss inappropriate student decisions from a truthful beginning instead of trying to figure out how the pieces of an event fit together.*
4. What are the specific ERs supporting this initiative?
    - a. Strategy 2, SER 11 - Identify/maximize school and community resources that are dedicated to improving all students' overall development and learning, in accordance with each student's individual needs. Relates specifically to action step two - Monitor and measure discipline and behavior issues.*
    - b. Strategy 5, SER 4 - Establish efficient and safe facility utilization guidelines. Relates specifically to action step two - Establish key measures, ratios and issues of concern for facility utilization.*
  5. Additionally, the background section of the report ties the initiative to the Strat Plan with the statement, "...making the best use of technology in instruction..." Please provide supporting evidence for how the use of surveillance equipment will have a positive impact on instruction.
    - a. Safety and security are critical. A positive learning climate and culture support improved learning. A student might not be worrying that a cell phone is missing during science class if these incidences are reduced.*
    - b. The increase in safety confidence would also strengthen the "connected-ness" that Ed Hallowell (M.D., Psychologist and Director of the Hallowell Center for Cognitive and Emotional Health, Sudbury, MA.) states is critical for success.*
  6. What are the projected ongoing costs to maintain, upgrade and support the equipment and software?
    - a. There should be no additional costs unless the system is expanded.*
  7. How does this initiative fit into the overall technology strategy that is forthcoming later this year?
    - a. The fiber was installed as part of summer technology work and also provided a cost efficiency.*
  8. How will the success of the program be measured – decrease in the number of thefts, decrease in the number of vandalism events/reduction in repair costs for vandalism, improved student achievement due to less administration time to investigate issues, decrease in staff hours spent dealing with issues, etc.?
    - a. Security cameras would not be referred to as a "program" and some of what is being asked for cannot be quantified. For administration with "additional time," our ongoing focus has been and will continue to be: consistent classroom visits, meet with teachers and teams, participate in curriculum decisions and implementation, work with parents via school improvement team....etc.*
  9. What are the specific goals that will signify success for each metric?
    - a. See response to question eight.*
  10. At what point will the success of this program be reviewed?
    - a. Please note that camera installation and monitoring is not a program. It is one component of a total safety and security plan.*
    - b. We will monitor and report to the board yearly the instances of vandalism, theft and inappropriate behaviors. We should state that year one may be a baseline year.*
  11. I'm sure this has been quantified and I'm interested to know how much time per week/month/whatever is currently spent by a building administrator on these issues and what is the expected, measurable reduction in time spent?
    - a. Administrators do not keep a log of minutes required for discipline issues. Some issues require significant time over a span of days while others may be solved in less than an hour. To keep data for something like this would be nearly impossible. Every assistant principal spends varying amounts of time as well. In sixth grade, less time is spent with discipline issues than in eighth grade – a pattern that has been consistent over time.*
  12. In other words, since cameras will not eliminate all time spent by an administrator in resolving these issues, how much time is expected to be saved?
    - a. Uncertain, however, what's frustrating are the "issues" that we are unable to solve, such as thefts from lockers. Cameras would certainly help with those incidences where there are no witnesses.*

13. What specific instruction elements will the administrators be working on and how will their increased attention be measured in student/performance outcomes?
  - a. *Please refer to the response to question eight.*
14. Of the 18 contacted, how many used cameras only at entrances?
  - a. *Three had cameras at entrances only. Despite the efforts to compare the use of cameras in other districts, it needs to be recognized that every school and district are unique in their own ways.*
15. What improvements in student behavior and achievement have been noted?
  - a. *Please refer to the student behavior report which is included in this board packet.*
16. Where are cameras used in District 90?
  - a. *District 90 has cameras positioned at outside doors.*
  - b. *We are also aware that OPRF has 136 cameras inside and outside of the school. There is a plan to add 50 more cameras this year.*
17. How will the data on PBIS be discerned from those that may be due to the cameras?
  - a. *PBIS and cameras do not have a quantitative cause and effect relationship.*
18. Should a policy be created (if there is not one) on how to deal with questioning students about a crime or altercation recorded on video, especially when there may be many students in the area, and how many of those students to question?
  - a. *The proposed video camera policy will address this.*
19. Who will be involved in the interviews and how to conduct?
  - a. *Interviewing procedures are part of current policy #5540.01, which was adopted January 12, 2010.*
20. Will the police have free access to the videos?
  - a. *The proposed video camera policy will address this.*
21. Will the videos change the level or degree of discipline?
  - a. *Could assist with timeliness and suitability of discipline.*
22. Will the use of videos for discipline also cause the potential for more litigation?
  - a. *No way of knowing this; could prevent litigation.*
23. How does video surveillance, if any, increase the district's liability?
  - a. *Information from the cameras will support staff and student observations and statements.*
  - b. *In many ways it minimizes liability because it may minimize litigation costs.*
24. How will the Middle School staff and District relay to the public (parents and students) the purpose of the cameras is about safety (but based on data and their contribution to the safe environment)?
  - a. *Administration will send a letter to parents discussing safety. All board meeting discussions and staff discussions regarding the cameras have focused on safety.*

**Next steps:**

1. Preliminary draft of policy to board on 1/26/2010
2. Board approval/authorization to move forward
3. Letter to community regarding district's intention/request for feedback
4. Opportunity for community feedback is a minimum of three weeks
5. First reading of policy
6. Board adoption of policy
7. Equipment purchase and installation