



River Forest
Public Schools

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District 90 Safety and Security Review Committee

Recommendations to the Board of Education *February 6, 2024*

The District 90 Safety and Security Review Committee convened for the first time on October 24, 2023 to begin the process of evaluating D90 safety objectives, protocols, and resources. The Committee's charge was to assess the elements that are already in place, investigate "best practices" in school safety as recommended by reputable school safety entities and experts, and determine appropriate recommendations that will markedly improve safety considerations across the school community. The Committee was comprised of River Forest Fire and Police Department representatives, a River Forest Park District representative, a member of D90 Board of Education, District 90 school and District administrators, instructional staff from all D90 schools, and a school social work clinician. While a number of resources were utilized and are memorialized at the end of this document, primary references include the following:

Recommendations of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force School Safety Working Group. Presented to the Office of the Governor April 5, 2018 (Updated March 2020).

School Safety and Violent Event Incident Management (SSAVEIM). C3 Pathways, Inc., October 2022.

Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model, An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence. U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC), July 2018.

The Committee membership divided into three subcommittees; each subcommittee included a diverse representation of members with varied backgrounds and areas of expertise. After a formation meeting on October 24, the subcommittees met during common meetings and on their own schedules to investigate their area of focus in detail and derive specific subcommittee recommendations. The subcommittees include:

- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Procedures and Protocols
- Emotional Health and Community Wellness

On November 28 and December 12, the full Committee reconvened so that the subcommittees could report out about their respective recommendations and justify the basis for which they were recommended. In the interim, the District partnered with the highly-qualified School Safety and Threat Assessment Specialists from the West 40 Intermediate Service Center to conduct physical safety assessments at each school. The purpose of conducting these independent assessments was to identify potential areas of weakness in District facilities and current safety processes/procedures. The full Committee reconvened and reconciled the final recommendations on January 10, 2024 and approve that they be presented to the Board of Education for consideration. The recommendations provided in this final document strongly reflect the group’s priorities and shared consensus.

District 90 School Safety and Security Review Committee Membership

Kevin Martin, Director of Technology	RF District 90
Sargeant Ben Ransom, RF Police Dept.	Village of RF
Deputy Chief Dave Bochenek, RF Fire Dept.	Village of RF
Kristine Mackey, Board of Education Member	RF District 90
Tiffany Daniels-Hudson, RMS Faculty Member	RF District 90
Bobby Bachar, RMS Faculty Member	RF District 90
Dana Parker, WES Faculty Member	RF District 90
Alison Hawley, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction	RF District 90
Joy O’Reilly, LES Faculty Member	RF District 90
Kristin Bailitz, LES Faculty Member	RF District 90
Val Smart, WES RFESP Member	RF District 90
Officer Megan Drake (SRO), RF Police Dept.	Village of RF
Casey Godfrey, School Principal	RF District 90
Anthony Cozzi, Chief Operations Officer	RF District 90
Brittany Yelnick, School Social Worker	RF District 90
Karen Stille, Superintendent of Recreation	RF Park District
Ed Condon, Superintendent	RF District 90
West 40 School Safety/Threat Assess. Specialists (<i>Consulting</i>)	West 40 ISC

Final Safety Review Committee Recommendations

The Facilities and Infrastructure Subcommittee recommendations include the following items (see Appendix A for references/resources):

1. It is recommended that the phone system be upgraded to a cordless, Voice Over IP (internet based) system, with cell backup to ensure mobility and efficiency during a crisis. This system should include the ability for each user to make an all-call emergency announcement from his/her location. In addition, training on procedures in an emergency should be detailed and reviewed periodically. (Preliminary quotes already in progress).

2. A comprehensive visitor management system needs to be investigated to replace the manual sign-in sheets at the building level. The District should consider systems that include management of all visitors, including volunteers and a system that can manage emergency drills, has panic alerts, and can incorporate reunification processes. (Preliminary quotes already in progress).
3. It is recommended that the District re-emphasize (and expand) the daily use of 2-way radio communication to appropriate staff members.
4. It is recommended that the District investigate the age of our oldest security cameras and upgrade where necessary, adding cameras to identified “dark” areas in the District.
5. The District installed security window film many years ago on each building’s main entrance door glass and vestibule air-lock windows. It is recommended that the District investigate adding it to all entrances and possibly interior classroom sidelights in identified locations. (Preliminary quotes already in progress).
6. To replace our current digital evacuation floor plans, it is recommended that the District upgrade to digital aerial mapping of our campuses that not only indicates indoor maps with evacuation plans, but shows locations of all cameras, AED’s, fire extinguishers, etc. to assist first responders. In addition, this mapping could be expanded to show the neighborhood and identify reunification sites. Entrances shall be labeled A1, B1, C1, etc., to align with Fire Department Alpha, Bravo, Delta response plan. (Preliminary quotes already in progress).
7. It is recommended that the District create a physical border to Willard School, since there is no fencing as at Lincoln and Roosevelt. Rows of low-growing shrubbery could be installed to funnel visitors to the proper doorways. Fencing should also be considered along the northern parking lot, to create separation between open space/play area and automobile area. The portable toilet that is located adjacent to the Willard Parking Lot area should be moved to another location on the Park District grounds.

NOTE: The Subcommittee came to consensus that extensive security measures, such as high fencing, gated parking, metal detectors and scanners, daily security personnel, etc. should not be considered due to negative budgetary and climate/culture implications. However, contracting with security personnel to be present at large school events should be considered.

The Procedures and Protocols Subcommittee recommendations include the following items (see Appendix A for references/resources):

1. It is recommended that the District develop comprehensive staff development plans:
 1. CPR and “Stop the Bleed” training for all staff
 2. Incorporate walk throughs of drills to build “muscle memory” for emergency scenarios

3. Reconsider initiating lockdowns based on situation versus location
2. It is recommended that the District conduct a review of procedures to accommodate scenarios not currently addressed:
 1. Consider “reverse” scenarios (ex. students who are outside or dispersed around the building)
 2. Procedures for clearing a room (i.e., cafeteria; auditorium; large, shared spaces)
 3. Medical drills to reinforce universal knowledge about AED locations
 4. Review current drills relative to expanding knowledge of best practice
3. It is recommended that the District develop a more detailed school/District reunification plan for implementation at an off-site location.
4. It is recommended that it become mandatory for all staff to always wear ID badges onsite, and that crisis resource information continue to be available on the back of staff IDs for ease of information access.
5. It is recommended that Building Engineers make it a part of the daily routine to check exterior doors to see if they are closed properly, not propped open or malfunctioning due to the weather. Ensure all exterior doors close and open appropriately and any keys that are distributed be labeled “Do Not Copy.”
6. It is recommended to request that the Village of River Forest Police add to the daytime routine a lunch/recess patrol around each school. They currently patrol at arrival and dismissal.
7. It is recommended that the District include the RF Police and Fire in all our drill communication via the CrisisGo app.

The Emotional Health and Community Wellness Subcommittee recommendations include the following items (see Appendix A for references/resources):

1. It is recommended that the District ensure all faculty and staff receive training and supports to utilize Responsive Classroom and RMS Student Advisory resources effectively, as well as new employees when onboarded to the District.
2. It is recommended that the District ensure that community safety instruction provided by River Forest first responders (RFPD, RFFD) continues in District 90 schools.
3. It is recommended that the District continue to leverage community partnerships, including those that promote physical activity, support mental health/wellness, and communicate vital health and safety matters. Examples include collaborative communication pertaining to firearm storage and safety, and shared messages for the school community pertaining to physical wellness.

4. It is recommended that the District ensure that safety and security agreements with community partners about D90 facility use and programming expectations are clear and supportive of all groups' goals.
5. It is recommended that the District administer a survey to caregivers to better understand student mental health needs and guide next steps. Anonymized information gathered from the survey will be shared with other interested community partners.
6. It is recommended that the District ensure that District 90 Behavior Threat Assessment structure and protocols continue to be supported, and also expanded through the provision of an anonymous tip line.

West 40 Physical Safety Assessment Reports

An important component of the safety and security review process was conducted in partnership with School Safety and Threat Assessment Specialists from the West 40 Intermediate Service Center. These individuals have extensive expertise and experience at the regional and national level to determine physical safety and infrastructure conditions of school facilities. They conducted unannounced assessment visits at all D90 schools during the month of December and submitted comprehensive reports providing their determinations and recommendations for improvement. While they complimented the foundational safety conditions at all three schools, the assessments also provided prioritized recommendations that will further improve our safety procedures, ensure the well-being of students, staff, and visitors, and heighten the security of our facilities. It is the Committee's recommendation that the District work directly with the West 40 Safety Specialists to develop plans to refine and implement these recommendations in a prioritized manner. Fortunately, the physical safety assessment recommendations dovetail closely with the recommendations identified by the Safety and Security Review Committee which will facilitate effective coordination. These reports have been provided to the Board of Education as confidential documents identified as Appendices B-D.

Next Steps

Many of the Safety and Security Review Committee recommendations do not require approval from the Board of Education in advance of implementation, since they represent either procedural or operational changes. Yet, numerous recommendations will require eventual Board approval, either because of the anticipated expense or consideration of broader community implications. The members of the Safety and Security Review Committee request that the Board of Education consider accepting the recommendations publicly, however. The purpose of this is to ensure resources and underscore the District's commitment to provide a high degree of safety and security for all members of the school community.

Once the details of the adopted recommendations have been clarified, it will be the responsibility of District and school administrators to implement them with fidelity in collaboration with faculty, staff, students, community partners, and family members. To accomplish this goal, the Committee proposes the development of a smaller working group to review the recommendations expeditiously, identify priorities, and facilitate plans for implementation. The group will be comprised of D90 administrators and essential staff, and incorporate direct input/guidance from River Forest first responders at key intervals.

Submitted – January 22, 2024

APPENDIX A

Subcommittee References/Resources

Facilities and Infrastructure:

Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency. K-12 School Security Guide (3rd edition). Retrieved November 8, 2023 from <https://www.cisa.gov/search?g=k-12+school+security+guide>.

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Safe and Sound Schools. Straight 'A' Safety Improvement Model. Retrieved November 8, 2023 from www.safeandsoundschools.org.

Allegion. School Security Best Practices for Openings. Retrieved November 8, 2023 from www.allegion.com.

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), School Safety Working Group Report to the Attorney General. Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety. Retrieved November 2023 from www.cops.usdoj.gov.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. K-12 School Security: A Guide for Preventing and Protecting Against Gun Violence (2nd ed., 2018). Retrieved November 8, 2023 from <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2018/07/11/k-12-school-security-guide-preventing-and-protecting-against-gun-violence-2nd-ed>.

Procedures and Protocols:

National Association of School Psychologists and National Association of School Resource Officers. Best Practice Considerations for Armed Assailant Drills in Schools. Released December 2014 (updated 2018, 2021). Retrieved November 8, 2023 from <https://www.nasponline.org>.

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), School Safety Working Group Report to the Attorney General. Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety. Retrieved November 2023 from www.cops.usdoj.gov.

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Emotional Health and Community Wellness:

CDC, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention. The Relationship Between Bullying and Suicide: What We Know and What it Means. Retrieved November 8, 2023 from [CDC.gov/violenceprevention](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention).

CDC, Division of Adolescent and School Health. Bullying and Absenteeism: Information for State and Local Education Agencies. Retrieved November 8, 2023 from [CDC.gov/bullyingandabsenteeism](https://www.cdc.gov/bullyingandabsenteeism).

Espelage, Dorothy L. et al. National Institute of Justice. Synthesizing Knowledge on Equity and Equity-Based School Safety Strategies. January 2023.

Everytown for Gun Safety. How to Stop Shootings and Gun Violence in Schools: A Plan to Keep Students Safe. August 19, 2022.

Grove, Christine et al. Frontiers in Veterinary Science. Therapy Dogs in Educational Settings: Guidelines and Recommendations for Implementation. June 8, 2021.

Illinois Terrorism Task Force. Recommendations of the Illinois Terrorism Task Force School Safety Working Group. Presented April 5, 2018. Updated November 2018

Irwin, Veronique et al. Institute of Education Sciences. Report on Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2020. July 2021.

Office of the U.S. Surgeon General. Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory. 2021.

U.S. Department of Education. Parent and Educator Guide to School Climate Resources. April 10, 2019.

U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center. Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model; An Operational Guide for Preventing School Violence. July 2018.

[Youth.GOV](#). School-Based Mental Health. Retrieved November 9, 2023 from [Youth.gov/school-basedmentalhealth](https://www.youth.gov/school-basedmentalhealth).