

Learning Resource Center Safety Audit

Report Date 2/4/08

A safety audit review of the Learning Resource Center was conducted 1/29/08 by Beeville ISD Safety Audit team member, Mrs. Cindy Clendennen. It was apparent school staff and administration have a proactive approach to providing a safe learning environment for the students and staff of the LRC.

An entrance conference was held with the school principal, Dee Dee Bernal. Mrs. Clendennen reviewed student and teacher climate surveys, inspected the facilities, and observed student and staff interaction while in transition through hallways and in the classroom environment.

Entrance Conference:

1. What is the most pressing safety need in your school?
Ms. Bernal stated her concern was the easy access of the campus to the public. Unless the secretary is at her desk at all times, one may enter the building unnoticed. A buzzer at the front door would be beneficial. (A buzzer has been installed since the safety walk.) Ms. Bernal also stated that quick exit of the building if needed could easily transpire since the campus is so small.
2. What school safety activities does your school do best?
Ms. Bernal feels fire and emergency drills are conducted most efficiently. In addition, bodily search of DAEP students using a wand is carried out orderly and consistently each day.
3. What topics are most important for training and staff development?
Items to address through staff development may include the different types of emergencies that can arise on the campus. In an event that a chemical situation happens on the campus, how and what type of student safety should occur.
4. What are the biggest barriers to improve school safety measures?
Ms. Bernal stated that due to the nature and the type of campus the LRC is there is a revolving door concept. The DAEP and AEP are located in the same building and both groups change frequently, the number of students and students themselves.
5. What other comments does the campus administrator have regarding school safety?
Since the LRC is such a small campus, it is relatively easy for the staff and principal to monitor activities, the building, and grounds.

Assessment of Area/Neighborhood risk factors:

Type: Rural Community; middle to low-income class, Alternative Education Program

Grades served AEP- high school; DAEP 6 – 12

Attendance rate: 87.5 %; AEP enrollment to date: 24

Risk factors that appear in the neighborhood at a minimal level include: a park across the street, vandalism, graffiti, gang activity and crime. Moderate level risk factors include: high mobility rate of students due to the nature of the campus. Extensive level risk factors include: trespassing on school grounds and truancy. Campus staff has a low tolerance of student activities that may include bullying, intimidation, and harassment. Students are immediately dealt with when inappropriate behaviors occur.

During the entrance conference the principal reported no major incidents on the campus. The student surveys revealed some indication of stolen property, physical contact among students, and other minor incidents.

There were 12 staff climate surveys returned for review. Items of consideration include:

- 7 of 12 felt parents are actively involved in school matters.

- 11 of 12 felt school personnel treat each other in a professional manner.

- 9 of 12 felt the school is well protected from potential crime and vandalism.

- 9 of 12 have no concern about the overall school climate and safety.

- 10 of 12 feel very safe at the school.

There was general consensus that:

- The people care for each other at the school.

- School personnel treat each other in a professional manner.

- There is an effort to praise and reward those who do well.

- School rules and expectations are clear and well known.

- Consequences for violating school rules are applied consistently.

- School rules are enforced fairly and appropriately.

There were 19 student climate surveys returned for review. Items of consideration include:

- 14 of 19 felt school grounds are taken care of.

- 15 of 19 felt the building is kept clean and classrooms look nice.

- 16 of 19 felt teachers are nice.

- 12 of 19 felt teachers respect students

- 14 of 19 felt teachers let students know when they are doing a good job.

- 14 of 19 felt they have good relationships with teachers.

- 15 of 19 felt when students have emergencies, they can get help.

- 12 of 19 felt adults care about students.

- 10 of 19 felt people who are different are respected.

- 8 of 19 felt comfortable talking to a teacher about their problems while 5 did not.

- 10 of 19 felt safe on the way to school and on the way home while 3 did not.

- 6 of 19 felt you can trust most people while 5 did not.

When asked in their own words to describe how safe or unsafe it is at their school, 13 responded they felt safe, 1 felt unsafe, and 5 refrained from response.

In conclusion, it appears students are pleased with cleanliness of the building/classrooms, have a positive rapport with staff, and feel safe while at school.

Documents:

The BISD Emergency Operation Plan was adopted by the local board of trustees on February 21, 2006. The EOP addresses mitigation/prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery and outlines measures taken at each phase. Each campus has an EOP annex which was developed by a district committee and should be tailored more to the individual campus. There has been district and campus wide training on each plan in order for school staff to be prepared during an emergency or catastrophic event. However, the Safety Audit Team feels each campus should have a more individual plan specific to the campus.

Since the LRC relocated into the Madderra-Flournoy Complex, a floor plan was available that identified classrooms and buildings on the grounds. However, there was no map drawn for the LRC specifically.

Fire evacuation maps were posted in classrooms, but not at fire extinguishing locations.

A faculty contact list (phone tree) serves as a means for emergency contact numbers (including home) in the event of an emergency.

Student handbooks are present and updated annually.

The Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) was present and is updated annually.

Building Access:

- Visitors are required to sign in at the front office; appropriate signs were present at all entrances.
- There is a plan in place to monitor key distribution and duplications with an annual audit.
- Contractors and vendors pick-up and drop-off at one designated area- the office.
- There is a single point of entry/exit for each program- AEP at the front entrance and DAEP at the side entrance. If DAEP students arrive late, they must enter through the main entrance as the side entrance is locked. The AEP and DAEP have separate designated areas in the building during the school day.
- School staff is present to monitor entrances and exits during arrival and departure of students. Students are wand searched at the beginning of each school day.
- Appropriate signage is posted on school grounds, however, there is no marquee designating the campus name. (A marquee was installed after the walk-through.)

- Students must have written permission or a telephone call from parents in order to leave school grounds during the school day.
- There is no required sign-in or sign-out procedure in place for staff members using the school building after school hours.
- Due to small enrollment numbers of students and limited staff members, ID badges are not required.

Grounds and Building Exterior:

The LRC is unique as the building is shared with the BISD special education staff. There have been no problems reported by special education staff or LRC staff as far as sharing the building because students assigned to the LRC keep to their side of the building. Additionally, Food Service is housed in the Flournoy portion of the complex and there have been no problems reported with grounds being shared. The exterior of the building is free of graffiti and the grounds appear clean and neatly kept. Shrubs are trimmed to allow for good line of sight and to prevent people from hiding behind them. Bottom windows have unbroken panes, however, there are a number of broken panes high up. Exterior doors appear to be sturdy and have non-removable hinge pins. Access to roof is restricted; there appear to be no climbable plantings along building or architecture. Fencing is around electrical units to keep students out but there is no fencing around the entire campus.

Areas of concern include:

- There is no marquee identifying the LRC. (One installed after the walk-through.)
- There are a number of broken window panes in places such as: AV storage room, counselor's office, and copy room.
- There is peeling paint on roofing ledge.
- There is a cable hanging down between the special education portable building and the main building.
- There is no anti-intruder alarm and the campus is easily accessible to the public. If no one is at the secretary's desk, anyone can walk onto the campus. Installation of a buzzer at the front door would alert staff to someone entering the building. (A buzzer was installed after the audit walk.)
- Windows are difficult to open as they appear stuck due to age and/or paint.
- There is a deep recess at the main entrance of the building where an intruder may hide, especially at night.
- There is no clearly marked parent drop-off or pick-up point on the campus.
- There is no parking lot for student parking. Students park across the street.
- There is no clearly defined (fenced in) recreation area on school grounds but students may be escorted to the park across the street.

Building Interior:

- All exterior doors are numbered on the inside.
- Hallways and walls are free from graffiti.

- Hallways and restrooms are uniformly and adequately lit.
- All hallways leading to exit doors are free from obstructions.
- There is adequate access to fire extinguishers and first aid supplies.
- Valuable items such as computers, video equipment, etc. are safely secured.
- All chemicals, poisons, and flammable materials are stored properly.
- Main entrances to restrooms have hardware that prevents locking from inside.
- Hazardous materials storage areas and classrooms are locked when not in use however, classrooms cannot be locked from the inside.
- It is unclear as to the number of CPR certified staff on campus.
- There is no emergency lighting system installed.
- There is no science lab on campus but experiments are done in the classroom. There is an eyewash station but no emergency shower present. Students wear protective clothing and safety goggles during experiments. Experiments/activities performed in the classroom are limited but many are computer based.

Cafeteria:

The cafeteria used is the central cafeteria for the district and is not part of the LRC campus. However, students are walked to the cafeteria as a group to enjoy their lunch. The cafeteria is uniformly and adequately lit and students are supervised while having lunch.

School Climate and Culture:

- School climate and culture appeared to be positive and orderly.
- Hallways displayed campus expectations.
- Staff was visible, helpful, and friendly.
- Most students and staff feel the campus is a safe environment.
- Students were neat in appearance and follow dress code policies.

There was evidence of the following:

- Annual update and review of the Student Code of Conduct
- Anti-bullying, anti-harassment, and anti-violence policies
- Dress code to meet district policy and LRC policy
- Behavioral expectations as outlined in the Code of Conduct and LRC procedures
- Systematic process to collect and review discipline referral data
- School-wide respect for diversity
- Clean and unobstructed hallways
- Visibility of staff members
- Annual bully prevention training
- A process to identify and serve the needs of students most at risk for engaging in disruptive and disorderly behavior
- Staff knows how to respond to threats from students, including threats found in school work, notes, or overheard by other students

General Security:

There is no central security alarm system throughout the building but there is a security camera inside the building. There are only two hallways utilized and staff is able to monitor them during the school day. Staff members also monitor restrooms two to three times daily. There is no security camera stationed outside the school and in the case of power outages, there is no back up system.

The district staffs security officers at the secondary schools which can be summoned in an emergency situation. In addition, local law enforcement personnel provide after hours patrols of the school site. Generally, the campus appears to be safe.

Communication and Information:

The principal is the designated spokes person for the campus. In the event of an emergency, the media, parents, and staff will direct their questions to her. The principal is to follow protocol by contacting the superintendent before answering any questions from the media. Two-way communication is present between classrooms and the main office but there is no two-way communication between the office and custodial staff or law enforcement.

In case of an emergency, a method is in place to communicate security instructions to staff in a rapid and timely manner. The school communicates with parents throughout the year about what they should do in the event of a school emergency. There are procedures in place to contact parents and the community with instructions in the event of an emergency.

Summary:

It is the opinion of this Safety Audit Team member that the Learning Resource Center is a relatively safe and secure campus. The staff conducts themselves in a professional manner and creates a friendly and positive learning environment for their students. Even though some students have been removed from their home campus due to disciplinary reasons (DAEP students) they appeared to be orderly and compliant with school staff. It is this committee member's opinion that students' behavior is a reflection of high expectations and standards set by their teachers, counselor, and administrator of the LRC.

Submitted by Beeville ISD School Safety Audit Team member:

Cindy Clendennen
2/4/08