

To: Board of Education
From: Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent
Luann Kolstad, Chief School Business Official
Date: February 25, 2019
Re: Safety and Security in D64 2013 to Present

Ensuring the health, wellness, and safety of our students and staff as we meet our educational mission to inspire every child to discover, learn, achieve and care remains our top priority. As such, District 64 leadership has spent the last five years developing, implementing and annually refining all aspects of safety and security across District 64 schools. This holistic approach encompasses not only our physical security and safety procedures, but also efforts to enhance social emotional learning that can directly impact the well-being of students and staff.

The report below begins with physical and operational improvements, before moving to our social emotional learning efforts.

Charting a Course for Improvements in Safety and Security 2013 - Present

In August 2013, administration contracted with RETA Security to conduct a physical security audit. The audit was conducted by Paul Timm (now with Facility Engineering Associates, P.C.), a Board-certified Physical Security Professional (PSP) by ASIS International since 2003. Mr. Timm has nearly 20 years of security consulting experience, and authored: School Security: How to Build and Strengthen a School Safety Program. In his report, Mr. Timm emphasized that while it is not possible to guarantee 100% safety and security within a school or district, it is possible to significantly *minimize risks* of harm in a school building due to a breach of security.

The key recommendations from the 2013 RETA physical security audit focused on layering security, slowing down unauthorized visitors, and hardening our facilities. Recommendations were grouped into four broad categories:

- Secure Vestibules
- Visitor Management Systems
- Additional Exterior Cameras
- Communications

Mr. Timm's findings identified numerous opportunities involving both training and purchasing of additional/reconfigured equipment and facilities to better secure our schools and control access points. Among the key recommendations for District 64 to consider were:

- Improve visitor management procedures
- Continue to develop Emergency Plans
- All phones should be labeled with emergency dialing instructions

- Adopt one standard, two-way radio system
- Pursue the installation of secure main entry vestibules
- Continue to replace classroom locking mechanisms
- Optimize intercom systems
- Consider installing panic buttons in each Main Office
- Improve Student Monitoring
- Update Standard Surveillance Systems
- Identify and label tornado shelter areas
- Continue collaboration with local Park Districts

Results from RETA’s Physical Safety Audit were used to drive safety enhancements to our facilities over the last five years (2014-2019) and play a central role within Strategic Objective Five within the *2020 Vision* Strategic Plan. Strategic Objective Five focuses on providing safe and secure learning spaces for staff and students while ensuring they are flexible in order to allow time to foster the 4 C’s in technology-rich learning environments.

Using recommendations from RETA as our guide, District 64 has invested considerable thought, financial resources and a commitment to enhancing security at our schools over these past five years. Here are a few of the key elements now in place:

- A uniform visitor management system, called *Raptor*, is used at all schools in the District to check visitors in at each of our buildings. *Raptor* scans for registered sex offenders and also allows for school office personnel to “flag” parents/guardians in which orders of protection, restraining orders and/or custody issues exist.
- We have added additional exterior as well as middle school interior hallway cameras that are connected to monitors in the main office so personnel are able to see visitors as they approach the building.
- Protective, bullet-resistant film has been added to all exterior main entry windows. We are investigating adding this film to all first floor exterior windows over the coming years.
- Panic buttons were installed in every office to be used when a rapid police response is warranted.
- Everyone in the building is required to wear a lanyard so staff members, visitors and others can be immediately identified as being cleared to be within the building.
- All exterior building doors are locked and electronic key entry systems have been added. This means doors are never “propped” open, because staff can gain entry through their electronic key cards. In addition, all exterior doors have “hold open” alarms that alert the office if a door has been left open.
- In years past, we partnered with RETA to conduct “probes” at all schools to see whether existing entries were sufficient to prevent visitors from entering our buildings without checking into the office. The results provided actionable feedback to school offices and

staff members as they continued to practice and enforce procedures for granting access to the buildings and recognizing unauthorized visitors.

- Signs have been added on the inside of each door instructing staff and students not to open the door to visitors. All exterior doors also have signage directing visitors to the main office door.
- In fall 2018, District 64 added a Motorola XPR 3500e two-way radio system providing both a Local Area Network (LAN) and a Wide Area Network (WAN) at all buildings. The administration is continuing to pursue interoperability with local emergency responders.

In addition, the Board has moved forward with providing secure entry vestibules for D64 school buildings, as follows:

- The first secure vestibule was created at Washington School in summer 2016 as part of an office reconfiguration.
- In summer 2017, Lincoln Middle School's office and Learning Resource Center reconfiguration projects included the installation of a secure vestibule.
- In summer 2018, Roosevelt School's building was reconfigured to better meet the school's learning needs, which included relocating the office to another area of the building and installing a secure vestibule during this renovation project.
- Taking direction from the Board, administration accelerated the construction plans for Carpenter, Field and Franklin to all be completed in summer 2019. As of this date, through a competitive bidding process the Board has awarded contracts for work at Carpenter and Franklin for summer 2019; the Field contract will be presented to the Board for approval in March.
- The administration will work with the Board to determine next steps for Jefferson Early Childhood Center and updating of the secure vestibule at Emerson Middle School so that all buildings have relatively the same configuration for secure entries.

From an operations and training basis, many improvements have been enacted:

- Building Crisis Teams have been formed and meet regularly to plan training opportunities for staff to raise awareness and confidence in ways to respond in the event of an emergency. We have adopted a mindset that we all must be prepared to serve as first responders until our local first responders arrive.
- Emergency drills continue to be practiced at each school and are done with the support of our local police and fire departments. Feedback provided from our partners helps improve school-based safety procedures. Lockdown drills are practiced annually to allow staff and students to practice how to shelter in place until the first responders arrive.
- A quick reference crisis "go guide" was created and is placed in each room's emergency pocket to assist in clearly reminding staff of the procedures to be followed in an

emergency. Emergency maps with evacuation information for each classroom also were updated to show tornado shelter areas, etc.

This spring, [Maine Township District 207](#) is introducing a new violent incident training model for all students and staff, called ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate). The training will culminate on April 26, when all students will watch a training video and participate in intruder drills. We are working to arrange a visit to Maine South to watch the drill in progress. We also will continue talking with our local first responders to determine whether this training model may be useful for D64 staff in the future.

Partnership with NIPSTA and First Responders

As educators, we know that it is critical to not just expand our staff members' knowledge of protocols and procedures, but to *change the culture* by repeated practice if we are to successfully move "beyond a binder" toward standardizing operating procedures across all schools with our safety plans.

Working with consultants from the Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy (NIPSTA), the following steps were undertaken:

- Completed a comprehensive "cover to cover" review of our crisis manual, bringing them up to date and adding new protocols.
- Conducted preparedness response training with NIPSTA and local First Responders based on the Incident Command System (ICS) for Schools.
- Engaged all staff at the 2016 Institute Day on safety and security plans to build awareness of their role as local first responders until the community first responders arrive during a crisis. Local first responders estimate their response time to be 3 to 5 minutes.
- Reorganized and conducted in-depth training of our Building Crisis Teams. Training during 2016-17 included *Incident Command System (ICS) - 100* training for all first responders in the District. NIPSTA conducted tabletop exercises in each building with their Crisis Team. Two scenarios were developed and used during these trainings. From these exercises, NIPSTA and administration gathered invaluable data regarding additional measures/refinements that needed to occur in our procedures.
- Improved flow of students into and out of schools at drop-off and pick-up was reviewed with our NIPSTA partners who did onsite evaluations. Based on their recommendations, changes were made at buildings so that students are entering and exiting fewer doors during arrival and dismissal times.
- Active supervision of playgrounds through assigned quadrants has been established at our elementary buildings.
- Conducted audits of entry procedures to determine whether visitors could gain access to other areas of our buildings after being admitted, without checking in at the office.
- Off-site relocation visits were conducted in 2017-18 and 2018-19 with staff and students

to ensure procedures are well thought out and able to be implemented in a true relocation emergency.

Social Emotional Learning

School climate impacts students' perceptions of safety, their sense of connectedness to other students and adults, and their ability to support themselves and others. District 64's holistic approach to school safety includes a District-wide SEL program that consists of four components: explicit skill instruction, environmental structures, community-building practices, and data collection for the purpose of progress-monitoring.

Explicit Skill Instruction

The *Second Step* program is a core resource that guides explicit skill instruction at both the elementary and middle school level.

- In grades K-5, skill lessons are built around four important strands, including skills for learning, empathy, emotional management, and problem-solving. The K-5 program also includes a Bullying Prevention Unit, which helps students develop the skills to recognize, report, and refuse bullying. In grades K-3, students are introduced to the “bystander power.” In grades 4-5, students learn how bystanders have the responsibility to stop bullying and cyberbullying.
- At the middle school level, *Second Step* lessons are built around four strands: mindsets and goals; values and friendships; thoughts, emotions, and decisions; and serious peer conflicts. Middle school students learn to make decisions based on their personal values, build strong positive friendships, stay in control when they're experiencing strong emotions, resolve serious conflicts, and prevent bullying and harassment.

Environmental Structures

At the building level, all staff have come to consensus on three to five expectations for student behavior. These expectations are part of the “Building Behavior Matrix” and communicated through the school culture. For example, an Emerson Eagle SOARS (**S**hows Respect; **O**ffers Empathy; **A**cts Safely; is **R**esponsible for Learning and Behavior; and **S**hows Self-Regulation and Self-Awareness) and a Roosevelt student demonstrates the five bees (Bee Caring, Bee Responsible, Bee Safe, Bee Respectful, Bee Fit). In addition to common expectations, buildings have also determined how all staff members acknowledge positive behavior and respond to misbehavior. Staff also make plans to introduce the Behavior Matrix annually to students and to teach students positive behaviors in each of the different areas of the school.

Community-Building Practices

Community-building practices enable all staff and students to build supportive relationships, a positive school culture, and a nurturing climate. In November 2018, we introduced “*restorative practices*” as a key strategy for building community to all staff in grades 4-8 staff. Schools that

embrace restorative practices provide consistent opportunities for students to build positive rapport with one another and with adults. Students can then build on this rapport to manage conflict, repair harm, and develop even stronger relationships. All staff will participate in this professional development over the next two years.

Data Collection & Progress Monitoring

Because of District 64's commitment to continuous improvement, we collect data that informs our decisions about SEL programming. In fall 2018, baseline data was collected through the Safe and Civil Schools' *Climate & Safety Survey*, a proven tool for accurately and consistently measuring perceptions of school climate and safety. School teams analyzed strengths and weaknesses in: safety in the common areas of the school; social/emotional safety of students and staff; positive interactions between students and staff; understanding of school behavior expectations; attitudes about schoolwork; frequency of discipline problems; and a sense of belonging and support for all stakeholders. A follow-up survey will be administered in March 2019.

In addition to the *Climate & Safety Survey*, the Technology Department has designed a Data Dashboard to help schools review real-time behavior data and look for opportunities for improvement. Examples of data collected include: names of referring teachers, location of behavior incidents, time of day, and specific type of behavior. Data review enables school teams to look for trends and design targeted support for students. While middle schools have had Data Dashboards for the past year, elementary schools implemented this tool for the first time in the 2018-19 school year.

Student Services Support

District 64 provides a range of supports to meet the varied social emotional needs of students and is committed to continuous improvement in this important effort. This year, the Student Services Department is focused on systematically integrating the recommendations from the internal and external audits of special education completed in spring 2018. Staffing within the department overall is one of the four key areas prioritized for improvement, along with consistency, message of inclusion, and professional development. All four of these areas impact the well-being of D64's special education as well as general education students throughout the year.

Comprehensive updates on these efforts have been provided monthly to the Board this year. Among the improvements that have a key impact on social emotional learning and a positive school climate are:

- Additional staffing has been added, including:
 - An additional psychologist to provide the necessary services and supports to students and staff.

- An additional social worker to support middle school and larger elementary school caseloads.
- A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) to assist in analyzing behaviors and developing appropriate and effective interventions for students as well as providing training to build the capacity of both regular and special education staff surrounding students with more complex behavioral needs.
- An additional special education coordinator, which allows each coordinator to be an instructional leader at each site. And, a .5 special education coordinator was authorized (in December) to provide further leadership support both at the school and District level.
- Among the procedures that have been renewed are:
 - The Student Suicide and Threat Assessment procedures have been finalized and shared with all administrators. These are being used by our social workers, psychologists, and administrators.
 - Procedures aligned to child abuse have been reviewed and updated.
- As the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) updated their training, we ensured all present District trainers had received updated training prior to offering workshops to District staff. Crisis Prevention Intervention training has been regularly occurring since December. For next year, we hope to increase the number of CPI trainers in D64.

Family Engagement

In addition, for the first time this year, District 64 in cooperation with the PTOs of Emerson and Lincoln middle schools sponsored a community showing of the documentary film, *Angst*. The Student Services department added a new webpage, called **Health & Wellness Resources**. This webpage now offers a wide variety of community resources in Park Ridge and Niles that are available to all families who may be experiencing mental health or other concerns for their students or family members. The webpage was shared with all the school websites as well, making it a consistent, ongoing resource throughout D64. It was also featured in the eNews newsletter.

Finally, District 64 continues to engage its parents and family members directly in support of the social emotional well being of students in a variety of ways, including:

- A vibrant Parent University series to provide support for parents, including experts such as Dr. Devorah Heitner speaking on *Screenwise, Helping Kids Survive and Thrive in their Digital World*.
- The Superintendent's Focus Group on Social Emotional Learning and its work with Dr. Charlene Myklebust, who also presented a community presentation on the *Home-School Connection: Nurturing Social Emotional Health* in spring 2018, laid important groundwork to build a common understanding of this topic.

- The Parents and Teachers Talking Together (PT3) group is opening dialogue between these two important groups around special education topics.
- A new All-Abilities Committee within the school PTO/As hopes to foster a message of acceptance for and by all students and families.

Next Steps

As this report summarizes, District 64 has made significant advancements in improving the safety and security of all students and staff in just a few short years. The Board, all D64 staff members, students and families, our first responders, and our community members should take great pride in these critical accomplishments, while we acknowledge the financial investment and appreciate the dedication and focus needed to achieve them.

As with communications, safety and security are areas that can never be considered “done” or “complete.” Rather they require ongoing, active engagement and a commitment to continuous improvement. At the meeting, we will update the Board on two important initiatives that we anticipate will be the next steps:

- **Doors and Door Hardware** - As part of this year’s Health Life Safety/Master Facilities Plan, doors and door hardware throughout the District are being surveyed as discussed at the July 9, 2018 regular meeting and the September 10, 2018 Board of Education Committee-of-the-Whole: Facilities meeting. Studio GC now is conducting the survey of classroom doors, hallway fire doors or smoke stops, exterior doors -- in short, every door throughout the District. Each door is unique and must be evaluated separately for lock function, security and operation of the door hardware, and also to make sure the fire and smoke ratings on the doors are correct. This may include replacement of frames in some circumstances. We anticipate bringing this report to the Board later this spring.
- **Security Assessment Refresh** - As a follow up to the 2013 report, Paul Timm now is conducting a new audit of the physical security at each of our schools currently. He will be presenting a summary of these security audits performed in January 2019 on our buildings along with recommendations to the District. We anticipate this report will generate a number of items that the Board and District will want to consider integrating in our future planning.

We look forward to a fruitful discussion with the Board as we move into the next phase of our work together to improve the health, wellness, and safety of our students and staff.