

FISD School Safety Advisory Committee Recommendations Summer 2018

After meeting four times through the summer to focus on recommendations related to school safety in FISD, the District School Safety Advisory Committee (SSAC) recommends the following layers be considered by FISD Administration and the Board of Trustees:

* **Additional Law Enforcement:** After reviewing the proposed additions to Law Enforcement, the SSAC believes the increased law enforcement presence as proposed by Friendswood Police Dept. and FISD is adequate based on the current budget and officer availability. This doubles the total current total amount of officers as follows: (1) School Resource Officer to float between elementary / intermediate schools (new), (1) School Resource Officer at FJH (no change), and (2) School Resource officers at FHS (1 new - beginning in Jan). This is based on short response times by FPD (90 seconds), traffic patrols by FPD at the campuses in morning and afternoons, location of off-duty FPD officers in the areas near the schools at banks and other establishments, and proximity of FPD to campuses in the district. Also, the committee appreciates the awareness of the buildings, community, and previous actions taken by FPD to work with FISD to address safety issues. As resources become available, the committee would like the District to consider adding another officer to FJH and another roving officer.

* **Physical Security/Controlled Access of Campuses:** The Committee heard reports from Erich Kreiter on proposed physical security enhancements to campuses and recommends implementation of the following:

- Limit number of entrances at secondary level - during school day and outside of school day
- Renovate existing security vestibules - elementary / intermediate priority
- Remove door hardware from doors not used as a physical entrance
- Evaluate current electronic door locking reader locations and access
- Hardwire existing electronic locking systems at all campuses
- Update electronic door locking software system - alerts if doors are open
- Update signage
- Expanded surveillance camera coverage
- Fencing and perimeter security upgrades
- Training of students and staff for physical security updates on campus and access to grounds

* **Social / Emotional Supports (SEL) :** The SSAC feels this is a pro-active layer critical to implement in an effort to prevent safety issues at the campus level. After review of the current social and emotional learning tiers of support, the committee recommends the following:

- Actions to support and facilitate steps to provide school counselors with more time to spend with students for counseling initiatives.
 - Provide crisis training for counselors
 - Provide crisis resources for counselors
- Actions to create more uniform and comprehensive programming for all students at Tier I - especially at the secondary level.
- Identify students who are not participants in activities and explore avenues to get them involved in extracurricular, clubs, etc.
- Utilization of outside resources and professionals to provide support for students at Tier II and Tier III.
- Provide grade level specific SEL professional development support for school counselors.
- Engage and educate parents and community in partnerships to provide SEL support to families. (mental health, faith based activities, mentoring programs, after school clubs, in-home training etc.)
- Create a threat assessment team on each campus to identify and create action plans for students that are a possible threat to themselves and others based on a threat assessment matrix.
- Provide ongoing SEL training for all faculty and staff.
- Additional counselors with primary focus on SEL.
- Ensure continuity of care with transfers of students from campus to campus.

School Security Monitors: The SSAC recommends hiring school safety monitors at Cline (1), Westwood/Bales (1), Windsong (1), FJH (1), and FHS (2) for the purpose of monitoring exterior and interior doors, student entry, high traffic points, cameras, parking areas, parent check-in stations, etc. in the effort to maintain the integrity of the physical safety of the campus.

Volunteers, if needed, could be utilized at the elementary level, but there are some concerns about fulfilling the schedules daily and also accountability for volunteers. Also, unarmed volunteers at all levels could be used in times of heightened security or as needed in exterior areas. Recommend that the district begin school monitor program by hiring employees to fill the role and then evaluate the program as additional layers are added. Monitors should be identifiable to students and staff via a uniform or standardized dress as well as a photo ID badge.

Marshal Program: After reviewing options for layers to provide a deterrent, as well as a response with force to an armed intruder, the SSAC is generally recommending the District further research the implementation of the school marshal program as allowed by Tex. Educ. Code 37.0811. This program involves the appointing of one or more specially trained and licensed employees to serve as an armed school marshal who must abide by provisions contained in Education Code. During discussions in the committee, the following recommendations were brought forward as considerations for the Board of Trustees in selection

criteria / guidelines for acting marshals on top of other guidelines required by statute or Education Code:

- Participation must be voluntary.
- Appointments should remain confidential.
- Appointments should be focused on employees whose primary duties do not involve primary contact with students at the elementary/intermediate level. (The committee discussed threat levels at both elementary and secondary levels. They agreed the internal threat at the secondary level is much higher than at the elementary level thus requiring broader protection at the Junior High and High School.)
- Work and train closely with Friendswood Police department.

Other options considered to arm employees included the hiring of private security firms and a locally developed Guardian plan. These options were rejected in favor of the school marshal program by the Committee because of the more regimented training program via the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) process, district selection process, and documentation of the program in Education Code. It was also generally felt that employees have a more vested interest in the safety and student culture and relationships present at each campus.

This recommendation should be studied further by the administration and the board prior to implementation.

On-going Comprehensive Safety and Security Training: The SSAC recommends ongoing, uniform safety and security training prior to the start of school for all staff and substitutes. Training for students should also be held once school is in session this fall. Training should be focused on current research and formulated in conjunction with action plans for response to an active shooter by FPD. The committee also recommends refresher training after the Winter break.

Metal Detectors: The SSAC does not recommend the implementation of fixed metal detectors at entrances of the campuses. The culture of Friendswood High School and Friendswood Junior High, specifically the amount of student activity (practices, performances, clubs, tutorials, etc.) through the early morning and throughout the evening on most nights, as well as the number of entrances and exits through this time period, does not make metal detectors an effective or cost efficient layer of support. To be effective as a prevention program, metal detectors must be implemented as in an airport or courtroom where those entering are scanned and contained in one place until leaving. The committee feels implementation of metal detectors is not physically possible for FISD secondary facilities because of the number of feasible entrances and exits as well as the amount of staff needed to monitor. The amount of extracurricular programming occurring throughout the day and late into the evening where students would not be scanned at the entrance at both secondary campuses makes fixed metal detectors an ineffective layer. The SSAC was also concerned about the safety hazard produced

by a large gathering of students at entrances prior to passing through the metal detector. The committee feels funding can be used for more effective layers.

However, the committee does recommend the district take time during the coming school year to consider the logistics and legalities of implementing a random search plan for the secondary schools, including the use of portable metal detectors or metal detecting wands. This layer would be a deterrent and provide an opportunity to find weapons, drugs, or other contraband.

District Communication: The SSAC recommends implementation of uniform terminology for communication for different levels of alert at the campuses (hold, lockdown, shelter in place, evacuate, protect mode) as presented to the committee. This terminology should be used at the campus level and publicized to the community and part of parent, staff, and student training utilizing skyward, canvas, and websites. The District should pursue the collection of student cell phone numbers during registration in order to communicate directly with them in time of emergency. The committee recommends continuing the current parent communication practices in place.

Student Code of Conduct/Dress Code:

The SSAC reviewed the Student Code of Conduct and Dress Code currently in place at Fisd.

The Fisd Code of Conduct has many policies and procedures in place to address student discipline, school threats and weapons, and other student-related safety issues. The Code of Conduct is standardized across all campuses based on the Texas Association of School Board (TASB) Model Code which captures all the required legislation and laws contained in the Texas Education and Penal Codes. The SSAC approved of proposed adjustments to the code of conduct that include the following:

- Disciplinary action for students that fail to comply with all safety measures (i.e. propping doors, opening designated non-entry doors for entry, or failing to adhere to safety regulations.)
- Inclusion of “See Something, Say Something” reporting provisions.

The committee recommends the District strictly enforce existing policies, procedures, and protocols found in the Code of Conduct and Student Handbooks.

The SSAC reviewed the current dress code provisions to determine if current dress code provided a safe environment. The committee also considered the implementation of a standardized dress for students in relation to safety. After consideration, the committee is not recommending any changes to the dress code or implementation of standardized dress for safety purposes.

The current dress code already includes provisions related to a safe environment. Current provisions include the following:

- Full-length coats, such as those commonly referred to as “trench”coats.
- Any clothing or accessories which may be deemed to represent gang affiliation (real or implied).
- Clothing or accessory, which may be deemed to be offensive or degrade any student population.
- Gothic style dress.
- Any clothing or accessory which advertises or is related to alcohol, tobacco, drugs, sex, or any other substances students are prohibited from having at school, are not permitted.
- Clothing with suggestive or inappropriately located decorative patches, insignia.
- Clothing with improper advertising, pictures, slogans or statements.
- Clothing or accessories that in any way suggest disrespect for the American flag are not permitted. Slogans or drawings representing local, country, state or federal detentions are not permitted.

I.D. Badges:

Staff

Currently, staff are issued a name badge not containing a picture. Badges are also not standardized across campuses. The SSAC felt it was an important safety measure for FISD staff to be easily recognizable to all students, staff, and parents. As a result, the SSAC recommends all FISD staff should be issued a standardized, photo identification badge to be worn visibly at all times. Also, District substitutes should be issued a standardized ID that makes them easily identifiable to students, staff, and parents.

Students

The SSAC recommends student ID's should not be required for students in grades K - 8. The age level of the students and the limited entry and exit by students at these campuses does not warrant the requirement of identification badges, and the unintended consequences which would result from implementation of id badges for this age level.

FHS required the wearing of visible ID's for many years. This was discontinued via a change in student handbooks and code of conduct when enforcement of the policy was removing students from class because of disciplinary placement for failing to wear the ID and missing classes while standing in line to receive a temporary ID. Students also incurred excessive obligations for payment for temporary ID's. The unintended consequences of requirement of visible ID's did not make the purpose for wearing them beneficial enough to continue.

The Committee recommends the continuation and enforcement of the current policy at FHS as follows from the Mustang Manual:

STUDENT ID'S & LANYARDS Students are issued a new ID and a lanyard at the beginning of each year. Students must wear a Mustang lanyard at all times while on campus. Students will not be allowed into class without their lanyard. Students must have their student ID on their

person at all times. Students who do not wear their Mustang lanyard and/or have their student ID on them are subject to disciplinary action. If a student does not have their lanyard, then the teacher will issue a new one and the student will owe an obligation of \$1. If a student does not have their student ID when asked to present it, then they will be printed a new picture ID and charged a \$5 obligation. Students who have two or more ID violations will lose their standard exemption.

The committee felt if the student ID's did have more functionality for campus activities (ie. library access) students would be more apt to keep them accessible.

Clear/Mesh Backpacks

The SSAC is not recommending the use of clear/mesh backpacks at this time. The committee discussed the realities that students could still hide prohibited items inside of binders or small purses within the clear bags. Also, students would still be required to bring bags and cases for extracurricular activities and band instruments that would not be clear. The committee agreed clear/mesh backpacks could serve as a deterrent, but did not consider it an effective layer of security.

Visitors to campus: The Committee discussed the number of visitors to campus and possible safety impacts and recommendations. This is a specific concern at the elementary and intermediate levels where there is open lunch to parents three days per week and also various party days open to a certain number of parents per classroom. There was not a final recommendation from the committee on limiting access to visitors as there was a conflict between the positive impact of parent and community involvement at school and the logistics checking in parents for lunch and activities. The SSAC does recommend that parents who come for lunch be separated from other students and that the administration explore lunch visitor rotations by alpha groups.