

Strategic Plan Information and Advocacy Report



TO: Board of Education
FROM: Brian Johnson, Director of Student Services
DATE: May 15, 2023
RE: Information and Advocacy Report – Well-Being

OVERVIEW

Board Goal II: Well-Being- We will provide support systems for students and staff.

Objective D: Improve School Safety

- Indicator 1: Improve the practices and policies related to school safety.
- Indicator 2: Improve confidence and knowledge of school safety.

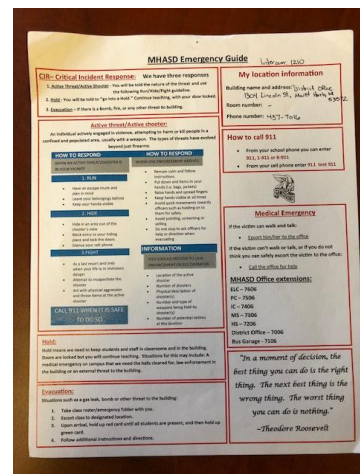
INTRODUCTION

The safety and security of our students and staff are a top priority in our District. We are always working to improve our processes and procedures. As a district, we are committed to learning new “advances” or “products” that offer an additional layer of protection to our students. This year, we have continued to move forward with safety drills, scenarios, and the teachings of both *Run, Hide, Fight* and *See Something, Say Something*.

A key component for school safety is proactive and preventative strategies. The District continues to identify strategies that will contribute to the overall student success in school and in life. The focus on student connectedness is a key data point that the district is working on improving, especially, for our middle and high school students. If students feel connected to school, while also having a trusted adult they can talk to, is the preventative component that can make a difference in overall school safety and well-being. The objective of improving school safety is deliberately under the heading of “Well-Being”. The first and most important component of school safety is prevention.

The mental wellness of students and staff is among our district’s top priorities. Many of the components of mental health and wellness have been shared in previous Information and Advocacy Reports as well as the Safety and Wellness Committee. The results of the YRBS will be shared next month. Moreover, our students tell us a critical component of their mental well-being around issues of safety and security is knowing staff has a plan and know what to do in case of an emergency.

This report will primarily focus on strategies related to active threats, practices, and policies related to school safety and professional development and training around school safety.



INDICATORS

Indicator 1: Improve the practices and policies related to school safety.

District and School Safety Plans

The District Safety Team has continued to move forward with the Emergency Guide which was re-written in 2018, by continuing training of new staff and students on how to respond during a critical incident. The District has defined a critical incident to include:

1. Active Threat/Active Shooter: Individuals will be told the nature of the threat and use the following Run/Hide/Fight guideline.
2. Hold: An announcement will be made "Go into a Hold." Staff will continue to teach with the door locked.
3. Evacuation: If there is a bomb, fire, or any other threat to the building.

The District has also continued to re-train staff on specific strategies and practices using tabletop exercises focusing on specific areas of concern within each building (including the District Office).

Safety Grant(s) & Next Steps

Within the last few years, the District spent its entire allotment of School Safety grants from the Wisconsin Department of Justice (\$263,237). This enabled us to focus on "value-added" student and staff safety systems. For example, the two grants have included enhanced security upgrades, new safety technology, and training for staff in the areas of trauma-informed care and mental health. Within the last year, we have received three grants that have allowed us to expand these initiatives and continue to improve school safety. We have received the Dane County Mental Health Grant, the Get Kids Ahead Initiative, and the Digital Mapping Grant.

These grants have allowed us to purchase the following items:

- Halo Smart Sensors (High School Bathrooms)
- Additional Cameras (especially outside)
- Radios
- 3-D Digital Maps for all of our school buildings: All uploaded into the Dane County 911 system
- Radio Repeater Signals for the Mount Horeb Police Department to better communicate from the interior of buildings
- Plus, mental health supports, SEL programming, and behavioral support

Next steps, the district will continue to focus on school safety as well as proactive strategies. A few specific items are:

- Common Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) System
- Attend the Summer School Safety Conference
- Infinite Campus Templates
- Reunification Plan
- Full District-Wide Training

Indicator 2: Improve confidence and knowledge of school safety.

Officer Rosemeyer continues to be a valuable resource to our team. He brings a consistent, calm demeanor to any crisis. He is also able to teach students and build proactive relationships. His team continues to conduct annual safety checks. During the building walkthroughs, Officer Rosemeyer and the team determined that overall safety was in place and all doors were locked in all buildings. Officer Rosemeyer looked for gaps in safety and had discussions with the school administrators about what could be done to enhance safety within their buildings.

We are thankful for the continued partnership with the Mount Horeb Police Department and our ability to have a District School Resource Officer. Steve Rosemeyer has been instrumental in bringing training and a lens of overall safety to our district. He has provided professional development to staff, trained students, responded to multiple crises, and most importantly, built relationships with students. Officer Rosemeyer, alongside District and school administration, has collaborated on preventative measures including the *Speak Up, Speak Out* program.

The Mount Horeb Area School District continues to train and educate staff and students on the components of “Run.Hide.Fight.” In previous years, the administrative staff has participated in ALICE training, ran parent presentations, conducted full staff training, and run student trainings. This has increased due to the latest school shooting in Nashville. Parents and students have reached out asking about safety and what they could do to help.

Finally, the Board's willingness to continue availing use of District facilities for the police and sheriff departments to run mock drills only serves to enhance proficiency and trust. This was last done at the Primary Center in the summer of 2022.

Safety Drills

This past year, we are back in full implementation mode running monthly safety and evacuation drills. Traditionally, as a District, we regularly practice fire drills and tornado drills. With the updated state law, we have morphed our fire drills into evacuation drills. Examples of these drills might include a chemical spill during a science experiment, instead of a traditional fire alarm and evacuation. Per Wisconsin legislation, the Board of Education receives a list of these drills and team debriefing sessions each December.

In addition to the monthly evacuation drills, schools conduct an annual Critical Incident Response (CIR) drill (as mandated by state law). When we conducted the CIR drills and/or training, we notified guardians in advance about the date and purpose of the event. This formal drill was conducted this past fall/winter in each building. This also includes barricading practice. These serve an important purpose, as they occur in the classroom and provide an opportunity for students and staff to deeply consider how to successfully barricade themselves from a threat. In preparation for these events, we always inform our students that they are safe during this practice (these are not drills). We also share with our students the reasons why we were practicing how to barricade, as well as how to best protect ourselves in the event of a critical incident.