

School Safety & Security – an update

We will hold a second School Safety and Security Community Forum on June 25th from 6:00PM – 7:00PM in the Northwestern HS Library (note this date has been changed from June 18th due to the Board Meeting date being rescheduled).

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update of what we have completed, what is in process, and future considerations regarding school safety and to possibly enlist focused financial planning and support for a school resource officer for the 18-19SY.

This meeting immediately precedes our monthly Northwestern Board of Education Meeting.

Northwestern has and will continue with our proactive approach to school safety, security, and potential violent or explosive situations.

We have been working with the Wayne County Sheriff's Dept. and Wayne County Commissioners the past two months on a proposal for a shared SRO (School Resource Officer), which would be a Deputy Sheriff with ongoing significant training. The proposal is that an SRO would be employed and utilized as Northwestern SRO during the school year and an active on the road Deputy in the summer months. The Wayne County Sheriff's Dept. would receive \$30,000 in funding from the Wayne County Commissioners, which would cover an est. 1/3 of the total cost. This agreement would reduce our costs for the SRO and still serve the school needs. The district's cost for the SRO would be over \$50,000 (training, salary, insurance, equipment, vehicle, and other costs). The district would be very grateful for any financial support from community and businesses for this added cost. We should have word on this prior to our June 18th meeting. We are finalizing the contract details and job description for a June agreement.

We have been working in collaboration with other superintendents and the Tri-County ESC for months on a county-wide (or possibly a three-county) 1 mil levy that would be utilized for school safety and security. We have proposed the collected revenue to be distributed by enrollment, but could be either distributed to schools by enrollment or by dollars collected locally for each district. Should this 1 mil levy pass in November we would not begin receiving this revenue until July 2019. This is why we need financial support for this upcoming 2018-2019 school year – during this transition year.

What Northwestern has done since January, 2018:

- Expanded and increased Counseling and Therapy, and Family Counseling Services through and within Northwestern Schools
- Added a third organization to provide additional services – Family Counseling out of Mansfield – in addition to services provided by Catholic Charities and ANAZAO
- Peer supports – HS to upper ES students (training through ANAZAO)
- Positive Behavior Supports (PBIS) – refresher and more intensive training
- Numerous staff discussions regarding school safety and security
- Continued anti-bullying efforts

- Continued efforts focusing on individual student needs and climate/family issues – especially anger management, self-esteem, relationships, and resiliency
- Wayne County Bullying Conference (Mrs. Beun has taken an active role and was a panel members and speaker for this spring county-wide event as well)
- Updated and replaced several security cameras
- Provided Staff “Unarmed Self-Defense training” in an intruder situation for staff in all three buildings voluntarily
- Purchased and distributed pepper spray to administrators, secretaries, custodians, interested bus drivers, and other key employees
- Purchased magnetic door lock pads for classroom doors
- Replacement of MS Entrance Security Camera system

Efforts in Process (in place by August, 2018 or early fall):

- Employment of a Full-Time School Year School Resource Officer for Northwestern
- 1% county-wide levy to fund the SRO and ongoing School Safety & Security measures
- Peer supports – recent graduates & strong leaders interacting with MS students (training through ANAZAO)
- MS Building Door reinforcements (incl. smoked replacement glass, reinforcements, etc.)
- Involvement in the “Stop the Bleed” initiative (emergency response and anti-hemorrhage discussions, logistics, training)
- Planning School Bus Training in August
- Adding security cameras to our new school van (we already have multiple cameras on every school bus)
- Studying additional secondary door lock systems for classrooms
- Add an additional 3 Security Cameras on campus
- Continued anti-bullying initiatives
- Applied for and received funding for a District office base MARCS radio unit (this is in addition to the base radio we had purchased three years ago for each school building – note that we have had numerous walky-talkies throughout the district for several years as well)
- Providing more comprehensive Staff “Unarmed Self-Defense training” in an intruder situation for all staff during Sept. 2018 professional development days
- SRO monitoring of social media
- SRO educating through DARE programming
- Continuation of current initiatives and ongoing discussions
- Purchasing additional direct intercom phones to reach the entire building in emergency
- Expanded access of our security cameras to Sheriff Dept. Deputies on their electronic devices
- Mandate that all Secondary exits remain locked and secured – no propping or unlocking of doors

Future efforts (these are items we are pursuing, but whether due to cost, degree of impact, additional time needed, labor needed, or logistics cannot occur sooner). We will be pursuing these as able, but with passage of a safety & security levy these can surely be pursued in summer 2019 and beyond:

- MS Door replacements and additional reinforcements
- Entrance bulletproof glass coating

- Installation of additional security cameras TBD
- Install a gate across the NE corner of the HS Building across to the storage building and fencing to secure the back of the HS
- Improved security to secondary exits through cameras, peepholes, and alarms
- Software to potentially scan social media for key phrases, threats, and self-harm
- Multi-directional signal boosters for MARCs handheld radios
- We are searching for additional school safety, opioid, or DARE officer content, if we can qualify for grant money

As I have shared before, the very best deterrent in many situations is forging and maintaining strong relationships and communications with staff, students, and parents; addressing mental health and behavioral issues, dealing with any bullying behavior immediately, as well as providing additional counseling supports for students and families as provided with existing staff, Catholic Charities, ANAZAO, families, and local clergy. The \$41,000 grant we have received for these counseling agencies to work with our students most in need in all of our school buildings through Wayne County JFS through Title XX funds as approved by the Wayne County Commissioners has been a much needed additional support for our children each of the past 3 years.