

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 5, 2018
SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS
COMMISSION MEETING**

November 5, 2018

1. Opening Items

1.01 Call to Order

The meeting of the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission was called to order at 2:02 p.m. at the Washoe County School District Central Administration Building, 425 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

1.02 Roll Call

Chair Lisa Ruggerio and Commission Members Misty Vaughan Allen, Scott Benton, Marci Burke, Charlene Bybee, Jeff Frame, Amber Joiner, Diane Nicolet, and Nathan Noble were present. Commission Member Manuel Mederos was not present at the time of roll call. Commission Members Darin Balaam, Jim Nadeau, Scot Munns, and Mia Mansfield were absent from the meeting.

1.03 Pledge of Allegiance

Sharon Orch led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.04 Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Commissioner Mederos arrived at the meeting at 2:04 p.m.

1.05 Action to Adopt the Agenda

It was moved by Commissioner Noble and seconded by Commission Bybee that **the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission approves the agenda as presented.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Misty Vaughan Allen, Scott Benton, Marci Burke, Charlene Bybee, Jeff Frame, Amber Joiner, Manuel Mederos, Diane Nicolet, Nathan Noble, and Lisa Ruggerio). Final Resolution: Motion Carries

2. Updates

2.01 Chair Report

Chair Ruggiero provided the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission with information related to events and meetings in the community and District relevant to the Commission.

2.02 Student Representative Report

Commissioner Noble provided the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission with information related to discussions and meetings from the Student Advisory Board.

3. Items for Presentation, Discussion, Information and/or Action

3.01 Review of draft Administrative Regulations 1506, Visitors, and 1507, Visitor Management Protocols, and possible action to provide recommendations to the Superintendent on the draft regulations

Roy Anderson, Emergency Manager, reviewed the draft regulations. It was important to note the Visitor Management Protocols were being developed because of the new visitor management system that would be installed in all schools over the next few years. Staff was interested in receiving feedback from the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission on the regulations to ensure they addressed possible concerns.

David Lasic, Chief of Staff, explained administrative regulations were how the District implemented the goals of Board Policies. The regulations would provide direction to school site staff on the expectations of what should occur when a visitor to the school came onto campus.

Chair Ruggiero noted in 1506, registered sex offenders had been removed and placed in 1507. Mr. Lasic indicated there was a difference between visitors and volunteers. Visitors were not required to go through the background check process that volunteers were required to pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes.

Commissioner Joiner requested clarification between visitors and volunteers because there was some confusion among parents with the new requirements that if someone volunteered more than four times in a month they would have to be fingerprinted. She wondered if volunteer forms would still be required by anyone interested in volunteering so the District would know who was in the schools. Jason Trevino, Chief of School Police, stated that volunteers would now be broken into two categories, regular and non-regular. Regular volunteers were those who volunteered at least four times per month and were required to be fingerprinted. Non-regular volunteers were those who volunteered less than four times per month. Both categories would be required to submit the volunteer form, which allowed School Police to check for wants and warrants.

Commissioner Joiner mentioned that there was a lot of confusion occurring for parents because some principals were requiring parents to fill out the volunteer forms even if they only wanted to attend an event occurring at the school, such as a Halloween costume parade. She wondered if the individual principals were allowed to determine which activities parents would be considered volunteers for. Chief Trevino commented that, for School Police, there was a difference between a school activity and a volunteer activity. School Police considered an event, such as a parade or concert, an activity where parents should be welcomed and not required to fill out volunteer paperwork; however, if the parent was assisting a teacher in setting or cleaning up the event, then they would be considered a volunteer. Mr. Lasic mentioned the District was aware of the confusion and was working with the principals on clarification.

Commissioner Mederos expressed concern over the need to present identification for visitors with the new visitor management system. He mentioned there were a number of parents in the community who might not have the proper identification or were fearful of having a background check performed because of their immigration status. Mr. Lasic stated the District would accept any form of government issued identification card, not only those issued in Nevada or the United States. In Nevada, anyone was able to obtain an identification card, no matter their immigration status. The intent was not to prevent parents from coming to their children's schools, but to ensure the District knew who was in the schools.

Commissioner Mederos noted the "site administrator" had the ability to deny a visitor. He wondered who was considered a site administrator and if there was a conflict, who the parent/guardian would be able to speak to if they were denied access. Mr. Lasic remarked the principal or vice principal was the site administrator and the area superintendent for the school should be contacted if there was a conflict or concern.

Commissioner Bybee asked about the current process for assemblies, concerts, or other events and if there was a sign-in process for those attending. Mr. Lasic indicated the process currently varied by site, event, and time of day of the event. If the event were to occur after school hours, then the schools would not usually check in visitors. If the event were to occur during school hours, especially at an elementary school, he hoped the schools were having attendees sign in. Part of the current issue was that different schools had different procedures and there needed to be a District-wide standard of expectations. Chief Trevino noted the District understood having people sign-in would take additional time for parents and other visitors. An educational piece to the process would need to be developed for both the schools and the visitors. If an event was occurring during the school day in a part of the school, the District still needed to be aware of what was going on in the rest of the building and if there were visitors in other areas.

Commissioner Burke expressed concern over the language of non-enrolled children not being able to visit without a parent. She wondered about older siblings who might be taking care of younger siblings. Chief Trevino noted there was a difference between having someone on campus and providing someone access to the buildings. It was inappropriate for an older sibling to be wondering around the halls of a school when classes were in session, but that sibling could wait in the office or outside the gate to pick up the sibling at the end of the day.

Commissioner Noble wondered how the regulations would be enforced, especially at high schools where there were multiple entry points. Chief Trevino indicated that training for staff, students, and visitors would need to occur since the process would be different at high schools. The idea was to have layers of security at every site for a checks and balances type of system. The perimeter fencing, single point of entry, and now visitor management system were intended to work together. School Police would also be able to run reports to show compliance, so if a school showed no visitors then School Police would know that the system was not being used and they would have a meeting with the school site. Mr. Anderson mentioned the training component for staff and students would be important as well, so they would know to report information to the office if they saw someone without a badge.

Commissioner Noble asked about how the layers of security would work at a high school with an open campus for lunches since there would be a large number of students leaving or entering at the same time. Chief Trevino noted that question was part of a larger conversation the District would need to have about open campus high schools. High schools in general were treated differently in some aspects when it came to the perimeter fencing and single point entry, but it would be important for the District to at least have the discussions about how safety and security could and should be handled on high school campus.

It was moved by Commissioner Joiner and seconded by Commissioner Allen that **the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission recommends support of Administrative Regulations 1506, Visitors, and 1507, Visitor Management Protocols.**

Chair Ruggerio opened the motion for discussion.

Commissioner Nicolet requested language be added to 1506, Visitor, to include the Safety and Security measures (Section 4) from page 3 of 1507, Visitor Management Protocols. She understood it was duplicative, but wanted to ensure everyone was clear on the intent.

Commissioners Joiner and Allen agreed to the amendment.

The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Misty Vaughan Allen, Scott Benton, Marci Burke, Charlene Bybee, Jeff Frame, Amber Joiner, Manuel Mederos, Diane Nicolet, Nathan Noble, and Lisa Ruggerio). Final Resolution: Motion Carries

3.02 Update from National School Safety Advocacy Council on recommendations in the District-wide safety audit related to the safety and security of District facilities

Sean Burke, President, School Safety Advocacy Council, presented an update on the District-wide safety audit. About 40 schools remained to be audited, most of them elementary schools. They continued to work with staff on focus groups to gather information and providing training for school safety to all District staff. He stated that since the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, they had been contacted by multiple school districts across the country and they always held up the Washoe County School District as an example of what other school districts should consider implementing, including the development of a safety committee. He praised District staff in their willingness to accept recommendations and interest in ensuring student and staff safety.

Curt Lavarello, Executive Director, School Safety Advocacy Council, mentioned that they also appreciated the access that had been provided to the students so that conversations could occur with those who would be most impacted by any changes. He was impressed with the knowledge of the students about impacts to safety and how their knowledge of mental health issues had evolved since the District started the safety audit project. They would like to continue to work with the student groups to gain more information and ideas. The policies and procedures the District had been working on implementing were all aligned with national best practices.

The Commissioners were interested in learning about what the students were concerned about in the schools. Mr. Lavarello noted the commonality for all student groups was that they were most concerned about what happened in the restrooms and that there was not enough supervision. Consistency throughout all schools in the District was also an issue that the policies and regulations should address. Mr. Burke added that the students were also concerned about the number of doors not locked during the day, not only exterior but interior as well.

Jason Trevino, Chief of School Police, provided additional information to the Commission on the re-check process. The District wanted to ensure the information from the initial audits of the schools did not remain in a report on a shelf somewhere, but was actually being used and changes made. The re-checks had allowed the District to learn improved training was needed for new principals because there was not always enough time during the transition process for a principal to thoroughly review the results of the initial safety audit and the steps that had been implemented.

Commissioner Noble expressed concern over students being the ones to know or understand if there was an issue on campus. Mr. Burke mentioned that students were often the ones who were more aware about what was occurring in the schools than the staff members. Adult staff members would often try to find an alternate reason for what they might see or hear, whereas students would identify that something was not right. The goal was to ensure the students were comfortable enough to report that information and know the adult would do something with the information.

Chair Ruggiero recessed the meeting for 15 minutes.

3.03 Safe Routes to School Presentation

MJ Cloud, School Police Safe Routes to School Coordinator, provided a presentation on the Safe Routes to School program. Currently, around 15% of students in the District walked or biked to and from school, which had decreased from 30-50% since the 1960's. Also of concern was that the obesity level in children had also increased during that time period as well. During the 2018-19 School Year, the District had already had 10 vehicle versus student accidents so it was important to get the message out to not only students, but the community. She noted that many parents did not want their children walking or biking to school primarily because of perception issues and not because of what was actually occurring in the community. For example, parents expressed concern with the safety of children walking or biking because of accidents; however, the number of children injured while riding in a car was much higher than the number of children injured while walking or biking to and from school. Additionally, many parents were concerned about childhood abductions, but children were more likely to be struck by lightning than abducted by a stranger. Other examples of perception versus reality were provided.

Officer Cloud explained the Safe Routes to School program was not just an opportunity to provide fun events for students to participate in, but was also a learning opportunity to allow students to gain knowledge of pedestrian and bike safety. The program was also intended to provide information to the parents with the reality of walking and biking to school versus their perceptions. The curriculum included cross-curricular opportunities in English Language Arts, math, geography, science, and other subjects. She would collaborate with other government agencies on the safety of the routes because there were times when a crosswalk would need to be moved because the location was not ideal for students or additional signage was required. Many of the agencies were also interested in speaking with students, especially in middle and high schools, to hear their concerns and where they saw the most problems. One program the District was working closely with the City of Sparks on was the Be Safe, Be Seen Flag Program the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission had previously heard about from a local Girl Scout Troop.

Priyasha Landry, 7th grader at B.D. Billingshurst Middle School, provided information on the Flag Program and other methods that could be implemented to improve pedestrian safety. Many students in the community were forced to walk across increasingly busy streets with vehicles stopping and/or parking in crosswalks and red zones, as well as making U-turns in school zones. She presented images of how the District and other local governments could work together to curb the jaywalking issues because of previously mentioned concerns.

Some Commissioners expressed an interest in making a motion to support Miss Landry's ideas to improve predestination safety because they believed it would require a change in the culture of the community to fully achieve. They mentioned that part of the issue directly related to parents and neighbors because they were the ones speeding and making U-turns in school zones so conversations needed to start at home and school. Neil Rombardo, Chief General Counsel, noted the item was not agendized for action but only as a presentation and discussion so the Commission could not take a vote on supporting the program. Officer Cloud indicated that the City of Sparks was working with Miss Landry on implementing some aspects of the projects.

Other members of the Commission wondered if there were any concerns about impeding the flow of traffic in certain areas. They felt there could be potential problems if the signs were a distraction to drivers. Officer Cloud mentioned that she would be interested in seeing the signs on streets in more residential neighborhoods where the speed limits were lower. She believed some proposed projects could be problematic on streets with higher speed limits because they could be a distraction.

Members of the Commission provided Miss Landry with information on how her project could move forward through presentations to other local governments and corporate donations.

3.04 Presentation on Signs of Suicide (SOS), a suicide prevention program provided to middle and high school students

Katherine Loudon, Coordinator of Counseling Services, provided a presentation on the Signs of Suicide (SOS) program. SOS was a suicide prevention program provided to middle and high schools through a partnership with the District, government agencies, and non-profits. The program not only provided information on suicide prevention, but also allowed for a mental health screening for students, if parents approved. The program was initially only offered in high schools; however, about 3 years ago the District worked to implement the program in middle schools to reach a larger number of potentially vulnerable students.

Kim Hargrove, Children's Cabinet, explained how the program was provided in the schools, including the mental health assessments. Prior to any assessment being conducted, information was presented to students, staff, and parents (if interested) on the signs of suicide and what they should do if they recognized any of the signs in their friends or others. The assessment consisted of seven questions. If a student was identified as "at-risk," an additional assessment was conducted by a licensed social worker or psychologist and information provided to the parents. They also worked with any student not identified as "at-risk" to ensure nothing was missed and provide an opportunity for the students to address any concerns they might have.

Commissioners wondered if the District had been tracking information on the program to determine what else needed to be done and if the program should be implemented in other grades. Ms. Hargrove noted they were willing to provide the information at any school interested in having the program. The data related to the need for the program varied from year to year since there were always new students receiving the information; however, in general, around 20-25% of students screened were deemed at-risk and opportunities provided to them to have additional conversations regarding potential problems. The community had seen fewer youth suicides in the past few years, but she could not guarantee it was solely due to the program.

Commissioner Noble stated the District's Counseling Department and the programs being provided were helping. Students throughout the District now knew where to go if they were having problems; however, many students, teachers, and others in the community faced stigma surrounding suicide and believed those who attempted it were only "seeking attention". Those who might be considering suicide were often shamed or the act was treated as a joke so it would be critical in the future to address that stigma as well.

Commissioner Vaughan Allen provided information the State's plan related to suicide prevention. She stated the stigma surrounding suicide was one of the biggest challenges. It was important to remember that any attempt at suicide should be considered attention needed and not attention sought. The Office of Suicide Prevention was working to ensure services were not reactionary. When she first began working with the State, Nevada was in the top 10 nationally for youth suicide and now they were at the national average, so there had been a decrease and that needed to be celebrated even though the work needed to continue.

Dr. Byron Green, Chief Student Services Officer, added that the District could not provide the programming alone so the partnerships with the state, local government agencies, and others was critical. He mentioned that it was often difficult to determine the success of a suicide prevention program because they would probably never know how many possible suicides were prevented. The District was working with many others to expand the information to parents through the Family Resource Centers as well.

4. Closing Items

4.01 Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

4.02 Next Meeting Announcement

The next meeting of the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission would be held on December 3, 2018, at 2:00 p.m. at the Central Administration Building.

4.03 Adjourn Meeting

There being no further business to come before the members of the Commission, Chair Ruggiero declared the meeting adjourned at 4:14 p.m.

Lisa Ruggiero, Chair