

Board of Education Safety Report as of November 2019

To inform parents and community members as to what the Haddonfield Board of Education (BOE) has done both over time and during the past year to ensure a safe and secure environment for all students, we want to describe some of the safety programs approved by the BOE. This article also outlines some (not all) of the plans we have for safety and security going forward.

While we recognize we still have a lot to do in terms of security, we want to be sure you all know exactly what has been done to date in terms of providing a safe and secure atmosphere for our students and staff.

- **Anonymous Reporting System for MS and HS Students Instituted:**
STOPit! is our anonymous reporting system for anyone to tell us about mental and emotional health issues or safety concerns among the student population. The system is taking root and is being used well by our students and parents. Earlier this school year, we received an anonymous report that enabled us to intervene and help a student almost immediately.
- **Visitor Management System in Each Building:**
We have purchased the Raptor Visitor Management System for each school. The Raptor system is used in 32,000 K-12 schools across the nation. Visitor management systems are very important safety systems in that they allow us to digitally screen and track who is visiting our buildings. Office staff have been trained and are vetting every visitor to the schools. Identification is checked and screened for possible red flags. Last month, during the well-attended Halloween festivities at Elizabeth Haddon, Dr. Mussoline noted that every parent had a proper Raptor ID badge created for them before entering the building.
- **Secretarial Training for Visitor Entrance Procedures:**
Our Safety Coordinator, Mrs. Sandy Horwitz, trained all building secretaries over the summer of 2019 on proper building entrance procedures.
- **Secure Vestibules at Elizabeth Haddon and Tatem Elementary Schools:**
The arduous statutorily regulated process to renovate a school building to install vestibules at Haddon and Tatem has been underway since summer, and we are anticipating completion during the spring. Once completed, all Haddonfield schools will have secure vestibules for the first time in the history of the district.
- **Secure Vestibule at Haddonfield Memorial High School:**
Since HMHS didn't require a construction project, the District secured a small vestibule area at HMHS over the summer of 2019 and therefore was able to limit entrance into the building and provide a small holding and screening area for people seeking entrance.
- **Security Cameras Installed:**
With vandalism prevalent at certain school sites, the BOE installed security cameras at

certain schools to prevent property loss as well as to prevent activity that could harm our youth.

- **Vaping Detectors Installed:**

The problem of vaping has caused many teenage deaths in America. From lung transplants to long hospital stays, this new tobacco company product is now one of the most dangerous risk factors for our teens. Therefore, the BOE has installed vape detectors in areas where students vape to protect our students and inform parents of the risky activity.

- **Armed School Resource Officer Patrols MHMS:**

Instituted at the start of the 2019-20 school year, a Class III School Police Officer was hired to patrol HMHS. Officer Melissa Young completed the New Jersey School Resource Officer Training and approaches her role with enthusiasm and dedication. She maintains a visible presence in the hallways, and she is making critical connections with students. This position and all of Officer Young's police training and her supplies are fully paid for by the Haddonfield BOE.

- **Full-Time Counselors in All Schools:**

School counselors are often the first line of identification for detrimental social-emotional issues that students are internalizing. This is the first year that all Haddonfield schools have full-time counselors working with students and families on critical well-being issues.

- **Role of Anti Bullying Specialists and School Climate Teams:**

As we discussed last year, a positive school climate is the best defense against workplace and school violence. Know that our Anti-Bullying Specialists, School Climate Teams, and principals are working intently, as they did last year, to create the most positive school climate possible. Our number of HIB incidents in the 2018-19 school year declined significantly from 2017-18 because of added training and vigilance by the adults in each school.

- **Classrooms Marked:**

A recommendation from the community security committee that met last year was to ensure we provided teachers and students with markers demarcating the place in each classroom for students and teachers to stand during lockdown drills. That was completed in all classrooms over the summer. Drills are practiced throughout the school year.

- **Exterior Doors Labeled Based on Regulation:**

All district exterior doors have been re-labeled based on International Fire Code § 505 requirements. The process was supervised by the Haddonfield Fire Chief.

- **Drills for all Emergency Situations Revised:**

This year all school emergency drills are coordinated by our principals and our Safety Coordinator, Mrs. Horwitz. The Haddonfield Police Department, Fire Department, and

Office of Emergency Management took over and observe all school lockdown and active shooter drills in all schools.

- **Threat Assessment Protocols Revised and Updated:**

All counselors and principals were trained in new threat assessment protocols. Threat assessment is a structured group process used to evaluate the risk posed by a student or another person, typically as a response to an actual or perceived threat or concerning behavior. The primary purpose of a threat assessment is to prevent targeted violence. The threat assessment process is centered upon an analysis of the facts and evidence of behavior in a given situation. The appraisal of risk in a threat assessment focuses on actions, communications, and specific circumstances that might suggest that an individual intends to mount an attack and is engaged in planning or preparing for that event.

- **Social-Emotional Goal in BOE-Approved Strategic Plan:**

The Board of Education was instrumental in ensuring that we look at the social and emotional wellbeing of all students over the next three years by approving a strategic plan goal: “Social-Emotional Skills and Support.” You will see evidence of the action steps we are using to accomplish this goal in the School Climate Assessment item below.

- **School Climate Assessment:**

Dr. Gino Priolo, our Director of Special Education, has been leading our efforts to assess our school climates, and Mr. Chuck Klaus has worked diligently on formalizing our Threat Assessment and Protocol procedures.

- On October 15 and 16, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Committee Co-Chairs Dr. Gino Priolo and Ms. Laurie Bushey, along with School Psychologist Dr. Kristin Leren attended two days of comprehensive RULER training at Yale University's Center for Emotional Intelligence. RULER is the acronym that stands for the five skills of emotional intelligence: Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions. The framework of the RULER program aims to develop enhanced mindsets about emotions, deepen social and emotional skills, and foster healthy emotional climates for both the adults and students in our schools. Dr. Priolo, Ms. Bushey, and Dr. Leren are now collaborating with the district's administrative team, as well as the district's SEL team to implement the frameworks of the program throughout the school district. You can learn more about the RULER approach at <https://www.rulerapproach.org/>.
- Beginning this week, the district will be rolling out a comprehensive SEL survey through Panorama Education that will be administered to faculty, staff, and students in grades 3-12. The data will be centered on the current development of social and emotional intelligence, as well as data on the overall climate in our schools. This information will be shared with parents and the community and will help to inform policy and practice. More comprehensive information about the survey, its content, and how the data will be shared can be found here. (LINK: https://haddonfieldschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Nov2019Parent_SEL_Ltr.pdf)

Security Items accomplished before July 2019:

- **Secure Vestibule Created @ Central/Middle School:**
A secure vestibule was created for entrance into Central/Middle School to better account for visitors into that office area servicing two schools.
- **Door Locks Changed:**
All classroom door locks were changed to allow the teacher to lock the classroom doors from the inside for quicker response time and overall safety.
- **Creation of a District Level Position of School Safety Coordinator:**
The BOE appointed Mrs. Sandy Horwitz as School Safety Coordinator to oversee school safety issues in all Haddonfield schools.
- **Telephone Infrastructure Changed:**
A new telephone system was installed allowing everyone to immediately dial 911 from classrooms and offices, again for quicker response times.
- **Alyssa's Law Panic Alarms in Place in All Offices:**
Haddonfield was on the cutting edge of ensuring quick response times to schools in the event of an emergency by installing panic alarms in every office so office staff and principals can immediately alert police safely and securely.

Future Plans:

- **Individual Panic Alarms for Staff:**
With the goal of shortening police response time as much as possible in the event of an active shooter, plans will be submitted by the end of November for consideration in next year's budget to install panic alarms in our hallways and to provide every staff member with a personal panic button to wear. Pursuing another recommendation, we are costing out the price of installing strobe lights outside each building to signal to visitors and returning staff and students that the building is on lockdown. Depending on the estimated costs, these projects may have to be completed in phases.
- **Student Reunification Protocols:**
A project for this year is to formalize our Parent Reunification procedures. Plans need to be developed to efficiently and supportively handle parent reunification with their children in the event of a crisis.
- **Security Cameras:**
There is a great need for security cameras inside and outside of all buildings not only for BOE property protection but for the health and safety of all students and staff as well. This is a much larger issue that has to be addressed through bond issuance in the future.
- **Creation of A Crises Counselor/Student Assistance Team Counselor:**
The Board has plans to include a Student Assistance Team counselor/coordinator in the 2020-21 budget. This person will essentially identify students with academic, social, or

personal concerns and work together with the student and parents/guardians and community agencies to address these various issues. Some of the issues this person along with building level teams will coordinate are as follows: Academic decline; persistent disciplinary problems; observable expressions of anger, tears; observable behavior such as interrupting, giddiness, poor emotional control; observable behaviors such as overheard conversations about alcohol or other drugs, parties where drugs are present, or fears about a fellow student's use of mood-altering substances; observable behaviors such as overheard conversations about feeling very sad or depressed; observable cuts, scars on arms and/or legs; observing a distinct behavior change or change in friends; observing drug-related or morbid language or drawings; observing glassy eyes, red eyes, agitation, frequent cold-like symptoms, rash around the nose/mouth, smells similar to marijuana, alcohol, or solvents; loss of interest in academic and/or extra-curricular activities.