

School Safety

Enclosure B-1-b
June 11, 2018

Worthington Schools has applied a three pronged approach to school safety: secure the environment, train students and staff, and address the mental health needs. The first chart below illustrates many aspects of our plan from 2017-18. Each year the district attempts to adapt and improve our plans. Following the Parkland incident, we met with police chiefs from Worthington, Perry Township and Sharon Township to discuss their concerns and learn how they were modifying plans as a result of the national issue of school violence. Gary Sigrist, consultant from Safeguard Risk Solutions, also provided recommendations after completing walkthroughs at multiple sites. In addition, we discussed our procedures with teachers in Key Communicators meetings and heard from PTAs through principal reports. Dr. Bowers even sent emails to all parents inviting them to contact us regarding their concerns. As a result of these discussions, we have developed a list of additional strategies to be implemented during the 2018-19 school year. (page 2) While our plans must be constantly evolving, the list below provides a path to significantly strengthening our plan in all three areas. Finally, our principals at TWHS and WKHS have voiced support for an SRO for next school year. We have included a few words from both Aric Thomas and Pete Scully.

At the regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, June 11th, the Board of Education will have the opportunity to discuss these changes and ask questions about our plan.

Worthington Schools Safety 2017

Secure the Environment	Training	Mental Health
<p>All buildings are locked during the student day and guests are required to be in camera view prior to being permitted to enter through a common entry point.</p>	<p>Staff annually review the school safety plan and submit it to the Ohio Department of Education as well as our local first responders.</p>	<p>All schools have school counselors.</p>
<p>Staff are assigned to entry and exit points during arrival and dismissal.</p>	<p>All employees have had access to ALICE training through the WPD.</p>	<p>The district employs three mental health specialists.</p>
<p>Each building is equipped with a panic button to request police support.</p>	<p>Students receive age appropriate training on the ALICE concepts and site rally points were practiced.</p>	
<p>Each building has a walkie-talkie with direct access to the WPD radio room.</p>	<p>Staff and students practice a variety of drills each year.</p>	
<p>Protective film has been applied to entry areas.</p>	<p>Staff participate in table top safety activities to prepare for specific situations</p>	

Worthington Schools Safety Additions 2018

Secure the Environment	Training	Mental Health
School resource officers at each High School	Formalize a safety team from each building with inservice prior to the start of school	Increase Mental Health specialists
Safety bags/buckets for classrooms	Implement Sandy Hook Promise student initiatives	
Number the classroom windows	Complete full scale safety drills in fall 2018	
Entry Fobs for Sharon and Perry Township		
MAC aide		
Improve Phone Coverage in buildings		

Dear Dr. Bowers and School Board,

I had the privilege of working with School Resource Officers in my previous schools, and I can affirm their general nature to serve the school community in a positive and collective manner. Leading Prom Promise campaigns, assisting with threat assessments, providing ALICE training to students and staff, and being a liaison between the community and school were just a few features that stood out to me. Moreover, the rapport each of them were able to create with the diverse students and families our schools were serving was exceptional. Many students saw them as a front-line resource to help them with their issues and concerns, and, in many cases, the students would approach them before any other adult in the school.

Adding to this is the unique opportunity to consider the partnerships we could strengthen between two fine policing agencies; I believe the possibilities are endless.

Although I realize a singular person may not prevent the unthinkable from happening, I do know the relationships the officers will make will have a lasting effect on our school community.

Sincerely,

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Aric Thomas, Principal

Dear Dr. Bowers and members of the Board,

I'll be really blunt. If you asked me two months ago about whether I wanted an SRO, my response would be pretty luke-warm. I was worried about things like the school to prison pipeline. I was worried about my students of color and my undocumented students. I was worried about the kid who is just nervous to see anyone with a gun or in uniform. So, what has happened over the last two months?

It's not that those fears still aren't present. I believe the presence of a police officer will present us with new work and effort to make sure some of our kids feel safe and welcome. Over the past two months, after working with the city of Worthington and the Worthington Police Department, I've realized the benefit of having an SRO far outweighs the risks that we will need to carefully manage and monitor.

SROs are classified as a "specialist position." I'm not a police officer, so I initially just glanced over that portion. Essentially, it means that this officer has a significant amount of extra training that is school safety related. He/She will be trained initially and then regularly updated on the most current approaches, practices, and threats. The idea that our school could have a resource present daily who can troubleshoot and work with us to enhance our approaches to keeping kids safe, is strongly appealing. We need feedback. Having an expert walking our halls and giving us regular feedback would be an immediate and impactful benefit.

SROs have a panel of training requirements that aren't school-specific, but would help us. He/She will be trained in Crisis Intervention. He/She will go through a law enforcement version of Implicit Bias training. Most importantly, this officer will have a stronger and more personal relationship with school staff and students. This connection only improves community policing and ups the ante on the strong partnership we've already built.

As a high school principal, there is one thing that is clear in our Social-Emotional Learning data. We need as many adults connected to kids as we can get. Part of this process is choosing the right person. The city of Worthington and Worthington PD is committed to working closely with us to make sure we have a fit that provides us with a kind adult who connects with kids. Simply being able to add that is worth it to me.

I have seen the research. I believe the fears are real and well-documented. I believe it is important for us to regularly monitor the impact of an SRO in our school environment. I also believe the benefits outweigh the risk. I believe that we do our jobs as school administrators, this is a strong and important enhancement to our school.

I write this letter to indicate firm and full support of adding an SRO at Thomas Worthington High School.

Sincerely,

Pete Scully

