District Crisis Team Meeting
Tuesday, Oct. 8, 3:30 p.m. - Mellon

Present:
Orlando Thomas, Windsor          Lindsay Aikman, Centennial
Amy Magers, Windsor               Jeanne Smith, Windsor
Lisa Milkereit, Dr. Howard/CFT    Nancy Lorey, Windsor
Todd Hitt, CFD                    David Brauer, Windsor
Erin Ewoldt, parent/Carrie Busey  Jenelle Thompson-Keen, parent/JE & CI
Jonathan Kosovski, Int’l Prep Academy Michael Sitch, Central
Joe Williams, Central             Amy Dean, Garden Hills
Laurie Scott, Mellon              Jessica Hines, Jefferson
Tim Gabbert, St. John Lutheran    Tod Myers, Champaign Police Dept.

Introductions:
Committee members introduced themselves.

Celebrations:
Jonathan indicated International Prep Academy successfully completed their ALICE drill. Jessica described the amazing Jefferson AVID math activity for students. Black and brown students thoroughly enjoyed this learning activity.

Meeting Norms:
Committee members reviewed meeting norms, and it was requested that we please not engage in philosophical conversations about the law.

As requested, our District’s lead attorney (Francek Law Firm) provided the following information regarding liability we would incur for not conducting the State mandated ALICE drill:

“Based on our review of the issue, there are two possible penalties.

“First, the District’s status with the Illinois State Board of Education could change based on non-compliance with the requirement. The State Board has discretion as to determining the impact of the District’s status, but this could be grounds for changing the District’s statute to ‘on probation’ or ‘pending further review.’

“Second, the District’s refusal to comply could be grounds for future liability in the event of harm from an active shooter incident—or other incidents this drill seeks to address. The District has certain liability protection as a school district from ordinary negligence. However, if a student or staff member is injured in a manner that may have been prevented from this training, then there is risk of ‘willful and wanton’ liability. This is the higher level of wrongdoing required for District liability. The District should also discuss this issue with its insurance provider as liability from such intentional violation of the law may not be covered by the District’s insurance coverage. I have not reviewed the terms of the District’s insurance policy for purposes of this opinion, but only flag this issue for further review.”
International Prep Academy ALICE Drill:
Orlando indicated he, Jeanne, and Todd attended this drill as observers. Jeanne created an observation form for recording drill start and end time, student and staff responses, special needs students’ status, safety hazards, excused students, etc. They looked for barriers, which might not have been considered prior to drill.

- When and where were they planning to conduct their debriefing? Could Todd provide feedback prior to next school drill?
- Johnathan indicated the drill was fairly efficient. He made the drill announcement at 12:17 p.m., and the relocation site was St. Matthew School. They returned at 12:40 p.m. Something not considered was route to St. Matthew. They may need to figure out protocol in the future, and take a longer route. In addition, they need to consider where the dangerous person was located. In debrief, teachers stated students were much better with the drill when it was over; students were nervous at first, but better afterwards. Students indicated they were fine, and were enthusiastic. After the meeting, a parent emailed about student door holders, etc. Would not have students holding doors for others during this drill in a real emergency. All special ed students participated. Seven or eight students opted out. No students had tears afterwards. No social worker was needed. Students were given popsicles and returned to learning - no crises, no issues. Conversations continued at homes.
- Mike asked Jeanne what she was looking for when considering if students were distressed. Jeanne stated she was looking at student faces and actions for signs of stress and trauma.
- Johnathan stated Early Childhood (CECC) participated and it went well. IPA used English and Spanish student presentations.
- Todd (CPD) was giving student high-fives. Jonathan alerted staff that police may be on campus during the drill.
- Amy Dean received feedback from teachers who wanted to make the pre-drill presentation appropriate for three- and four-year-olds.
- Jenelle asked about police feedback. Todd stated he noticed the route students took and suggested changes after seeing a bottleneck. He also gave Jonathan feedback on the drill and stated it went well.
- Orlando and Todd are planning to attend the St. Thomas More drill just to see what other districts are doing.
- Lisa asked if police would be at all District drills and was told they would.
- Johnathan sent letters home in backpacks so everyone was aware of the date of the drill. Orlando will keep a master database of students being opted out of drill.
- Todd has the schedule for drills. He may not be at a few later drills, but will still be able to sign off on the drills.

Communication:
Orlando indicated a District parent email link has been created for parents to contact us with questions regarding crisis/drills, etc. He asked committee members if they approve of John Lyday and Orlando being the only people to see the parent email questions/responses. They could share information with this committee or would committee members prefer to receive the emails directly? Committee members agreed they didn’t want to receive emails directly.
• An auto response to emails might say, “Thank you for your email…We’ll respond in the near future.”
• Laurie suggested creating a database of common questions and answers to add to the District website to increase parent understanding of ALICE. Orlando asked us to consider three to five questions that parents might commonly ask.
• Parent letter regarding ALICE already shows on our website.
• Mike asked if this aligns with our committee goals. Jonathan stated it aligns with Goal 2, and we’re being proactive.
• Joe suggested the parent site might prompt them to ask themselves if the school has their correct or updated contact information, which would be needed in a real crisis situation. He stated some students will scatter during a reunification and would directly contact parents. Joe suggested telling parents about the different drills done in schools.
• Jessica suggested we share the differences between an “evacuation” and “reunification” in the Q & A section.
• Erin suggested including the various components of the ALICE drill. Will it include a lockdown? Many parents asked Jonathan if the drill would include a lockdown.

Observations Requests:
Dr. Zola has denied requests to observe the drills. No one is allowed to observe our practice. If we have people not participating, including media, they would need to leave. We want to make sure we do not have more barriers to students and staff this first year.
• Jenelle asked if parents volunteering in schools would be asked to leave, also. Orlando stated they would need to leave. Jenelle asked for messages to be communicated with people as needed; it has been confusing to them.

School Safety Concerns:
To evaluate safety considerations a few years ago, Orlando requested an officer (plain clothes) walk around District schools (inside and outside) looking for unlocked school doors and general safety, etc. The officer identified whether he was asked to identify himself by staff at the front entrance and what his reason was for being there (to meet with a staff member). Did that staff member report to the office promptly? Did staff see the officer walking around in the building? Did staff report him to the main office? Orlando and Todd then met with school administrators with their information and any resulting safety concerns. Are all doors locking and alarms functioning properly?
• Mike would like us to do walkarounds and safety checks at schools again. Orlando and Mike recently met to discuss a tighter plan for crisis communication. Can we get information out quicker to families? District Communications staff and Orlando are working on a plan for principals related to communications with staff. When administrators/principal are absent, is there a secondary support system in the event of a crisis? We should provide more structure for building crisis teams. What is our expectation of the team? We need baseline things in place. Mike is concerned that the perimeter doors at secondary schools are easily accessible with people going in and out of them often.
• Elizabeth Stegmaier plans to visit campuses and determine appropriate building safety measures, then prioritize safety needs. Mike and Orlando discussed creating/Implementing a tighter plan for communication. Mike might talk to principals
regarding current safety deficiencies (i.e. working cameras) at their buildings. Orlando and Mike also discussed plans for police presence.

- Committee members would like to consider ways to bring the school environment back to homeostasis after a crisis. We would like more than solely police presence. Lindsay stated it was very helpful to have the Ministerial Alliance (revised) after recent crisis at Centennial. Could a message (using helpful tone) be sent out which supports staff after a traumatic event? We need to double down on our community work and communication going out.

- Laurie submitted a grant proposal for additional radios, but the grant was not approved. We are still hoping to get more radios through other means. Orlando needs to meet with our tech staff regarding proactive measures to improve radio communication, etc. There are multiple tools: updated computer apps, checklists that are recognized by DOJ; we need to look for current protocol. Laurie strongly encourages that we use tools that are recognized in the field if we pursue future funding. Laurie will locate her information that might help with building walkthroughs. Need to start taking a comprehensive approach to safety needs. Many grants are currently being awarded to rural communities.

- Joe would like the committee to recommend the District fund the radios. Elementary school budgets cannot afford radios. We need digital radios with greater capacity. Schools shouldn’t need to rely solely on cell phones for communication during a crisis. Laurie has statistics for specific number of radios needed in our District. Jonathan proposes we purchase a minimum number of radios per school, which the District would provide. Joe would like this committee to have a better sense for what each building has in terms of cameras and basic safety information. He hears from other buildings that elementary schools need cameras too. It is an item included in the referendum conversation.

Orlando indicated it was 2007 when a company last assessed building/school safety. Do we need an expert with a skill set to do an assessment?

- Mike stated nothing has gotten better toward safety at his building for years. We are behind the eight-ball. We can get some things done - cameras, public announcement system, radios that work. We can get signs on doors about where visitors report.

- Laurie suggested we explore new safety applications and other resources rather than hiring a consultant. Crisis teams at buildings can help.

- Orlando will ask building administrators to assess their building safety needs. By November 5, we will have a document in the hands of principals. We will share results with Elizabeth (Capital Projects), and then prioritize.

- Jennelle asked if perimeter checks would start by the next team meeting.

- Can Ministerial Alliance be helpful? Orlando would want this group to have a plan for collaboration with the District. We can recommend things to the Board and make proposals.

- Jenelle, as a parent, would like to thank Jefferson School staff for responding well after the Centennial incident. As a parent, her kids knew things were happening, and that things were fine at their building.

- Lindsey was asked to tell this committee that Jefferson and Centennial buildings knew about the incident, but Jefferson families did not get any information.
• After ALICE drills, surveys live at the building level. Our committee members can review surveys. Is there a way to notify folks in the community about drills? Jonathan did not hear any concerns. No systemic way for letting people in the community know; may not want that to happen.
• Amy asked what proactive action steps we should plan.
• Orlando stated the District is working to secure counseling services for Garden Hills, maybe a contractual provider for students and staff. How do we get a campus back to a comfortable culture and climate level after an event, both on the front end and aftermath? Joe asked what we are doing to help students if they hear another student say they’re going to bring a gun to school. How do we support families?
  • Revised: Lindsey asked again if we were going to get to the preventative, proactive intervention work. She asked if that lived on a different team because she doesn’t want that work to be an afterthought. Orlando pointed to our second goal and said that would fit under that category.

Next Meeting: November 5