

School Safety Committee **Recommendations**

July 2018



Creating an Intentional Culture of School Safety

Introduction

The Clear Creek Independent School District is committed to ensuring each student and staff member is emotionally and physically secure. The school district has made safety an intentional and strategic focus of day-to-day operations for nearly a decade. Those efforts, outlined in the [Clear Creek Independent School District's Strategic Plan and the Superintendent Targets](#), include secure entry vestibules, improved surveillance of school activities, perimeter fencing and bullet/shatter resistant film on entry ways.

The District's focus on people and prevention extend to enhanced training for all staff and students, bully prevention curriculum and outreach, additional security personnel at the high school level, and expanded partnerships with local and federal law enforcement agencies to assess, investigate and mitigate threats. Simply stated, much progress had already been made prior to the formation of the 2018 CCISD School Safety Committee. In light of the horrific school shootings across America, and most recently, very close to home in Santa Fe, the superintendent called for a citizens committee to review existing practices in CCISD and make a set of recommendations to further improve school safety.

This committee was comprised of 15 parents, selected from a random drawing, law enforcement officers, mental health providers, students, CCISD teachers and staff, and faith-based leaders. The team met every Tuesday through June to review current practices and research potential changes to all areas of the school system.

At the onset of this group's work, the superintendent encouraged members to explore all options and leave budgetary questions or concerns off the table, essentially, do the work without worrying about the price of school safety.

The committee came to a consensus that the real way to impact student safety is through improved facilities, additional officers and student support counselors, consistent and updated training, enforced policies and procedures, and a robust emergency communications system. A full listing of the recommendations can be found in this document and online at www.ccisd.net.

Committee Charges

- ✓ Recommend appropriate changes and timelines to ensure a safe and nurturing learning environment for students and staff
- ✓ Examine the use of clear backpacks for students and whether they are a deterrent
- ✓ Investigate the use of safety solutions at all schools and facilities
- ✓ Review the various levels of mental health providers and student access to such providers
- ✓ Evaluate the student code of conduct and law to determine if changes are necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff
- ✓ Define communication tools and protocols in case of an emergency
- ✓ Consider all other safety measures as practicable

Committee Guidelines

- Recommend appropriate changes and timelines to ensure a safe and nurturing learning environment for students and staff
- Identify sources of funding from Federal, State and Local levels to support recommendations including both fixed assets and personnel
- Consider recommendations from Governor Abbott's discussion on school safety
- Identify, investigate, and address causal factors for students in crisis.
- Identify quality social media monitoring tools to investigate and remove threats to schools

CCISD School Safety Committee Membership

Law Enforcement

Captain Josie Rivas,
Galveston County Sheriff SLO Division
Chief Gary Ratliff, League City PD
Captain Dana Hitzman, Houston PD
Richard Rennison, FBI

Mental Health Experts

Dr. Pam Ellis, CCISD
Dr. Kelley Williams, Krist Samaritan
Center
Dr. Pam Reed, Devereux Center

Students

Anna Alves
Alina Dong
Adarsh Suresh
Erin Pritchard

CCISD Staff

Dr. Britani Moses, Principal
Mandy Scott, Principal
Jamey Majewski, Principal
Rosemary Lagrone, Teacher
Will Thomas, Teacher
Ben Haney, Teacher
Laurel Showman, Technology
Sally Harris, Front Office
Walter Watson, Transportation

Parents

Clear Springs Feeder Pattern

David Newman, Clear Springs High School
Eric Pugh, Creekside Intermediate
Amy Eason, Gilmore Elementary

Clear Brook Feeder Pattern

Mitzi Pandolph, Clear Brook High School
Patricia Trubl, Westbrook Intermediate
Michael Downs, Greene Elementary

Clear Falls Feeder Pattern

Kate Vaughan, Clear Falls High School
Ron McGraw, Seabrook Intermediate
Stephanie Brown, Mossman Elementary

Clear Lake Feeder Pattern

Jason Foltyn, Clear Lake High School
Grace Melgar, Space Center Intermediate
Henry Gonzalez, Falcon Pass Elementary

Clear Creek Feeder Pattern

Catharine Pearce, Ferguson Elementary
Keolla Bell, League City Intermediate
Holly Rocha, Clear Creek High School

Faith-Based Leaders

Mark Carden, Clear Creek Community
Church
Dr. Waleed Basyouni, Clear Lake
Islamic Center
Rabbi Yitzchok Schmukler, Chabad of
the Bay Area

Consensus Statement on Metal Detectors, Arming of Teachers, and Marshals in Schools

The team of volunteers explored the use of metal detectors, the arming of teachers, and the solicitation of marshals with concealed handgun licenses. The group came to a wide consensus that these measures, at this time, would shift CCISD from a nurturing learning environment to one synonymous with a penitentiary. The committee does not recommend these options.

The group found research and evidence that metal detectors would not stop a motivated shooter nor do they effectively detect weapons. A [2015 TSA study](#) found a fail rate of 95 percent with high-quality equipment, full-time and trained screeners, and intensive support personnel. Michael Dorn, Director of non-profit [Safe Havens International](#), said, "Properly funded and run metal detection programs can be quite effective in reducing the risk of the more common types of weapons violence in schools (gang-related violence, etc.) but it is much harder to dissuade a determined attacker who is willing to risk death or who plans to kill himself or herself."

The group participated in a case study of the metal detection program at Davis High School in the Aldine Independent School District. They found the screening process takes up to 45 minutes for a school population of 2,500. Teachers and campus staff operate 12 detection sites because by law, police officers cannot conduct searches without probable cause. The group felt the length of time students wait outside to go through the detectors would create a secondary safety hazard.

The group and district staff intentionally sought evidence to indicate that metal detectors are effective in the prevention of gun violence and could not identify a source. One comprehensive [study by the Journal of School Health](#) concluded, "There is insufficient data in the literature to determine whether the presence of metal detectors in schools reduces the risk of violent behavior among students, and some research suggests that the presence of metal detectors may detrimentally impact student perceptions of safety."

The group discussed whether a metal detector program would also include after-school activities and evening events such as band concerts, basketball games, open houses, recognizing the absence of an active metal detector would allow persons to bring and intentionally hide weapons to use at a later time.

For these reasons, the CCISD School Safety Committee does not recommend the installation of metal detectors inside schools based on evidence of significant fail rates of weapon detection, secondary safety issues for students waiting outside, and the redirection of campus teachers and staff time to operate metal detectors every day.

Consensus Statement on Metal Detectors, Arming of Teachers, and Marshals in Schools

The committee reviewed the state regulations over the Guardian Plan, a program that allows schools to have staff carry weapons on campus, and the Marshal Plan, a program where citizens can serve as armed personnel in a school setting. The group did not feel state regulations provide for the appropriate vetting, psychological examination, or training of guardians or marshals.

In the end, the committee felt adding 15 additional police officers, 15 student support counselors, enhancing training and prevention techniques, and improving security systems would provide a far more stronger shield than metal detectors, guardians and marshals.

The school district, through a similar or follow-up committee, should continue to explore safety improvements on a regular and consistent basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Henry Gonzalez, Committee Co-Chair

Richard Rennison, Committee Co-Chair



Prevention

Through People


Current Status

Clear Creek ISD has two full-time Galveston County Sheriff School Liaison Officers (SLO) at each comprehensive high school, one at Clear View High School, and one at Clear Path High School. Each of the ten intermediate schools have one full-time SLO and these officers also patrol elementary schools. After the Parkland, Florida shooting in February, CCISD added a security monitor to each high school to solely patrol the exterior building.

Recommendations

1. Add 15 SLOs to the CCISD security force which will bring comprehensive high schools to three full-time officers and intermediate schools to two SLO officers per campus. The second intermediate SLO will also patrol elementary schools and ensures intermediate schools are always covered with a minimum of one officer.
2. Establish or expand community policing and outreach programs such as DARE and Watch D.O.G.S. to foster law enforcement relationships and provide an additional layer of security at the elementary schools.

Current Status

Clear Creek ISD has a strong student counselor program at all levels. The committee received a comprehensive outline of the people, programs and needs in the area of student support and bullying prevention.  [View the presentation here.](#)

Recommendations

1. Increase the number of student support counselors at the high school level and implement a student support counselor program at each intermediate school.
2. Investigate the need for additional Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) to support student needs.
3. Create a counselor to student ratio commensurate with the state average of 450:1.
4. Increase mental health consultants and partnerships with agencies.




[Click and View Page 2 for the Committee Discussion on Counseling Support](#)



Prevention

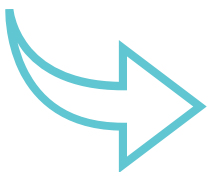
Through Improved Facilities

Current Status

Through a series of community-supported bond programs, the District has fortified schools throughout the school district. Such efforts include perimeter fencing at all elementary schools, secured vestibules with buzzer entry at all schools, bullet/shatter resistant film in entry ways, updated surveillance cameras, technology upgrades to support monitoring of school activity.  [View the presentation here.](#)

Recommendations

1. Ensure all classroom doors can be locked from both sides.
2. Increase the number of controlled access points.
3. Decrease the number of uncontrolled access points.
4. Replace obsolete cameras in campuses and on buses.
5. Increase staff access to panic buttons and develop strict protocols for use.
6. Evaluate and install bullet/shatter resistant film on windows and doors in strategic locations.
7. Ensure school liaison officers and area police dispatch centers can access security cameras remotely.
8. Develop individual site plans, utilizing technology, to ensure exterior doors are not ajar during school times.




[Read the Committee Discussions on Facility Improvements](#)



Prevention

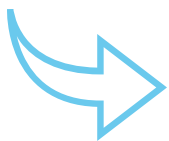
Through Safety Training

Current Status

The school district employs a full-time Safe Schools Director who is skilled in emergency response, prevention techniques, and logistical training. The school district currently exceeds all state requirements for school safety training.  [The committee learned of the training currently in place.](#)

Recommendations

1. Conduct at a minimum, one Lockdown and one Hold drill per semester. (A minimum of 4 drills per year)
2. Conduct drills during random times of the school day so that staff and students know what to do during passing periods.
3. Train all substitutes on each emergency protocol and require demonstration of proficiency annually.
4. Implement tabletop emergency scenario training for staff to be conducted four times a year during faculty meetings.
5. Develop training information specifically for parents, in multiple languages, on all CCISD Emergency Protocols.
6. Train all staff on basic life saving techniques every two years.
7. Offer volunteer lifesaving training courses for students before or after school.
8. Expand Mental Health First-Aid training offerings to staff, substitutes, students and parents.



[Click Here to View the Committee's Discussion on Safety Training](#)



Prevention

Through Safety Protocols

As part of the committee's work on safety training and emergency planning, the group identified areas within safety protocols that should be addressed. Specifically:

Recommendations

1. Develop student-centered plans for self-contained special education classrooms and communicate such plans to parents annually.
2. Address conflicting actions between a fire drill and lockdown drill so that students and staff know what to do in the event of a fire alarm during a Lockdown or Hold.
3. Create a reunification process for students and staff who leave a campus in an emergency.
4. Expand existing campus safety protocols to include after hours activities.
5. Develop safety protocols for students who may be outside or not in room in an emergency.
5. Establish safety plans for students and staff with medical needs.
6. Develop a written policy for staff, limiting the use of cell phones and electronic devices until an all-clear is given.
7. Request, via legislative efforts, a reduction in the required fire drills to allow for more time for other emergency drills.



Prevention

Through Policy

Current Status

CCISD has many policies and procedures to address student discipline, school threats and weapons, and other student-related issues. The committee recommends the District strictly enforce existing policies, procedures, and protocols as well as consider the following changes:

Recommendations

1. Strengthen dress code policy to address safety, not just modesty concerns.
2. Require students and staff to wear identification badges at all times on intermediate and high school campuses.
3. Reduce discretionary language from CCISD policies to ensure consistent application.

Clear Backpack Committee Statement

The CCISD School Safety Committee could not reach consensus on a clear backpack policy at this time due to the timing of the committee and the start of the school year, realities that students can still hide prohibited items in the backpack, concern of weight of school contents and durability of plastic backpacks, student privacy, and lack of evidence that such a program would deter a motivated individual from causing harm.

Committee members discussed that the implementation of a clear backpack program would provide an added layer of security for administrators, provide a visible reminder of school safety, and could deter students from bringing prohibited items such as a weapon or tobacco. The committee discussed the range of a clear backpack program such as would it extend to gym bags, lunch bags, purses, instruments and large zipper binders, etc.

The group cannot make a recommendation for or against clear backpacks at this time.



Prevention

Through Student Wellness

Current Status

The Clear Creek Independent School District has a comprehensive character education program and counseling program. In addition to the recommendations in the area of mental wellness training, additional counseling support mentioned in this report, the committee recommends:


Recommendations

1. Implement Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) curricula.
2. Implement a standard mental health check-in as part of the school counselor academic advisement sessions in grades 6-12.



Prevention Through Communications

Current Status

CCISD's Office of Communications handles all emergency communications for the school district. The committee learned the school district was moving to a more systems approach with regards to the types of communications that would be created for each type of emergency situation. This system would be based on a new standard of terminology of Lock Out, Lockdown, Shelter, Evacuate and Hold. Each protocol has a standard response and communication. The committee also learned of the significant challenges the District faces with social media, pranks and threats, and how these issues tie up a significant amount of time for campus administrators and police as they must investigate each instance.  [Click here to see the presentation provided to the committee.](#) (Communications is towards the end)

Recommendations

1. Create a CCISD emergency app and website to share current security status, emergency protocols, and pertinent school safety information.
2. Implement a school-wide and community-wide information campaign, outlining the criminal, legal and disciplinary consequences of creating and sharing threats or rumors of threats.
3. Clearly communicate code of conduct violations and consequences to parents and students.
4. Develop graduated threat levels and post on the District's communication platforms.



[Click and View Page 4 for the Committee Discussions on Communications](#)

Next Steps



Public Meeting

6 p.m. Clear Springs High School, 501 Palomino Lane, League City, Texas 77573. CCISD School Safety Committee will review recommendations and accept public feedback. The meeting will be available live online at www.ccisd.net. Based on public input, the committee may revise its recommendations prior to presenting to the CCISD School Board for approval.



Board Meeting

7 p.m. CCISD Education Support Center, 2425 East Main Street, League City, Texas 77573. CCISD School Safety Committee will make its final recommendations to the CCISD Board of Trustees. The school board will take action on the recommendations. The school board has the authority to revise or reject any of the recommendations. This meeting will be recorded live and made available online.

