

South Middleton School District Board of Directors
Safety & Security Committee Meeting Notes
Wednesday, 11 Aug 2021 – 6:00 PM

- **Call to Order / Roll Call / Public Comment** – The meeting was called to order by Jon Still (Chair), with the following present: Jon Still, John Greenbaum, Bill Hartman, Brad Group, Mark Correll (Assistant Principal, BSHS), Dave Bitner (Assistant Principal, YBMS), Trisha Reed (Principal, IFES), Zach Gump (SMSD Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds), Dr. Matt Strine (SMSD Superintendent) and Alex Smith (SMSD Director of Student Services). Approximately 15 members of the public attended — none desired to make any comments.
- **Old Business:**
 1. Threat Assessment Update: Alex Smith updated the committee on the recent re-organization and training of the Threat Assessment Team, as well as their ongoing processes for evaluating threats via systems such as the Safe-to-Say-Something reporting system.
 2. Alex also noted the hiring of Angelina Romano to the new district social worker position.
- **New Business:**
 1. Health & Safety Plan Update: The committee held a robust discussion with Administration members regarding a need to update the District Health & Safety Plan in response to current COVID surge conditions and updated guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Points made during the discussion included the following:
 - The Health & Safety Plan was drafted in early July, and approved by the Board on August 2nd. However, there has been a recent dramatic increase in national, state, and local COVID cases as a result of the Delta variant, resulting in more new cases at this time than at the same time last year. Additionally, while infections and hospitalizations were predominantly in older populations last year, the Delta variant has caused a more pronounced increase in infection & hospitalization rates for children and adolescents.
 - Guidance released by PDE on 15 July highlighted the federal CDC mandate for masking on all US public transportation and points out that school buses are included under this mandate (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html>). *As such, the Committee agreed unanimously to recommend that our Health & Safety Plan be updated to include such masking for all riders on on SMSD school buses.*
 - The Committee agreed that the overriding “mission” of our District is to provide the best venue for student instruction, which all agreed is 5 days per week in-person instruction. With that as the District’s mission, it was agreed we should accept “no unnecessary risk” to mission accomplishment.
 - All students and adults ages 12 and older have been offered the option to be vaccinated. The District has held several free vaccination opportunities for district students and adults. Thus everyone at the high school has at least been offered vaccination.
 - Currently, students younger than 12 do NOT have the option to be vaccinated. It is unknown at present when vaccinations will be provided for children less than 12 years of age, but the latest estimates are sometime in late Fall.

- In light of the points above, **three Courses of Action (COAs)** were discussed:
 - (A) **Indoor Masking Optional** (*Status Quo, with exception that masks would be required on school buses, as required by CDC mandate*)
 - (B) **Indoor Masking Requirement for Schools with Students < 12** (YBMS, IFES, & Rice Elementary)
 - (C) **Universal Indoor Masking Requirement for all District school buildings** (as well as bus transportation).
 - Two members of the Committee were in favor of proposing COA (C); one member of the Committee was in favor of COA (B).
 - **Decision:** *The Committee recommends to the Board President that COA (C) be placed on the August 16 Regular Board Meeting agenda for a vote. If COA (C) does not receive a majority vote, COA (B) should be considered by the Board. If neither passes, the District would continue the status quo of indoor masking-optional, with the exception that masks would be required on school buses, as mandated by the CDC on all public transportation.*
2. Zach Gump discussed the current status of building safety & security with regards to his planned departure on 19 September. In accordance with ACT 44 of 2018, he will be turning over his position as the Safety & Security representative to Alex Smith. The Committee expressed its concern that Mr. Smith has a lot on his plate, and urged the District to expedite its hiring of a new Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds that could assume the safety & security responsibilities in time for effective turnover with Mr. Gump. In the meantime, Mr. Rodney Harmon will be recommended by the Administration for Board appointment as Interim Supervisor of Maintenance for a period of 60 days via stipend to his regular hourly wage.
- The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm, with an Executive Session under Act 44 of 2018 rules called among the committee members and building administrators to discuss sensitive security matters.
 - **Next Scheduled Quarterly Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, 10 Nov 2021 @ 6:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted by

Jonathan Still, Committee Chair