



SAFETY AUDIT SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

JUNE 2018



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INTRODUCTION

The safety of students and staff has always been a top priority for Upper Arlington Schools. A comprehensive safety plan includes support for the physical and social/emotional health of the school community as well as prevention and preparedness plans for incidents such as threats of violence, fire and severe weather.

In February 2018, the Board of Education directed the superintendent to conduct a full audit of existing safety procedures. The Board also invited the community to a town hall meeting focused on safety concerns in the schools. These efforts are meant to provide a comprehensive look at all safety plans, security measures and emergency training exercises to ensure the district is meeting or exceeding best practices in all of these areas.

The Board of Education previously held community safety meetings and commissioned a safety audit in 2013. At that time, safety meetings were held at schools, and all staff members went through extensive safety training.

The new safety audit serves as a tool to ensure UA Schools is staying on course with best practices in safety and providing consistent reviews and updates to the Board as well as the community.

Upper Arlington Schools engaged Safeguard Risk Solutions to conduct the new safety audit in partnership with the Upper Arlington Division of Police and the Upper Arlington Division of Fire. Representatives from the agencies met several times between February and May of 2018 to collaborate on the audit and make recommendations for safety improvements.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF SAFETY AUDIT AND SAFETY PLANS

The Upper Arlington Board of Education received the full safety audit report on May 14, 2018, in executive session of a special meeting as permitted by Ohio Revised Code (RC) 121.22 (G) (6). While the majority of the audit report will be kept confidential for the safety of students and staff, per RC 3313.536(l) and 149.43, the Board of Education has requested this report summary be shared with the community and staff.

CURRENT AND BEST PRACTICES IN SCHOOL SAFETY

In order to keep students and staff as safe as possible, schools must take a multilayered approach. Schools must implement safety measures while creating a positive school climate. Safeguard Risk Solutions emphasized that schools should be more like castles and less like prisons. While both are structures fortified for safety, castles are inviting places in which people want to spend time.



Safety is top of mind as the district works with staff and community members to plan for six new or renovated school buildings. The planning teams include experienced school design professionals, a security consultant group, the Upper Arlington Division of Police and the Upper Arlington Division of Fire.

STUDENT WELL-BEING

The multilayered approach must begin with an acute focus on student well-being. Students thrive in an environment that celebrates all individuals. Diminishing student bullying and magnifying positive relationships are key components to student well-being. Students also benefit from engaging in activities including athletics, clubs, and the visual and performing arts. Students benefit from working with highly qualified and caring staff members in the classroom as well as in after-school activities. This approach to student safety is described in the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan in the personalization goal.

STAFF AND STUDENT TRAINING

One of the first lines of defense in any school is a well-trained, highly alert school staff and student body. The UA Schools staff and students participate in regular emergency preparedness trainings related to threats of violence, fire and severe weather. Other important trainings for UA Schools staff include how to identify struggling students and connect them with needed supports such as counseling, mental health services and academic supports.

SECURITY MEASURES

A consistent evaluation of security measures can result in low-cost but effective refinements such as reducing the number of unsecured entrances, keeping landscaping trimmed to promote visibility, and ensuring there are established procedures for the accurate and timely reporting of suspicious or concerning behavior. UA Schools consistently reviews and re-evaluates its plans to identify areas for possible enhancements.

SCHOOL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLANS

Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) require schools to submit emergency management plans with an annual review, an annual emergency management test and a three-year re-evaluation of the plan by the Ohio Department of Education.

UA Schools follows RC and OAC. Emergency Operation Plans for each building have been uploaded to the Ohio Department of Education's SaferSchools website along with building floor plans, satellite images of the school and surrounding neighborhood, and an emergency contact list. The plans have been reviewed annually, and all emergency management tests have been conducted.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICIALS

Effective school emergency management planning is not done in isolation, and UA Schools has worked with district staff, the Upper Arlington Division of Police, the Upper Division of Fire, the Franklin County Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security during the planning process. This type of collaboration ensures that resources will be available if needed and that there will be seamless integration with first responders.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL OR REVISED SAFETY PROCEDURES

In order to maintain safety in schools, many parts of safety plans must be kept confidential. UA Schools consults with the Upper Arlington Division of Police, the Upper Arlington Division of Fire as well as security and legal experts to determine which elements of safety plans should be kept confidential and which can be shared with the broader community. While many safety updates are being made on a regular basis, it is important to note that this report outlines only the recommended changes to existing practices that have been deemed safe to share publicly.

1. STUDENT WELL-BEING

The current strategic plan includes a focus on student well-being as outlined earlier in this report.

It is recommended that the district increase the focus on student well-being as well as the resources dedicated to this area of education. Planning for the next strategic plan will begin during the 2018-2019 school year and the district will convene a team of students, staff, community members and wellness experts to examine what next steps need to be taken in areas such as, but not limited to, mental health supports, safety, bullying prevention, substance abuse prevention, student stress reduction and physical health. This will ensure the district is meeting its mission to not only challenge students, but also to support every student every step of the way.

2. STUDENT IDENTIFICATION CARDS

UA Schools currently issues identification cards to high school students. A card includes a student's name, school name and photo.

It is recommended that UA Schools look to expand the functionality of student identification cards so they can be used by students entering and exiting the school, assisting with attendance tracking.

District officials will research the types of student identification systems available and present a report and recommendation to the Board of Education by February 2019, with program implementation set for August 2019.

3. VISITOR/VOLUNTEER/CONTRACTOR PROTOCOL

UA Schools has already established a background check procedure for volunteers and requires background checks for staff members and contractors assigned to its school properties for projects.

It is recommended that the district look to implement a visitor management system that captures the state identification or driver's license information of all visitors to the school.

District officials will research these programs and present a report and recommendation to the Board of Education by February 2019, with program implementation set for August 2019.



4. SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SROs)

UA Schools currently has two SROs, one stationed full time at Upper Arlington High School and one who splits time between Jones Middle School and Hastings Middle School. In addition there is a special-duty officer stationed at UAHS to monitor the senior doors. The role of the SRO goes beyond law enforcement as they help to build a positive school culture by providing an additional role model and confidant for students.

It is recommended that the district work with the City of Upper Arlington to add two SROs so that there may be a full-time officer at the high school and both middle schools as well as an additional officer who splits time among the district's five elementary schools. It is recommended that the two additional SROs be put in place as soon as it is feasible for the Upper Arlington Division of Police.

The district will continue to work with the City of Upper Arlington and the Upper Arlington Division of Police to monitor the effectiveness of the SRO program.

5. AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Outside the hours of the school day, both during the week and on the weekends, the district's school buildings are utilized by students, staff and community members for various activities and clubs and, at the elementary level, the School-Aged Child Care program offered by the district. The safety of all individuals using the district's schools outside the school day is a priority for the district.

It is recommended that safety plans for all after-hours programs be reviewed in collaboration with the Upper Arlington Division of Police and Division of Fire and aligned with the procedures in place during the school day. In addition it is recommended that groups using the buildings after hours receive training on how to respond in an emergency situation.

These updates will be implemented by August 2018.

6. SAFETY TRAINING

As a well-trained staff is an essential piece of any safety plan, it is recommended that the district increase the amount of training and practice exercises for safety and violence prevention for all staff in the district. The details of the age-appropriate training and exercises will be developed in cooperation with local safety officials and will remain confidential for the safety of the students and staff.

District officials will begin collaboration with building principals, the Upper Arlington Division of Police and the Upper Arlington Division of Fire during the summer of 2018, with implementation during the 2018-2019 school year.

7. POLICIES ON OPEN LUNCH, OPEN STUDY HALL AND OPEN CAMPUS

For many years UA Schools has had an open lunch policy, allowing students to leave school unsupervised during the lunch hour. In more recent years, Upper Arlington High School also adopted an open study hall policy for seniors, allowing for seniors to leave unsupervised during any point in the day they are not required to be in a class. UAHS also has an open campus policy allowing students to move freely within the building at



appropriate times for the purposes of individual study or collaboration with other students and/or a teacher.

According to safety experts and the Upper Arlington Division of Police, open lunch at the elementary and middle level may expose younger students to risk due to the lack of required supervision. Further, at the high school level, open lunch and open study hall create a steady flow of people in and out of the building, especially during lunch periods, making it difficult to track who is inside and outside of the building at any given time. Schools must be accountable for the safety students and staff, and in order to do so it is imperative to be able to easily and accurately track who is in the school at what time.

It is recommended that the district discontinue the open lunch policy at the elementary schools and middle schools beginning with the 2018-2019 school year. It is recommended that the district discontinue the open lunch policy at UAHS over a four-year period using the schedule outlined in the table below. The phase-in approach gives the school needed time to build the required capacity to provide lunch service to all students. In the interim, parents and guardians of sophomore, junior and senior students may choose to have their students remain on campus during lunch by indicating that preference on the electronic back-to-school forms that will be available in late July.

Further, it is recommended that the district amend the open study hall policy at UAHS beginning in 2019-2020. This amended policy would close study halls during periods 2 through 7, while allowing seniors to opt out of attending study halls scheduled at the beginning (period 1) or end (period 8) of the day.

It is also recommended to keep the current open campus policy. This means that students (other than seniors during the first and last periods of the day) would not be able to leave school during a study hall, but they would be able to choose where in the building they would like to spend that time.

In addition, beginning in the fall of 2019, all students entering or exiting the building during the school day would be required to use the new student ID system recommended in this summary report to enter and exit the building.

The student voice will be critically important in the successful implementation of the proposed lunch procedures. The district will convene a committee of rising freshmen (members of the class of 2022) to form the Lunchtime Advisory Team. These students will work directly with school staff to explore ways to improve the student experience during lunch periods. This may include optional programming and activities available to students during lunch periods. The team also will help to identify new menu options and create additional secure dining spaces -both indoor and outdoor- on the school site. Any additional dining spaces will be created with the well-being of our students with food allergies in mind.

Parents and guardians who want to take their students to lunch may still stop by the school to “check out” their students for lunch outside of the building.



SCHOOL YEAR	RECOMMENDATIONS
2018-2019	<p>ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close lunch for all students. (Parents and guardians may continue to “check out” their students for lunch.) <p>HIGH SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close lunch for all freshmen. (Lunch remains open for all sophomores, juniors and seniors; study hall remains open for seniors. Parents and guardians may continue to “check out” their students for lunch.) • Maintain open campus policy. • Add service capacity to high school food service department. • Add additional secure dining spaces for students, both indoor and outdoor, while respecting safety of students with food allergies. • Form the Lunchtime Advisory Team, a student committee to provide ideas and feedback on additional menu items, dining spaces and optional programming during lunch periods.
2019-2020	<p>HIGH SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close lunch for all freshmen and sophomores. (Lunch remains open for juniors and seniors. Parents and guardians may continue to “check out” their students for lunch.) • Amend open study hall policy so that seniors can opt out of attending study halls during the first or last period of the day, but must stay at school for study halls during other periods. • Maintain open campus policy. • Implement enhanced student ID system.
2020-2021	<p>HIGH SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close lunch for all freshmen, sophomores and juniors. (Lunch remains open for seniors. Parents and guardians may continue to “check out” their students for lunch.) • Continue with amended open study hall policy that allows seniors to opt out of attending study halls during the first or last periods of the day. • Maintain open campus policy.
2021-2022 (New high school opens)	<p>HIGH SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close lunch for all students. Parents and guardians may continue to “check out” their students for lunch. • Continue with amended open study hall policy that allows seniors to opt out of attending study halls during the first or last periods of the day. • Maintain open campus policy.



8. SECURITY CAMERAS

Security cameras can be a valuable tool in both preventing security incidents and investigating them. It is recommended that the district add or upgrade cameras at all buildings.

District officials will research and plan for these systems during the summer of 2018, with implementation beginning shortly thereafter.

CONCLUSION

UA Schools retains an unwavering commitment to the safety of students and staff. The district will continue to work closely with public safety officials on the ongoing evaluation and refinement of this multilayered approach to school safety. Staff members will continue to focus on student well-being while researching and implementing additional ways to offer Upper Arlington students needed supports. School officials will continue to meet or exceed all state requirements for safety planning and training, and the district will continue its close collaboration with the Upper Arlington Division of Police and Upper Arlington Division of Fire. In addition, the district will continue to offer annual town hall safety meetings for the community.

The above recommendations are made after much consideration and with the safety and security of students and staff in mind. With approval from the Board of Education, the district will work to implement these recommendations in cooperation with students, staff and public safety officials.



APPENDIX - SAFETY RECOMMENDATION TIMELINE

RECOMMENDATION	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
<p>Student well-being - increase the focus on student well-being as part of the next strategic planning process. Convene a work team of students, staff, community members and well-being experts to examine what next steps need to be taken in areas such as, but not limited to, mental health supports, safety, bullying prevention, substance abuse prevention, student stress reduction and physical health.</p>	<p>Convene work team in Fall 2018 for implementation in August of 2019</p>
<p>Student identification cards - expand the functionality of student identification cards to include the ability to have students utilize the ID card system to enter and exit schools, assisting with attendance tracking.</p>	<p>Implement new system in August 2019</p>
<p>Visitor/volunteer/contractor protocol - implement a visitor management system that captures the state identification or driver's license information of all visitors to the school.</p>	<p>Implement new system in August 2019</p>
<p>School resource officers (SROs) - work with the City of Upper Arlington to add two SROs so that there may be a full-time officer at the high school and at both middle schools as well as an additional officer who splits time among the district's five elementary schools.</p>	<p>As soon as feasible (understanding that the hiring and training of officers takes time)</p>
<p>Safety training - increase training and exercises for safety and violence prevention for all staff in the district.</p>	<p>Throughout the 2018-2019 school year with continuous review and updates each following year</p>
<p>Open lunch/study hall/campus policies - discontinue the open lunch policy at the elementary schools and middle schools beginning with the 2018-2019 school year and discontinue the open lunch policy at UAHS over a four-year period as outlined above. Amend open study hall policy so that seniors can opt out of attending study halls during the first or last period of the day, but must stay at school for study halls during other periods beginning in 2019-2020. Keep in place the open campus policy at UAHS.</p>	<p>Phased approach beginning in August of 2018 and ending in August of 2021</p>
<p>Security cameras - add or upgrade security cameras at all buildings.</p>	<p>August 2018</p>