



To: Superintendent of Schools
From: Chief Operating Officer
Date: August 9, 2024
Re: Response to motion to a Safety Task Force

[By David Conway] Request the superintendent reach out and identify an outside security company for the purpose of conducting a total safety and security assessment of the Lowell Public School system. Furthermore, request the superintendent contact the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), to see if they would partner with us for this safety audit. Amended: Request the superintendent develop an RFP and identify an outside security company for the purpose of conducting total safety and security assessment of the Lowell Public School system. Furthermore, request the superintendent contact the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to see if they would partner with us for this safety audit.

A formal letter requesting a partnership with DESE was delivered on 4/4/24. We have not received a positive response as of yet. Lowell Public Schools completed a district-wide Safety Assessment in 2016, completed by Safe Havens International (SHI). The assessment included a combination of comprehensive on-site assessments of the 31 school sites operated by the District with an off-site review of the District's emergency management plans, as well as available information on safety and security policies and student disciplinary data. These assessments focused on identifying opportunities to improve safety, security, climate, culture, and emergency preparedness at each assessed school and throughout the District.

The findings from these assessments were incorporated into a detailed, strategic-level written report. The strategic report was supplemented with individual site assessment reports for each of the assessed schools. The site report provides both specific opportunities for improvement in each school and identifies trends in school safety, security and emergency management throughout the District. The strategic report has assisted the District in effectively identifying and addressing concerns through District-level, rather than site-specific, approaches.

The School Safety Coordinator reached out to the Lowell Vocational Technical School to inquire about their outside agency safety and security audit, conducted by Smart Security Partners.

Conversations revealed that the audit was very thorough and similar to the Lowell Public Schools audit in 2016. There were some good suggestions, but much of the input had validated what was previously known, or the costs of implementation would have necessitated other programmatic cuts.

A grant initially funded the first position for school safety as an LSAA position several years ago. All the school safety coordinators have had a great impact on the District through their focus on school safety on a daily basis. These coordinators have all assessed the safety of buildings and done spot checks on buildings with police assistance. They have also responded to families in crisis during emergency events. Just this past school year, these are some of the achievements of the Office of School Safety:

- Safety Coordinator met with senior safety leaders for the City on a regular basis;
- MBHERP Plans were developed per DESE guidelines and added to each crisis plan;
- Be Safe was updated for all schools;
- Evacuation chairs were acquired and delivered to multiple schools; and delivery of evac chairs
- Almost all schools were properly numbered and lettered;
- Safety meetings occurred at Central Office on a monthly basis with stakeholders to collaborate and share ideas;
- Repeater was implemented at LHS in collaboration with MIS police department;
- A \$50,000 grant was obtained for the emergency operations team and threat assessment team;
- A threat assessment refresher course was launched and updated forms were provided for each school;
- Alerts were updated with Raptor;
- Safety audits were conducted in the Fall and Spring which led to increased safety within the schools;
- The Mass Notification language was updated for LHS;
- Monthly “Stop and Thinks” were implemented;
- Camera walk thrus and evaluations of 11 schools were conducted;
- Go Bags and safety flip charts were purchased for elementary and middle schools;
- Numerous grant applications for safety improvements were submitted.

I have also included a proposed RFP as requested.