

**FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
OPPAGA SAFETY AND SECURITY
BEST PRACTICES SELF-ASSESSMENT
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2002**

Goal A: The school district ensures that its safety and security program has clear direction and is effective at meeting its intended purpose in a cost efficient manner.

- 1. Best Practice – The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the safety and security program.***

The district is aggressively improving safety and security at all school sites. School resource officers are located at each high school and surveillance equipment is being added to monitor the buildings and grounds. Use of PECO revenue and local capital outlay allocations for fire and safety equipment continue to be available for the purchase and maintenance of safety and security equipment.

In association with the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC), the district's buildings and fire and safety equipment are inspected annually by a qualified inspector. In addition, the district utilizes staff at each school to oversee discipline and help identify safety and security problems. These personnel are partially funded by Federal Safe and Drug Free Schools Grants and state funded Safe Schools allocations.

However, the district's safety and security measures and programs are not assessed as to whether they have been measurably effective and cost efficient over the course of their installation.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the district develop and establish clearly stated safety and security program goals and use accountability and performance measures to evaluate the program's effectiveness. The effectiveness should be measured through the evaluation of equipment and personnel costs and the subsequent return on investment. These evaluations may provide a before and after effect on such expenditures and policies.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

Costs covered by general operating revenue, PECO, and Local Capital Improvement revenue. No additional costs should be required. To be implemented during the 2002-03 school year.

- 2. Best Practice – The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the safety and security program and minimizes administrative layers and processes.***

Due to the fiscal impact of declining student enrollment, the school district is currently reviewing economies of scale at the various schools. Staffing will continue to be a challenge for the district but current and future safety and security issues will not be compromised. Adequate staff is currently in place as determined by the district's review of program needs.

The district typically reviews staffing needs at least on an annual basis. At that time, the organizational structure is also scrutinized to eliminate potential unneeded administrative layers. Findings related to this review are submitted to the superintendent for possible recommendations to the school board.

Goal B: The school district has comprehensive plans and procedures to ensure the safety and security of students and employees.

- 1. Best Practice – The district has implemented a school safety plan that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures and identifies those responsible for them.***

Adequate school safety plans are currently in place including written goals and procedures, principal evaluations, a crisis management plan, student and employee accident reporting procedures, SRO contracts, and School Improvement Plans. In addition, copies of school floor plans have been submitted to law enforcement agencies and fire departments in case of emergency.

- 2. Best Practice – The district has developed a checklist for each educational facility that provides step-by-step emergency procedures.***

Emergency checklists are available at each school as the Crisis Management Plan. This plan includes step-by-step procedures for dealing with crisis such as weapons use and hostage situations, hazardous materials or toxic chemical spills, hurricanes and tornadoes, and various man-made emergencies. The district also has councilors that are available in the event of any emergency during the next school year.

- 3. Best Practice – The district develops and maintains its school safety plan and emergency response procedures with stakeholder input.***

The district's school safety plan was prepared with broad stakeholder input involving administrators, teachers, and parents. Such input was obtained during meetings of the school advisory councils, PTOs, and other organizations. The plans and procedures are reviewed and revised as needed. However, the emergency procedures and safety plan are not readily available to the public upon request.

Recommendation

The district will incorporate the school safety procedures, except for sensitive information, on the district web site for easier public access.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

Immaterial costs would be required for implementation by June 30, 2003.

4. ***Best Practice – The district provides emergency response agencies with floor plans and blueprints as appropriate.***

Available blueprints or floor plans have been submitted to the appropriate law enforcement agencies and fire departments. The district does not, however, have updated blueprints on all facilities. Some floor plans were drawn by maintenance or other personnel since the original blueprints have been lost over the years.

Recommendation

The district will utilize the services of an architectural firm to review and update all facilities drawings as needed.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

The costs at this point are not known but adequate capital outlay revenue will be available during the next fiscal year. This project will be consistent with the district's current plan to hire an architectural firm for ongoing district facilities requirements. The project, pending a contract, will be implemented after July 1, 2002.

5. ***Best Practice – The district and each school regularly practice emergency responses based on potential hazards at each site.***

Emergency drills are practiced and documented regularly at each school. The procedures for emergency drills were developed and implemented in accordance with state law and verification of drills has been made by the district.

6. ***Best Practice – The district's Master Plan for In-Service Training identifies district and school personnel who need safety training and provides an adequate level of safety training for all personnel.***

Inservice training is conducted and scheduled through PAEC risk management and teacher training inservice workshops and seminars. Personnel requiring safety training are identified by administrators and principals and training is documented. The district identifies the training required of all staff and schedules such training accordingly.

The district typically reviews and uses the training opportunities available through DOE, PAEC, and other organizations. The district subsequently supplies the trained personnel with the appropriate equipment to do their job safely.

Goal C: The school district has developed a clearly written code of student conduct and communicated with students and parents.

- 1. Best Practice – The district and school have established disciplinary policies and a code of student conduct that are well-defined.***

The student code of conduct is clearly written and communicated with students and parents as required by school board policy. The code of conduct is available at each school or administrative office and, upon request, copies provided to parents or the general public.

Disciplinary policies provide for the employment of school resource officers and support specialists to enforce measures currently in place. Such measures include relocation of disruptive students, locker searches, and adhering to state and federal requirements.

- 2. Best Practice - The district revises its code of student conduct and informs all stakeholders as to the final product.***

The code of conduct is clearly written and revised on a yearly basis, submitted to the superintendent, and approved by the school board at a meeting open to the public.

Goal D: The school district identifies, minimizes, and protects others from disruptive and/or violent student behavior.

- 1. Best Practice - Each school has a system in place to identify the early warning signs of student violence.***

The district facilitates and encourages assistance with those students who exhibit early signs of violence through psychological counseling and sessions with school guidance counselors. Confidentiality of cases such as these are maintained by utilizing student file procedures that are strictly enforced. In addition, school resource officers, which are employed at each high school, are also trained and have the experience necessary to evaluate early warning signs of violence in students.

It should be noted, however, that although the district has much of a good system in place to detect and possibly prevent student violence, much of the instructional staff is not equipped for this task. The training for such evaluations is lacking at the school level.

Recommendation

It is recommended that staff development take place for both instructional and non-instructional personnel to help in the detection of early warning signs of student violence.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

No additional costs would be required; staff training allocations are adequate. To be implemented through June 30, 2003.

2. *Best Practice - The district identifies and implements parent and community outreach strategies to promote safety in the home and community.*

Many outreach programs have been in place during the school year which help promote safety in the home among their other goals. Such programs include tobacco free campaigns, parent/teacher organizations (PTOs), school advisory councils (SACs), and Even Start a federal parent educator program in which district personnel work with the parents of at-risk students.

3. *Best Practice – The district conducts a hazards analysis to determine the potential safety and security issues facing each school.*

Each school or facility conducts hazard assessments during the year and makes plans to purchase or otherwise secure the necessary materials or equipment to help fix potential or actual safety problems. In addition, various independent safety audits are conducted from time-to-time which include identification of potential risk factors in students.

4. *Best Practice – Based on the needs identified in the school hazards analysis, the district implements appropriate violence and drug prevention programs for each school.*

The district continues to have a documented safe and drug free schools program that is federally approved and funded. This plan works in conjunction with the state funded safe schools program. These programs are implemented and maintained in association with local law enforcement agencies and require performance and expenditure review reports at the end of each fiscal year.

Based upon the levels of funding and the results of the prior year performance review, changes are made to the programs to utilize resources more effectively.

5. *Best Practice - The district has crime watch and school safety hotlines available in all schools.*

Crime watch programs are not currently in place at the various schools. No documented programs or hotlines have been established. Consequently, neither students nor parents may have the ability to report potential acts of crime in a timely manner.

Recommendation

The district will review and attempt to implement school safety hotlines and crime watch programs at each location.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

Implementation of the programs may require some purchased services. Cost would have an immaterial impact on the general fund budget. To be implemented by June 30, 2003.

6. *Best Practice - The school board adopts curricula and programs aimed at protecting students, teachers, bus operators, administrators, and school personnel.*

The district reviews and makes available sources of violence prevention and safety related programs through PAEC inservice training and seminars and other documented training funded by the teacher training categorical allocation.

The district has a dress code that is reviewed periodically and is uniform throughout the various schools. Changes to the dress code are recommended by the superintendent and approved by the school board.

However, the school district does not typically design curricula towards violence prevention.

Recommendation

The district will continue with its violence prevention program efforts and will review various curricula possibilities for the next school year.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

The curricula will be funded through the instructional materials categorical allocation. Possible implementation to be during or subsequent to the 2002-03 school year.

Goal E: Educational facilities and equipment are safe and in good working condition.

1. *Best Practice – The district conducts an annual review of all relevant health and safety issues for each educational facility.*

Discipline data is entered into the student information system at each school according to the requirements of Florida Law and the department of education for statistical information and disciplinary trends. In addition, annual fire and safety audits are performed and corrections are made according to the recommendations set forth.

In conjunction with Sate Requirements for Educational Facilities an annual review is conducted to determine whether facilities are in compliance and other safety self-

assessments, performed with PAEC safety personnel, are used to define goals and objectives of safety related expenditures.

However, the district does not always provide safety information to the public in an annual report form.

Recommendation

The district will provide a public information report either through an annual report or through the superintendent's report to the school board. Sensitive information that would compromise safety or security matters will not be release.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

No additional costs will be required. To be implemented during the 2002-03 fiscal year.

2. *Best Practice - The district designs educational facilities and sites to enhance security and reduce vandalism through the use of "safe school design" principles.*

The district has not built educational facilities or provided for major renovation on existing facilities in recent years. However, the district has selected an architectural firm to assist in its assessment of current and long-term needs and in the preparation of educational plant surveys and planning documents required by DOE. The selected firm specializes in educational facilities and the related requirements for safe schools.

3. *Best Practice - The district has procedures that govern access to each educational plant facility and its students and access is limited to authorized students and visitors.*

The district schools lock all unused doors to limit entrance into the facility and provide for a clearly marked central point for receiving all visitors. Once inside, visitors are required to sign in for security records. Buildings are secured when unoccupied and a key program is in place.

Students are not released to parents, guardians, or other persons unless the requirements of the written student release program are met. The requirements include identification checks and prior parental approval for students who are picked up by non-parent individuals.

4. *Best Practice – The district ensures that playgrounds are properly constructed, maintained, and supervised so as to reduce the risk of injury.*

The district constructed new playgrounds at the elementary schools during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2000. The contractor and the district followed US Consumer Product Safety Commission guidelines regarding construction materials and regulations.

However, although district personnel perform maintenance checks on the playground equipment during the course of the year, records are not kept for documentation. The lack of documentation does not provide evidence of a step-by-step inspection on a regularly scheduled basis.

Recommendation

It is recommended that, although the playground equipment is still relatively new, a system of preventive maintenance be initiated at all schools. The preventive maintenance schedule should be at least yearly and include a checklist that will document the type of maintenance performed and should be signed and dated by the inspector.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

There will be no additional costs to the district for this ongoing project. To be implemented by August 2002.

5. *Best Practice – The educational facility has appropriate equipment to protect the safety and security of property and records.*

Each educational facility is equipped with locks and alarms designed and monitored by security professionals. Some, but not all, schools utilize security cameras to a certain extent. In addition, the district can demonstrate that the alarms are inspected and reviewed on a quarterly basis through the vendor agreement.

Although the schools keep records in fireproof vaults and file cabinets, a formal disaster recovery plan is not in place in the event the records are lost or destroyed.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the district provide and improve the security camera system for all schools. Also, the locking system for school doors should be reviewed as to effectiveness.

It is also recommended that the district develop a disaster recovery plan for all schools in the event that records are stolen or destroyed. This may involve duplication of certain student files and other records for off-site storage. This is currently the case with ESE student records.

Fiscal Impact and Timeline

Duplication of records may involve the purchase of microfilm equipment, etc. Such purchases would be minimal to the capital outlay and general fund budgets. Personnel costs would not involve overtime and therefore no adverse impact would be required.

Implementation would begin during the 2002-03 fiscal year.

6. *Best Practice - The district provides appropriate safety equipment and information to prevent injuries to students and others.*

Each educational facility is equipped with first aid kits and fire extinguishers that are inspected on at least a quarterly basis. The district has also provided appropriate safety equipment and instruction in areas with dangerous equipment or chemicals and provides the necessary protective equipment for student athletic activities.

7. *Best Practice - The district follows environmental and food safety health practices and regulations.*

The district provides all appropriate food safety health practices and that appropriate personnel have received information and materials pertaining to their safety-related duties, rights and responsibilities under state, federal, and OSHA guidelines as documented by food safety audits

The district posts and maintains, on site, copies of state and local health regulations in order to comply and assist the food service employees in determining current requirements for proper preparation of food.

Goal F: The district takes steps to ensure the safety and security of students and staff during transportation.

1. *Best Practice - The district has procedures to create a safe and orderly process for students arriving at or leaving each school campus.*

The district's school safety transportation plan ensures that service driveways at each school meet the state requirements for educational facilities. School administration also provides for procedures to ensure that students can safely enter or exit the school location safely and without danger of bus traffic.

From time to time existing schools re-designate the school bus and private car loading areas to further separate and provide for safe drop-off and pickup areas. Appropriate signage is in place and modified as required.

2. *Best Practice – The district has implemented policies, procedures, and practices that ensure the safety of transported students.*

The district orders school buses with the appropriate safety restraints as per DOE specifications, has procedures to ensure the safety of designated school bus routes, and ensures that bus stops are designated as reasonably safe locations.

Bus driver training is documented and a disciplinary program is in place to ensure that all persons transporting students or other personnel are properly licensed, trained,

and qualified. In addition, students are instructed on safe riding practices during the school year.

3. ***Best Practice – School buses, including buses operated by schools, charter schools, and contractors, are inspected and maintained in accordance with states laws and state department of education rules.***

Pre-trip records and maintenance records verify that buses are inspected and deficiencies corrected prior to student transportation. Furthermore, buses are inspected by trained and certified personnel consistent with the requirements of the Florida School Bus Safety Inspection Manual. If deficiencies are noted, buses are returned to service only after corrections are made, verified, and documented.

APPROVED BY THE FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT IN A REGULAR SESSION ON JUNE 6, 2002.

Signed:

Jimmy Gander, School Board Chairman

Jo Ann Gander, Superintendent of Schools