

July 8, 2002

Commissioner Charlie Crist
Attention: Office of Safe Schools
Florida Department of Education
325 West Gaines Street, Room 301
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Dear Commissioner Crist:

Attached you will find an original, plus one hard copy as well as an electronic copy in Microsoft Word of our Self-assessment Report of Washington County's Safety and Security Best Practices. It was presented at a publicly noticed school board meeting on June 27, 2002. This provided the opportunity for the public to hear the school board discuss and approve the report. Members of the media who are always present utilized information from the report in their newspapers coverage of the board meetings.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Dr. Beverly Helms of my staff.

Sincerely,

Jerry E. Tyre, Superintendent
Washington County School District

JET/ek
Attachment

**Washington County School
District**

Promoting

**A Safe & Secure
Teaching – Learning
Environment**

Self-Assessment Report of Washington County School Board's Safety and Security Practices

Presented to
Washington County School Board
in Compliance with
Section 229.8348 F.S. (Safe Passage Act)

District 1
Donald L. Morris
District 2
Philip Rountree
District 3
Angia Morris
District 4
Francis Hinson
District 5
Gary F. Clark

Jerry E. Tyre, Superintendent
June 27, 2002

Self-Assessment Report

Coordinators

Calvin Stevenson and Beverly Helms

Self-Assessment Team

Jerry E. Tyre, Superintendent
Mike Welch, Deputy Superintendent
Philip Rountree, School Board Member
Beverly Helms, Director of Administrative Services
Calvin Stevenson, Coordinator of Support Services
Sue Porlier, Coordinator of ESE and Student Services
Myra Henderson, Director of Finance
Jenny Strickland, Coordinator of Food Services
Donna Pate, Coordinator of Technical Services
Jayne Peel, Principal - Chipley High School
George French, Guidance Counselor - CHS
Brian Paridon, School Resource Officer- CHS
Olin Gilbert, Principal - Kate Smith Elementary School
Yolanda Kolmetz, Dean of Student Services - KMS
Peggy Ingram, Guidance Counselor - KMS
Phil Flater, Principal - Roulhac Middle School
Susan Roberts, Guidance Counselor - RMS
Bobbie Dawson, Principal - Vernon Elementary School
Joan McLeod, Guidance Counselor - VES
Bill Lee, Principal - Vernon High School
Bill Arndt, School Resource Officer - VHS
Alice Register, Guidance Counselor- VHS
Ozeal Harrell, Principal - Vernon Middle School
Merle Bonner, Teacher - VMS
Heather Miller, Guidance Counselor - VMS
Paul Parker, Director-Washington-Holmes Technical Ctr
Bill Gunter, Guidance Counselor - WHTC
Billy Baxter, Principal - Dozier I & II
Erla Davis, Program Specialist/Principal Designee - Eckerd
Freida Cook, Resource Teacher/Principal Designee - The Vernon Place
Chuck Stanley, Transportation Specialist
Neal Mixson, Consultant - Panhandle Area Educational Consortium
Gary Synder, Consultant - PAEC
Roger Dale Hagan, Washington County Emergency Management Director

Training of the Self-assessment Team

The training of the self-assessment team was held on March 27, 2002. A memo was sent to each with appropriate checklists. (See Appendix A)

Involvement of Schools in the Self-assessment

All schools were given the "Best Practices" to review and were asked to complete a self-assessment and submit a report of its findings by April 19, 2002. Principals, assistant principals, guidance counselors, teachers, food service personnel, school resource officers and other staff members were involved in the assessment of best practices at each school site. The reports were submitted to the district office and were reviewed by the self-assessment coordinators. Follow-up was conducted as appropriate. PAEC personnel provided technical assistance and support as needed. The complete assessment reports from each site are on file in the School Board Office.

The Final Report

The overall self-assessment report identifies the Goals and Best Practices, the finding related to these, recommendations to address specific practices and steps that are to be taken to implement the recommendation.

The report is divided into the following six goal areas.

- *Goal A addresses the need for an effective and efficient safety and security program.*
- *Goal B deals with comprehensive plans and procedures for school safety and security.*
- *Goal C covers the district's code of student conduct.*
- *Goal D focuses on minimizing disruptive and/or violent student behavior.*
- *Goal E speaks to the safety of educational facilities and equipment.*
- *Goal F deals with transportation safety.*

Each goal lists the best practices, findings, recommendations and strategies to be taken to implement the recommendation.

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.

BEST PRACTICES

- The district has established and implemented accountability mechanisms to ensure the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the safety and security program.
- The district regularly reviews the organizational structure and staffing levels of the safety and security program and minimizes administrative layers and process.

FINDINGS - The district is in compliance with the best practices associated with this goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS - None

STRATEGIES - None needed at this time.

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

BEST PRACTICES

1. The district has implemented a school safety plan that includes district-wide emergency and safety procedures and identifies those responsible for them.
2. The district has developed a checklist for each educational facility that provides step-by-step emergency procedures.

3. The district develops and maintains its school safety plan and emergency response procedures with stakeholder input.
4. The district provides emergency response agencies with floor plans and blueprints as appropriate.
5. The district and each school regularly practice emergency responses based on potential hazards at each site.
6. The district's Master Plan for In-Service Training identifies district and school personnel who need safety training and provides an appropriate level of safety training for all personnel.

FINDINGS - The district is in compliance with the six best practices. There is coordination/collaboration between the school personnel and emergency personnel. The School Safety and Emergency Plan is updated and all staff have received a copy of the emergency manual as well as appropriate training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The district needs to continually review and update its emergency plan, procedures and coordination with appropriate agencies.
2. The Master Plan should be updated to identify individuals in need of training and the type of training needed.

STRATEGIES

1. The Emergency Plan will be reviewed by the administrators at the September meeting to identify any areas that may need to be updated.
2. The director of staff development will review and revise the Master Plan as needed. Appropriate safety training components will be developed for all personnel. Principals will verify that all individuals receive the appropriate training.

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

BEST PRACTICES

1. The district and each school have established disciplinary policies and a code of student conduct that are well defined.
2. The district revises its code of student conduct and informs all stakeholders as to the final product.

FINDINGS - The district is in full compliance with this goal. All schools publish the code of conduct in the student/parent handbook annually.

RECOMMENDATIONS - None

STRATEGIES - None needed at this time.

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

BEST PRACTICES

1. Each school has a system in place to identify the early warning signs of student violence.
2. The district identifies and implements parent and community outreach strategies to promote safety in the home and community.
3. The district conducts a hazards analysis to determine the potential safety and security issues facing each school.
4. Based on the needs identified in the school hazards analysis, the district implements appropriate violence and drug prevention programs for each school.
5. The district has crime watch and school safety hotlines available in all schools.
6. The school board adopts curricula and programs aimed at protecting students, teachers, bus operators, administrators, and school personnel.

FINDINGS - The district is in compliance with best practices 1, 2, 3, 4, & 6. Some schools are not implementing crime watch and school safety hotlines (5).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All schools should identify the extent to which best practice 5 and its related indicators are being implemented.
2. Crime watch and school safety hotlines should be implemented in all schools.

STRATEGIES

1. Each principal will submit a description of and the degree to which crime watch and school safety hotlines are being used at their school.

2. The district will review the reports and develop a district wide plan to address best practice #5.

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

BEST PRACTICES

1. The district conducts an annual review of all relevant health and safety issues for each educational facility.
2. The district designs educational facilities and sites to enhance security and reduce vandalism through the use of “safe school design” principles.
3. The district has procedures that govern access to each educational facility and its students and access is limited to authorized students and visitors.
4. The district ensures that playgrounds are properly constructed, maintained, and supervised so as to reduce the risk of injury.
5. Each education facility has appropriate equipment to protect the safety and security of property and records.
6. The district provides appropriate safety equipment and information to prevent injuries to students and others.
7. The district follows environmental and food safety health practices and regulations.

FINDINGS - The district is in basic compliance with this goal, however, best practices #1, 3, & 4 need to be reviewed and more systematically addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Schools should adhere more closely to the written procedures for School Safety Committees.
2. Access to each facility should be reviewed and provision made to better limit access to unauthorized students and visitors.
3. Playground equipment should be systematically evaluated, monitored and maintained for proper functioning and use.

STRATEGIES

1. Each safety committee will use the checklist provided to identify corrective action needed.

2. Minutes of the safety committee meetings will be sent to the district office within 1 week of the meeting.
3. The district will review the minutes and corrective actions data for needed follow up.
4. Each administrator will submit a written plan reporting the procedures for access to the campus and provisions that are or will be implemented to limit access and increase visibility of unauthorized students and visitors.
5. The district will develop and implement a plan for the review of each playground area, the condition of the equipment available and the supervision provided.
6. A study or review of all injuries/accidents that have occurred on playgrounds will be made, and a report prepared.
7. The district will review its key control program and the procedure for accounting for keys to all buildings, rooms, and gates.
8. A plan will be developed to address the lack of an adequate key control program. It will identify the keys available, holders of the keys etc, and provide for a proper accounting of all keys.

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

BEST PRACTICES

1. The district has procedures to create safe and orderly process for students arriving at or leaving each school campus.
2. The district has implemented policies, procedures, and practices that ensure the safety of transported students.
3. School buses, including buses operated by schools, charter schools, and contractors, are inspected and maintained in accordance with State Laws and State Department of Education rules.

FINDINGS - The district is in compliance with the best practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS - Continued efforts should be directed to ensure the safety and security of students and staff during transportation.

STRATEGIES - A review of the best practices and indicators will be conducted periodically.

Appendix A

February 27, 2002

Memo

To: School Board Chairman, Principals, District Staff, School Resource Officers, and Director of Local Emergency Management
From: Beverly Helms and Calvin Stevenson
Re: Safe Passage Act

Attached you will find information relating to the Safe Passage Act. Included are: **1) the memo from Mary Laura Openshaw; 2) the technical assistance paper, and 3) the Best Practices Checklist that includes the associated indicators.**

You will note that at least three things must happen prior to July 1, 2002. The first is the self-assessment that we must conduct using the Best Practices Checklist. All schools will conduct its own self-assessment and the representatives from each school will share its findings with the District Self-assessment Committee.

The District Self-assessment Committee will meet on **Wednesday, March 27, 2002 at 8:00 am** in the **School Board Room** and will review the district and school level practices in relation to each of the six goal areas (Goals A-F).

Lastly, the results of the self-assessment must be presented to the School Board on or before its June meeting. This affords the public the opportunity to hear the School Board Members discuss and take action on the committee's findings. The Superintendent will subsequently report the results and the School Board actions to the Commissioner of Education within thirty (30) days following the School Board meeting.

Principals: You and your staff need to review each of the indicators associated with the six goals (Goals A-F) as they relate to your school. Complete the Best Practices Checklist and bring it to the meeting on **Wednesday, March 27, 2002 at 8:00 am**. Selected principals have been asked to identify a teacher to attend the meeting.

District personnel and others: You should review the entire Best Practices Checklist with regard to each area of responsibility and expertise. Complete those areas that relate to your position or role and bring the results to the District Self-assessment Committee meeting.

In summary, read the information, review Goals A-F and their indicators and conduct an assessment from your perspective or in the areas of your expertise/responsibility. Make arrangements to attend the committee meeting on **Wednesday, March 27, 2002 at 8:00 am**. Bring all paperwork, checklists, documents and/or questions.

If you need additional information, call one of us. We look forward to seeing you on **Wednesday, March 27, 2002 at 8:00 am**. You need to plan to spend as long as necessary to complete the task.

BH:CS/ek

Attachments

cc: Guidance Counselors; Chuck Stanley; Paula Waller, PAEC; Selected Teachers