

To: MMSD Board of Education Members
From: Jane Belmore, Interim Superintendent
Date: April 23, 2020
RE: Update on safety and security of the district and recommendations

Ensuring the safety and security of MMSD is a complex undertaking and usually involves at least four strategy areas: prevention, mitigation, response and recovery. Every action that is taken within and across departments and teams involved in school safety and security takes these strategies into consideration. Providing safe, secure and welcoming schools is necessary to ensure all students have the opportunity to access learning opportunities in a safe, learning-centered environment.

My information for you contains three memos that update the work done during the 2019-20 school year on:

- [the overall MMSD Safety and Security Planning and Implementation](#)
- [MMSD Safety and Security Personnel](#)
- [Information from the Chief of High Schools](#)

MMSD Safety and Security Planning provides an overview of all of the teams, departments and partnerships that make up the planning and the implementation of strategies for keeping our students and staff safe and secure while at school.

MMSD Safety and Security Personnel specifically highlights the work that has been done with School and District Safety Teams, High School Assistant Principals in charge of Safety and Security, School Security Assistants and School Resource Officers. Much work has been done this year on the new SRO contract to align it with our District values and beliefs on supporting our students, as well as revising the role and work of the SSAs.

The data gathered from the High Schools can be summarized as supportive of keeping SROs in schools. SROs are seen as a critical part of school and student safety especially considering the following themes for school leadership, students, families and staff to the benefits of SROs:

- Relying on relationships, extending knowledge of a student's personal situation to intervene and support students inside and outside of school;
- Increasing a school's capacity to ensure safety and promote learning among all students;
- De-escalation skills and training to prevent issues from becoming harmful to students;
- Understanding the unique dynamics of the school building, and utilizing their safety and security knowledge to make buildings safer; and
- Students and staff who see the benefits of SRO's in schools.

After much discussion and interaction with school leadership and the school community at all of our high schools, no high school principal indicated a willingness to pilot having an SRO removed from school. It is critically important to understand that the absence of SROs in schools would result in calls to MPD (mandated by Act 143) being answered by police personnel who have not necessarily been trained to work with high school students and who would likely have no relationship with the students or the school staff. These responses to incidents in or around schools would **not** ensure the most helpful and least harmful actions with our students.

Recommendations: Based on the work that has been done this year, outlined in these updates, and on the recommendations from the four high schools, the following is recommended:

Keep Safe, Secure and Welcoming Schools work a priority to foster equitable access and outcomes for school communities.

Continue to provide training to staff and especially safety and security personnel to ensure they have skills and support needed to perform the essential duties of their job.

Maintain all SROs in place and continue to strengthen their relationships and partnerships in schools and across agencies to provide our students and families embedded support during times of need. In addition, it is critical MMSD and MPD maintain the in-depth work around SRO contract implementation and oversight.