

POMPTON LAKES PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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April 2023

Dear Member of the Pompton Lakes School Community,

In the early winter, the Pompton Lakes Board of Education created a Student Safety Committee to review the current status of the district's security systems and procedures and to develop a plan for enhancements. Through its work, the committee analyzed the following:

1. Current Communication Systems within the Schools
2. Building Access and Physical Security of School Facilities
3. Emergency Procedures and Protocols
4. Preventative Measures and Student Mental Health Services

The analysis provided an overview of how the district addresses each of the above-mentioned areas (current status) and identified a number of potential enhancements and improvements (future improvements). The committee then solicited the input of experts to focus on how best to address the list of identified improvements. This process included a security assessment from a safety and communications systems solutions firm, an in-depth walkthrough of all school buildings, multiple meetings with district and school administrators, and informal discussions with local law enforcement representatives.

The work of the committee concluded with a list of recommendations in each of the analyzed areas. A summary of the recommendations can be found below:

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

The committee recommends:

- the replacement of all existing communication systems in each school, to include the installation of wall phones in every classroom (replacing outdated wall speakers), new clocks in every classroom (replacing non-functioning clocks) and the installation of message boards in hallways and common areas (allowing information to be shared and emergency messages/instructions to be given).
- the installation of generators in each school. This would allow the schools the ability to maintain communication systems (computer network, phone system, security systems) in the event of a power failure.

BUILDING ACCESS AND PHYSICAL SECURITY

The committee recommends:

- the replacement of the existing door access system (the current system is over 15 years old) with a new one. In addition the committee recommends that software be installed to manage staff, student and visitor access and identification (ID badges).
- the installation of an integrated video surveillance system that provides live streaming access to the police department (current systems do not have this feature) and the latest features in search, management and notification functions.
- the installation of entry vestibules at each school to hold visitors until approved for entry.
- the hiring of armed officers at each school.
- the replacement of aged windows and exterior classroom doors at Lincoln School (these are the oldest windows in the district and in need of being replaced).
- the installation of shatterproof film on all existing first floor windows and doors at every school.
- the installation of a lightning detection system at all PLHS athletic fields

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

The committee recommends:

- the continued review and assessment of all existing safety procedures.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES AND STUDENT SERVICES

The committee recommends:

- the continuation of all existing extracurricular programs and activities (to continue to provide an opportunity for students to make positive connections with their school and connect with a trusted adult).
- the expansion of counseling services, including an increase in the availability of mental health crisis counseling.

Some of these recommendations are currently contained within the proposed 2023-2024 budget, specifically the continuation (and addition) of extracurricular activities, the addition of armed officers in the schools, and the expansion of the mental health crisis counseling that the district provides to students in need.

At its April 18 meeting, the Pompton Lakes Board of Education approved a resolution instructing the district's architect to submit to the New Jersey Department of Education a scope of work to address a district-wide proposal focused on student safety. This proposal would address the

remainder of the recommended items contained within this letter. The resolution is a necessary first step for the New Jersey Department of Education to review and to approve these items for a referendum.

In the coming months, the Pompton Lakes Board of Education plans to host a number of information sessions open to the public to share details of the proposed plans and to answer questions. Ultimately, the main goal of any proposed referendum would be to enhance and improve the safety of the students served by the school district.

The Board looks forward to sharing much more detail and additional information in the coming months with the school community and the general public.

Sincerely,

Paul Amoroso
Superintendent of Schools

cc: Members of the Pompton Lakes Board of Education