



Skaneateles Central School District

Excellence in Education

To: SCSD Board of Education
From: Ken Slentz, Superintendent
Date: 10 April 2018
Re: School Security Interventions in the 2018-19 Budget

Purpose of the Recommendation:

To provide additional support in the 2018-19 budget to further enhance a safe and secure teaching and learning environment at Skaneateles Central Schools

Background of the Recommendation:

Since the February 14 tragedy at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas high school in Broward County, Florida, administration has communicated our evolving comprehensive approach to school safety and security to staff, parents, and the community. Our approach generally addresses the following key areas (see Attachment A):

1. Facilities security upgrades completed, in process, and in future projects;
2. Mental health staffing;
3. Mental health and relationship building programming;
4. Relationship with law enforcement including ongoing round table discussions on key planning and training needs;
5. Engagement of students, staff, and parents; and
6. School security personnel

At the March 20 board meeting, the March 22 community forum on school safety, and at the April 3 board work session, (see Attachments B, C, and D), conversation and public comments about school safety and security largely focused on the employment of school security personnel including a school resource officer(s). While the employment of a school resource officer(s) or security guard could be a considered component of a comprehensive approach to school security, research suggests that it should not be the only option considered.

Recommendation:

Administration recommends that the board allocate funding for the implementation of interventions that will further enhance school safety and security in the 2018-19 academic year.

Administration further recommends that the board direct administration to establish an ad hoc community advisory committee that will assist in the development of recommendation for the board regarding the type of intervention to be enlisted – personnel, program, or a combination thereof – that will cause improved safety and security. If the recommended intervention is for additional personnel, the recommendation should address the job title, description, policy parameters, protocols to be followed, expected outcomes from such a position, and whether the position should be for a limited time period during which an impact study could be completed. If the recommended intervention is additional programming, the recommendation should address the research basis, expected outcomes, and details of implementation including training requirements of the program. In any case, the committee’s recommendation should reflect feedback from students, staff, and parents.

Rationale:

The fear of a school-based tragedy is very real for some of our students, staff, parents, and community members and may be presenting an obstacle to the teaching and learning that the district’s Strategic Plan envisions. As such, the district has an obligation to minimize or mitigate obstacles in line with our *Obstacles to Learning* strategy.

Given that the cost of employment of school security personnel is not insignificant (estimated range is \$60,000 - \$75,000 which represents between .25 and .31% on the tax levy); that research does not give us any degree of certainty that this intervention would have a positive impact on our campus security; and that while anecdotal evidence exists on school resource officer’s positive relationships with students, foiling of crimes in schools, and general contributions to school buildings, there is no empirical evidence to support these anecdotes at scale, true as they may be in individual cases. Conversely, the existing and continuously mounting evidence about the positive impact of school mental health professionals; teachers who build positive relationships with students, coaches and advisors who provide additional learning opportunities for students, student actors, student athletes; and research-based intervention programs including behavioral interventions is compelling and needs further study in comparison to the school security personnel model. Accordingly, administration believes a more deliberate approach is needed to determine the best investment in interventions that will enhance school safety and security. This is particularly true given that, in order to present budget models which allow us to continue our work on the strategic plan, include funding for school security interventions, and are sensitive to the level of funding required from the tax payers, administration is limiting other investments in certain areas including, but not limited to:

1. *Instructional support* – professional learning coaching, instructional technology integration support,

2. *Custodial staffing* – a review from the year which compared to work required and how the district staffed this department in pre-recession years would require one additional custodian to work a midday shift,
3. *Expansion of the world language program* – our design would have required one additional certified foreign language teacher,
4. *Purchases of various equipment* – by modifying our equipment replacement plan, and
5. *Purchases of certain materials and supplies* – in all departments and areas.

Finally, it is important to remember that the district's Strategic Plan is built on the foundation of the *6 Dimensions of Wellness*. This foundation was thoughtfully chosen based on decades of empirical research and on the evolving needs of our students. The 8 strategies of our Plan articulate a comprehensive approach to achieving the district's mission which seeks to provide excellent opportunities for all students through setting high expectations for each student, and which is done in a caring environment that is supported by staff, parents, and the community. To remain faithful to the implementation of this model (see Attachment E), a deliberate, inclusive, and transparent approach is encouraged.

Next Steps/Timeline:

If the board accepts the recommendation, funding will be included in the 2018–19 district budget which will be put before the voters on May 15, 2018.