



# Skaneateles Central School District

*Excellence in Education*

## *Enhancing Student Wellness through Safe, Secure, and Welcoming School Facilities*

*(Updated March 19, 2018)*

The well-being of the students in the Skaneateles Central School District is our first and highest priority. For us, student wellness spans across *6 Dimensions* – Intellectual, Physical, Social, Emotional, Occupational, and Spiritual - which sit at the foundation of our Draft Strategic Plan. The ultimate goal of the Plan is to provide opportunities and experiences that maximize our students’ ability to learn. One of the Plan’s key strategies is our *Safe and Secure Facilities Strategy*. (See Attachment A.) Below are some of the action steps that we have taken to under this strategy over the past few years and that we will take in the days, weeks, and months ahead to continually improve the safety of our students and staff and the security of our buildings.

### **TO PROTECT OUR STAFF AND STUDENTS, NOT ALL DETAILS OF OUR PLANS CAN BE SHARED.**

#### **Staff Awareness and Student Engagement**

We believe that a key component of maintaining a safe and secure building is the positive relationships between our staff and our students and among the students themselves. *Asking faculty and staff to identify those students who are in need of additional attention from our counseling and/or administrative staff and asking students to report classmates/schoolmates who they feel may need our attention is a critical “first line of defense”*. A few examples of steps that we have taken and are taking to further enhance this approach include:

- ***School-Based Intervention Team (SBIT) Meetings*** - In each school, mental health, nursing, administrative, and instructional staff meet to discuss students of concern including attendance, behavioral, social-emotional, and/or academic issues, and they then develop plans to address each student’s issues.
- ***Student Assemblies*** – In recent weeks we have held student and staff assemblies to discuss the Florida tragedy and to discuss our expectations for our students to actively take care of themselves, their class/school mates, and their school to help keep us all safe.

- ***Student Leadership Meetings*** – Meetings have taken place at all schools with students and administrators on how students can best have a voice in the actions that are being considered and in the demonstrations of concern by our student body.
- ***Student and Staff Surveys on School Safety*** – We have administered a *District Safety Survey* to all staff and to high school and middle school students. The results will help us better understand how safe students and staff feel within our buildings and on our campus, and the comments/suggestions will give us additional considerations for improvement.
- ***Student membership on Health and Safety Committee*** – Middle and high school principals have been asked for recommendations for students to sit on the district’s Health and Safety committee.
- ***Faculty, Staff and District Office Meetings*** – to discuss revised plans and to identify additional gaps in protocols.
- ***Student Wellness Program Implementation*** – including Zones of Regulation, Responsive Classroom, and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) are ongoing in the elementary and underway in the middle school.

#### **Mental Health Staff**

Trained mental health staff address student academic, social, emotional, mental health, and family systems needs. Our goal is to be as proactive as possible in addressing concerns so as to allow students to focus on their learning with minimal distractions. When needed, students and families are referred to outside counselors and/or agencies to provide additional support. Our staff includes:

- ***Certified School Counselors (6 total)*** in each elementary and middle school building, with 3 counselors in our high school.
- ***Certified School Social Workers (2)*** in our middle and high schools (our high school social worker is also our certified drug and alcohol counselor).
- ***Certified School Psychologists (2)***, where one is shared between our elementary schools and another is shared between our middle and high schools. We have an additional psychologist employed by BOCES in the middle and high schools.
- ***School Nurses (4)***, play an increasingly active role in mental health management of students

Our counseling staff also provides various trainings to our faculty and staff, including *Mental Health First Aid*, which lays out a clear process to find the right help for students in need as soon as possible.

## Communications

**Internal Communications** –Emergency incident processes will now include a district wide communication platform that will reach full time, part time, and substitute staff.

**Parent Communication Protocols** – Future emergency communications will utilize text, email, and phone calls and will include language as to 1) what information can be shared with their children and 2) what parents are allowed to do depending on emergency status (lockdown, shelter in place, lockout).

## Parent and Community Engagement

As partners in the effort to keep our children safe and to provide the best possible education, parents and community leaders can be extremely helpful when it comes to identifying issues of concern with our students, policies, and facilities management. Through our school and media communications we regularly work with the following groups:

- **Parents, Guardians, and Church Leaders** – Through our school communications, we have encouraged parents, guardians, and church leaders to engage in conversations with our students about the need to “see something, say something” when it comes to school and student safety.
- **Reporting Concerns** - Parents and students alike have been reporting concerns to us, many of which we have been able to act on. Other parents have taken tours of the elementary schools in particular to see what security measures are in place and what other measures are being planned for.
- **Parent and Community Advisory Committee Meetings** – Based on feedback and suggestions, we are scheduling parent meetings and community advisory committee meetings to discuss the current status, future plans, and other ideas that should be considered to improve our safety and security.
- **Community Forum** – On March 22, the district will host a community forum to discuss actions that have been taken, that are being taken, and that should be considered to better ensure the safety of our students and staff and the security of our buildings. More details will follow this week.

## Law Enforcement Relationship

The district is fortunate to have excellent relationships with local, county, and state law-enforcement and health and safety agencies.

- **Response time** to a call to the district by law enforcement and fire department is typically within minutes.
- **State troopers regularly review our facilities** and make recommendations for improvements to security.
- BOCES Health and Safety Officers meet regularly with district staff to **improve school safety plans** and training opportunities and to share promising practices for school safety and security.
- **March 1 Incident Review** – Since the March 1 incident in the middle school, the district has held incident critique meetings with administration and law enforcement personnel and another is scheduled for this week. The goal is to take advantage of the incident to improve our plans, communications.

### School Building Access and Control

- Each school building has a **single point of entry** once the students have arrived. Adjustments to each of these entries are currently underway and include:
  - All school points of entry are locked throughout the day.
  - An electronic access system has been approved and will be installed in each school building and at the district office.
  - Project 2021 construction will include *secure vestibules* at each of the four school buildings. *(This was originally scheduled for summer, 2017, but construction bids exceeded the available budget.)*
- **“Swipe card” access** to multiple doors in each building have been added for staff access and will be active shortly. This new procedure is helpful because it ensures the following:
  - Decreases our reliance on keys to access our buildings.
  - Lost cards can be immediately deactivated.
  - Administrators can immediately monitor who has entered the building via computer or smart phone.
- **Door sensors** have been added to exterior doors to notify staff as soon as doors have been propped open or left ajar
- **161 digital cameras** have been installed on the interior and exterior of our buildings and can be viewed in real time on computers and/or smart phones.
- Our **middle and high school public address systems have been upgraded** to include additional speakers on the interior and exterior of our buildings so that all students and staff are able to hear emergency announcements.

- Primary and elementary public address systems are being reviewed at this time for an interim solution to tie in to the new system in the middle and high schools.
- Our *telephone system has been upgraded* to include district wide announcement capabilities.
- A *lockdown alert system* has been installed to notify any visitors when we are in lockdown status.

### Practice Drills and Training

By state regulation, the district practices both fire and lockdown drills throughout the year, including the following:

- 8 fire drills are practiced.
- 4 lockdown drills are practiced, all of which will now be done in coordination with law enforcement.
- Required Active Shooter Drills are being considered by the NYS Legislature at this time.
- A *Safety and Security Guide* is given to students and parents at beginning of academic year. The Guide provides procedures for students and a notification chain for parents.
- Annual staff training sessions on emergency procedures, mental health awareness, and child abuse identification are conducted.
- Front office staff will be trained on specific practices and actions that they should take on a daily basis and during emergency situations.
- Substitute staff will receive specific training on emergency plans and responses.
- We are updating our current planning as a result of our March 1 review meetings with administrative staff and law enforcement members.

### Additional Actions Under Consideration

- *Hiring of a School Resource Officer(s)* – the Board will discuss this at the March 20 regular session meeting. We are also watching the details of a senate recommendation to include funding to school districts for additional mental health and school security supports.

## ATTACHMENT A

### *Why Skaneateles?*

**District Mission** – the mission of the Skaneateles Central Schools District is to *provide positive and successful learning experiences for all students*. The schools will also strive to *provide the students with knowledge and problem solving skills necessary to contribute and adapt to an ever changing world*. Within a caring and student-centered environment, the schools will offer a balanced educational program with *high expectations to challenge and motivate each student*. The school staff, students, parents, Board of Education and community *share the responsibility for this mission*.

**We Believe That** – our students are ***Ready*** for their post-secondary pathways when they have consistently demonstrated the knowledge, skills, habits, attitudes, and behaviors demanded by the NYS learning standards and/or the *6 Dimensions of Wellness* which are:

1. *Intellectual* - actively striving to expand and challenge one's mind with continuous learning (*and desire for learning*), problem-solving, and creative endeavors
2. *Physical* – understanding and attending to the balance between work, family, exercise, and nutrition to achieve personal fulfillment
3. *Social* - positively contributing to one's environment and community through ongoing in person, in print, and digital interactions
4. *Emotional* – developing the capacity to manage one's feelings and related behaviors including the realistic assessment of one's abilities, development of autonomy, and ability to cope effectively with stress
5. *Occupational* - developing personal satisfaction and enrichment in one's life through work and career
6. *Spiritual* – continuously aligning one's life activities and behaviors with their values, beliefs, and purpose (finding one's "North Star")

To accomplish this, the District has developed a *Draft Strategic Plan* which has our growth mindset philosophy as a foundation which will drive our decisions about resource allocation and support our practices of continuous improvement towards the achievement of the district's mission and vision. The *Draft Strategic Plan* will provide a critical lens and set of action steps that will ensure that each strategy is accomplished and that each of our students are ***Ready!***

## Strategies in the SCS Draft Strategic Plan

**Teaching Practices Strategy:** Develop a comprehensive K-12 instructional and assessment design (curriculum) which includes opportunities for students to apply their learning and which will allow for at least *one year's worth of academic growth* relative to the NYS learning standards; develop a comprehensive professional learning plan which explicitly supports this work.

**Obstacles to Student Growth Strategy:** *Identify critical obstacles to our students' success* in achieving one year's worth of academic growth and develop a specific professional learning plan to mitigate, minimize, and where possible eliminate obstacles.

**Exploration and Innovation Strategy:** *Provide more rigorous, engaging, and meaningful learning opportunities* for our students to improve their readiness by exploring, developing, and implementing research-based structures and programs including those from other districts across the state and nation.

**Extracurricular Opportunities Strategy:** *Extend the classroom learning experiences into the extracurricular offerings* including the interscholastic athletics program, competitive clubs, performance clubs, and fundraising activities through revised policies, procedures, job descriptions, and program evaluation tools that align to the mission and vision of the district.

**Human Resource Strategy:** Improve the district's ability to provide excellent learning opportunities and experiences to our students, through *improved recruitment, preparation, and retention of high quality, learning-focused employees* and the development of collective bargaining agreements which support the mission and vision.

**Safe and Secure Facilities Strategy:** *Provide safe, secure, and welcoming school facilities* by continuously reviewing and updating procedures, protocols, and physical status of all schools in line with current research and recommendations. Maintain an active training and communications program for staff, students, and parents in accordance with state mandates and district policy/standards.

**Fiscal Support Strategy:** *Utilize a long range budget planning process* including scheduled replacement plans, a district reserve plan, and professional services advisors that will generate greater cost predictability and better allow us *to focus our investments on enhancing student learning opportunities and experiences.*

**Communications Strategy:** Develop a districtwide communications plan which builds on existing protocols and which focuses on *accurate, consistent, comprehensive, and timely communications.*

