

## **Northport-East Northport UFSD**

### **Districtwide Health and Safety Meeting**

#### **Minutes of the Meeting- November 30, 2023 via Zoom**

Attending: Robert Howard, John Lackner, John McEnroe, Rocco Colucci, Dan Bach, Susan Boyle-NYSIR, Linda Bogdanowich, Lisa Todaro, Eric Jordan, Matthew Stanton, Allen Earle, Tim Hoss, Tom Harrison, Julie Hendricks-Atkins, Tori-Ann Schuttinger, Stephen Kerekes, Angelo Cocchiola, Lori Beekman, Trish McGrane, Sabina Larkin, Jayne Seymour, Alan Tener, Eleni Russell, Michael Genovese, Wendy Meyer

Bob Howard began the meeting by welcoming everyone to the second Health & Safety Committee meeting of the 2023-24 school year. He started the meeting by reviewing the Health and Safety Committee purpose and norms. He explained that the proper process and protocol is for the building-level Health and Safety Committee meetings should occur prior to the Districtwide Health and Safety Committee meetings. The buildings should work towards solving concerns at the building level. Mr. Howard reminded the committee that the website has an online google form that can be filled out by community members, parents and staff if there is a health and safety concern that they would like to bring attention to. Mr. Howard opened the floor to any questions at this point. There were no questions. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2023 Districtwide Health and Safety meeting. A motion was made, Tim Hoss seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

#### Old Business/New Business

Bob Howard had a brief agenda detailing the following:

- Elementary Playgrounds – One playground has been installed at Pulaski Road School. Bob indicated there will be a break in playground installs as the installer has another job, however they will return in December to install the playground at Norwood Avenue School, Ocean Avenue playground will follow, ending with Fifth Avenue's playground. Bob went on to say that as we open the playgrounds, there will be a process of inspections and playground safety training. Susan Boyle of NYSIR facilitates playground area inspections, so the district will be utilizing her expertise in playground safety. She has provided a training for our physical education staff and plans to return to train lunch monitors supervising recess periods. All students will receive an introduction to the new playgrounds during their PE classes. The playgrounds contain a lot of new fun and exciting elements, and are age appropriate for our elementary school students when properly installed. The district is committed to do the due diligence to help our students be prepared to safely enjoy their new playgrounds.

Lori Bookman, Pulaski Road Principal indicated they are very excited about the new playground. She went on to say that it looked fantastic and was very different from what they had before. She thanked Susan Boyle for directly working with Pulaski's PE teachers, and is looking forward to Susan returning to work with lunch monitors and providing ongoing guidance for teacher aides. Lori thanked all who contributed to the planning, installation, and completion of the playground with a grand opening date of 12-1-23. Susan Boyle added that the Buildings & Grounds crews were on top of things right away with installing fibar wood chips. She explained that fibar wood chips are not ordinary, they are engineered to be uniform in size making them ADA accessible, however also making them very expensive. Susan added that as a team, suggestions will be made

for any further training needed as students begin expanding and exploring their boundaries, with a focus on preventing any student accidents.

Bob Howard thanked Lori Beekman for her input, Susan Boyle for her support, as well as the community as a whole for their support and approving funding for the playgrounds

- SHARE Program - Bob provided a brief update and indicated John McEnroe will touch further on this in his report. To recap, Suffolk County has this program so they are able to collaborate with school districts, sharing access to camera systems to expedite their response in the event of an emergency. In the case of an active shooter, police will know where the shooter is, where they can gain access, rather than losing valuable time trying to reach the building administrator. John McEnroe is actively working on the set up and implementation of this program.

Bob Howard welcomed John Lackner

John Lackner welcomed everyone to the meeting. John shared the following information:

- Visual Inspections - Performed over the past few months, joined by NYS Certified Code Enforcement Official, Kevin Herbst. A couple items noted:
  1. Ponding or poor draining at Northport Middle School behind the gymnasium area - hope to address over the holiday break.
  2. Flooding issue in the NK wing area at Northport Middle School- hope to address over the holiday break.
  3. Block work repairs at East Northport Middle School. The engineer has looked at it and we expect quotes will be established shortly to have repair work done over the summer.

Bob asked John to provide the how and why we do visual inspections. John indicated we did a visual inspection because the SED staggered building condition surveys to reduce the demand for contractors and supplies at the same time, resulting in keeping costs down. John indicated he anticipates our building survey will occur in 2024. The building condition survey is used to report on sanitary systems, drainage systems, plumbing systems, and building foundations, including walls and doors. When complete, we give a rating of excellent, satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Rarely do we have anything rated unsatisfactory. A survey is general for the building – for example, 2 bathrooms may need work but the other 10 do not – so the inspection would warrant a satisfactory rating.

John added that Kevin Herbst also facilitates the district's fire safety inspections, scheduled for January 4, 2024. John reminded all district staff to be mindful of holiday decorations, and that extension cords and surge protectors are not permitted for any appliances as they require a direct plug into a wall outlet. Surge protectors are permitted for electronics (computers, printers, etc.) If there is an air conditioner powered by an extension cord, a receptacle will be provided.

Additional project updates:

- Ocean Avenue - Stage work is completed; sound and lighting replaced and curtains reinstalled. Any additional work, such as sheetrock will be put on pause so the play performance scheduled at Ocean can go on as planned with no interruption.
- NMS- Vestibule, fascia and soffit work was completed, as well as new signage complementing the security vestibule. Rear soffit work to be completed shortly.
- Playgrounds – Installation done by American Rec; demo, prep work and fibar (soft “wood” carpeting) work was completed in-house. John anticipates each playground taking two weeks moving forward, with Norwood, then Ocean, and ending at Fifth Ave.
- WJB – Abatement work in the gym to take place over the holiday break. Bob Howard added that staff working the holiday break will not be allowed to enter WJB - alternate work locations to be identified and communicated.

Bob thanked John for his update.

Bob welcomed John McEnroe. John welcomed all and discussed the following:

- NMS – Additional port was ordered for the vestibule and will be installed to compensate for the added door swipe. Placement of the greeter will be evaluated as this person will need to communicate with the front and rear of the building, and we want to make sure placement does not interfere with the security vestibule.
- Building Emergency Response Team Training – Fall team training is about 80% complete, with two buildings remaining.
- Blue Strobe Visual Lockdown Communication System – Project is continuing. We completed the 2 middle schools last year, and have slated the 4 elementary buildings for this year. The blue strobes alert people on the outside of the building that the building is in lockdown. Once installation is completed, the system will be tested and signage will be installed to inform visitors and parents about what the blinking blue light means. Further updates will be provided throughout the year.
- The Visitor Management System - Received some upgrades: hardware for all 8 reader stations has been upgraded to receive available updates for software from New York State, REAL and Enhanced IDs.
- Cameras – Additional installations around the district to cover blind spots. This will be further evaluated for any future needs.
- Classroom Door Vision Panels – About 80-85% finished with the installation of security safety film. We will continue to evaluate the need for additional areas. All staff should be mindful to avoid placing any holiday decorations on these panels.
- Our local law enforcement now has a secret code to allow for quick access into our buildings in the event of a lockdown emergency.
- Rave Panic System – During the series of emergency drills and lockdown drills done this year, John thought it would be a good idea to use the Rave System and get everyone used to using it. A lot of communication went out reminding that Rave would be used, including details such as who will be deploying, what time, what school to make sure everyone knows as there is no drill function and did not want there to be confusion and have a police response. John met with Rave System folks last summer and they are working on a drill function, however for now it is live so it is important to make all notifications to Northport Police, Suffolk County Police and State Troopers that the drills are live. The drills were a success. Where we used the Rave System, every school went back and looked at the map, and within feet you could see where the person was. We

didn't want to use an active shooter as we didn't want to create alarm, even if everyone knew it was a drill.

- Suffolk County Police Training – The district hosted SCPD at Bellerose Avenue School recently to do their active shooter training. They were able to do this during the week during school hours, which is normally hard to do. The response was very positive. We would like to repeat the training at an active school, like the high school, only during off hours with no students involved. This would be an opportunity to get the police and emergency responders used to the layout of the high school, as well as putting this in place to expedite the entry and navigate their way around a large building.
- Pedestrian Safety - In response to the Northport HS pedestrian accident that occurred in September, an onsite survey of the traffic controls was performed and a more effective plan was designed, including 3 additional stop signs. We will continue with increased security to ensure vehicle and pedestrian safety, as well as everyone should be mindful when driving around campus.
- Share Program – Approved by the Board of Education at the 11/9/23 meeting. As mentioned at the last Health & Safety meeting, this program allows Suffolk County Police to have temporary, remote access to cameras in their command center. If there's an emergency, or active shooter event, they can view the cameras live, expediting their response, as this is a great tool for collaboration with the Suffolk County Police Department.
- Eric Jordan - Commented on the Share Program, applauding this fantastic program and is pleased we are participating. He added further his disappointment with the Board's restrictions when it gets activated. For clarification, in an event, in order for police to see the cameras, there would have to be a communication from the building principal. However, there could be delays in reports from principals, keeping emergency responders from gaining access. By utilizing the Share program, this provides our law enforcement and emergency responders the opportunity to see building activity live. Eric also requested clarification on the restrictions in the contract. Bob Howard replied that the contract was written between Suffolk County and school districts, containing the same language so there's no difference in negotiation. The wording in the contract limits what the police can do. But if there is a call indicating an active shooter in the building, the police have the ability to open a window that is unlocked. The technology is not there to limit police access. But there is a limit in the contract of how they can get in for those purposes. Bob reiterated that if there's an active shooter, there's an expectation that law enforcement will access all resources to be able to save lives. Eric further expressed his concern that if there was a true emergency in a building, would people remember how to hit the Rave App button, and would there be reliable wi-fi in the building? John McEnroe replied that they have checked the service in the buildings and have had no issues.
- Linda Bogdanowich – Thanked John McEnroe on behalf of Fifth Avenue for all the work that has been done on the blind spots, and for the hard work he does in general. Bob Howard added that there's a lot of things that John does that cannot be shared. Bob thanked John for all the work he does, known and unknown.

Bob Howard welcomed Dr. Alan Tener, providing details regarding the following for the social emotional health component:

- SEL Committee - Transitioning to a Belonging Committee. The thought behind this transition was that largely with the SEL Committee, mostly mental health staff attended. By transitioning to a Belonging Committee, this opens up the membership to include a broader audience, including 2-3 representatives from each building. The committee's focus will be to look at cultural

diversity, social emotional awareness and central belonging within the district. The committee had its' first meeting and will continue forward with a second meeting sometime early in the new year.

- Panorama Surveys – Fall surveys are underway. At the elementary level, currently doing grades three and four.
- Common Corners – At the elementary level, short presentations will be done for staff on how to implement this program. Working with the children, we created calming bottles. Additional tools we have are fidgets and other devices, as well as laminated cards on breathing techniques for the children.
- Mindfulness – Ongoing training for staff to help them to transition to using space properly, as well as pushing into classes to work with the kids on developing their skills and techniques they can utilize in Common Corners.

Bob Howard opened up the meeting to the committee participation

- Eleni Russell – Asked John Lackner for clarification of what he was referring to when he mentioned block work at East Northport Middle School. John indicated the block is cinderblock, an interior block wall which may result in some exterior brick work as well.
- Tim Hoss – Thanked the Buildings & Grounds crew for the great job they did working on the security vestibule, resulting in a structure that esthetically fits in with the building and ties the building together nicely. He remarked on their level of professionalism, attention to detail, and the pride they take in their work. Again, he thanked the crew, as well as Bob Howard, John Lackner, and John McEnroe for bringing the vision to fruition. Bob Howard thanked Tim for the kind words.
- Sabina Larkin – Thanked John Lackner and the Buildings & Grounds crew for their work on the stage. A project that started out small became bigger when they noticed there was some structural work that needed to be done. She expressed appreciation for the pause they took from completing the project for the sake of the children's play performance. Sabina noted how beautiful the work is, and the comfort it brings knowing that the structural integrity of the building is kept intact. Sabina added she appreciated that the crew has kept it within the scope of the all-purpose room and the beauty that is there at Ocean Avenue.

Bob Howard segued off of Sabina's comment of how a small project becomes bigger when unknown circumstances arise. Bob indicated anytime you're in a building, you need to have trust in the people managing the buildings, and his confidence in John Lackner and his team. When it comes to the buildings, we're all teammates – if we see something and it doesn't seem right, we address it. Bob added this gives testament to it from a health & safety standpoint. The extra detail and efforts our staff do to ensure the safety of our students, staff, and anyone occupying our buildings.

- Matt Stanton – Inquired if there was a district message regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict and how this is resonating throughout the district, from a response standpoint of the students, of all ages. Bob Howard replied that with any war or conflict, there's a lot of deep issues and feelings and personal issues mixed in. He turned the discussion to Dr. Tener for input. Alan responded that he could only speak to his school. He has not heard from other colleagues, however we do have a student directly impacted as they actually came here because of the conflict. That student vocalized in a healthy way what is going on for them. Alan said he would ask around the other schools if there is a need for additional supports. Typically, this would be more of an issue at the

high school level. Matt thanked Dr. Tener and expressed appreciation that the district was taking a proactive approach to trying to keep the children on the right track. Angelo Cocchiola added there was a staff member affected with a child in Israel. He added other than that, the high school has not had any issues with handling sensitive topics, whether locally or internationally. Tim Hoss added that he has not seen any issues at the middle school.

Bob Howard reminded everyone that the next meeting will take place on February 29, 2024 at 3:45p.m., via Zoom. He indicated that the plans are to keep the meetings virtual, however this can be reconsidered in the future.

Bob thanked everyone for their participation and wished all a Happy Christmas and Hanukkah, wherever you are celebrating.

#### 2023-2024 Districtwide Health and Safety Meetings

September 28, 2023 @ 3:45 p.m.

November 30, 2023 @ 10:00 a.m.

February 29, 2024 @ 3:45 p.m.

May 2, 2024 @ 10:00 a.m.