

Highline Public Schools Safety Meetings Report 2018

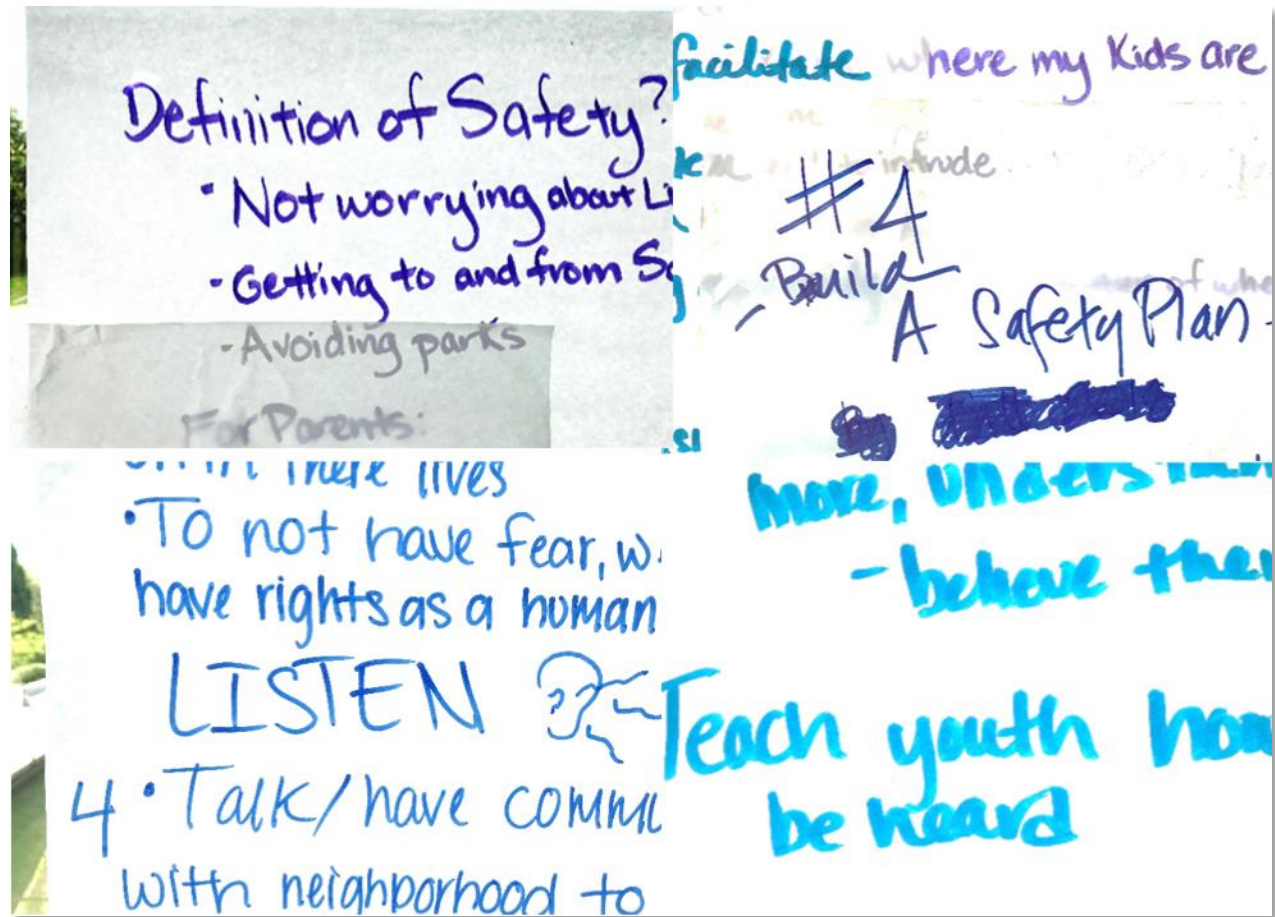


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Executive Summary

Purpose: This report summarizes feedback and input gathered from community members at four meetings held by Highline Public Schools in spring of 2018. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss school and community safety.

Analysis: Community input was entered into an electronic spreadsheet, coded for themes, and summarized by topic.

Key Findings:

- Community input was grouped in three main categories: vision for the community, priority issues that should be addressed, and strategies for addressing these issues and achieving the community's vision.
- Community vision primarily consisted of: (1) an inclusive social environment, (2) safe public spaces, (3) safe schools, and (4) empowered community members.
- Priority issues in the community included: (1) community climate, (2) mental health and substance use, (3) crime and violence, (4) child and family support, (5) government and politics, (6) law enforcement, (7) socioeconomic systems, (8) school climate, and (9) bullying.
- Participants suggested community-based, school-based, and individual-level strategies for addressing priority issues and achieving community vision. Suggested strategies included improving the social and physical community environment, providing services to community members, improving partnerships across stakeholders including with law enforcement, school emergency planning, prioritizing student and community voices, and increasing civic engagement.

Implications: This community input can inform strategic planning, policy development, and agendas for future meetings and data collection activities.

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview of Highline Public Schools School Safety Meetings 2018

This report summarizes community input from four meetings held in spring of 2018 to discuss school and community safety in Highline Public Schools:

1. Evergreen High School, White Center, WA: March 22, 2018
2. Highline High School, Burien, WA: April 19, 2018
3. Tyee High School, SeaTac, WA: May 1, 2018
4. Mount Rainier High School, Des Moines, WA: May 10, 2018

Each meeting lasted one to two hours, and consisted of discussions facilitated by community members and students. Appendix A contains additional information about each meeting.

1.2. Methods and Analysis

During facilitated discussions, input was handwritten by community members on large poster paper and sticky notes. Original hard copies of this information were compiled for analysis. Community input was entered into an electronic spreadsheet, coded for themes, and summarized by topic.

2. Key Findings

2.1 Conceptual Model of School Safety

Community input primarily addressed three topics: (1) vision for the future of the community, (2) priority issues that should be addressed in the community, and (3) strategies for addressing these issues and achieving the community's vision.

To summarize community input, a visual diagram, or conceptual model, was developed and organized by the three main categories of community input (Figure 1). Sections 2.2-2.4 describe the components of this conceptual model.

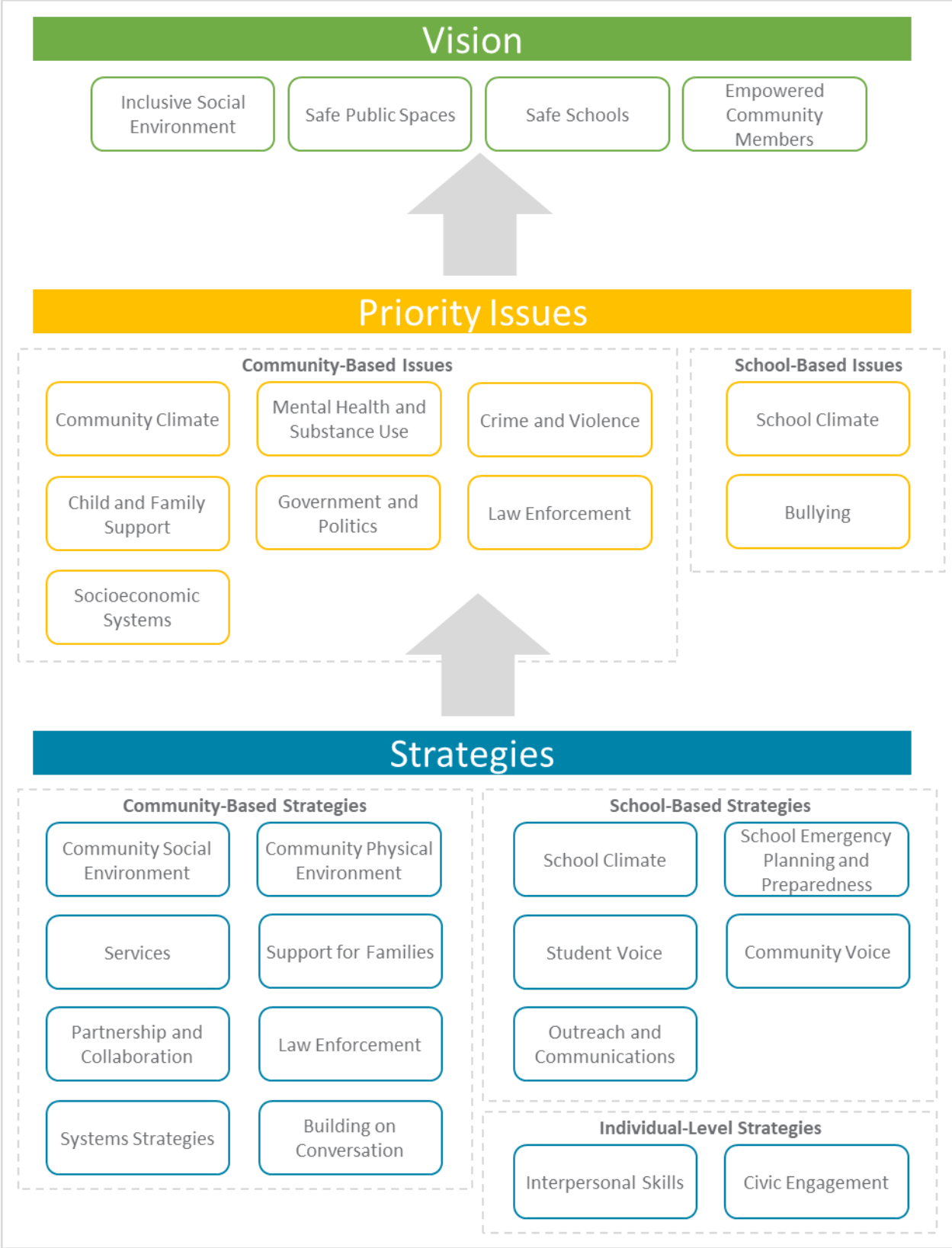


Figure 1. Conceptual model of school safety, based on community input from meetings.

2.2. Vision

Meeting participants highlighted four key components of a vision for their communities: (1) an inclusive social environment, (2) safe public spaces, (3) safe schools, and (4) empowered community members. Input related to community vision is summarized below.

Inclusive Social Environment

- Community members are active, engaged, and connected to each other.
- Community members are kind, decent, respectful, happy, hopeful, inclusive, compassionate, peaceful, relaxed, and trusting.
- Community members feel a sense of belonging.
- There is good communication in the community and all voices are heard.
- The community is diverse, tolerant, equitable, and inclusive of all cultures.
- There is no chaos, harm, or violence.
- Police play a positive role in the community.
- Community members look at each other and acknowledge each other.
- Community members feel comfortable asking each other for help.
- Families and parents are engaged in children's lives.

Safe Public Spaces

- It is safe to bike, walk, and be outside in public spaces, even at night.
- Parks are safe.
- It is safe to be in crowds.
- Children return home and are safe traveling to and from school.
- Children can play in the community.
- Community members gather and hang out in public spaces.
- There is limited crime, and it's possible to leave belongings alone in a public space.

Safe Schools

- Investments are made in schools.
- Community cares about schools and students.
- Schools are accessible, transparent, and welcoming.
- Schools are prepared for emergencies and can respond efficiently to crises.
- Students have access to extracurricular activities and mentorship.
- School staff are happy and invested.

Empowered Community Members

- People feel safe, do not feel fearful, and feel a sense of freedom.
- People accept mistakes, and are equipped with problem-solving skills.
- People are vulnerable and are themselves.
- People feel empowered to take risks.
- People feel safe at home.
- All basic needs are met, and those who need help get it.
- People feel able to wear whatever clothes they want.

2.3. Priority Issues

Meeting participants emphasized two types of safety-related issues in their communities: (1) community-based issues, and (2) school-based issues. Input related to priority issues is summarized below.

2.3.1. Community-Based Issues

Community-based issues emphasized in the meetings included: (1) community climate, (2) mental health and substance use, (3) crime and violence, (4) child and family support, (5) government and politics, (6) law enforcement, and (7) socioeconomic systems.

Community Climate

- Fear and feeling unsafe.
- Disrespect of others.
- Lack of community connection, knowing neighbors, or having common ground.
- Lack of trust, understanding, respect, or sense of belonging.
- Transiency of community members.
- Lack of opportunity.

Mental Health and Substance Use

- Lack of mental health support.
- Drug use and opioid epidemic.
- Isolation, invisibility, and anonymity.
- Lack of sense of self-worth.
- Stress from economic needs.
- Lack of coping skills and conflict resolution skills.

Crime and Violence

- Violent expressions of anger.
- Desensitization to violence.
- Property crime and petty crime.
- Gangs.
- Domestic and intimate partner violence.
- Easy access to guns, particularly for children and teenagers.
- Gun culture.

Child and Family Support

- Family dysfunction.
- Lack of support for families.
- Parenting approach.
- Need for mentorship for children and adolescents.
- Pressure on children and adolescents.

Government and Politics

- National and local political environment.
- Approach of government institutions.
- Approach of media.

Law Enforcement

- Approach of police.
- Lack of police.
- Approach to immigration enforcement.

Socioeconomic Systems

- Homelessness and lack of affordable housing, especially for children and families.
- Poverty and economic inequality.
- Racism.

2.3.2. School-Based Issues

School-based issues emphasized in the meetings included: (1) school climate, and (2) bullying.

School Climate

- Inadequate funding for security.
- Lack of community involvement.
- School infrastructure.
- Disrespect of students.
- Student behavior and disrespect of authority.
- Disagreement between students and teachers and other school staff.
- Approach of school and board meetings.

Bullying

- In-person bullying.
- Cyber bullying and social media.

2.4. Strategies

Meeting participants suggested three categories of strategies for addressing priority community issues: (1) community-based strategies, (2) school-based strategies, and (3) individual-level strategies. Input related to strategies is summarized below.

2.4.1. Community-Based Strategies

Community-based strategies emphasized in the meetings included: (1) improving the community social environment, (2) improving the community physical environment, (3) providing services to the community, (4) supporting families, (5) strengthening partnerships and collaborations, (6) reforming law enforcement practices, (7) shifting systems, and (8) building on the conversations held at the meetings.

Community Social Environment

- Be aware of others, build relationships, and address isolation.
- Develop a common understanding.
- Develop a culture of community safety that discourages violence.
- Call out racism and anti-blackness.
- Celebrate diversity and connect across cultures.
- Develop a caring, connected, and close-knit community.
- Collect community history and document historical community knowledge.
- Hold community events and meetings.
- Strengthen community organizations, groups, and clubs.

Community Physical Environment

- Improve safety of walking and biking.
- Provide support at bus stops and consider safe routes to school programs.
- Address dangerous places.
- Improve lighting.
- Implement neighborhood block watch.
- Develop central meeting areas and venues.
- Create community gardens and green space.
- Ensure there is clean water.

Services

- Expand after-school activities, interest-based clubs, cultural clubs, and programs.
- Implement bridge programs between younger and older students in different grades.
- Connect students to opportunities.
- Develop job and internship programs that connect youth to businesses.
- Improve mental health services for children and adults.
- Provide services that help students, families, and community members meet basic health and economic needs.
- Strengthen mentorship programs for students.
- Develop outdoor learning programs.

Support for Families

- Ensure employers accommodate family needs.
- Increase access to affordable child care and early learning programs.
- Increase access to resources for families to meet basic needs.
- Equip families to engage in children's education and well-being.
- Support communication between parents and children.
- Provide classes for parents on education and parenting tips.
- Develop supportive home visiting programs for families.

Partnership and Collaboration

- Strengthen relationships between law enforcement, courts, students, teachers, school and district administrators, families, businesses, local government, and the community.
- Strengthen parent teacher associations (PTAs) and parent teacher student associations (PTSAs).

Law Enforcement

- Improve response time of law enforcement.
- Ensure law enforcement are approachable, not intimidating, trusted, and viewed positively.
- Ensure law enforcement are engaged in the local community on a continuous basis.
- Train law enforcement in bias, mental health, de-escalation, trauma, restorative justice, and culturally responsive practices.
- Review and hold accountable the law enforcement system.
- Ensure law enforcement actions are developmentally appropriate for students.
- Prevent students from being arrested at school.
- Invite law enforcement officers to visit schools.
- Build relationships between law enforcement and schools, students, and community.
- Bring law enforcement into the community conversation about safety.
- Address the use of physical force and mistakes with weapons by law enforcement.
- Educate students about their rights when interacting with law enforcement.
- Increase visibility of law enforcement officers in the community.
- Reduce police presence.
- Hire law enforcement that better represent the community in terms of culture and diversity.
- Create opportunities for students to job shadow law enforcement officers.

Systems Strategies

- Disrupt institutional racism.
- Encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and connection across systems.
- Ensure equity in safety initiatives.
- Reevaluate hiring processes to increase equity.
- Leverage power and privilege to improve systems.
- Reform gun laws.

Building on Conversation

- Continue this conversation and encourage discussion.
- Get clarity on what to do next.
- Develop concrete solutions.
- Take action.

2.4.2. School-Based Strategies

School-based strategies emphasized in the meetings included: (1) improving the school climate, (2) school emergency planning and preparedness activities, (3) raising student voice, (4) raising community voice, and (5) improving outreach and communications.

School Climate

- Fund schools and programs for students.
- Clarify discipline policies and consider restorative justice models.
- Implement socio-emotional learning (SEL) approaches.
- Address bullying, gangs, and truancy.
- Ban guns in schools.
- Improve after-school safety.
- Ensure students' basic needs are met.
- Set a clear vision for students, including planning for after graduation.
- Upgrade and improve school buildings and materials.
- Improve recess activities and empower playground staff.
- Listen to teachers' input about the schools.
- Support and train teachers and staff to be culturally responsive.
- Ensure teachers and school staff feel safe.
- Hire and maintain teachers and staff of color and who are bilingual.
- Develop a culture of see something, say something.
- Smile and give off positive energy.
- Ensure access to in-school counseling and suicide prevention interventions.
- Support youth to connect with each other, and reach out to isolated students.
- Support undocumented students.

School Emergency Planning and Preparedness

- Fund school emergency preparedness.
- Develop clear instructions in case of emergency, for a variety of scenarios.
- Be aware of safety, lockdown, and crisis response plans.
- Plan and implement best practices for safety and incident response.
- Know when and how to call the police.
- Address security of school buildings, including lock functionality, lock placement, security cameras, and window coverings.
- Practice protocols during safety drills.

Student Voice

- Create a platform and safe space for students to engage and provide input, such as conversations, class meetings, and other convenings.
- Create a newsletter that is informed by students.
- Foster student leadership through student council, ASB, and other opportunities.
- Believe in and care about students.
- Center activities around students.
- Acknowledge youth knowledge and strengths.
- Encourage youth inquiry.

- Coach students to speak publicly and to advocate to address issues.
- Create a drop box where students can share ideas.
- Bring students into the community conversation about safety.
- Use technology to amplify student voice.

Community Voice

- Value community knowledge, and strive to learn from families and community.
- Engage families, neighbors, parents, students, and community leaders in discussions.
- Invite and train community members to facilitate meetings and discussions.
- Engage with faith-based organizations and the religious community.

Outreach and Communication

- Develop a clear communication plan.
- Communicate with families about incidents and emergencies at the school using multiple and timely modes, including phone trees and social media.
- Advertise safety meetings and other community meetings in the schools.
- Communicate with all stakeholders, including school staff and community members.
- Raise awareness about community spaces and gathering places.
- Ensure communications are in multiple languages.
- Schedule community meetings at times and locations that work for all stakeholders.

2.4.3. Individual-Level Strategies

Individual-level strategies emphasized in the meetings included: (1) strengthening interpersonal skills, and (2) increasing civic engagement.

Interpersonal Skills

- Develop the courage to have important conversations.
- Be interested, present, consistent, curious, hopeful, committed, clear, and proactive.
- Build consensus, mediate, and resolve conflict.

Civic Engagement

- Engage in community organizing, protests, advocacy, and local politics.
- Ensure policies are consistently enforced.
- Attend local government, council, board, and other public meetings.

Appendix A: Summary by School

A1. Evergreen High School

Meeting Location: Evergreen High School, 830 SW 116th St, Seattle, WA 98146

Meeting Date: March 22, 2018

Meeting Time: 6:30pm-8:00pm

Facilitator: One adult affiliated with the YES Foundation.

Meeting Participants: Approximately 45-50 people attended, including: several school administrators and principals from Evergreen High School, Cascade Middle School, White Center Heights Elementary School, Mount View Elementary School, and Hazel Valley Elementary School; a school security representative; a representative of the King County Sheriff's Office; several parents; five students; and representatives of community-based nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

Notes on Meeting Implementation: The meeting was structured around breakout sessions focused on stakeholder groups including: (1) schools, including students and staff, (2) school districts, (3) parents and families, and (4) law enforcement. For each stakeholder group, meeting participants discussed assets, needs, and roles.

Some language interpretation was provided. Light snacks were provided. No child care was provided. The meeting was held in the Evergreen High School library. More people attended than expected, exceeding the room's capacity. Participant engagement was high. Meeting participants expressed an interest in follow-up and next steps, including input from students, school and district administrators, school teachers and staff, community members, and law enforcement.

Summary of Community Input:

- Community input indicated that safety is the responsibility of the community as a whole, not just of the school district. There is a need for schools and community to work together, and to get more input from students about school safety.
- Community assets identified included: school staff, community knowledge, parents, students, cultural strengths, after-school programs, in-school supports, and having a community that cares.
- Community needs included: hiring and retaining school staff who reflect students culturally and racially, improving mental health supports, securing school buildings, increasing funding for school safety, providing more socio-emotional learning, training school staff and community members in cultural competency, disrupting institutional racism, and committing to restorative justice.

A2. Highline High School

Meeting Location: Highline High School, 225 South 152nd St, Burien, WA 98148

Meeting Date: April 19, 2018

Meeting Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm

Facilitators: One adult affiliated with Lake Burien Presbyterian Church, and two students from Highline High School.

Meeting Participants: Approximately 100 people attended: 20% were school staff or administration, 5% were law enforcement, 35% were parents or families of students, 20% were students, and 20% were representatives of community organizations.

Notes on Meeting Implementation: The meeting was structured around four questions: (1) What are you doing right now to contribute to community safety? (2) What are the factors that make the environment less safe? (3) What is your definition of safety? What would it look like/feel like? (4) What will YOU do to contribute to making our community/school more safe?

Some language interpretation was provided. Light snacks were provided. No child care was provided. Participant engagement was high. Student leaders were successful facilitators. Meeting participants expressed an interest in follow-up and next steps, including strategizing with student leaders, and holding regular forums rather than waiting until there is a crisis or emergency.

Summary of Community Input:

- Community input indicated that students care about the schools and want to take on leadership roles, and that community members also care and want to engage.
- Strategies for contributing to community safety included: building consensus, standing up to intolerance, developing conflict-resolution skills, and supporting programs that work.
- Factors that participants identified as making the environment less safe included: availability of guns, gangs, the opioid epidemic, bias, and lack of conflict-resolution skills.
- Definitions of safety included: not worrying about life or death, building a thriving community, law enforcement being approachable, and not encountering dangerous places in the community.

A3. Tyee High School

Meeting Location: Tyee High School, 4424 South 188th St, SeaTac, WA 98188

Meeting Date: May 1, 2018

Meeting Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm

Facilitators: One adult affiliated with a community nonprofit organization.

Meeting Participants: Community members.

Notes on Meeting Implementation: The meeting was structured around four questions: (1) How do we equip the community to respond to crisis in our neighborhoods? (2) How do we amplify the voices of our youth to be a part of the solution? (3) What is your definition of safety? What would it look like/feel like? (4) What will YOU do to contribute to making our community/school more safe? Student volunteers assisted with facilitation.

Summary of Community Input:

- Strategies for equipping the community to respond to crisis included: developing a communication system to distribute information in a clear way, building respect and bridges within the community, increasing access to mental health support, and creating volunteer pathways for people to help others.
- Strategies for amplifying voices of youth included: creating a platform for youth to provide input, helping youth connect with community organizations, and teaching youth to articulate their feelings and opinions.
- Definitions of safety included: living freely, feeling supported, tolerance and acceptance of differences, both physical and emotional security, and security both at school and in the community.
- Strategies for contributing to community safety included: listening, setting an example, bringing new people into this conversation, hosting neighborhood events, and supporting children and youth.

A4. Mount Rainier High School

Meeting Location: Mount Rainier High School, 22450 19th Avenue South, Des Moines, WA 98198

Meeting Date: May 10, 2018

Meeting Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm

Facilitators: One adult affiliated with a community nonprofit organization.

Meeting Participants: Community members.

Notes on Meeting Implementation: The meeting was structured around four questions: (1) How do we equip the community to respond to crisis in our neighborhoods? (2) How do we amplify the voices of our youth to be a part of the solution? (3) What is your definition of safety? What would it look like/feel like? (4) What will YOU do to contribute to making our community/school more safe? There were no student volunteers assisting with facilitation.

Summary of Community Input:

- Strategies for equipping the community to respond to crisis included: strengthening communication systems, connecting leaders, and developing leadership capacity among students and the community.
- Strategies for amplifying voices of youth included: training student leaders as facilitators, promoting existing youth leadership opportunities, and creating a platform for ongoing two-way communication between schools and families.
- Definitions of safety included: people gathering in public places, both physical and emotional security, kindness, calmness, fairness, respect, strong communication, being able to walk anywhere without concern, being able to leave your belongings in a public place without concern, and neighbors engaging with each other.
- Strategies for contributing to community safety included: promoting socio-emotional learning, training school staff and students, and facilitating strong partnerships with families.

Appendix B: Articles and Resources on School Safety

Table 1 contains articles and resources related to school safety.

Table 1

Articles and resources related to school safety.

Name	Description	URL
Department of Health and Human Services Child Welfare Information Gateway - Preventing Community Violence	Website with Links to Resources	https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/communities/preventing-community-violence/
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - Safe Start Initiative	Evidence-Based Practices in Mitigating Impact of Violence	https://www.rand.org/health/projects/safe_start.html
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - School Violence Prevention Resources	Website with Links to Resources	https://www.samhsa.gov/safe-schools-healthy-students/resources/violence-prevention
National Association of School Psychologists PREPaRE Curriculum	Resource for School Safety Planning	https://www.nasponline.org/professional-development/prepare-training-curriculum
Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative	Example Initiative	http://ths-wa.org/_wordpress/programs-and-services/youth-programs-and-services/seattle-youth-violence-prevention-initiative/
Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro (2013) - A Review of School Climate Research	Peer-Reviewed Academic Journal Article	https://k12engagement.unl.edu/REVIEW%20OF%20EDUCATIONAL%20RESEARCH-2013-Thapa-357-85.pdf
Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson (2010) - What Can Be Done About School Shootings? A Review of the Evidence	Peer-Reviewed Academic Journal Article	https://www.jstor.org/stable/27764551?casa_token=OYCdG-OfGuIAAAAA:6lrJaSFnmU2JGNW0FI5MnTPsyrA0qZ5Mh40ZLdg5gAlkuBHsexVT9ttRSt5GDGzrx88vb46zKSXjxWJEGXXUiY7yzRnOWmQ-WTIKlHX1JxLeYpgslo