



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

District continues focus on safety upgrades

Drills, cameras, personnel all contribute to creating secure schools

Safety drills, SafeUT app tip investigations, secure entries at schools, and a sharper focus on social and emotional health are the new norm for Davis School District.

Assistant Superintendent John Zurbuchen updated the Board of Education of the Davis School District about the district's continuing emphasis on safety protocols in all of its schools. The district has four working safety steering committees, which focus on various aspects of safety improvements.

Drills

It's been about 18 months since a report came out regarding safety drills and how districts were doing in complying with the required drills. Zurbuchen said Davis School District was at about 80 percent. The report, he said, gave the district the opportunity to review state law and revise its compliance with the law.

The law states that elementary schools should have an emergency drill every month, alternating between a safety drill and fire drill. Secondary schools were required to have two fire drills by a specific date and then two others some other time during the year. Nowhere, he said, does the law address lock down or lock out drills specifically. Understanding the importance of preparing students for any event, Davis is choosing to address those anyway.

What that looks like today, Zurbuchen said, is a

“We are ensuring that those drills are getting done. Because we should. Not just because it's law, but because it's safe for kids.”

— Assistant Superintendent John Zurbuchen

districtwide schedule so that each month during the school year, every school is doing the same type of drill.

At this point, 675 drills have taken place in district schools. By the end of the year, each school will have completed five evacuation (fire drills), two lockdown drills, one lockout drill and an earthquake drill during the Great Shakeout in April.

Additionally, it more than meets the secondary standard. That is not an easy task, Zurbuchen said, because in high schools, drills are not easy. Students with vehicles can easily leave as the drill takes place.

Principals are reminded each month which drill they need to schedule. Ten days before months end, those who haven't checked off completion of the drill are reminded again.

“We are ensuring that those drills are getting done,” he said. “Because we should. Not just because it's law, but because it's safe for kids.”

Board Member Cheryl Phipps asked how parents are being drilled. Referencing past incidents, she said parents swarmed the school and didn't act appropriately.

Reunification drills will be more commonplace next year, Zurbuchen said. Part of the balance, he said, is ensuring that each drill is valuable and not adversely affect-

See SAFETY, Pg. 2

Innovation continues to grow in district schools, departments

Innovation in the Davis School District is more than computers and technology, Superintendent Reid Newey told board members in a workshop meeting.

Every department is involved in innovation, Newey said, to the point that it's become part of the district culture.

“This is a team organization,” Newey said. “Innovation takes ... different teams interacting on less of a

linear fashion ... and more of a globular, intersecting fashion.”

For instance, he said interactive video conferencing classrooms are being used to connect less-experienced teachers with more experienced teachers in teaching concurrent enrollment. He expects the use of those types of classrooms to just keep increasing, allowing students to take courses at any school without leaving their location.

Various departments in the district are using data to make deci-

sions, including the Human Resources Department in monitoring teacher absences to better prepare for high-need days with substitutes. The Quality Staffing Department is also using data in looking at teacher retention.

The district is involved in all five career pathways created by the Governor's Office of Economic Development and is working on development of a construction pathway as

See INNOVATION, Pg. 2

SAFETY, from Pg. 1

ing learning. The other factor is that in a real situation, law enforcement would set up the perimeter and control parental access.

SafeUT App tips

The district's mantra of See Something, Say Something is being heard loud and clear. Seven months into the school year, the district has received 1,300 tips on the SafeUT app compared to just over 1,000 received all year during 2017-18.

The district follows up on each one of those tips. Any tip threatening harm, whether to an individual, school or oneself, creates an immediate alert to the administrator of that school.

"It's been very helpful," he said. "We've used it a number of times in safety situations. Where we have run into ... a challenge is SafeUT is adamant that tips must be anonymous, that way people aren't afraid to report, which makes sense, but it also increases your false positives."

Those tips that turn out to be a hoax can lead to criminal charges against the individual who placed the tip. Zurbuchen said it is still better to have the tool than to not have it because it leads to the safety of students.

Secure vestibules, security cameras

The district continues to move full steam ahead on the installation of secure vestibules in schools. Twenty have been installed thus far, 10 more are in the process and by the end of the school year, 40 will be completed.

Zurbuchen said once again it's a great safety too, but there are some unintended consequences. One of the most common hiccups schools are dealing with is the lack of manpower to quickly answer when a parent or community member presses the buzzer to get into the school.

The goal is to eventually have secure entryways in all 89 of the district's schools.

Upgraded digital security cameras are also being

installed as quickly as possible in all schools. Schools already have some type of security camera. Fifty schools have cameras that are easily viewed through a new video management system. The eventual cost for this upgrade is over \$3 million. Zurbuchen said it is money well spent as already the video has been used in investigations.

"I've always said cameras are not so much there as a tool to keep things from happening all the time as they are a tool for finding out what happened with much more as-surity," Zurbuchen said.

Camera installations on buses are taking longer. The cost for the cameras and Wi-Fi system that runs it is about \$4,500 per bus for a system.

The best app, Zurbuchen said, is still the human app. That includes the successes that have been seen with the mantra of See Something, Say Something. It also includes the district's hiring of Tim Barlow, who oversees all the security cameras, monitors social media and assists in the investigation of any tip coming into the SafeUT app.

Social and emotional health

In addition to hiring another security team member, the district has added five part-time family service workers and six health aides. The district also boosted the number of elementary school counselors so there is now one for every two schools. This year in the Student and Family Services Department, two full-time multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) coordinators were added to assist schools with student behavior. The district also hired Social and Emotional Learning Director Kathleen Chronister. A Title IV grant of \$400,000 will allow three social workers to move to full time and bump up the number of family service workers to 10, while also increasing their hours to 29.5.

The district is also hoping House Bill 373 will bring about \$1.6 million to help hire licensed school health nurses.

INNOVATION, from Pg. 1

well as an education pathway.

Other products of innovation

Newey listed include:

- Increased use of Canvas learning management system by teachers and students;
- Nearly 2,000 junior high students in coding classes;
- 1,900 students earning 3,000 quarter credits in online high school;
- Online digital library access;
- Language labs in every secondary school;
- And Project Lead the Way in 23 schools.

In other board reports:

- The board heard the results of three audits — employee application process, boundary variances and elementary immersion. The first audit was terminated because a new process was put in place. The second audit found procedures were followed for variances. The third audit found some issues with tracking use of Confucius Institute funds. The recommendation was for better training of new hires when one individual retires or leaves.

• A brief overview was given on the Teacher and Student Success Act legislation. Robison said the funding will be used for local needs. The board will further discuss possible options during its upcoming board study session.

Board Member Brigit Gerard said: "Local control ... two buzz words we have heard for a long time, especially the last two years. And I think this is local control at its finest. It's a great opportunity to show we know what our local needs are."