

Lincoln Park Schools Security Presentation

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What is a “second question” on the ballot?

1. In addition to voting for Board of Education representatives, a second question gives the public the opportunity to approve or reject an additional proposal.
2. “Would you support adding \$180,000 to the existing tax levy for the purpose of adding three Class 3 Special Officers to the school budget?”
3. This will cost the average household an additional \$6.29 each year.
4. Since school budgets are capped, a second question allows the community to decide if they would like to support the additional spending exclusively for this purpose.

What happens if the proposal is not approved?

If the community votes against the proposal, we will not add these positions to the budget.

All of our existing security protocols will remain in place as well as our close relationship with the Lincoln Park Police Department.

We do not believe that if this proposal is not approved that our schools will be any less secure than they are at present.

What happens if the proposal passes?

- If the proposal is passed, we would work with the LPPD to prepare for these positions.
- Necessary equipment would be purchased.
- Job postings would be placed.
- Interviews would be conducted in cooperation with the LPPD.
- Ideally, the positions could be filled in January, 2024.
- We plan to use these funds to secure three officers, one at LPES and one at LPMS.

Why three officers for two schools?

- The third officer would have several purposes:
 - Covering when the other officers are not scheduled or are out sick
 - Attending evening activities for students
 - Assisting when an event may require additional support

What will be the officers' responsibilities?

- Assisting with visitors to the school
- Interacting with students during lunches
- Assisting with arrival and dismissal of students
- Serving on the Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams

Will we have Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams?

N.J.S.A. 18A:17-43.4 requires the establishment of Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams in every NJ Public School.

Teams are comprised of the following:

- Counselor or other school mental health professionals
- School administrator
- School safety specialist
- Teaching staff member
- Resource Officer or school employee who is a liaison with police

What is the purpose of Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams?

1. Provide guidance for staff and students regarding the recognition of behavior that may represent a threat to the school community
2. Designation of members of the school community to whom threatening behavior will be reported
3. Implementation of policies concerning the assessment and intervention of students whose behavior poses a threat to the safety of the school community and appropriate action to be taken
4. Coordination and consultation with the school safety specialist
5. Confidentiality

Behavioral Threat Assessment Teams Facts

- A Behavioral Threat Assessment (BTA) focuses on a student's observed behaviors, not their traits or profile.
- A BTA is not a criminal investigation, nor is it a disciplinary process.
- A BTA focuses on gathering and assessing information about a student's behaviors in full context to ensure that they receive appropriate support, all as a means of proactively preventing unwanted outcomes.
- A BTA may be done in coordination with or may lead to a risk assessment.

What reporting tools are available?

- StopIt! - This app has been in our district since 2018.
- RSVP-3 - County-run program
- Trusted adults in school
 - Email
 - Face to face conversation

What can parents do to help?

- Be careful what you say around your children. Avoid phrases such as, “I want to kill him,” or “I wish I were dead.” Do not allow your child to use those phrases. Each time we hear it, we perform a formal risk assessment.
- Emphasize to your children that violence is never the answer.
- Teach your child the difference between self-defense and retaliation.
- Recognize that everyone in Lincoln Park Public Schools wants to protect EVERY child in our district.

What can parents do to help?

- PLEASE support our disciplinary consequences. They have never kept any of our students out of a college.
- Is discipline the same for all children? Not always.
 - IEP's
 - Progressive disciplinary consequences
 - Relevant circumstances that come out during an investigation
 - Confidentiality
- Attend our parent programs
 - Internet safety
 - Vaping Awareness
 - Using the Genesis parent portal

Leadership in Attendance

Present this evening:

Chief Zammit, LPPD

Lieutenant Michael Bono, LPPD

Jenna Aiello, LPBOE president

Mark Halupka, LPBOE

David Winston, LPMS principal

Additional Questions

Will the Class 3 officers be employed by the LP Police?

No. They will be employed by the LPBOE, but LPPD will ensure they are appropriately trained and all certifications are up to date.

Will they wear uniforms and carry firearms?

Yes. The “uniform” will be determined by the school so they can easily be identified as officers, but they will not wear a traditional police uniform. For example, a polo shirt with a logo and khaki slacks. These officers will be carrying their firearms, just as our local police officers do when they visit our schools.

Additional Questions

Will they be handling discipline of students?

No. The administration and staff will continue to handle all discipline of our students. If these officers become aware of a potential threat or a crime, they will, like all school staff, notify the building administrator, unless a call to 911 is appropriate, in which case, they would respond appropriately. The expectation and their training is for these officers to respond to imminent threats immediately.

Additional Questions

What will be the responsibilities of these officers?

- Monitoring and assisting with visitors
- Assisting with arrival and dismissal of students
- Assisting with supervision of students during lunch or recess
- Serving on the Behavioral Threat Assessment Team as appropriate.

We are expecting these officers to build positive relationships with students, strengthening our positive perception of and relationship with law enforcement. School climate has always been a priority and these officers must contribute positively to that goal.

Additional Questions

What are the requirements and do they need special training?

Yes. These officers will be required to recertify twice yearly to carry firearms.

They must complete SRO (School Resource Officer) training within a year of being hired.

They must pass various other requirement from the State of NJ.

They will receive appropriate professional development training with our staff.

They must be recently retired from law enforcement and in good standing.

They must be a NJ resident and younger than 65 years of age when hired.

Additional Questions

Is there an employment limit for how long they can serve in our schools?

While there is no limit to how long they may serve in our schools, they are hired annually and if an officer is not meeting our expectations, we have the right to terminate the relationship and find a more suitable replacement.

Will we get metal detectors in school?

No. Metal detectors in schools are installed to address a specific concern within the community. We do not have any concerns that would be addressed by installing metal detectors. Our intent is make students feel safe and comfortable when coming to school. In Lincoln Park, metal detectors would not contribute to a positive school climate.