



# **Safety and Security Public Forum**

October 29, 2024  
Kinawa Auditorium

Questions may be submitted  
after the presentation



# INTRODUCTIONS



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## **John Hood**

Superintendent, Okemos Public Schools

## **Katie Cavanaugh**

Vice President, Okemos Public Schools Board of Education

## **Katie Diehl**

Director of Safety and Security, Okemos Public Schools

## **Jason Russell**

Founder and President, Secured Environment Consultants (SEC)



# PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC FORUM



- To provide an overview of the district's approach to school safety and security
  - Physical Security
  - Violence Prevention
  - Behavioral Threat Assessment
  - Policies and Procedures and Legislative Advocacy
  
- To answer questions and hear concerns regarding school safety.



# COMMUNITY MEETING NORMS

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Be respectful

Seek to understand

Assume positive intentions

*Together...educating with excellence, inspiring each learner for life.*



# SECURE EDUCATION CONSULTANTS (SEC)



- Spring 2022: Jason Russell of SEC to discuss security.
  - Wanted to be proactive rather than being reactive after an emergency occurred.
- Spring 2022: SEC began security assessments throughout the district
- Referral to Dr. Margaret Coggins
  - Security and management consultant specializing in areas of violence prevention and threat assessment
- 2022, 2023, 2024: Okemos Staff trainings by SEC
- February 2023 : Supported OHS swatting incident
- Fall 2023: SHIELD to hire a Director of Safety and Security
- Ongoing: New school building and secure vestibule designs
- Ongoing: Performing site assessments of our outdoor athletic spaces



# PHYSICAL SECURITY



## We are Leaders in Security: How Did We Get Here?

### Partnerships:

- Secured Environment Consultants (SEC)
- Meridian Township Police Department
- Meridian Township Fire Department

### Physical Enhancements

- Security Cameras
- Access control
- Secured Vestibules
- Window Film
- New construction planning



# VIOLENCE PREVENTION



## We are Leaders in Security: How Did We Get Here?

### Partnerships:

- Dr. Margaret Coggins
- Prevent2Protect

### Prevention Measures:

- Behavioral Threat Assessment
- BASC-3 Mental Health Screener administered 3 times a year
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum
- Social workers and counselors in every school building
- Student Support Advocates (SSA) in all elementaries
- WoofPack facility dogs



# BEHAVIOR THREAT ASSESSMENT



## We are Leaders in Security: How Did We Get Here?

An evidence-based approach, developed from extensive research and practice, to:



**IDENTIFY THREATS & OTHER  
FORMS OF RISK.**

**ASSESS THE SERIOUSNESS  
&  
POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE.**



**MANAGE & PREVENT  
VIOLENCE & OTHER  
ADVERSE OUTCOMES.**

The goal is prevention and to provide intervention and support for students who are at risk of violence to themselves or others.





# BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT PROCESS



When a report of a concerning behavior or communication is received, the administrator will determine whether a risk assessment is needed.

**If yes:**

The school's BTA team will follow a systematic methodology to collect the facts and investigate the circumstances.

The team will conduct interviews as needed with, for example, the student being assessed, the potential target(s), and any witnesses.

Additional background information and student history is also reviewed.

Based on the information gathered through this process, the threat assessment team determines the level of risk and implements plans to manage the risk.

## Behavioral Threat Assessment

The Process - When a student demonstrates concerning behaviors or communicates direct or indirect threats that may pose a danger to the safety of students or staff, a threat assessment team conducts a risk assessment.



# BEHAVIOR THREAT ASSESSMENT



All OPS team members have received annual specialized behavioral threat assessment training based on operational guidance and research promulgated by the National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) of the United States Secret Service.





# COMMON ACTIONS TAKEN



Possible steps taken during investigations into behavioral concerns:

- Backpack/locker checks
- Removal from classroom and/or school
- Parental contact
- Home welfare checks
- Home firearms checks
- Involvement of local law enforcement
- Involvement of security experts
- Referral to outside agencies
- Behavioral threat assessments



# PREVENT2PROTECT



Prevent 2 Protect is a unique program that draws upon the expertise of mental health providers, law enforcement and educators, to provide a research-to-practice hub located in MSU's Department of Psychiatry.

Psychiatrists, law enforcement experts, resident physicians, allied health professionals, educators, and targeted violence prevention experts support community-based intensive support teams, provide consultation, training, technical assistance, and conduct research to inform school violence prevention policies and practices in Michigan and nationally.





# WHAT FAMILIES CAN/CAN'T KNOW



## WHAT FAMILIES CAN KNOW

- Targeted communications to impacted families
- Investigation is ongoing
- Investigation ended
- Threat substantiated or unsubstantiated

## WHAT FAMILIES CAN'T KNOW

Please understand that under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), we can't share protected information, which includes details about students who are not your children.



# REPORTING CONCERNS



Call 911 for emergencies or life threatening situations

We remind students and families that there is a confidential method of reporting concerns through OK2SAY by calling 855-565-2729 or by texting 652729 (OK2SAY)

During the school day, contact the Principal, other Building Leaders, or Director of Safety and Security

Concerns after hours, weekends, and holidays should be reported directly to local law enforcement. Contact Meridian Township Police Department at 517-853-4800.



# MANAGING SCHOOL THREATS FOR PARENTS



## Managing School Threats Effectively ADVICE FOR PARENTS



### Trust Official Channels

Encourage parents to rely on communication from the school and law enforcement regarding threats. Explain that spreading unverified information can create confusion and make it harder for schools to manage the situation effectively.



### The Impact on Investigations

Let parents know that when rumors spread online, it can complicate investigations, waste valuable resources, and slow down the response process. False or exaggerated claims can mislead law enforcement, distracting them from addressing genuine threats.



### Creating Panic and Fear

Sharing unverified information can cause unnecessary panic among parents, students, and the community. This panic can escalate situations, making it harder to maintain calm and order during threat assessments.



### Protecting Student Privacy

Remind parents that discussing rumors about specific students or threats online can violate privacy and harm the well-being of those students and their families. Public speculation can stigmatize students and lead to harmful, long-term effects, even if the rumors are unfounded.

## Managing School Threats Effectively TALKING POINTS FOR PARENTS



### Role of Law Enforcement and Schools

Schools and law enforcement have trained professionals who follow strict protocols to assess and handle threats. Sharing unconfirmed information can interfere with these protocols and slow response efforts.



### Misinformation and Escalation

Circulating unverified information can amplify misinformation, potentially causing overreaction or unnecessary emergency responses. This diverts critical resources away from actual emergencies.



### What Parents Should Do

Report any concerning information directly to the school or law enforcement instead of posting it online. Talk to children about the importance of not spreading rumors and reporting threats responsibly.

## Empowering Protection.

[www.secprotects.com](http://www.secprotects.com)

Jason Russell, President and Founder

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# SAFETY AND SECURITY UPDATED PROCEDURES



- Drills: Tornado, Lockdown, Fire, Medical Emergency Response Teams
- Updated Building Access Procedures
- Updated Severe Weather Response Procedures
- School Closures Procedures
- Emergency Operations Plans Procedures
- After School Events Procedures





# BOARD OF EDUCATION'S ROLE IN SECURITY



- Set Policy
- Instruct the superintendent to create a safe and secure environment for our students and staff
- Budgetary expenditures - we've continually chosen to spend money on security and safety - hired SEC, hired Director of Safety and Security, included security upgrades in bonds, used sinking, bond, and general funds on security upgrades, paid for increased mental health support including additional counselors and social workers, student supervisors, etc.
- Advocating on behalf of the district - seeking additional funds for security and mental health, gun reform legislation including red flag laws and safe storage.



# BOE POLICIES UPDATED IN THE LAST YEAR



Behavioral Threat Assessment

School camera and monitoring  
policy

School visitors

Detection dogs

Drill, Plans and Reports

Firearms and weapons

Hiring and background checks

Drug and alcohol free workplace

Discipline policy - staff and students

Search and seizure

Investigations, arrests and other law  
enforcement contacts

Anti-bullying policy

Registered sex offenders policies

Protection orders against students

Use of Seclusion and Restraint

Resolution on Michigan Safe Storage Law



# GUN SAFETY ADVOCACY



- Board advocated for common sense gun legislation
  - Board resolutions on gun safety
- Made trigger locks available at events and working towards legislation allowing public funds to be used to purchase trigger locks that the district can give out
- Advocacy committee members have met with legislators, spoke at committee hearings on common sense gun legislation
  - Provide safe storage info to all families





# PUBLIC FORUM Q & A



Be respectful

Seek to understand

Assume positive intentions

Our expectations are that you will not share student or staff names

*Together...educating with excellence, inspiring each learner for life.*



# CONCLUSION



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Thank you for attending our Safety and Security Public Forum

Behavioral Threat Assessment Website:

[Okemosk12.net](http://Okemosk12.net) - Departments - Safety and Security - Behavioral Threat Assessment

If you have any additional questions, please contact:

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