



Student Safety & Well-Being Committee

Mercer Island High School

November 4, 2025

Meeting Notes

Meeting notes taken by Michelle Mueller, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Opening Remarks

Ms. Martinez (MISD School Board Director) commenced the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

Ms. Battersby (Assistant Superintendent, Compliance, Legal Affairs, and HR) shared that Superintendent Fred Rundle was unable to participate due to illness.

She stated that the purpose of the committee is to bring together varied perspectives with the goal of ensuring there are systems in place to safeguard and protect every student. She emphasized that the group will serve in an advisory capacity to the District and the School Board.

While born from allegations of sexual misconduct in the District, the committee's role is not to investigate. Rather, the committee will look at what policies and practices are in place to determine what is working and what might be improved as well as consider whether the needs of the community are being met and to ensure that practices reflect community values. The committee will provide a recommendation to the Board and Superintendent with respect to suggested practice improvements and/or policy revisions. The Board and/or Superintendent will affect any necessary changes.

Ms. Martinez added that necessary changes at higher levels may be identified. In this case, communication and advocacy work will extend to the appropriate agencies or individuals. Some discussion occurred around the allegations of sexual misconduct in the District. Ms. Battersby clarified that investigations run by MIPD, CPS and the District are distinct from one another and confirmed that there are two active investigations at present, one on allegations of sexual misconduct and one on whether a staff member failed in his duty as a mandatory reporter.

Committee Introductions

Mr. Schott introduced himself as the committee's facilitator and provided some background information on previous roles as a facilitator. He highlighted that, in this capacity, he will seek to ensure that all voices are heard and attempt to keep the facilitation neutral and objective. He encouraged committee members to speak up if they feel these goals are not being met. Mr. Schott noted further that he will be providing agendas and pre-reading in advance of meetings going forward.

Agendas will be designed to be flexible should discussion on a topic take longer than anticipated; however, the goal will be to conclude meetings at the designated time. Meeting notes will be taken to summarize discussions and identify decisions.

In the future, he will be working with a co-facilitator who will help plan for and debrief after meetings. Committee members expressed a preference for in-person meetings where discussions and decisions will occur but agreed that remote, webinar-style meetings would work when an expert is delivering an in-depth presentation on a particular topic.

Introductions were made by each committee member and committee members shared information on their connection to the District and their area of expertise.

Draft Rules of Engagement

The committee was provided with proposed ground rules under which it will operate and asked to review. Ms. Battersby highlighted that students other than one's own child or children should not be named. If there are concerns regarding another student, these may be brought to the attention of an administrator in private. Additionally, she stressed that while there will be an emphasis on transparency regarding the committee's work, there may be questions around the ongoing investigations that will not be answered to ensure the integrity of these investigations.

Some discussion occurred around a desire to condense the guidelines into fewer than the ten proposed, possibly by combining rules, and around the need to better define some of the terms, especially "confidentiality." Some committee members expressed an interest in clearer guidelines on what can be shared with family and with PTA and community members. It was highlighted that the community knows that this committee has been formed and is anxious to know who is serving on the committee; what is its purpose; what the deliverables will be; and how, when and by whom committee discussion/actions will be communicated to the public.

Ms. Battersby reminded members that student names and their personal experiences, aside from immediate family members, should not be discussed, eliminating some of the concern around confidentiality.

Mr. Schott noted that nothing pertaining to active investigations will be addressed, further mitigating confidentiality concerns. The consensus was that if a discussion point should be treated confidentially, it should be introduced as such. Additional discussion occurred around the difference between confidentiality and anonymity, with committee members agreeing that no names associated with personal stories should be shared.

Mr. Schott emphasized that meeting notes would serve to summarize committee discussions and decisions rather than to provide specific details. Mr. Schott noted that the facilitator's intention will be to provide this summary soon after the meeting. If a member feels that important elements of the conversation were excluded from the summary but should be made public, these concerns may be addressed at the next meeting.

Back to the Future Exercise

The committee engaged in a “Back to the Future” exercise. The goal of the exercise was to 1) imagine an ideal future state (addressed in the present tense), 2) identify the current state (addressed in past tense), and 3) identify the steps taken to move from the current to the future state. Members were split into four balanced groups (each group with a mix of parents, students, administrators, subject matter experts) to develop three statements reflecting the desired future state. Future committee work will focus on consolidating the inputs from the four breakout groups.

The groups presented the following statements as desirable future states (expressed in current tense). *Facilitator Comment: These are not statements about what exists today. This is a group exercise around what the desired states are expressed in current tense.*

Group 1:

- Clear, accessible trauma-informed and student-centered policies and procedures exist.
- Boundary education with trusted adults is provided for students and staff.
- Students know that they are safe and they belong.

Group 2:

- There is an environment where reports are taken seriously, and teacher-student relationships are professional; no teacher is treated with any unfair or preferential treatment.
- Students and school staff are educated earlier on regulations to create an environment where inappropriate behavior is not normalized.
- Students feel safe to come to school, and reports and concerns are acted upon.

Group 3:

- Staff, students and families are empowered to build healthy relationships among all stakeholders for the betterment of the community.
- To have a district with better, more meaningful education for students and teachers, clearer channels of reporting, and an environment where students feel comfortable reporting incidents in a safe capacity.
- Policies are put in place for prevention, such as stricter guidelines on teaching assistants, test retakes and teacher office visits/appointments.

Group 4:

- Mercer Island is a model district in which families feel confident that their students will be safe and cared for when sending their students to school.
- The educational system is marked by clear, effective and usable systems that support students, staff and community members alike; these systems enable schools to address concerns regarding safety and well-being.
- A culture exists where there is a clear understanding of conduct expectations that safeguard the health and well-being of all students; this culture reflects the ideals of the community.

Mr. Schott acknowledged that many of the goals are aligned. He will work to create consolidated goals to present to the committee at the next meeting.

Meeting Wrap up and Housekeeping Items

A committee member requested copies of the current sexual harassment policy and reporting process. Ms. Battersby indicated that it might be useful for the committee to review the District's

sexual harassment; harassment, hazing, intimidation and bullying; and nondiscrimination policies as all three follow a similar reporting process.

Some discussion occurred around pre-reading expectations for future committee meetings. Mr. Schott noted that, as facilitator, it is his responsibility not to overwhelm members with “homework” while also recognizing that a base level of understanding is required.

It was agreed that Mr. Schott would provide agendas for upcoming meetings a week in advance and include any pre-reading necessary to prepare for the next meeting. The requested policies would be included as pre-reading for the December meeting.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. Schott indicated that the exact schedule for committee meetings and agenda items has not yet been finalized. The goal is to spend as much time as needed on any topic while also moving ahead towards workable solutions. Topic suggestions may be brought to the group for prioritization.

Some discussion occurred around whether the committee’s composition provides sufficient representation of stakeholder groups. Committee members provided feedback on representation that may be missing or lacking. Committee members conceded that it was difficult to comment on expert representation at this time. It was noted that there is concern in the Mercer Island community that there is an overrepresentation of MISD staff.

Closing thoughts

- The next meeting will be held on December 2.
- Mr. Schott will work to clarify and consolidate the rules of engagement.
 - Members should reach out if interested in assisting.
- Mr. Schott will consolidate the group statements into 3-4 statements which reflect the collective perspectives.
- Mr. Schott, Ms. Martinez, Ms. Battersby and Ms. Mueller will collaborate on communication that will be made available to the committee/community.
- Mr. Schott will share the requested policies.
- Mr. Schott and Ms. Martinez invited members to contact them with questions or concerns.

The meeting concluded at 7:32 p.m.