



Student Safety & Well-Being Committee

Mercer Island High School

December 2, 2025

Meeting Notes

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

Opening Remarks

Mr. Frank Schott commenced the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Committee Re-Introductions

Committee introductions were made and members provided information about themselves.

Mr. Schott stated that Ms. Erin Battersby and Ms. Cristina Martinez offered an introduction on the committee's purpose at the last meeting. He presented the agenda for today's meeting and reminded members that his role as facilitator is to be as objective and impartial as possible and to lead the group through the agenda. He noted that there may be occasions when conversation on a topic extends longer than anticipated and that not all items on the agenda may be addressed as planned. He indicated that interviews for a co-facilitator are ongoing.

Meeting Norms

The committee was provided a copy of the revised meeting norms, drafted by Derek Franklin, to review in advance of the meeting. Mr. Franklin reviewed the revised norms, which he simplified while keeping the objectives as originally presented.

1. What is said here, STAYS here (official meeting record is group voice/ record)
Pertains to confidentiality.
2. Demonstrate RESPECT, kindness, patience
Create a safe space.
3. LISTEN actively, do not interrupt, and clarify when needed
Practice active listening skills.
4. PARTICIPATE to your comfort level - all voices matter
5. Create SPACE for all voices
Allow for differences of opinions; encourage quieter participants to contribute.
6. Use "I-STATEMENTS" and speak from your own experience
Begin statements with, "I feel" or "I need."
7. Assume BEST INTENTIONS of others
Participants have joined with an intent, which may differ from the intent of others. Be mindful of

these differences.

Some discussion occurred as follows.

- The District will be responsible for communicating with the community. Communications will likely be a summary rather than sharing the meeting minutes. The goal is to show committee progress.
- Some members expressed concern that community members will ask them about meeting discussions.
 - Members were advised to share that the initial meeting discussion was to set expectations. Subsequent meetings at this time are laying the groundwork and establishing objectives. Members may stress that the committee will not conduct investigations.
- Some members expressed concerns around the first meeting norm, feeling that committee work may not be transparent. Members were reminded to specifically state if a matter they are to address should be treated confidentially. Mr. Schott will review.
- It was noted that a student facilitator, Ms. Paulette Denman, has joined the committee and will be holding separate meetings with students to ensure student voices are heard. She will report back to the full committee.
- Mr. Schott stated the committee's consensus to set aside five minutes at the end of each meeting to conduct a recap identifying what members wish to include in the meeting summary, which may be used to guide the District's communication to the community. He suggested submitting a draft summary to the committee for review.

Laptops and Cell Phone Usage during Meetings

Some members expressed concern around the use of laptops and cell phones during meetings, while others emphasized the need to use a laptop to record notes (which would not be shared). Mr. Schott stated the committee's consensus to permit laptop use but prohibit cell phone use. Members may step out to use their phone, if necessary. This matter may be readdressed in the future.

Publishing Meeting Notes

This agenda item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Contact Lists

Some discussion occurred around opting in to share committee contact information internally. Mr. Schott stated the committee's consensus to not share contact information internally or externally/publicly. It was acknowledged that community members may become aware of a committee member's participation, and individuals should consider this if it is a concern.

MISD Student Safety Update

Superintendent Fred Rundle addressed the committee as follows.

- The District has created a website and is building out an FAQ. Feedback is welcome.
- He provided an update on the ongoing investigation into the alleged misconduct of Mr. Johnston and the possibility that Mr. Willecke failed in his duty as a mandatory reporter.
- He discussed the various ways in which the District and Mercer Island High School are engaging with students to address concerns, ongoing professional development with staff and administrators, updates to the reporting process, and communication with/opportunities for families.

- He discussed further the possibility of engaging Praesidium or Grand River Solutions, both third-party vendors, to perform a root analysis/ risk assessment.
- He noted that District staff are developing a reporting flowchart that incorporates a feedback loop.

Some discussion occurred regarding the committee's scope, including whether its focus should be sexual misconduct or, more broadly, student safety. Superintendent Rundle confirmed that the committee's work will be centered on sexual misconduct, although acknowledged that student safety is a related factor. Some committee members expressed concern over duplication of efforts. Superintendent Rundle indicated that learning by both groups will be parallel. Any recommendations from the third-party vendor will be brought to the committee for consideration to ensure they reflect the needs and values of the Mercer Island community. A committee member emphasized that, when responding to safety issues, it is crucial to take a two-pronged approach: triage immediate needs while using those responses to build a sustainable, long-term plan. These concepts are defined further below.

- Triage: Identify and assess safety issues that can be addressed immediately, then develop short-term solutions.
- Building Blocks: In developing longer-term solutions, conduct a more in-depth assessment to build and expand upon existing efforts and incorporate lessons learned from the initial triage process.

Review Open Items from November 4 Meeting

Mr. Schott reviewed the purpose of the "Back to the Future" exercise conducted at the committee's November 4, 2025, meeting. He discussed commonalities between the desired future state statements, expressed in present tense, from the four groups, noting the following.

- Three of four groups noted that students need to feel comfortable and safe going to school and referenced education, training and awareness.
- All four groups mentioned policies and systems, including reporting and culture.

Mr. Schott intended to develop a set of consolidated goals; however, he concluded that the existing statements each held significant independent value.

Mr. Schott created a "word cloud" from the PTA questions asked during Superintendent Rundle's webinar on October 29 to highlight general themes from the community. The primary themes included student safety, support and prevention as well as teacher conduct, culture and accountability with secondary themes identified as transparency and communication from MISD, the District's handling of misconduct, and MIEA's role and external factors. Using these themes as a starting point, the committee broke out into four groups to create statements on the current state of the District, expressed in past tense. When taken together, statements about the current and future states of the District will allow the committee to assess what changes should be made and identify problems that need to be addressed.

Back to the Future Exercise

The groups presented the following statements to reflect the current state of the District expressed in past tense.

Group 1:

- It used to be a culture where students' concerns were not heard, given time to process nor taken seriously.
- It used to be a culture of superiority and popularity where some members of the staff were beyond reproach.
- It used to be a culture of patriarchy where members of our community were discounted and others held in esteem.
- It used to be a culture of humiliation, marginalization for some students where students did not feel safe or a sense of belonging.
- It used to be a parent community who did not take their responsibility as adults who helped students navigate the challenges of adolescence to give boundaries and guidance.
- It used to be a community where we did not educate students about sexual abuse and how to find a safe place to report.
- It used to be a culture where staff were not all treated with respect when they shared concerns about student safety.

Group 2:

- There was a culture of acceptance and tolerance between peers and people at different levels (e.g., Snail Pound, Instagram posts without consent).
- There used to be a fear of reporting due to retaliation.
 - Student concerns - Will my friends know?
 - Staff concerns - Will administrators or other staff members retaliate?
- There used to be no programming or education on inappropriate behavior between students and teachers.
- There used to be no information provided when misconduct by teachers occurred and what disciplinary actions were taken (e.g., students thought a teacher left due to illness, sent cards).
- There used to be teachers who served as tutors and college counselors for their students creating a conflict of interest (e.g., lines were blurred, text messages were exchanged).

Group 3:

- We were a place that was permissive and tolerated, if not celebrated, people and activities that walked the line.
 - It was perceived that the Administration allowed things to happen and that favorite teachers were not held accountable.
 - Snail Pound was not permitted but tolerated in practice.
 - Students were not surprised by the allegations against Mr. Twombly or Mr. Johnston, and they perceived their behavior as pushing boundaries.

Group 4:

- It was an environment where students and staff were scared to report, where not all reports were acted upon, where students and staff did not understand the reporting process and where not everyone was aware of the See Something, Say Something App.
- It was a permissive culture where it was acceptable to push boundaries, where preferential treatment was afforded to favored teachers, and where nothing would happen if people reported such staff members.
- The systems and processes didn't protect students, teachers or reporters.
- It was perceived that authority figures would punish, not help.

Group 4 acknowledged that there was a feeling of betrayal among both parents and staff around the events that occurred.

What's Next

- Reminders:
 - December 8 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
 - Moving Beyond Stranger Danger
 - Hosted by King County Sexual Assault Resource Center
 - Mercer Island Community and Event Center
 - December 15 from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.
 - MISD Learning Webinar - Information on Sexual Harassment and Misconduct policies and procedures
 - Webinar will be recorded and shared at a later date to view on demand
- The next committee meeting is January 14, 2026, from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the MIHS Library.
- Ms. Denman will arrange to meet with students.
- Looking at providing exposure to how the See Something, Say Something App works.
- UW Harborview Abuse and Trauma Center will be hosting Healthy Connections on Friday, December 13. Looking into recording the session to share with committee members.

Meeting Highlights

- District is exploring bringing in a third party contractor.
- Elaborate on the triage/building blocks approach.
- Share intention behind "Back to the Future" exercise.
- Communicate work being done with partners and students.
- Finalize meeting norms - Mr. Schott will work to refine the first norm.
- Promote December 8 event at MICEC.

The meeting concluded at 7:32 p.m.