



FAYETTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DISTRICT SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING SUMMARY

March 20, 2018



Fayette County Public Schools Superintendent Manny Caulk established the District Safety Advisory Council to examine best practices in school safety and develop specific recommendations to ensure all Fayette County Public Schools are safe places to learn and work.

The Council is comprised of 28 students, teachers, parents, principals, district officials, Lexington-Fayette Urban County representatives, community advocates, law enforcement officers, business representatives and faith leaders.

The group will meet six times during the month of March and deliver a white paper with recommendations during the first week of April. You can follow the work of the council by visiting www.fcps.net/advisorycouncil.

TONIGHT'S DISCUSSION

Student voice took center stage for tonight's meeting of the District Safety Advisory Council when a panel of 12 student representatives from FCPS high



schools and special programs shared their thoughts on safety.

Each of the student panelists had an opportunity to share their recommendations for helping students feel safe at school and in the community. Increased communication and trusting relationships between and among students, teachers, administrators and families was a recurring area of focus.

"There has to be a way for us to talk to someone honestly," said one student. "Too many kids are not getting access to things they need."

Students were complimentary of existing tip lines, but said people need to know what signs to look for and report. Also, they said, more has to be done to break down the stigma of "snitching."

"It's important for us to have connections and to trust that when we make a report, something will happen, that it will be investigated," one student added.

Several students said they don't feel confident that they or their teachers would know how to respond if an emergency occurred at odd times of the day. Drills usually happen during class, they said, asking for more information and time to practice what to do if something happened before or after school, during class changes or during lunch.

Students encouraged the advisory council to consider recommendations beyond metal detectors and law enforcement officers. Comments repeatedly centered on school culture and climate.

"School safety is more than a secure building," one student said. "We need to create an inclusive culture in our schools where people feel comfortable," added another. "Our schools have to be places that recognize the voices of all students, making everyone feel like they matter," said another. "I fully believe that inclusion creates safe environments."

Specific recommendations for changes included mentoring programs between adults and students and between students of different ages, afterschool programming, community-building activities and outreach, and addressing social media threats and rumors.

Staff from Martin Luther King Academy told council members that their students also expressed a need for after school, evening and weekend activities to give them an alternative to negative choices in the community. Open gyms, sports leagues and jobs need to be made more accessible, they said. If teens can't get a sense of belonging, family or team from a positive affiliation, they said, gangs are an attractive alternative. Boys especially need help developing conflict resolution skills, they said, and those with a propensity toward violence need early intervention and mental health support.

After hearing from the experts, members of the advisory council began the work of identifying and discussing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in the area of school safety.

Guiding questions were: 1) What are our greatest **strengths** that we do not want to lose sight of? 2) What areas of **weakness** do we need to focus on improving?

- 3) What **opportunities** do we have to leverage and strengthen our system?
- 4) What are our **threats**, the things that would cause us to fail?

The top things identified in each area were:

- Strengths: school-based law enforcement, existing tip lines, community collaborations and motivated school leadership.
- Weaknesses: mental health services, juvenile justice systems, not having enough officers in schools, the inability to identify students that pose threats and not monitoring social media.
- Opportunities: expand mental health, family involvement, student voice and community partners.
- Threats: apathy, culture, cuts in funding and social media.

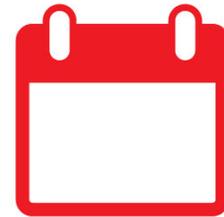
UPCOMING MEETINGS

March 22, 2018

6 to 8 p.m.

Topic: Social Media

Location: Frederick Douglass High School, 2000 Winchester Road



March 29, 2018

6 to 8 p.m.

Topic: Facilitated Discussion of Recommendations

Location: Henry Clay High School, 2100 Fontaine Road

HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?

If you have questions, comments or suggestions for the council, you can email them to advisorycouncil@fayette.kyschools.us. During the meetings, public comments are being collected electronically through [slido.com](https://www.slido.com) or the [sli.do](https://www.slido.com) app. We are working with a professional facilitation team to review everything we receive via email and [sli.do](https://www.slido.com) and ensure that your thoughts and comments are captured as part of the work.



SEE FOR YOURSELF

Meetings of the District Safety Advisory Council are recorded and will be televised on Spectrum cable channel 197 beginning the Monday after each meeting. To access them on demand, visit www.fcps.net/advisorycouncil

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