



## **SUMMARY OF MILFORD SCHOOL BOARD OF EDUCATION LISTENING SESSION ON SCHOOL SAFETY MARCH 2018**

Thank you to all who attended the Milford Board of Education special meeting held on March 7, at Mulberry Elementary. The Board held this meeting to listen to the concerns and suggestions from our community about school safety. Approximately 120 people attended the meeting including Jamey Mills, Milford's Chief of Police, and Mike Mills, Miami Township's Assistant Chief of Police.

Superintendent Nancy House opened the meeting by sharing what Milford is doing as a district for the safety and well-being of our staff and students.

### **Safety Drills**

Through cooperation with our local law enforcement, Milford has been on the forefront of ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) training. All of our teachers have gone through ALICE training which provides preparation and a plan on how to more proactively handle the threat of an aggressive intruder or an active shooter.

Each building is required by the state to conduct at least six rapid dismissal drills and nine in buildings without sprinkler systems. During the school year, three safety drills are conducted that involve a scenario with either an active shooter or a lockdown.

By state law, we are not permitted to share complete details of our safety protocols.

### **Speak Up!**

Students or parents who have other concerns which may jeopardize the safety of students, employees or school facilities, are asked to promptly report the issue using our district's student/parent hotline – accessible both online and by telephone. A live attendant answers these calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and will contact a district administrator immediately and that includes in the middle of the night.

### **Mental Health**

If one of our students is struggling with mental health issues, the district has support and counseling resources available. We have contracted with the Ohio Children's Home and Child Focus to have therapists on site to work with students in need. In December, Milford hired William Cates to serve as the district's comprehensive mental health support specialist. He will be coordinating mental health services for our students districtwide. Mr. Cates is a licensed professional counselor in the state of Ohio, and has 11 years of experience working with all ages, and a multitude of complex behavioral health concerns. He has experience in crisis management and de-escalation, risk-assessment, treatment analysis and planning, and the coordination of mental health services.

We have to work together as a community to keep our students safe. If you or your child see something suspicious, please say something. If you have concerns, please share them. Together, we can protect our students and make sure everyone feels safe in our school.

## Community Feedback

A total of 19 parents, community members, and a student shared the following thoughts and suggestions on safety. The Board will be discussing this input as they move forward to review and enhance the district's safety measures.

1. Implement Stop the Bleed, a national program that teaches people who are not medical professionals to implement effective bleeding controls in face of life-threatening injuries. Lives could be saved if these techniques were shared before first responders arrive in active shooter situation.
2. Cannot depend on government entities to keep us safe. We must be prepared to handle situation until first responders arrive. Until we can resolve bigger issue of mental health and violence issues that permeate our culture, limit entrances and/or install metal detectors at all entrances; have parents or retired law enforcement or military assist in patrolling the school equipped with communication devices; have trained professionals conduct active shooter drills; allow teachers and other staff members to do concealed carry if so desired.
3. We need to look into concealed carry permits for staff/teachers. We need to look at and address how we are teaching our children. Parents need to start parenting and teaching our youth what is right and wrong. Parents also need to make sure they know what and how the school is teaching information and have conversations with their child. It is a community effort.
4. A student shared that he does not agree with arming the teachers with guns, but instead should arm the teachers with more funding towards mental health and school counseling. He said he would feel less safe in his classroom if teachers were armed because knowing there is a weapon in the classroom would make it harder for him to focus on his education. Fund mental health not just in school but outside to avoid more people being broken.
5. A substitute teacher in the high school and junior high school shared that we need to have some form of procedure for substitute teachers when going into lockdown because they are not given keys to lock classrooms. District needs to address that safety issue.
6. Students need support groups inside our schools and a safe space that they can get in contact with someone 24 hours a day. Parents need to have an active presence on their children's social media and when parents do see something that causes alarm they need to step forward and report it to the school. Students should be able to come forward with issues without judgment or punishment. Teachers that she has spoken with do not want to be armed. Appreciates the Raptor check-in system Milford has implemented in schools. She and her children would not be comfortable with teachers carrying guns. She feels that we need to listen to what our high school students have to say about guns. Suggested a hotline 24-hours a day manned by parents and/or staff members.
7. Common sense approach. Games, festivals etc. all have armed security. ALICE programs, mental health programs are appreciated, but not scratching the surface on protecting people. Perception that the district does not know how to protect students in these evil times. It is district's job to educate and should let the professionals do their job. Strong advocate of training and arming teachers that are up to the task. Also, have properly trained guards or police officers in our schools

and have community involvement and fundraisers to cover these costs. He also shared information about a proposed Ohio bill to allow current and retired police officers to do volunteer patrols in our schools. The volunteers will be eligible for a tax credit in return for their service. Believes a safety task force would be a great idea and Board should include parents.

8. A parent shared that his 9-year-old daughter was sexually harassed at school. He worked with the school to ensure her safety, but concerned that students who are causing problems are not being removed from the classroom. He asked for teachers to be able to create a task force to bring these problems to the school board and get something done rather than wait for someone to get hurt. Consider steps to arm teachers in the event of a school shooting. With a concealed carry, students in the school should not know which teachers are armed or which are not.
9. The bottom line is about our children being safe and we cannot put a number on that. Paying a police officer to be present in every school would be an expense most parents would be willing to pay. We need to minimize any threat to our children and having an armed police officer gives our children the best opportunity to survive. Teachers do not have the proper training. Police officers have that extensive training.
10. The Ohio Outreach Coordinator for Sandy Hook Promise spoke at the request of Milford parents. Sandy Hook Promise was founded by parents who lost children in the Sandy Hook shooting. She shared information on free programs her organization offers in school districts. These violence prevention programs empower young people to reach out to those who are socially isolated and create a more connected community. They have a program to train staff and students to recognize and report threatening behaviors including suicide.
11. Parent would be more worried if she knew teachers were carrying guns. Guns are not the answer to survival, but prevention is. People are passionate about keeping our children safe. Parents and school should be able to come together to find preventative ways to do that.
12. No greater responsibility than keeping our schools safe. We have to step in and hold our kids to high standards. We have to encourage good behaviors and accountability for bad behaviors. We cannot let things go because of a child's circumstances. Every school in the district should have an armed security guard or resource officer. No one is suggesting that a teacher who does not want to carry should carry. Teachers who carry should be licensed, trained, and held to high standards. Those who are willing should be able to carry and it should be concealed. Students shouldn't know who has a gun.
13. Not in favor in concealed carry for teachers, but an armed and trained security guard a good compromise even with increased taxes.
14. Schools try to handle more than they are able to handle. We have adult and juvenile justice system. When a student starts behaving in a manner that normally in the adult world would be considered a crime he or she needs to be reported and have a paper trail. Cannot hold under the radar.

15. Appreciates school security system. No problem with adding metal detectors and security officers and or SRO full-time at each school. Prevention important. Not for teachers carrying guns. If Board allowed teachers to carry guns then a lot of parents would pull their children out of school.
16. John Becker, State Representative, said he doesn't like to spend taxpayer money and he looks for no-cost solutions. The question is how do we stop the next school shooting? In the case of a school shooting, he believes we should have someone in the building who can shoot back. Uniformed security costs money. He thinks principals should be directed to come up with a list of people in their building who have a concealed carry permit, or military/police background who can be trusted to carry a gun. He said the school board has the authority to allow these individuals to carry guns to school.
17. A parent shared a personal story of a school shooting that impacted her family. Nothing that day that could of have been done by the teachers to prevent shooting. She approves of the current security measures. Important to take a step back and reach out to kids who are disconnected. Thanked the teachers and administrators for making a connection with the kids.
18. Important to understand the difference between a trained officer and someone who has had concealed carry training. Parents need to talk and listen to their kids. Talk to them about kids they are going to school with. Encourage kids to speak up and identify kids and report safety issues to teacher.
19. The district should host a forum to address the programs in each of the schools that are supporting the kids from a school counselor/school psychologist standpoint to programs that the schools have trained the teachers in.