

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

FACILITIES, TRANSPORTATION & SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, March 14, 2018

A meeting of the Facilities, Transportation & Security Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 6:00 pm in the Coddington Building. Present were Mr. Anthony Andronico, Mr. Paul Bregoli, Mr. Douglas Gutro (6:17 pm arrival), Mrs. Kathryn Hubley, Mrs. Emily Lebo, and Mr. James DeAmicis, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent DeCristofaro, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Public Buildings Commissioner Paul Hines, Mr. Michael Draicchio, Ms. Maura Papile; and Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Public Buildings Commissioner Paul Hines presented an update, the Public Buildings Department is in the process of repairing and replacing drinking fountains and sinks where higher than standard levels of lead and copper were detected in the tests done in the Fall of 2016. The City of Quincy's goal is for each source of drinking water to be well under the state & federal standards. The work is being completed when school is not in session, during school vacations and over long weekends, as frequently the building supply valves are being replaced as well.

As there were no questions, the Subcommittee moved on to the next agenda item.

Dr. DeCristofaro shared a compilation of statistics reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of incidents resulting in disciplinary action for the school years 2012-2013 through 2016-2017. In the last four years, over 70% were non-criminal, non-substance, and non-violent incidents, such as class cuts, insubordination, and out of bounds.

Mrs. Hubley asked for clarification, there have been no guns on school grounds and Dr. DeCristofaro said there have been none in his seventeen year tenure as superintendent.

Dr. DeCristofaro then discussed the research he performed at School Committee's request on metal detectors as part of school security. Metal detectors are not commonly used. Locked exterior doors, controlled access, staff identification, and camera surveillance are the most common interventions for middle and high schools. Some high schools require students to wear identification. Metal detectors can be stationary or handheld. Research suggests that random searches and paired with controlled access to the building can be perceived a deterrent and may make students and staff feel safe. There is a significant cost factor for purchasing the detectors, maintaining them, and training staff. These are largely used in large urban school districts with consistent weapon issues. This is community-sensitive, it may have a negative implication about the safety of our schools.

Mr. Gutro arrived at the meeting at 6:17 pm.

Mrs. Hubley asked if the districts who use metal detectors use them at all levels; Dr. DeCristofaro said the majority are used at high schools.

Mrs. Lebo asked if the research showed that schools may have discontinued using them after adopting them, due to the time factor involved. Dr. DeCristofaro did not note any mention of this.

Mr. DeAmicis is more in favor of the idea of random searches and keeping an open dialogue with the community. Dr. DeCristofaro said there was a time about ten years ago when bags were checked due to a series of incidents at Quincy High School. This is something to explore further with Mr. Mulvey.

Mrs. Hubley asked if the School Resource Officers are able to do metal detector searches. Dr. DeCristofaro said that it is more likely to be the Security Staff members, and they would have to be trained.

Mr. Bregoli asked about costs and Dr. DeCristofaro will research further. Mr. Bregoli anticipates that the public response to searches would be positive. Mr. Bregoli is concerned about the openness of athletic events, referees, students and staff from out of town.

Mrs. Lebo agreed with random searches, noting the responsibility is to keep students safe during the school day. After 2:30 pm, the schools are community centers. Mrs. Lebo disagrees that parents won't be concerned about the implication that the schools are unsafe. Mrs. Lebo asked if parents will need to be notified, Dr. DeCristofaro said this would be a revision to Security Policy.

Mrs. Hubley asked for a survey of best security practices for other Gateway cities and adjacent cities and towns.

Mr. Andronico asked about the discipline reports for comparable school districts and agrees with random student checks during the school day. Any precaution would need to be district wide, but questioned whether that is the right decision for Quincy.

Mr. Gutro said that Quincy is a mid-sized city and would not want to see us use big-city solutions for mid-city problems. Mr. Gutro said that the data is trending downward, a credit to the education and security in place. Very encouraging to see what was presented today.

Mr. Bregoli does not feel that Quincy Public Schools is an unsafe place and we want to make sure this stays true.

Mrs. Lebo asked if we need to have a separate Policy for vaping, Mrs. Papile said this is covered over the existing substance use policies. Mrs. Lebo also complimented the declining incident statistics.

Mr. Gutro made a motion to adjourn the Facilities and Security Subcommittee Meeting at 6:40 pm. Mr. Bregoli seconded the motion and on a voice vote, the ayes have it.

