

**Final recommendations from the
MMSD Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee to the
Board of Education
March 9, 2023**

The following recommendations are respectfully submitted to the Board of Education in the areas of nutrition, buildings and facilities, general staffing, staff mental health, student behavior, student mental health, training, and ongoing safety improvements through the creation of a Superintendent's Safety & Wellness Advisory Panel to include accountability measures for the stability of safety and wellness in the MMSD.

MMSD Internal Advisory Panel

- a. *It is recommended from the Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee to the Board of Education that the MMSD create an internal Safety & Wellness Panel to advise the Superintendent as structured in the document attached to this agenda item in BoardDocs for the Operations Work Group meeting dated March 13, 2023.*

Nutrition:

- a. *It is recommended from the Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee to the Board of Education the following under the category of school nutrition:*
 - i. *Continue the implementation of salad bars at all high schools and into the middle schools, continue to offer reduced charge meals, and if the school is unable to provide free food to students who are in need over the weekends, then provide information as to where they may be able to access it.*
 - ii. *At the elementary school level, schools or school lunch programs provide healthy mid-morning snacks to be eaten in the classroom rather than asking parents to donate snacks. It is further recommended that at all the elementary and middle schools, students should get 10-15 more minutes for their lunch period.*
 - iii. *Add more culturally inclusive foods to create more options for students. Add more vegetarian foods that provide adequate nutrients. Additionally, partner with local farms to get fresh foods at least 3 times a week. Adding a salad/nacho bar and more innovative food options. Making sure students receive as much nutrition as possible to perform at a higher level during the school day.*

It is further recommended that the district seek to change how schools and students view school food by involving students in the process and planning. Have students provide ideas with what to choose and make the menu more widely accessible. By involving students in the process, they will be more engaged and more willing to eat school food.

Buildings and Facilities:

- a. *It is recommended that the Safety & Wellness Ad Hoc Committee advance to the Board of Education under the category of Buildings and Facilities the following items:*

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- i. *Buildings and ground staff and/or administration create a restroom maintenance checklist consistent across all MMSD schools and that Buildings and Grounds staff inspect all school restrooms on a quarterly basis using said checklist. 'Failed' maintenance issues from the checklists should be brought to the School Board for inclusion in budget planning.*
- ii. *With renovations happening, make sure that new heating and cooling systems are added into the renovation plans.*
- iii. *Create a cell phone plan for all schools so everyone can agree on phone usage in school on how they can be used or limited.*

General Staffing:

- a. *It is recommended by the Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee to the Board of Education that the district investigate improvements to the volunteer onboarding process towards the goal of increasing volunteers in the schools to address and support safety and mental health issues, for example, to cover lunch and recess supervision and hallway monitoring.*
- b. *It is recommended by the Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee to the Board of Education to continue to support the district's efforts to move toward the national goals of increasing the student-to-staff ratios in the areas of psychology, social work, nursing, and counseling.*

Staff Mental Health:

- a. *It is recommended by the Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee to the Board of Education in the area of staff mental health to increase resources and support of staff in the following areas:*
 - i. *Increased and improved communications and standardized protocols for school emergencies for staff, students and families.*
 - ii. *Increased staff mental health services and structures of support, with the time to use them during work hours, and advancing mental health days discussions and the creation of spaces to be healthier.*
 - iii. *Ensure all stakeholders follow through with all written policies in the district's behavior plans and, if the stakeholders do not feel supported in these measures, they should be able to request assistance and the administration should respond in writing with a plan.*
 - iv. *Institutionalize building level school teams to work on staff wellness that includes many stakeholders, e.g., classroom teachers, special education staff, security staff, etc., that meet during the contract day (Mondays and*

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other times set aside for professional development) with structures that ensure staff voice.

- v. *Provide more autonomous preparatory/planning time for staff.*

Student Behavior:

- a. *The Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee recommends in the area of student behavior that the Board of Education ensure that:*
 - i. *the MMSD creates a safer environment for students and staff that includes training for students, staff, and parents.*
 - ii. *the Office of School Safety, together with staff and students, provide an analysis of improving safety in school buildings, including bathrooms and common areas, with action items, and create procedures for hallway monitoring or staggering passing times. If the analysis points to a need for additional security assistants that would respond to and mitigate issues that impact student and staff safety in buildings, then advertise more widely the open security staff positions with possible promotions. If the analysis points to no need for additional security assistants, share the top 3-5 issues that are being responded to and what might be needed to reduce these occurrences.*
 - iii. *the MMSD ensure that all staff and students are familiar with the Behavior Education Plan and use the appropriate response levels for behaviors. If the BEP is analyzed and/or evaluated for changes, ensure that all stakeholder voices are included in the process of making those changes.*
 - iv. *the MMSD provide better and more transparent communications to staff and parents whenever safety issues cause a hold, lockdown, etc. In other words, notify faculty of the issue (even if it's vague) and how to keep students calm and safe. Brief staff on important details prior to scholars and parents to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading before the official MMSD communication comes out. Staff absolutely should be made aware of the presence of a weapon or other physical threat immediately in real time via a call to the classroom or an all-staff email. Ask principals to notify students and parents through emails, newsletters, and announcements about a family-oriented document explaining the process for critical response.*
 - v. *the MMSD do presentations about safety protocols at the beginning of the year to include the objective of the Office of School Safety and what their role is in providing school safety.*

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Student Mental Health:

- a. *It is proposed that the Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee recommend to the Board of Education the following to better support student mental health:*
 - i. *Improved communication from staff around behavioral health supports and resources in school and in the community for students, staff, and families, making sure to include student voice and making sure it happens at least at the beginning of every semester at all three grade levels.*
 - ii. *At the beginning of every semester at all 3 school levels every classroom teacher should make students aware (at an age-appropriate level) of the behavioral health support available to them. What they can do and who they can talk to. Inform students about resources and how to access these resources.*
 1. *Elevate student voice.*
 2. *Educate teachers on what is available for students and how to support them.*
 3. *Maintain contact with parents to figure out how to best support each child and work to create a space where each student feels safe.*
 4. *Ensure that students continue to have access to counseling when a person resigns or retires.*
 5. *Ensure that course load is not dramatically and significantly different between the same class at two different high schools.*
 6. *Create flyers to be handed out to all students and staff and posted around the schools that includes information on where to get mental health support in their school and who to talk to about mental health support.*
 7. *Implement at least one therapist at each of the four high schools.*
 - iii. *Work to ensure that all Students Services staff such as psychologists, social workers, counselors, and nurses are able to spend approximately 80% of their time on duties aligned with MMSD core competencies and foundational practices.*
 - iv. *Offer the appropriate amount of credit for the work that students do on Board-approved advisory committees.*
 - v. *Partner with public health agencies such as UW Public Health programs or other similar programs to create a mental health communications plan for students and staff.*

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Training:

- a. *It is proposed that the Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee recommend to the Board of Education in the area of training that the MMSD:
 - i. *Continue with the increased number of drills for safety at all schools.*
 - ii. *Require that every school provide advance notice of at least a week of any safety drills occurring to reduce stress around the drills happening at random.*
 - iii. *Require that every school revise their safety plans to detail the whereabouts in the building students go for certain drills. This should include extremely detailed information on where to evacuate when a fire occurs and where to go in the event of a tornado. This plan should then be shared with students and staff to make the evacuation process for drills, or real-life events, easier and less stressful.*
 - iv. *Develop a 'one-pager' for students, families and staff clearly outlining the purpose of the emergency flip chart, required training for students and staff, and drill frequency.*
 - v. *Research and identify best practices for consent education that is consistent with social-emotional learning and is developmentally appropriate. This consent curriculum should be integrated with social-emotional learning in all schools at all levels 4K-12 in partnership with community agencies that provide these services, minimally twice per year.*
 - vi. *Return to the pre-pandemic plan to saturate schools with teachers trained in Developmental Designs (DD) at the middle and school levels.*
 - vii. *Ensure that NVCI (Non-Violent Crisis Intervention) becomes an annual part of Welcome Back Day training (or some other dedicated District professional development day) and that it is repeated annually by all staff, especially on how to verbally de-escalate.*
 - viii. *Provide all lessons via newsletter and on the Safety website to students and families to review what will be taught to staff and students.**

General:

- a. *It is proposed that all the recommendations advanced by the Safety & Student Wellness Ad Hoc Committee to the Board of Education continue to be followed up on and monitored for implementation by the Superintendent's Safety and Wellness Advisory Panel. It is further recommended that accountability measures be considered by the Panel as a tool for how the recommendations are to be implemented that the Board of Education can use as a framework for moving forward regardless of any change in leadership to create safety stability.*