
Charlottesville City Schools Safety & Security Resources

— School Board Update —
March 4, 2021

Committee Purpose

June 11, 2020: The School Board & Charlottesville Police Department issue a joint statement ending the MOU that provided School Resource Officers (SRO's) for Charlottesville City Schools.

Next Steps: Determine Optimal Model for Safety & Security Personnel/Resources for Charlottesville City Schools

From the September 3, 2020 School Board Meeting

MISSION: Provide a recommendation to the Superintendent for the model & resources needed to most effectively support safety & security for CCS students & staff.

Committee Members

Division Administration:

Katina Otey, Chief Academic Officer

Kim Powell, Assistant Superintendent

Beth Cheuk, Coord. Community Affairs & Development

Denise Johnson, Supervisor of Equity & Inclusion

School Board:

Juandiego Wade

Lashundra Bryson Morsberger

Mental Health/Counseling Professionals:

Patrick Farrell, Intervention & Support Supervisor

Jodie Murphy, Mental Wellness Facilitator

Brianna Hill, CHS Counselor

Facilitator:

Charlene Green

School Administration:

Eric Irizarry, CHS Principal

Jesse Turner, Buford Principal

Adam Hastings, Walker Principal

CPD Liaison:

Assistant Chief Jim Mooney

Committee Members (continued)

CCS Staff:

Curtis Cherebin, CHS Health & PE Teacher & Coach

Kim Thompson, CHS Math Teacher (and CHS parent)

Matt Resnick, Buford History Teacher

Nicolette Harris, Buford Intervention Teacher & 504 Coordinator

Laura Floyd, HR Coordinator (and CHS & BME parent)

Community Members & UVA:

B. Stephanie Commander, Attorney

Warner (Dave) Chapman, former Charlottesville Commonwealth Attorney

Ben Allen, Executive Director of The Equity Center at UVA

Committee Members (continued)

Parents:

Andy Orban

Ashley Cinalli-Mathews

Cleve H. Packer

James Burnett

Jennell Lynch

Kathryn Laughon

Lakeshia Washington

Micah Bowman

Roger Richardson

Student Liaisons:

Braelyn Edwards

Dante Walker

Deshawna Timmons

Grant Patterson

Jaleom Aubrey Adams-Mallory

Jason Romero

Quinnyah Monae Blount

Zaneyah Bryant

Large Committee - each meeting had over 20 to 30 participants.

Record of Our Work/Keeping Community Informed

[Charlottesvilleschools.org/safety](https://charlottesvilleschools.org/safety)

- Slides from every meeting
- Minutes for every meeting
- Library of key documents and materials reviewed by committee
- Email sign-up to receive alerts when minutes are posted
- Form for capturing feedback for committee

Process To Date

- **8 Committee meetings from November 2020 - February 2021**
- **Listening Sessions/Feedback Opportunities**
 - Staff 11/16 & 11/20
 - Community/Parent 11/17
 - Student Surveys (2) conducted by counselors and student SB reps, letter from Black Student Union
- **Public Forum on Models for School Safety, January 12, 2021**

Topics Explored by Committee

1. Reviewed state requirements, overview of CCS safety measures, programs for student supports/mental wellness, recent CCS data for student police referrals
2. Facilitated feedback from staff, community, and students
 - Much consensus on mental wellness, proactive approach, restorative practices
 - Mixed views on the role, importance of SROs
3. Ongoing theme/questions about the impact of a surveillance/policing mindset on Black, Brown, and immigrant students
4. Lack of clear evidence of the efficacy of SROs in improving climate or safety outcomes on a daily or emergency basis

Review of National Models for School Safety

Goal: to learn from every model

1. Traditional SRO -- formerly in Charlottesville
2. Newly Revised SRO Model -- Alexandria (VA)
3. "In-House Security" -- Denver (CO)
 - a. They are phasing out SROs and convening a task force to address their model for safety
 - b. Currently, even some of their own school-hired security officers are armed
4. School-Hired Safety Specialists with Youth Resource Officers -- Cambridge (MA)
 - a. School-hired safety specialists have training in mediation, de-escalation
5. School-hired Safety Monitors only -- Toronto (Canada)
 - a. Removed SROs in 2017; still work with police per agreement as needed
 - b. School-hired Safety Monitors are unarmed monitors walking hallways/grounds
6. No Safety Personnel, Mental Health Staff Only -- Ypsilanti (MI)
 - a. Model under development

Community Forum on School Safety -- January 12, 2021

Heard from:

- **Alexandria:** Renewed MOU for school-based SROs but with a more explicit commitment to equity, student protections, and data-keeping.
- **Toronto:** Discontinued SROs in 2017 with a decision that centered the voices of black, brown, and indigenous students who described the negative impact of in-school policing. Relied on “safety monitor” positions that hired trusted community leaders (as well as an administrative infrastructure to support the new model). Have since seen drop in suspensions. Focus on relationships, culture as key indicators.
- **Legal Aid Justice Center:** Reinforced some of the general ideas of the Toronto presentation, presented Charlottesville schools data on police interactions (presented to this committee at the [November 10 meeting](#))

Key Take-Away:

- 100 percent of survey respondents wanted the committee to further explore the Toronto model. [Read more about the Toronto model here \(Chalkbeat, June 2020\)](#)

Recommendations from Committee for Board/Community Feedback

Key elements to present for Board/community feedback and staff committees:

- Additional School-Based Mental Health Professionals (Elem - High School)
- Possible New or Revised School-Based Position - Supervisor of Safety (see Cambridge [job description](#) and Albemarle [job description](#))
- New School-Based Positions - Safety Assistants (Walker, Buford, CHS) (see Toronto [job description/ coverage](#)*) *coverage predates full implementation of TDSB safety model
- New MOU to address CPD interface under new model
- Expanding PL around topics such as de-escalation
- Expanding programming around mediation, restorative justice
- Continued work around facilities upgrades such as access control
- Continued attention to discipline data, police referrals, school climate
- Partnership with regional emergency professionals for safety/crisis planning
- Attention to embedding this program within the schools' Tiered Systems of Supports.

Implementation Will Require Time

- Goal: implementation in August
- Ramp-Up Time:
 - If model relies on social-workers or mental health staff, the competition to fill these positions is great, and significant time would be needed to recruit, do background screening, and train these positions in ways that would support the new model.
 - If model relies on using community leaders, there will also be time needed to identify the right people, do background screening, and then adequately train them in areas such as de-escalation, trauma-sensitive practices, school policy, and more.
 - Once model is presented to superintendent, she would present her recommendation for Board/public review in one month (ex, March), and it would likely be presented for approval the following month (ex, April)

Outreach Plan

Possible elements of community outreach:

- Zoom informational/feedback meetings for groups such as staff/community
- Student focus groups
- Presentation (ideally, video) with accompanying form to collect feedback
- 1:1 phone conversations with responses tallied
- Neighborhood-based outreach

Timeframe:

- Begin after Board presentation
- Challenge: as schools and some families are transitioning to in-person services in March, it will be hard to capture attention on this topic.

Staff Working Groups

The superintendent safety committee's charge: philosophy and direction

Staff's charge: operationalizing the details (considering available resources and community feedback)



Recommendation for staff working group:

1. Develop details for staffing/policy/protocol/programming/evaluation
2. Plan will be responsive to community feedback as it comes in
3. Develop MOU with CPD to guide required interface areas without school-based officers
4. Teams divided by grade level
5. Staff will report to this committee on progress

Recommended timeframe:

1. Relevant staff begin work once this committee reaches consensus on model; goal is to answer as many questions as possible prior to this committee's recommendation to Dr. Atkins.

Proposed Process

| Step | Time Frame |
|--|--|
| Develop consensus on model for community discussion (ie, Toronto?) |  February 2 |
| Presentation to school board about process so far and the model on which we'll be seeking community input |  March 4 |
| Begin community engagement to seek feedback | March |
| With reporting to and review by this committee, a staff working group continues researching/building out more specific procedures in response to new learnings from other communities and from the feedback we receive. | February - April (underway) |
| Present final recommendation to Dr. Atkins , who in turn will make a recommendation to the School Board | Late March-April?? |
| School Board vote | April-May?? |

Timeline for Board Approval

- Two possible approaches for Board approval:
 - If community feedback/staff committees bring a very similar plan forward in a month, possible for Board to act to approve in April
 - If committee feedback/staff committees recommend significant changes, then present the revised plans to Board in April with vote in May