



**SCHOOL TASK FORCE
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM
OBSERVATIONS, STRATEGIES, AND APPROACHES**

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Communications Team



- Mr. Rodney Pennywell, Co-Founder, Falcon List
- Ms. Beth Agee, President, Discovery PTA
- Mr. Tom Drake, Principal, Grissom High School
- Mr. Marc Jacobson, Madison Resident
- Mr. Brad Jefferson, Teacher/Coach, Discovery Middle School
- Sgt Steve Wilkerson, Madison Police
- Ms. Paulakay Lane, Co-Founder, Falcon List
- Mr. Tim Solley, Madison County Director
- Ms. Missy Ming Smith, Madison County Commission
- Mr. Chris Newlin, Exec Director, NCAC
- Mr. Brandon Pressnell, Minister
- Dr. Roger Rinn, Psychologist
- Mr. Eric Terrell, Teacher, Bob Jones HS

Strong Community Feedback...



- Talk to the Task Force (*TTF*) was established and utilized by many to share their input on how to ensure our schools are safe.
- The primary community concerns were:
 - **Communication** (need to inform stakeholders of status & significant happenings)
 - **Training** (ensuring stakeholders know what to do in emergency situations)
 - **Use of metal detectors** (do the Pros outweigh the Cons)
 - **Access Controls** (consistently implemented)
 - **Traffic Planning** (address road congestion during an emergency)
 - **Reunification** (reuniting students to parents)
- Communication's Team conducted a Community Survey.
 - **Strong response from multiple stakeholders**
 - **Survey supports Findings and Recommendations of combined Task Force**
 - **Community has confidence in School/City Leadership**

Communication's TF Survey Data

Ending April 30th 2010

Survey Questions

1. I am a(n) (with a child attending a Madison City School)
2. Do you believe our schools are a safe learning environment?
3. Are you reasonably aware of what your responsibilities are in a school emergency (i.e., tornado, earthquake, other)?
4. Do you believe there is adequate communication between the school system and you?
5. Do you believe that students know what they are to do during a school emergency?
6. Do you believe school students can identify potential indicators of violent behavior in other students?
7. Do you believe school students are comfortable with reporting potential indicators of violent behavior to an adult or other authority?
8. Do you know how to communicate potential indicators of violent behavior to appropriate school officials or law enforcement?:
9. Do you know where to go (assemble) during a school emergency?
10. Do you believe bullying is a significant issue in our schools?

Segment

Segment	Total	Percent
Parents	308	64%
Students	79	16%
Faculty Members	69	14%
Administrators	3	1%
Interested Parties	23	5%
Total	482	100%

Survey Results

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)
Q1	See Segment Chart for details	
Q2	85	15
Q3	84	16
Q4	70	30
Q5	80	20
Q6	60	40
Q7	27	73
Q8	80	20
Q9	52	48
Q10	67	33



Positive results



Additional focus warranted

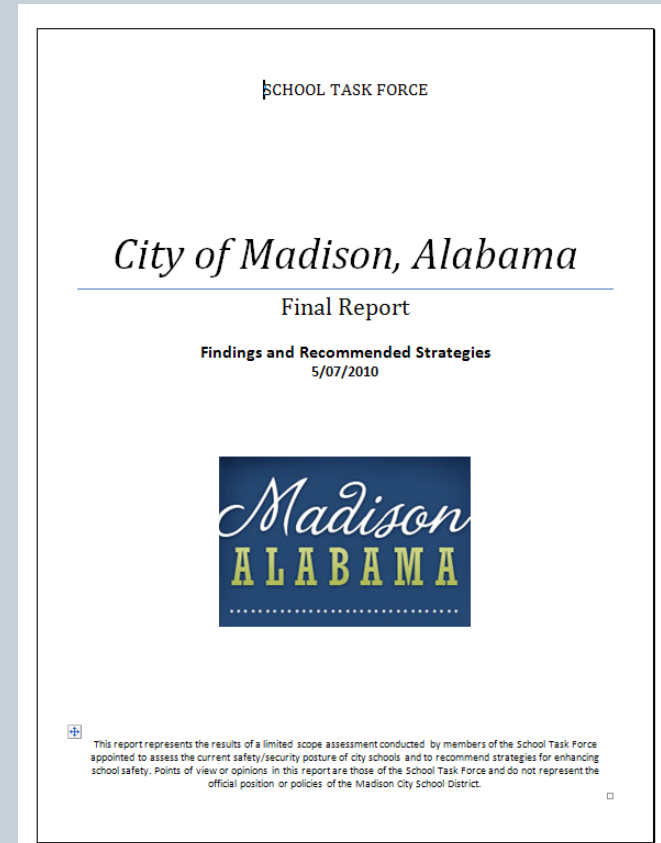


Additional focus required

Madison City Schools should...

Summary

- Establish a Safety Coordinator
 - Use Periodic Exercises to Train Key Resources
 - Resolve SRO Communication Issues.
 - Review TF Recommendations
 - Follow Best Practices
- Enhance Communications w/Stakeholders.
 - Develop Parent / Student Emergency Handbook
 - Install Confidential Texting
- Address Culture and Parental Involvement
 - Address student sense of responsibility
 - Involve parents for student role models
- Attack Growing Problems (May Need Further Study)
 - Want to be Gangs
 - Bullying / Cyber Bullying



**Observations &
Recommendations
Follow**

Communications is the Key – Plan for Key Stakeholder activities Pre, During, and Post Incident

Survey Data



Priority	11. Preferred Means of Communications – Non-Emergency		12. What needs to be addressed	13. What do you need to do more of to enhance safety in schools	14. What are the suggestions to the Task Force
# 1	Email	202	Bullying	Communication (Letting students and parents know what is going on)	See Next Slide
# 2	Telephone	111	Training	Training (Practice more lockdown drills)	
# 3	Text Messaging	78	Better Communication	Use of metal detectors (Consider the pros & cons)	
# 4	Email (Listserv)	54	Address issues quickly	Access Control (Consistently implemented)	
# 5	Public Media	18	Tougher Consequences	Traffic Planning (Preparation for road shutdowns and bus transport in a crisis)	
# 6	Websites	8	Better understanding by Parents/Students of Emergency Procedures	Reunification (Reuniting students to parents)	

Survey Data – Question 14 Comments



14. What are the suggestions to the Task Force

1. **Drugs – Stricter punishment desired.**
2. **Uniforms for children should be considered.**
3. **Stricter enforcement and punishment of smaller incidents so they don't grow to larger problems.**
4. **Bullying is a issue that needs more attention.**
 - a) **Students and Teachers need training.**
 - b) **Constant identification of all persons.**
5. **Peer Programs (Start them early)(Teach Responsibility)**
6. **Continue to promote safety at every school event.**
7. **Establish a Confidential Tip line.**
8. **Parent Responsibility of their child (Teach).**
9. **Must identify and communicate assembly areas.**
10. **Take “Gang” issues very seriously and follow up.**
11. **Concern of School Board not doing anything with recommendations of the task force.**
12. **Substitute Teacher training on current policies (Code Red) is necessary.**
13. **Automatic Notification Systems – Madison City Schools need an automatic Notification system.**
14. **Include Key Stakeholders in Policy decisions**
15. **More serious attention to teacher reported problems.**
16. **Make CARE Counselors available Post-Event.**
17. **Add More training for teachers.**
18. **Establish a committee to oversee implementation of the Task Force Recommendations.**
19. **Some fear this report will not be considered.**
20. **Some want metal detectors in the school.**
21. **Cell Phone should be allowed.**
22. **Some students are not aware of Lockdown procedures especially during breaks/class change.**
23. **Substitute teacher training for current policies (Code Red) needed.**
24. **Random searches should be conducted.**

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



OBSERVATIONS

- Parents and students are sometimes unaware of procedures to follow during an emergency situation and that expected of them.
- Survey results support that Parents want to know basic school policies during an emergency (i.e., checkout of students during a tornado, etc).
- Students expressed great reluctance to report information they knew if a Confidential method was not in place.
- Students expressed desire to be able to type, or text information.
- Currently there is not a single point of contact that has the authority and responsibility to ensure that a viable plan is in place, practiced, and evaluated.
- During the Task Force investigation, it was discovered that all Emergency procedures for the Madison City Schools were not standardized.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1 Develop an Emergency Handbook that explains in the appropriate language, that kids can take home to parents and discuss with parents. Have parent sign and return to school.
- R2 Make available a means to allow students, parents, etc to Confidentially text important information to authorities for disposition. Define the term Confidentiality. Making this tool web-based will facilitate dissemination needs.
- R3 The Madison City School System should employ a full-time School Safety Coordinator for the 2010 – 2011 school year to begin developing this program and implementing the recommendations addressed by the Task Force.
- R4 Create a standardized Emergency Procedure Template for Madison City Schools. The template will standardize emergency procedures but be modified for each school, they should be reviewed/updated periodically.
- Procedures should address, emergency procedures, how the program will be trained, and notification procedures.
- This should be a part of the School Safety Plan.
- Implement a “School Security & Communication Report Card” that evaluates the School Safety Plan on a regular basis.

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



OBSERVATIONS

- Task Force examined the way the schools train and noted that The School System could benefit from the use of periodic exercises.
- Exercises scenarios could replicate : shooter on site, epidemic, bomb threat, major fire, major external terrorist attack, major economic dislocation, infrastructure failure (power grid outage coupled with extreme heat, loss of the Web or telephone lines, and disruption in the water supply).
- The Task Force determined that current Technology Mediums are insufficient for Pre, During & Post Incident use. The Safety Team should thoroughly evaluate other means of communication for use Pre, During & Post incident by Key Stakeholders.
- There were no standardized Emergency Kits within each of the classrooms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R5 This is the core plan that links each of the planning scenarios to the response modules that will be immediately activated.
- Develop a combinations of pre-set response "modules" off the shelf. Modularizing the elements of a crisis response plan provides the organization with flexibility to deal with unexpected scenarios or combinations of scenarios. Response modules might include: facility lockdown, police or fire response, evacuation, isolation (preventing people from entering facilities), medical containment (response to significant epidemic), grief management, as well as external communication to media and other external constituencies.
- R6 Designate an emergency channel for communication
- Establish system of rapid communication between all stakeholders
- Identify alternate means in the School Safety Plan and ensure that personnel understand their use and under what circumstances.
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- Better hardware to enable no black out areas for radio and cell communication.
- R7 Emergency kit for each Classroom – Communication device (plus possibly water, food, emergency medical supplies, glass break tool).

Communications is the Key – Plan for Key Stakeholder activities Pre, During, and Post Incident

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



OBSERVATIONS

- During the Emergency situation, it was noted that there was a need for multiple avenues of communication for all Stakeholders, especially, where parents can retrieve information regarding an emergency situation – website, blog, call-in, dedicated TV channel, Rally Point with a pre-designated Public Affairs person authorized to speak on behalf of the administration.
- There is currently no evaluation or baseline in which to assess current policies, practices.
- Additional support and manpower to control scene during aftermath of incident as parents and media arrive.
- Madison City Schools need more SROs for the Middle and High Schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R8 Identify multiple avenues of communication during an emergency situation.
- Designate an emergency channel for communication
- Establish system of rapid communication between all stakeholders
- Create a pre-Approved “Crisis” Script for each medium used
- R9 Establish a “School Safety & Communication’s Report Card” to ensure continued assessment and improvement of safety.
- Report Card is a tool to be used by the new ‘Safety Coordinator’ and will provide a forum to assess safety posture and identify shortfalls/needs if required.
- The Report Card will provide a baseline for the School’s Safety Posture.
- The results of the Report Card can be compared to Federal, State and local best practices.
- R10 Need to identify additional support to control scene during aftermath of incident as parents and media arrive.
- Employ additional SROs and staff trained to act in support of police.

Communications is the Key – Plan for Key Stakeholder activities Pre, During, and Post Incident

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



OBSERVATIONS

- One of the major complaints and lessons learned during the Columbine shooting was the incompatibility of communication systems among different agencies and jurisdictions. This same issue applies in Madison City Schools, it was discovered that the SROs communication equipment should be upgraded and thus more effectively serve all 1st Responders.
- The Communications Team observed that there was also little or no plans regarding communications in any of the current policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R11 An effective means to communicate by all members of the Safety Team should be addressed in The Safety Plan . This plan should be standardized at the District Level and address the actions of key stakeholders including the: Principal, Vice Principal who will act as the Public Affairs Chief, Faculty members, Parents, and SROs. etc.
- The Safety Plan (Crisis Management) would adhere to State Law and address: (See Below)

Safety Plan Must

- Assesses and provides structure
- Communications
- Promotes Community
- Prepares for the crisis
- Responds during the crisis
- Evaluates effectiveness
- Develop a protocol for reporting circumstances of concern or unusual incidents.
- Define roles and responsibilities in emergency situations.
- Determine appropriate procedures in the event of a violent situation.

- Develop ways to summon internal security personnel or response teams.
- Identify ways to activate alert systems including local Emergency Medical services and preventive measures.
- Develop ways to maximize safety and minimize risks in emergency situations.
- Involve Families and assist them in preparing their Emergency Plan to communicate or locate their children
- Include by policy a by-classroom role-call once all-clear is given to provide 100% accountability of students.
- Evaluation Methods (School Report Card)

Communications is the Key – Plan for Key Stakeholder activities Pre, During, and Post Incident