

We, the East Lansing Board of Education, would like to thank our community for sharing their suggestions regarding improving safety in our district. Specifically, many teachers, parents, students, and other community members came to the Board meeting last night, January 24, 2023, to share their concerns during the public comment portion of the meeting. Additionally, we have received many e-mail messages and other communications about these issues. While we are diligently reviewing and responding to these messages, we also feel compelled to respond to the community – but particularly to our teachers who we hold in such high regard – in a timely manner. In response to the issues raised regarding school safety, the East Lansing Board of Education is committed to the following:

- 1) Direct the Superintendent and her team to determine and present to the Board recommendations for immediate implementation as well as short- and long-term safety enhancements across the school district. We are listening to the suggestions being offered from our teachers and their union representatives, our broader community, and other stakeholders. A list of the suggestions that have been received, particularly those offered by the East Lansing Educational Association (ELEA), are listed at the end of this document. We would like to see this plan by this coming Monday, January 30, 2023.
- 2) Hold a meeting with area stakeholders (local safety experts including the East Lansing Police Department, the East Lansing City Council, among others) as soon as practicable to discuss coordinated plans to enhance safety in our schools and broader community.
- 3) Communicate regularly and in as transparent a fashion possible with our community at school board meetings about ongoing efforts to address safety concerns.

We regret that it took this action from our community for us to take these steps. We are listening. More importantly, we are committed to taking action in partnership with our incredible team of teachers, staff, and administrators to make necessary change.

Additionally, for those interested in learning more about our district discipline policy we direct you to the following Board [Policy 5206 Student Discipline](#), which is aligned with Michigan state law. The Michigan Association of School Boards defines the [role of the School Board](#), which may also be relevant to those seeking more information.

In closing, while many of the comments made at the Board meeting last night deeply resonated with us, we were particularly appreciative of comments made by Mr. Norm Scott, ELEA President, who said,

*East Lansing is on the cutting edge implementing a Social Justice Intervention Model, and this is a change from past practice. Change that is worthwhile is challenging. Right now, too many educators are frustrated with the policies in place because of a climate of uncertainty. We must always work to ensure that the integrity of the educational setting is protected for the benefit of everyone. We owe it to our students and their parents to have in place, and provide for them, an always safe and predictable learning environment. We owe it to our administrators to provide for them a level of autonomy with a menu of supports, interventions, and options to help them work with teachers to curb unproductive and unsafe behaviors.*

We could not agree more. For the above reasons and many more, we are committed to implementing change to live up to this ideal together as an East Lansing Family. Together, we will strive to fulfill our mission to “Nurture Each Child, Educate all students, and Build World Citizens.”

Respectfully,

The ELPS Board of Education

Below, we have compiled the information we have received and are considering as we work with our administration to determine our immediate next steps.

**At the High School Building/Principal level:**

1. No backpacks in classrooms
2. Easily identifiable hall monitors/advocates/building subs/counselors monitoring every bathroom between every class that are properly trained to engage students (assigned to specific areas throughout the building)
3. Counselors to provide additional hallway supervision during passing time
4. Assign a monitor to students EXITING the main door during lunch to check IDs
5. Assign a monitor at the night activities door #8 throughout the day (if it can not be or until it is alarmed-see below)
6. Have an additional monitor/advocate observe the main buzzer each hour freeing up valuable time for our building administrative assistants
7. Hire additional advocates/monitors if necessary to accomplish the above
8. Host an assembly to introduce these individuals and their roles to everyone
9. Enforce tardy detention policy for all students with support from Superintendent and School Board
10. Cell phone ban with consequences for non-compliance
11. Re-evaluate additional security options
12. Mandatory student ID badges to be worn for daily scanning and identification
13. Additional security during sporting events
14. Survey students regarding safety and culture
15. Better communication to apprise the community about what safety steps are being taken

**Building Principal/Superintendent/Technology Director:**

1. Improved communication
  - a. Provide every teacher with a walkie-talkie on their desk so they can call for immediate help from all advocates, administrators, hall monitors, etc.)
  - b. Provide parents, teachers (including substitutes) and staff information on fights, weapons, shelter in place and lockdowns in real time in both texts and emails
2. Install panic button in the main office
3. Offer tools beyond restorative justice
4. Re-evaluate additional security options at the high school

**School Board/Facilities Committee/Policy Committee/Finance Director/Facilities Director:**

1. Review all policies related to student behavior, consequences and building security to ensure they are not impeding our Administrators' ability to discipline students
2. Reinforce the board's role in the delivery of consequences
3. Alarm all doors so kids can't just open them for whomever. Alarming the doors will leave all the doors available/unlocked if there is a fire, but prevent entry or letting other kids in. Note: Adults must abide by appropriate entry to the building to model for students.
4. Better communication to apprise the community about what safety steps are being taken

These suggestions are just a starting point of what we have received and can be built upon as additional needs are identified.