
Security and Wellness Update

Town Retreat June 2019

Security and Emotional Wellness Project

- What is it?
- Why now?
- Why Security *and* Emotional Wellness?
- What have we learned so far? What other inputs are we collecting?
- Can we afford it?
- What are the actions from here?

What is it?

- Our first obligation as elected officials and town staff is to ensure the safety and well-being of our citizens
- You deserve to have a town that has reached a well informed balance of safety and well-being in a changing world facing changing risks
- The Town and School Safety Task Force was formed in 2018 to research best practice, obtain outside advice from experts, develop a comprehensive plan and steward this plan through to implementation

Chief Targ	Chief McEnany	Superintendent Olsen	Superintendent Pigeon
School Committee Chair Adam	Board of Selectmen x 2	Town Manager Ross	Asst Town Manager Heideman
Board of Health Hanly	Deputy Chief Chambers	Asst Superintendent Clery	Finance Committee Greene

Why now?

- 2018 witnessed 82 active shooter events in the United States, a record high
- 8% of Westford High School Students report that they have missed school in the past 12 months because they did not feel safe at school
- 15% of Westford students reported incidence of self harm in the past 12 months
- 14% of Westford High School Students seriously considered suicide and 4% have attempted suicide in the past 12 months
- 8% of students report bringing a weapon to school, 1% within the last 30 days
- Weapons in schools, school violence and self harm are at our doorstep

Why Security *and* Emotional Wellness?

- Most incidents of school violence are perpetrated by students or former students
- Most perpetrators of violence tell someone of their plans and/or post to public social media prior to the event
- Statistically the greatest source of potential harm to our students and community members is self harm
- Identifying those at risk of harm to themselves or others and intervening appropriately is essential to our safety and well being

Physical security and emotional wellness are
equal partners in this effort

Town and School Safety Task Force Timeline

2018	2019	2020-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Task Force Convened - Security Study Awarded - \$200,000 Capital allocated for urgent needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Security Study Complete - Task Force further investigates system wide challenges - \$200,000 Capital employed for most urgent needs - Wellness Study Awarded and Completed - Action teams formed for each building to prioritize and implement recommendations - Capital recommendations included in annual capital planning processes - Detailed comprehensive recommendation made by Task Force - Public input sought on plans and recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendations implemented over a series of budget years - Building level improvements implemented - Task Force remains in place until all building and system level needs are resourced and implemented

Security Assessment

- Physical assessments of all 10 x Schools, 6 x Town Buildings and Nashoba Tech complete
- Detailed policy and procedure review and recommendations complete
- SRO presence review and recommendations complete
- Capital first recommendations (\$200,000 FY20 capital) complete
- Each building that was part of the assessment is forming a team to review, prioritize and implement recommendations
 - Timeline for implementation expected to be 6-12 months
- Further planning for several of the key issues will wait until we have the Emotional Wellness piece completed in the fall so that our approach is comprehensive

What have we learned so far?

- Detailed recommendations by building
- Detailed policy recommendations to make our policies current and consistent
- Recommendations addressing emergency management
- Recommendations addressing building access management
- Recommendations for level of SRO presence and SRO roles

What information are we gathering?

- The Emotional Wellness piece of this program will kick off shortly and evaluate
 - Best practices observed in promoting emotional wellness, identification of risk and successful intervention
 - Detailed recommendations for improvements to our services, policies and procedures
- We will continue to seek community input at this event and future events as our plans develop

Can we afford it?

- Many of the recommendations for policy improvements will take work and staff time, but not have significant cost
- Many of the site security recommendations have a cost that is meaningful, but can largely fit in our regular capital process and could potentially be phased in over several budget cycles
 - We would pursue top priorities first
- The recommendations that would require additional staffing may be more challenging and take longer to phase in
 - We have uncertain enrollment in coming years because of new development in town
 - We have six additional first responders to bring us to the recommended level of staffing for regular police and fire safety
 - We will need to carefully prioritize in coming budget cycles to ensure all the critical needs are met

Action Plan

- Further develop town/system wide improvements for physical security
- Develop building level action plans to address specific issues with a 6-12 month implementation plan
- Participate in the Emotional Wellness study which will conclude this Fall
- Develop implementation plans and budgets with a combined view of security, wellness and achieving the right balance between these issues
- The Town and School Safety Task force will remain in place until all implementation plans are complete

Discussion Questions

- Have you ever had an incident in a town or school facility where you felt unsafe? Please describe.
- Please rank the following potential improvements in terms of helping you feel safer: additional school resource officer presence, more formalized building access/visitor control, better parking lot lighting,
- Have you had a student participate in ALICE training? Would you value more or less threat response training for students?
- Would you be comfortable with monitoring of publicly posted social media made using school equipment or through school wifi with the goal of identifying those at risk of harm or self harm?
- Please list any mental health/emotional wellness resources in town or in our schools that you are aware of. Please note if any have been of particular value to you.
- Of all the things discussed today, which do you believe are the most important for near term focus?

Questions?
