

School Safety & Security Forum Survey Questions

The purpose of this is to answer the questions, comments, or concerns presented by our stakeholders in preparation for our annual forum. I have grouped similar questions, comments, or concerns to help streamline the responses. I will remain as transparent as possible, but it is important to understand that we are not going to share or provide insight to all of our school safety practices or tactics to ensure confidentiality and integrity. The safety of our children and staff has and will always be our top priority.

This feedback is provided by Captain Rick Francis, School Safety & Security Director and may or may not represent the thoughts or position of the Executive Team at SCPS or the School Board.

Two years ago, the Sheriff's Office assumed the lead role in School Safety and Security. On any given school day, the School Safety & Security Division has the awesome responsibility of overseeing approximately 67,000 children and 8,000 employees. We take this responsibility very seriously.

It may seem obvious to say that educational settings must be safe places, but safety in K-12 schools is a complex matter. There are laws, mandates, and policies that guide each school and district regarding protection from danger, risk, and injury on our campuses and workplaces. When we talk about school safety, most people think of plans used in case of emergencies, however, there are many factors involved in creating safe learning environments.

In light of the most recent tragedy in South Florida, the State passed new school safety legislation. Many school districts around the State are now scrambling to find ways to meet these new laws. Thankfully, for the past couple of years, we have had a proactive Safe School Campaign, which included, but is not limited to, the placement of a School Resource Deputy/Officer in each of our public schools. We do not operate in a vacuum, and school safety and security requires multiple partnerships and collaborations to address it effectively.

School safety is not achieved by purchasing a designated program or pieces of equipment; rather, effective efforts that integrate school climate, effective discipline, social-emotional learning, positive behavior, mental health and academics through a multi-tiered system of support. Equally important, comprehensive school safety addresses the most common forms of harmful or violent behavior that undermine school safety, such as bullying, fighting, and self-harm. Our training, planning, and professional development should encompass ongoing prevention and early intervention efforts that include mental health screening and approaches that are more intensive for students deemed at risk for violence to themselves or others.

Our schools should not resemble fortresses. We cannot barricade schools against all possible harm and to try to do so is counterproductive to maintaining a healthy learning environment. Excessive building security does not promote a sense of safety or student well-being, nor does it provide a guarantee of protection against an armed intruder. Reasonable physical security such as locked doors, access control, and visitor check-in systems must be combined with efforts to promote a positive school climate. This includes trust among staff, students, and families where students feel connected and part of a close-knit and caring community in which they feel empowered to report any safety concerns.

Each year we conduct school assessments that address a myriad of school safety and security items and risk mitigation efforts. The schools are reviewed top to bottom utilizing several assessment tools. We also seek input from school administration and other stakeholders. At the conclusion, these assessments are forwarded to my office for review. We utilize a system to set priorities on any shortcomings or areas of concern that were noted (if any). The Principal, School Resource Deputy/Officer in collaboration with Facilities, is responsible for reporting any issues that may arise during the year. These projects are addressed based on these priorities, school participation, and available capital outlay funding.

We have brought school safety and security technology advancements to our district on several different fronts. In July 2017, we launched the RAVE soft panic button (partnered with Mutualink) in Seminole County Public Schools. This yearlong venture resulted in the deployment of the most user-friendly proven technology that provides immediate cross-organizational communication needed during a school emergency. The panic button app system is a tool designed to improve the outcome of an emergency by enabling a faster response and more effective communication between school faculty, staff, and 9-1-1 first responders. One of the most significant aspects of the RAVE soft panic app is that it puts the ability to declare an emergency in each school employee's fingertips. With thousands of lives on the line, maintaining safety throughout an emergency event requires timely updates, open communication, and collaboration between all stakeholders. This relationship between RAVE and Mutualink also provides us an instant multimedia collaboration with the school's video surveillance system.

Seminole County Public Schools has placed the ability for a student to provide an anonymous tip at their fingertips 24/7. Collaboration is a major part of our Safe School Campaign in Seminole County Public Schools. One of the longest standing relationships is with Crimeline and the "SpeakOut Hotline." SpeakOut Hotline is designed to help anonymously report any threatening behavior that endangers students, friends, family, campus, or community.

We are excited to announce the new P3 Campus app tip reporting solution designed specifically for our schools. P3 Campus is a vital tool in keeping schools and students safe. Students can report about a wide range of concerns, from mental health issues to threats of violence through the P3 Campus mobile app or any web browser at P3 Campus.com. These tips are monitored 24 hours for urgent actionable items.

This proven technology is used in thousands of schools, has saved lives, and has prevented tragedies. Supplemented by turn-key promotional materials and guides, as well as providing administrators and designated law enforcement officials an intuitive interface to manage and share tips in real time, P3 Campus will aid us in gathering the information needed to fully support and protect your students.

P3 Campus is not simply a mailbox for anonymous tips. It allows our multi-disciplinary team to coordinate and maximize investigations, making sure nothing slips through the cracks. P3 Campus technology was created specifically to serve as a forum for collaboration and accountability between school administrators, police officers, and mental health professionals to ensure every student's needs are met. It provides students the capability to be proactive rather than reactive to situations or behaviors within their school community.

We have implemented several school safety and security measures over the past few years. Some of these are visible, and some are not. Our team has spent the last two years focusing on school safety and security. School safety is a continuous improvement process, is better suited as a proactive model, versus a reactive model and is a 24/7 process. We feel very confident and proud of what we have accomplished here in Seminole County. We still have work to do, but I am confident we are doing things here that no other school districts are doing.

If you have any additional comments, concerns or questions regarding school safety & security in Seminole County, please contact me at school-safety@scps.k12.fl.us

Respectfully,
Captain Rick Francis

Teachers/Guns

1. Will teachers who volunteer to safely carry a concealed weapon be allowed to carry into a school? If they are, would the option for a locked drawer to store the firearm work?

No. At this point, the Superintendent is not recommending to the School Board that we change our policy regarding weapons on school grounds. We believe that trained School Resource Deputies/Officers on campuses is our best method to provide the correct level of response during a critical incident.

2. If the school decides to not go along with new legislation regarding the arming of teachers and staff, is it possible for teachers or staff (that hold CWP) to keep a weapon locked in their vehicle in a biometric safe etc.?

No. At this point, we are not changing School Board policy regarding weapons on school grounds. We believe that trained School Resource Deputies/Officers on campuses is our best method to provide the correct level of response during a critical incident. There may be exceptions made for certain qualified individuals.

3. Which board members hold NRA memberships a/o have ever received campaign support or funding from the NRA?

The information requested is not information gathered by the school district.

4. If deadly force is to be allowed on campus by non-uniformed persons, what is the test/standard for using such force?

We believe that trained School Resource Deputies/Officers on campuses is our best method to provide the correct level of response during a critical incident. Officers/Deputies are authorized to use lethal response only when they reasonably believe the action is in defense of human life, including the Officer's/Deputy's own life, or in defense of any person in imminent danger of serious physical injury.

Discipline

5. What is the school doing to recurrent offenders?

We follow the SCPS Student Discipline and Conduct Code to discipline students who have repeated misbehavior and utilize the discipline matrix listed within the Conduct Code. In addition, we are increasing mental health counseling services to students as needed.

6. What are the guidelines the schools have when it comes to discipline? Are the schools doing the steps based on all the documents provided by the state and the school board? Are all the documents transparent and easy to understand for everyone, even in other languages?

We follow the SCPS Student Discipline and Conduct Code to discipline students within the code. The Code of Conduct is established by the local school district, with stakeholder input, and contains disciplinary measures as mandated by state law and statute. All discipline forms and related documents are provided, upon request and as determined to be necessary, to the student's parent/guardian in their native language.

7. Why is a student still allowed back in school after resisting a cop and cursing acting out of control?

This may be an inquiry regarding a specific student and situation. Without having full knowledge of the circumstance, a definitive or appropriate response cannot be provided.

8. What is the protocol to follow when a complaint has been given to the principal for strange student behavior?

Any behavior, which might be deemed a violation of the SCPS Student Discipline and Conduct Code, will be investigated. Once the investigation has been concluded, either the principal or his /her designee will notify the reporting individual. Schools are mandated to have a Threat Assessment Team, which could be utilized in this situation.

Mental Health

9. I would like to know if the district and the Department of Education would like to consider making mental health evaluations mandatory as they do with vaccinations and annual physicals.

That has not been discussed. However, with the additional mental health funding, more SCPS students will be screened and served than ever before.

10. What about incorporating more mindfulness coaching to help students with anxiety, stress and emotional regulation?

I am not sure what a mindfulness coach is. We will be increasing the number of mental health counselors across the district.

11. Is it possible to staff schools with more counselors? Seems some are backlogged with an increase in disciplinary issues.

We will be increasing the number of mental health counselors across the district.

12. What is being done to better inform parents and students of resources related to mental health? What are the schools and county doing to better staff and support this area, so that all students who need these services have access?

We are developing training for staff to understand the signs of students who may need to be screened for mental health issues.

13. Special needs kids are ignored in Seminole incessantly. Considering 90-something percent of violent crimes in schools are committed by kids with completely untreated -or under treated- psych issues this is EXTREMELY relevant, yet schools continue to focus on defense than prevention. WHY?

Our ESSS Department is working on creating a Therapeutic Center to better address the needs of some of our exceptional students. It is important to note that special needs and mental health are not one of the same.

SRO/SRD Questions

14. How many schools currently have school resource officers? Will resource/police officers continue to be present in all of Seminole County schools?

ALL Seminole County “public” schools have a designated School Resource Deputy/Officer. Having a dedicated School Resource Deputy/Officer is part of our Safe School Initiative. Each school has been staffed accordingly for the past two school years. The Superintendent, School Board, Sheriff’s Office, and participating Police Departments sincerely believe in this priority and plan to continue this initiative. We do not have a designated School Resource Deputy/Officer in our private schools at this time, although the Sheriff’s Office has engaged in conversation with them regarding the need.

15. Should the resource officer assigned to each school be making their presence known or should they be sitting behind their desk all day? Otherwise, what is the point of having one?

Part of the School Resource Deputy’s/Officer’s primary responsibility in ensuring a safe learning environment. He/she is expected to be engaged in his/her school and be visible to students and staff. Having the dedicated School Resource Deputy/Officer assigned to a permanent post is NOT what is expected.

16. Sept 24, 2005. Trained UCF police officer, Mario Jenkins, pulled out his gun and fired in a crowd of college students. It was a fatal mistake on his part. How can we assume this would not also happen on a high school campus?

This was a tragic event at UCF and offered several lessons learned. Our School Resource Deputies/Officers receive a myriad of advanced training to prepare them for the school assignments. Shooting in the air is against participating agencies written directives. If a School Resource Deputy/Officer utilize his/her service weapon on a school campus, it would be to stop an active killer incident and to protect the lives of others or self.

17. Would you allow a SWORN off-duty police officer to carry concealed within a school while working for SCPS in another capacity? Currently, it is against SCPS employee policy, how about an exception for sworn officer employees? There are several employed.

This area is being seriously considered. It would require support from the Superintendent, Sheriff and School Board.

18. Should the resource officers be rotated to different schools to keep more sharp/alert? What kind of continued training do they receive? Is the idea of a second resource officer still a possibility?

We believe that the School Resource Deputy/Officer must become an integral part or fabric of the school to be effective. This allows them to get to know the students and faculty to maximize this relationship. Rotating the School Resource Deputy/Officer on a regular basis would be counterproductive. However, many participating agencies set “term limits” of officers in specialized unit assignments (e.g., five years). We evaluate the School Resource Deputies/Officers on a consistent basis to ensure we have the right person in this role.

The school resource officers receive a myriad of training to include but not limited to: active shooter, stop the bleeding, swift assisted victim extraction, linear assaults, unified command, workplace violence, digital citizenship, lockdown/lockout/shelter in place, Below 100, critical incident intervention, exceptional student education awareness, basic school resource officer, focus on safety, instructor techniques, cyber safety, trauma informed case, tactical medicine, autism awareness, bullying prevention, school discipline, threat assessment/security, consequences alternative sanctions, and legal updates.

We plan to have a second School Resource Deputy/Officer in all of our high schools in the 2018-19 school year. High schools handled by the Sheriff’s Office already have a second deputy in the school during school normal hours. All of your city police departments participate in keeping our school environments safe. This is a collaborative effort.

19. Are school resources officers allowed to leave school to pick up lunch for themselves & other faculty & staff during school hours?

School Resource Officers/Deputies are highly encouraged to be on campus during school hours. By contract, they are allowed to leave the campus for law enforcement related functions (e.g., transport a student to the juvenile enforcement center). Schools handled by the Sheriff’s Office are mandated to remain on campus during school hours (no exceptions).

20. What type of security is being offered for after-school practices and sporting events? I see many teams practicing in the afternoons until 5:30-6:00. The gates are all open, and there are no resource officers on campus at that time.

Unfortunately, we are currently not able to cover every after-school related activity on school grounds by a law enforcement Officer/Deputy. This is an area that we will continue to improve upon.

21. What benefit is provided in preventing problems, or stopping small issues from becoming larger, by having on-site police officers?

We believe that having a trained and dedicated School Resource Deputy/Officer in our schools is a proactive approach to ensure the safety and security of our children and faculty/staff. Their purpose is to foster better relations between students and law enforcement personnel, to deter crime on or about school premises by the presence of a School Resource Deputy/Officer, to enforce local, state, and federal laws, and to be available for presentations to students, faculty and parents concerning law enforcement, school safety and related law enforcement subjects.

Our School Resource Deputies/Officers do not become involved with school discipline matters. We feel this is a school function and not a law enforcement matter.

Extended Day Questions

22. My daughter goes to the extended day after her VPK at Wilson; I would like to see more security when picking your kid up by having a ring bell before getting access to the room where all the kids are waiting; currently, everybody has access to that extended room.

Ideally, we would like to find the funds and manpower to extend law enforcement presence during this time as well. The Extended Day staff does not have the resources to assist in providing escorts, etc. The doors at the cafeteria are locked, and parents have to knock for a staff member to open the door.

23. Will there be procedures put in place for elementary schools that have an Extended day program? The campus of the schools are open for drop off and pick up without parent badges or a way to identify a parent that should be on campus during these times.

There are procedures in place for Extended Day Program. Ideally, we would like to find the funds and manpower to extend law enforcement presence during this time as well. The Extended Day staff does not have the resources to assist in providing escorts, etc. Their procedures are that all doors must be locked and identification is requested if the staff is not familiar with the individual picking up the student. Sign in and out is required.

Questions About Specific School

24. Carline procedures at Altamonte Elementary are not being enforced. We are frustrated because parents park in handicap spots, bus lanes, driving lane & visitor spots to let their kids out. Teachers are NOT paying attention & not speaking directly to the parents! When will this be controlled?

Please meet with the Principal and share your concerns. We have had our Traffic Unit out to the school a couple of times to help curtail any unlawful activity. We always welcome volunteers that are properly vetted by SCPS to assist us at our schools.

25. What additional security equipment or personnel will be added at Hagerty and Carillon and when?

Expect to see some additional fencing at Hagerty and a complete fence project at Carillon in the 2018-19 fiscal year. We added a second Deputy at Hagerty on a permanent status two months ago.

Some safety and security changes will not be visible and not advertised.

26. Are there any plans to make a single point of entry at Lake Brantley since now it is very easily accessible by anyone?

We are very aware of the status of our high schools. Our open high school footprints have been referenced in our annual school assessments. We plan to aggressively address all of our open High Schools when we can secure the required funding. Just to provide some idea on the cost associated with proper fencing of a high school, the cost is approximately \$150,000 to \$225,000 interior and about \$100,000 for the exterior.

27. Keeth elementary- just the back entrance for back walkers doesn't seem as secure as it should be

The back gate is across from our PE field from the school. It is locked during school hours, and when opened we have a staff member posted in the am and pm. This area has been identified as an area of concern in our school assessment.

28. You said the doors at Lake Howell High would be locked after 7:20 a.m. Does that mean that they will remain locked until school lets out for the day? Is the Lake Howell property fenced in all the way around, or can anyone walk onto the property from behind the school?

All doors on our school campuses should be locked during normal school hours. Classroom doors MUST be locked during school hours (NO EXCEPTIONS). The exterior of the property is fenced. We are very aware of the status of our high schools. Our open high school footprints have been referenced in our annual school assessments. We plan to aggressively address all of our open high schools when we are able to secure the required funding. Just to provide some idea on the cost associated with just proper fencing of a high school, the cost is approximately

\$150,000 to \$225,000 interior and about \$100,000 for the exterior.

29. I am a student at Lyman HS and the fence separating the Dunkin Donuts, and the High School is flimsy. What is the county planning to do to fix this problem and other problems like this?

The SRO checked the fence, and it is intact. This has been noted and will be addressed later. Our priority at Lyman is to complete the internal fencing project in the 2018-19 school year.

30. Many campuses are easily accessible because they are not fenced in, and others like Lake Mary HS you can walk in and no one notices if you checked in or not.

We are very aware of the status of our high schools. Our open high school footprints have been referenced in our annual school assessments. We plan to aggressively address all of our open high schools when we can secure the required funding. Just to provide some idea on the cost associated with just proper fencing of a high school, the cost is approximately \$150,000 to \$225,000 interior and about \$100,000 for the exterior.

31. Milwee Middle, open campus- check in at the center of the open camps, very concerning every time the bell rings kids are in an open area.

Expect to see some changes in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

32. What are you doing about no fencing around Sterling Park Elementary? It is a completely open campus

The fencing project at Sterling Park was completed in April 2018.

33. Lyman HS- zero internet signal in the band room for the teacher to use the emergency app... No way to see out back band room door before opening it.

The problem with internet in the band room has been fixed. A work order has been placed by the principal for the band room door.

34. What are you going to do about the portable classroom? They are not much protection against high-powered rifles. Milwee Middle School is a completely open campus and every time the bell rings, the kids are vulnerable just walking to class because the parking lot is right next to their classrooms.

I cannot resolve the need for portables in some of our schools. The "concretetables" offer a little more protection. Expect to see some changes in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

35. My concern is that I hear there are many fights at Markham Woods Middle School. Is this being monitored more closely now?

Students are monitored closely at all times. This year (2017-18), we added a Dean as well as a security guard. This is in addition to the SRD who is also on campus full time. We will continue to have two Deans, a security guard, and the SRD on campus full-time next year as well.

Security Measures / Keeping Students Safe Questions

36. Do they ever plan to have high school students wear badges? The students can look like adults, and with so many students, we do not always know who is not supposed to be on campus.

This suggestion has come up several times in the past couple of years. This is at the discretion of the principals. During prior discussion on this topic the issues of cost, time spent enforcing it, and badging credential integrity was brought up.

37. Do we need to remind parents, dividends, and chaperones that if they have a license to carry a concealed weapon, that they cannot bring their weapon onto campus, or on a field trip?

Absolutely. If anyone experiences such an incident, we encourage him or her to report it.

38. I went to a sub teacher training & a Seminole County Officer was there. The topic of keys was discussed - subs leaving with keys and not returning. Has this been rectified? Is there a county wide system in place? I am required to surrender my keys in the schools where I have substitute taught.

SCPS substitutes are required to have access (via key or access card) to their classrooms. This zero-tolerance issue was addressed last year. So far “voluntary surrendering of the keys” has been the best practice to ensure SCPS key(s) are returned.

We are in the process of a five-year access control overhaul in the district whereas employee photo ID will also serve as their access control through electronic locks to that particular school (based on granted permission levels).

If you want to teach in SCPS, you are required to have access to that classroom where you are responsible for children. Substitutes are typically not issued keys to the school due to their temporary status. The choice of surrendering your keys is a voluntary process as is substitute teaching for SCPS.

39. Why do the substitute teachers not have a badge and or have to show Identification when we sign in at a school?

Badging of substitute teachers was addressed last year as a priority. We plan to start the process in the very near future. ALL visitors, dividends, guests must present a government identification and process through the RAPTOR system. If the substitute teacher does not have an SCPS photo identification, they shall also go through the RAPTOR system and have a printed badge.

40. As a county, we prepare our students to hide...Why do we not teach our students to create "blockades" /stoppage devices/fight back to halt an intruder.

We currently operate on the nationally recognized Run, Hide, and Fight active shooter response. We have and will continue to evaluate other active shooter responses to ensure we provide our faculty and students with the best options. The majority of our training responses has been directed to the faculty. After several meetings with several different student groups and organizations, we have been made aware that some of our processes have not made it down to the student level or they have simply chosen to ignore it. We are redirecting our efforts to the student level as we move forward.

41. Has the district ever looked at any app based reporting programs? I have seen other districts using a program called “stopit” and thought it could be beneficial.

We have the anonymous reporting app called P3 Campus app through SpeakOut (Crimeline) that is available free of charge to our students at the App Store or Google Play. P3 Campus technology was created specifically to serve as a forum for collaboration and accountability between school administrators, police officers, and mental health professionals to ensure every student’s needs are met. It provides students the capability to be proactive rather than reactive to situations or behaviors within their school community. The tip line is monitored 24/7 to address urgent actionable items.

There is a current campaign to help promote this app to our students.

42. Are there cameras we can watch our kids in a classroom?

No. This is a Department of Education regulation.

43. Could you get students to monitor social media for things like threats, sex, drugs, etc. that happen in school in Snapchat, Instagram, and all that BS?

We encourage students to report any inappropriate social media posts to us directly or through our P3 Campus anonymous tip line. We are not in a position to have students act as our agents. We struggle daily with the social media influence on our youth. With the assistance of the FBI, we provide a Digital Citizenship presentation to high school and middle school children.

44. Is Seminole using ALICE in training its staff and students? If not is it using or considering using that type of training for Active Shooter scenarios? What are the specific training methods that are being used to train staff and students?

We currently operate on the nationally recognized Run, Hide, and Fight active shooter response. We have and will continue to evaluate other active shooter responses to ensure we provide our faculty and students with the best options. We reviewed the ALICE program two years ago and opted to stay with the Run,

Hide, and Fight model. We are currently in the middle of reevaluating ALICE and other response programs to ensure we are providing the best option for Seminole County.

45. If additional fencing, metal sectors or armed personnel are not affordable in the school budget, can a group of parents fund and how?

YES! Seminole County Public Schools has spent over 27 million in school safety and security over the past five years. Fencing and School Resource Deputies/Officers was the bulk of the money spent. Starting in April 2018, we provided the ability for citizens/private businesses to donate to district school safety project through The Foundation for Seminole County Public Schools (<http://foundationcps.org>). Under the donation tab, there is a drop down for School Safety and Security.

46. When will every school have secure front entrances? Many have open access. No doors to be “buzzed” through or even open offices/entries...

This is part of our standard school safety package. We hope to have all of the schools completed in the 2018-19 school year. Funding is the key.

47. How about closing entrances to the school? How about putting guards on the entrances? How about having students wear ID cards as the staff does?

A secured single entrance point is the standard school safety concept that we are in the process of ensuring in each school. We have discussed and in some cases implemented plans to transition our open high schools to a more closed campus atmosphere.

Putting an armed security guard at each of our school campus entrances is very costly but has been discussed as an added layer of security to assist the dedicated School Resource Deputy/Officer on each campus.

Some schools utilize a student ID. This decision is left to the discretion of the principal. As mentioned in a previous response, there are several pros and cons.

48. My class is 12 feet from an external glass door with no barrier between it and 419. I have every confidence that if a "bad guy" knocked on that door, a student would answer it without hesitation. How are we protected against that scenario?

We need to do a better job educating our students not to open the door or leave gates and doors ajar. Solicit your School Resource Deputy/Officer for options. I would need more specific information (i.e., school, building number, classroom number) to respond to this question more effectively. Please inform your principal regarding your concern.

49. Would you consider hiring trained & armed retired police officers and retired military veterans to guard all entranceways (front and back parking lots/doors) to our schools?

Yes, we are already in the process of evaluating this option.

50. Yes, I would like to know what is planned to do for the elementary and middle schools for more secure safety. Such as fences, bullet proof doors, windows, all doors Locked?

Interior and exterior fencing is a priority of our schools and is being addressed based on available funding and individual school needs and collaboration. Bullet proof doors and glass is simply cost prohibitive in a school district of this size. There are other effective measures that are on the table.

Unlocked classroom doors are a ZERO tolerance item (no exceptions). We have and will continue to enforce this.

51. What is the prospect of having a security dog presence in the schools? We have started this in our hospital system as a deterrent.

We have access to law enforcement K9s, which could be deployed based on a credible threat. We have not talked about this topic in the past but would certainly look into the possibility down the road.

52. How do we secure "open" campus layouts? SHS for example has one main entrance during school hours/but only for vehicle access.

This is a huge challenge for us but something that we are tackling with creative fencing, etc. Unfortunately, when our schools were built, school safety and security were not a "top" priority. We have projects underway for the past several years to help secure our campuses. We have an aggressive Safe School Campaign, and for the past couple of years, we have been proactively changing the makeup of our schools. Funding is the key!

53. In the event of a school shooting, is it protocol to lock students out of classrooms if they are in the hallway? If a teacher opens the door to let students in the shooter may get in too, but if a teacher does not open, the door students may be trapped in the hall with the shooter.

Yes. There are procedures in place to handle students, faculty, and guests that are locked out of classrooms and buildings during a lockdown scenario. The faculty is instructed not to open the door due to the inherent risks.

54. Can you give students Kevlar jackets and install a lock on them, think bike lock mechanism, so that the students are protected from body shots, and the shooter cannot take the vest for themselves? Costly, but still it is Kevlar.

Sorry this is not practical and is cost prohibitive.

55. Would the Seminole County school administration consider installing something like these "Shelter In Place" safe rooms for all school classrooms? www.shelterinplace.com and <https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=safe%20rooms%20in%20oklahoma%20schools>

We reviewed this product two years ago. It is a great concept but simply cost prohibitive, and most of our classrooms do not have the classroom space to support it. We would certainly welcome the ability to demonstrate the product in our schools if the company provided them free of charge.

56. My sixth grader is afraid to go to school. What assurances are the kids being given about their safety while at school?

We have staff on each school campus to assist students who have questions about school safety. I think it is important for parents to have a working knowledge of what we are doing in Seminole County and help reassure their kids. I hope that you and your child attended our annual school safety forum in March. Our schools are safe, but we will always have more work that needs to be done. I cannot 100% guarantee each of our 61-school campuses safety 24/7. I do feel we are better prepared than the majority of the counties and will continue each day to address any shortcomings and educate our staff and children.

57. Yes, have there been any thoughts on banning backpacks or doing random backpack searches?

Yes to both. However, at this point, we are not banning backpacks. The school can do random backpack checks, but it would need to be based on a particular threat or intelligence.

58. If a child is absent, parents are not notified until late afternoon. My concern is that any child could be injured or abducted on the way to school and the parent would not find out until late in the afternoon. I know middle and high school students have seven classes, but is there another option?

This school function is done at the earliest and most practical time. In the event of a school-related injury, a school official immediately notifies parent/guardian.

We are in the process of two proof of concept projects at the elementary school level that will send parents a text message or email during dismissal regardless of travel mode (bike, walker, car rider, bus, etc.).

Please keep in mind that there are several technological options available to parents with children with smart devices.

59. Yes, what type of medium is used to notify parents of an emergency? How soon are parents notified regarding an active assailant situation? Are HEIGHTENED precautionary measures taken after threat, even if found to be false/hoax?

SCPS utilizes SchoolMessenger to notify parents of any emergency on campus. The school communication system saves time and provides immediate, thorough engagement with your community.

We strive for almost immediate notification once we have a good idea of the facts. We realize that information is power and that parents want and deserve to know what is going on at the schools.

SCPS has a dedicated Public Information Officer that would coordinate with the Superintendent, School Safety Director, and Executive Director and push out information as applicable. This will be done through SchoolMessenger and numerous social media outlets. Each principal also can send emergency notifications out at the school level.

We have a very aggressive approach to investigating all school-related threats. We take every precaution necessary regardless if the threat is found to be non-credible. It is important to note we take several proactive measures each day and remain at a heightened sense of readiness and awareness.

60. Individuals called authorities 45 times regarding Nikolas Cruz. No one had the “sense of urgency” to do much about it. What are you doing to create a “sense of urgency” to act? What can you do to permanently remove a future shooter like Cruz from our children?

Florida just passed legislation to assist us with individuals who make threats towards a school.

I think Seminole County is more advanced in this area. We operate seamlessly with the Sheriff’s Office Domestic Security Division and other law enforcement entities when it comes to individuals who have been identified as a potential threat to harm others or self. These incidents are investigated immediately to determine the threat level.

We are revamping our school threat assessment teams and mental health intervention to ensure uniformity and oversight at the District level.

It is important to note that there is no magic “profile” of a young active killer. These incidents are pure evil, and it takes collaboration and strong individuals to report suspicious individuals.

61. The bathrooms are not a safe space in the schools. I have seen multiple photos of toilets torn off walls in winter springs HS. How can we make them safer? Sensors?

This is my first knowledge of toilets torn off walls in WSHS. I will reach out to the principal and address this issue.

Concerning bathroom safety- we looked into a cloud-based platform that detects and sends alerts to school officials when bullying or vaping is taking place in bathrooms, isolated areas as well as classrooms and lunchrooms of schools. When the sensor detects decibel level anomalies caused by bullying or chemicals from vaping, it sends an immediate notification to one or many school officials’ computers or mobile devices. We did not have the funding to move forward with the project.

62. Do you have any program to educate kids on the danger that represents to play or touch a gun?

Yes. Focus on Safety (lesson 8 – Gun Safety) presented to fifth grade students at each school.

Misc. School Questions that do not pertain to School Safety

63. Does the school board support the HB1 bill (bully bill) as a solution to school bullying?

The School Board has not discussed this topic.

64. It seems like some of the schools have more safeguards in place than others. What is the priority hierarchy for implementing security measures?

Each school year we conduct school assessments on all campuses utilizing two different assessment tools. Schools are reviewed top to bottom. The findings are submitted to my office for review. We then score the school needs setting proper school project priorities. For example- fencing is priority one whereas shrubs needing to be cut away from the building is a much lower priority. We then contact the schools and work with the principal on funding options for the project. The School Safety Division typically shares the cost of the project with the participating school.

65. What is the county, the school, the PTA doing about traffic in the area? E.g., crossing guard hit by parent exiting car line on a cell phone.

Traffic congestion around our schools is always a concern. There are so many factors affecting these issues. We have conducted several traffic-related studies in several schools. We have also worked closely with Seminole County Traffic Engineering, SCPS facilities to help address problem areas. Furthermore, we work with our law enforcement partners to help enforce traffic laws around the school zones. The majority of incidents are from distracted and impatient parents. The School Resource Deputy/Officer on campus handles these situations accordingly. I cannot speak for the PTA.

Code Red Drills/Rave App

66. Is my Kindergartner going to be participating in active shooting drills next year? Part of schooling should include social/emotional development. If he is going to be subjected to these drills, how can we ensure they are not emotionally harmed in this process?

Yes. Each SCPS student will participate in emergency drills. Over the past several years, we have conducted two active shooter drills at each school. Next school year we will conduct emergency drills on a quarterly basis. This is a new Florida law. Social-emotional development is part of schooling. We have trained staff on site who offer counseling for anyone who is in need. These drills are no different from when they started fire or tornado drills in schools. I am confident that over time these drills will be as commonly accepted as fire drills are today.

67. Do you feel as though everyone in our Seminole County Public Schools, especially high schools, know the drills? Including but not limited to; fire drills, active shooter drills, and hurricane drills while outside of the classrooms, such as lunchtime or outside electives/specials.

No! Over the past couple of months, we have been before many student groups and realize that our message was not getting down to everyone. Starting in late March, we refocused our efforts. There is now an aggressive campaign directing our attention to the students.

68. Do you plan to increase the wireless signal on all campuses so that the Panic Button system can work for ANY AND ALL cellphones no matter the location on campus?

Yes. We currently have two Proof of Concept Projects that will address Wi-Fi and cellular signal in our schools. Currently, the SCPS_Cert site is the recommended solution for no or poor cellular coverage.