

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
Community Conversation
21 February 2018
Clemmons Middle School

After Superintendent Beverly Emory introduced herself to the audience, she asked Mr. Jonathan Wilson to address security measures.

Jonathan Wilson, Director of Security, spoke about current security measures that help keep our campuses safe. He mentioned the following precautions:

- Aiphone: Requires visitors to be “buzzed in” during business hours
- Cameras: Allow staff to monitor who is on campus
- SROs: Present on every middle and high schools, “Roving” on elementary schools

Mr. Wilson encouraged parents to monitor their children’s social media usage to help children make good choices about what to post. He warned that posting threats and other damaging verbiage can have long-term detrimental consequences, including being charged with a felony.

Mr. Wilson also shared about the existence of crisis plans for each school that exist to help get students to safety in the event of a catastrophic event.

When asked by a parent about additional internal security measures, Mr. Wilson indicated that staff will be looking into options.

When asked by a parent if parents need to seek funding to purchase security measures, Superintendent Beverly Emory cautioned that we need to be careful and deliberate about how we proceed. She spoke on behalf of the need to address the social and emotional aspects of students with anxiety or concern over potential threats.

Dr. Emory shared that schools could conduct lock down drills with more fidelity. However, it’s really unfortunate that small children have to think about such scary things.

When a parent suggested that administrators warn students about impending fire drills, she said that staff has been considering options.

When a parent asked about how the aiphone system works, Mr. Wilson responded that schools handle things differently and some folks could do a better job about using precaution. The same parent inquired about security at West Forsyth High School. Mr. Wilson shared that staff administrators are considering what doors need to be unlocked or not.

Dr. Emory shared that the positive outcome has been the consistent reporting of concerns by parents and children.

What is going well?

Clemmons Middle School is doing very well. Teachers are working hard.

What are your concerns?

Q: How is the school system protecting student access to harmful websites?

- Setup VPN: reduces firewall
- Photo Math: take a picture of a math problem, get the answer and the supporting math

Dr. Emory shared that smart students will always be able to outwit the system. However, the district strives to be vigilant in its attempts to provide firewalls.

Q: How can we provide a safe environment for our students?

- Brunson Elementary: pods are out of sight of the school building
- Clemmons Elementary: pods are located at a far distance from the school

Pods have always been a challenge. They are supposed to be locked during the day. Cameras can help schools monitor. The district needs to focus on identifying the vulnerabilities of individual schools and mitigate danger.

Q: How does the district address concerns about cultural sensitivity?

Dr. Emory shared that the district can only get better when staff members know better.

Q: What are the changes to the Standard Course of Study for 2018-19?

Dr. Emory responded that math and English language arts standards are being revised but have not been released yet.

Q: How can communication be improved?

Dr. Emory indicated that the district sends phone calls regarding important upcoming events and opportunities. She also shared that the district could help parents by providing clear communication at the beginning of the year.

Q: Is the district considering using restorative practices to help reduce discipline referrals? How are schools addressing social and emotional needs?

Dr. Emory responded that three schools are piloting using restorative practices, and staff are monitoring their progress closely to see if there are positive results. She shared that the district has an increased focus on addressing social and emotional needs, and schools still have room to grow. Schools have to have a “gap goal” in their School Improvement Plans, so there is accountability for schools to address the concern.

Dr. Emory stressed the need for teachers to establish engaging classrooms with challenging assignments to help minimize discipline concerns. She shared that personalized learning also helps engage students. In addition, she indicated that an increase in middle school sports can also help engage students in the school community.

Dr. Emory applauded parents for wanting to be involved and support their children.

Q: How is the district addressing behavior on the bus that goes unpunished?

Dr. Emory indicated that bus drivers have been more vocal about a lack of responsiveness by school administrators. She shared that the district is planning on having a forum between bus drivers and assistant administrators to help clarify expectations.

Q: How can parents help with school security?

Dr. Emory asked parents to talk to their children. She encouraged parents to reach out and tell school personnel about concerns. She also stressed that parents can help students process events and emotions better than anyone else. She reiterated the need to monitor social media. Finally, she encouraged parents to reach out to elected officials to stress the importance of public education.

In closing, she invited parents to ask for assistance by contacting Central Office.