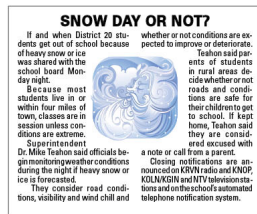


Safe school, crisis team plans in place

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Friday, 15 November 2013 15:53 -



Dist. 20 board approves update of manuals

It may be difficult to imagine the following scenarios—an escaped prisoner lurking near the school campus, an intruder prowling the halls of the school or a tornado bearing down on the town.

But because safety is important and state law requires schools to have safe school plans and crisis team manuals, teachers, staff and administrators know what to do during a crisis.

Athletic director Seth Ryker talked briefly about the district's plan and manual during Monday night's meeting of the District 20 school board.

Board members then approved the plan and manual.

Among other things, Ryker said the plan is a guiding document for possible crisis situations such as a need to lock out intruders, lock down classrooms if an intruder is inside or where to go for a natural disaster like a tornado.

Teachers, staff and administrators have copies of the plan.

Ryker, who along with elementary principal Jim Widdifield and a police officer, have attended safe school conferences, said he'd like to categorize the manual differently so it's easier for substitute teachers to understand.

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Superintendent Dr. Mike Teahon noted that the crisis team manual guides school personnel in times of crisis.

Teahon said eight to 10 staff members have crisis training such as in the event of a death.

The manual also outlines such things as the district's philosophy about funerals at the school and memorials.

Funerals at the school are discouraged unless necessary because large-seating capacity is needed.

Guidelines are also in place that discourage memorials that change school property, interfere with school day routines or require the use of public funds.

Both the plan and manual can be viewed at the school's website at www.gothenbourg.k12.ne.us or in the superintendent's office.

In other action, the board passed a policy that revises the district's identification of high ability learners.

Basically, students must meet three, instead of four criteria, for identification, according to HAL teacher Amy Harrison.

One of the criteria that changed is that, instead of looking at Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores, scoring high enough on the MAP (Measure of Academic Performance) test is now used.

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Students are also chosen for the program through referral, meeting a high-ability checklist and through other measures of achievement.

On another matter, board members also approved the 2012-13 audit prepared by McDermott & Miller, a certified public accounting firm from Kearney.

Each year the firm finds a lack of segregation of duties in dealing with finances because of the school's small staff.

Teahon said the district has a random check of invoices each month by a second person.

Board members also heard a talk by FFA officers Amanda Kowalewski and Kelsey Kuhlman about the national FFA convention in Louisville, KY, and projects by the local chapter this year.

In other business, the board:

learned that safety straps have been attached to basket goals in both gyms and that the district is preparing to replace aging heating, ventilation and air conditioning units in the Community Building gym.

heard that talks continue with city officials about safe student drop off and pick up on Avenue G west of Dudley Elementary. Currently a police officer is stationed in the area during busy times.

were informed that 16 football teams, instead of 32, will compete in playoffs beginning next year. There will be nine, instead of eight, regular season games but Ryker said the smaller playoff number will make it more challenging to get into the playoff field.

were told that 20 units of blood were collected during FFA's annual drive Nov. 1.

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were reminded of the district's policy of dismissing school for state tournaments. Teahon said the philosophy is to have school whenever feasible and that the number of students, teachers and staff affected by an event has bearing on the decision.

The policy can be reviewed at www.gothenburg.k12.ne.us or in the superintendent's office.

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