

# Health and Safety Committee

School Board Report

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## Goals and Activities

The District has developed a joint management-labor Health and Safety Committee. As the Health and Safety Committee Chair, I address any Health and Safety related issues and activities. I coordinate, schedule and follow-up on compliance work, and maintain records for state and federal compliance, including documenting committee activities.

The Health and Safety Committee meets three times during the school year. It consists of 22 members representing each building and area; custodial, science, art, health services, administration, and a health and safety consultant from Resource Training and Solutions. The Committee also oversees work of subcommittees doing health and safety related projects such as the enhanced crisis team and development of an after-school safety program.

The goals of the committee and corresponding activities are as follows:

### **Goal 1: To represent District employees on health and safety matters. To help communicate program details and encourage employee involvement in the District health and safety programs.**

#### **o Activities:**

- Obtain commitment from district administration to achieve and maintain committee representation from each school as well as each department
- Encourage regular attendance by representatives for each building
- Communicate committee activities to district employees
- Bring back questions and concerns from coworkers to committee
- Encourage District employees to report health and safety problems and complaints

### **Goal 2: To reduce work-related accidents and illnesses among District employees, by identifying and analyzing hazards, and recommending control strategies.**

#### **o Activities:**

- Discuss trends in accidents/illnesses and analyze OSHA 300 Log summary information
- Identify district-wide strategies for prevention and control
- Evaluate successes of prevention and control strategies

**Goal 3: To monitor District compliance with applicable health and safety regulations, and encourage enforcement of safe work practices and rules.**

**o Activities:**

- Discuss results of mock MNOSHA audits, agency inspections, and compliance activities
- Recommend district-wide activities to achieve or maintain compliance

**State Statutes and Policies**

Minn. Stat. § 123B.56 (Health, Safety, and Environmental Management)

Minn. Stat. § 123B.57 (Capital Expenditure; Health and Safety)

Minn. Stat. § 182.676 (Safety Committees)

**Rockford Area Schools District Policy 807 - Health and Safety**

The objective of the Health and Safety Program is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment; to increase safety awareness; to help prevent accidents, illnesses, and injuries; to reduce liability; to assign duties and responsibilities to school district staff to implement and maintain the health and safety program; to establish written procedures for the identification and management of hazards or potential hazards; to train school district staff on safe work practices; and to comply with all health and safety, environmental, and occupational health laws, rules, and regulations.

For the purpose of implementing this policy, the administration will, within the budgetary limitations adopted by the school board, implement a health and safety program that includes specific plan requirements in various areas as identified by the health and safety advisory committee. Areas that may be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

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|---|--|
| 1. Asbestos   | 15. First Aid/CPR/AED                                    |
| 2. Fire and Life Safety   | 16. Food Safety Inspection                               |
| 3. Employee Right to Know   | 17. Forklift Safety                                      |
| 4. Emergency Action Planning  | 18. Hazardous Waste                                      |
| 5. Combustible and Hazardous Materials Storage                                      | 19. Hearing Conservation                                 |
| 6. Indoor Air Quality   | 20. Hoist/Lift/Elevator Safety                           |
| 7. Mechanical Ventilation   | 21. Integrated Pest Management                           |
| 8. Mold Cleanup and Abatement   | 22. Laboratory Safety Standard/Chemical Hygiene Plan     |
| 9. Accident and Injury Reduction Program: Model AWAIR Program for Minnesota Schools | 23. Lead   |
| 10. Infectious Waste/Bloodborne Pathogens   | 24. Control of Hazardous Energy Sources (Lockout/Tagout) |
| 11. Community Right to Know   | 25. Machine Guarding                                     |
| 12. Compressed Gas Safety   | 26. Safety Committee                                     |
| 13. Confined Space Standard   | 27. Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)                  |
| 14. Electrical Safety   | 28. Playground Safety                                    |
|   | 29. Radon  |

- 30. Respiratory Protection
- 31. Underground and Aboveground Storage Tanks
- 32. Welding/Cutting/Brazing
- 33. Fall Protection

- 34. National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for School Generators established by the United States E.P.A.
- 35. Other areas determined to be appropriate by the health and safety advisory committee.

## Ongoing Projects

### Under Goal 1

#### Staff Surveys

An online staff input form was developed in the spring of 2016 to gather regular input regarding health and safety issues in the district. An electronic link is emailed to all district staff approximately two weeks before each committee meeting to gather input. The responses to the survey are shared at the committee meeting to determine action steps and/or solutions. Both responses and solutions are shared at building-level staff meetings, presented by a safety committee representative from that building.

For example, one survey had three concerns related to a single item, a slippery sidewalk near the Galaxy entrance. The following action steps and potential solution were discussed at the committee meeting and then shared at building-level staff meetings.

*A civil engineering firm did testing and core samples to determine source of the water and to make a recommendation for mitigation. The source of the seepage is ground water traveling from the hillside.*

*Recommendations for mitigation – from two different sources – involve tearing up the drive lane to install drain lines to the nearest catch basin which is at the west end of the drop-off lane, past door #1. The preliminary estimate for this project is \$50,000-\$70,000.*

*Until the District can afford to do this project, our course of action is to do our best to minimize the hazard. We regularly clean off the sidewalk with cleanser to remove the green growth, and apply sand to the sidewalk to give some grip to the surface.*

### Under Goal 2

#### Ladder Project

A concern was brought to the committee over workplace injuries caused by people standing on unstable items other than ladders to reach high places, and then falling off of them. The solution was to have ladders stored in convenient locations throughout the buildings so staff could access them easily when needed.

Committee members from each building identified areas of need and storage locations. Ladders were purchased, labeled, and stored in the assigned locations. A safety committee representative from each building shared this information at each building-level staff meeting. There have not been any work-related injuries related to falls from standing on unstable items since this was implemented.

### **Slips, Trips, and Falls Prevention Campaign**

At the beginning of our snow and ice season, and periodically throughout the winter, email reminders are sent out to staff describing safe procedures on slippery areas outside, including the slogan “Walk like a Penguin”.

Maintenance and custodial staff make snow removal and walkway safety the top priority any day that we have winter precipitation.

### **Minimization of the Health Impacts from Cleaning Chemicals**

Cleaning chemicals can have a significant negative impact on indoor air quality, and can aggravate asthma, allergies, and other health issues. In 2012, we changed from using a wide variety of chemical cleaners to using just one hydrogen peroxide based cleaner for the vast majority of our cleaning. This cleaner is biodegradable, has low VOC’s, contains no asthmagens, and has a neutral pH. This has created a healthier environment for all students and staff, including custodial staff who have the most contact with these cleaners.

## **Under Goal 3**

### **Annual Mock MNOSHA Audits**

Over the past five years, the district has drastically improved its compliance with OSHA regulations, as reflected in our annual MNOSHA audit. According to our Health and Safety Consultant, RAS had the best audit of all the school district's that Resource Training and Solutions serves in central Minnesota (over 30 districts). This positive change reflects the increased awareness, engagement, and responsiveness of all staff to a strong Health and Safety culture.

### **Crisis Management**

**Emergency Procedures**--Kathy Ehlers and I take part in ongoing trainings with Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM). District emergency procedures are reviewed and updated annually, following the recommendations of HSEM and the Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA).

Some recent updates include Emergency Response Team contact information, and district maps to include fire hydrants, evacuation gathering places, and other emergency needs, standard drill (fire, weather, lockdown) procedures and equipment, and Sister School/nuclear drill procedures.

We have also developed and implemented a more active and enhanced crisis team in each building called the Blue Team. Emergency response duties are defined in detail and assigned to specific personnel, and additional building-level drills are practiced and debriefed.

Currently, a subcommittee is developing after-school emergency planning procedures based on a nationally recognized program called "Anyone Can Save a Life". A pilot program is scheduled to launch with spring sports activities, and full implementation planned for the fall of 2017.

**Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan**--Completed and submitted in 2015, the Rockford Area School District portion of the five-year multi-hazard mitigation plan is currently part of both Hennepin and Wright County multi-hazard mitigation plans. Both Hennepin and Wright County Emergency Management Teams as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have been working together on these plans which originated as part of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Our school district was the first district to submit our plans in Wright County and one of the first two school districts to submit in Hennepin County.

The major goals of the district's plan include minimizing loss of life, injury and damage to property, the economy, and the environment from natural and manmade hazards; increase education, outreach, and awareness; enhance hazard mitigation coordination and communication with federal, state and local governments; and build and support local capacity and commitment to become less vulnerable to hazards. Overall, the district has 14 objectives under these goals in the multi-hazard plan. Please contact Kathy Ehlers at the district office if you would like to review the district's plan.

### **Asbestos Abatement**

Abatement has been ongoing in the district for many years, including during the recent construction projects. Most of the known asbestos in the district has been removed.

At this point, there are two areas left that have small amounts of non-hazardous (stable) asbestos containing materials; a section of floor tile in the high school art room, and mastic from old ceiling tile above the dropped ceiling in a small hallway in the lower level of the middle school. We are planning to abate these two areas this summer.

### **Water (Lead) Testing**

In the spring of 2016, the district had 40 samples of drinking water from all three schools collected and tested by an independent laboratory. Currently there are no lead levels of concern in the district's drinking water. We will repeat the testing in five years as recommended.

## **Radon**

Testing for radon is not a state or federal requirement, but we are currently having radon testing done in all of our buildings. Results will be available later this spring.

## **Future Safety Projects**

**Seat Belt Promotion “Buckle Up!”**--We are currently partnering with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Patrol on a driver safety project called “Buckle Up!” The goal is promote increased seat belt usage by teenage drivers and residents. There is a student education and engagement component, with the message reinforced by placing a “Buckle Up!” stencil on the pavement at our parking lot exits. This promotion is planned for spring 2017.

**Safe Routes to School**--The district is exploring a planning assistance grant offered through the Minnesota Department of Transportation. We are in the preliminary phases of identifying needs and exploring partnerships with the City of Rockford and other local stakeholders.