

Task Force Report:
Reducing Violence in the Lives
of Children and Youth in New Rochelle, New York

Presented to the
City School District of New Rochelle Board of Education
May 30, 2018

Jonathan Brice, Ed.D. Task Force Chair and members of the Task Force

Members

Task Force members, grouped by the facet of the community they represent, are:

City of New Rochelle

New Rochelle City Council members Jared Rice and Al Tarantino, New Rochelle Youth Bureau Executive Director Kelly Johnson, New Rochelle Police Captain Robert Gazzola and New Rochelle Police Youth Officer Detective Terrence Fudge.

Schools staff

New Rochelle High School House II Principal Camille Thomas-Edwards, Secondary Schools Social Studies Chair Gustavo Barbosa, teachers Darren Gurney, Michael Lyons, Steve Newman, Brittnee Sabatino, teaching assistant Otilia Taylor-Tanner and social worker Angelica Guel, MSW.

Parents

Jeff Apotheker, PhD., Henry Ballesteros, Barbara D'Alois, Christopher Conroy, Adam Etkin, Robin Friedman, MSW, Jason Griffith, Andrea Harewood, LCSW-R, Susanne Kuligowski, Michael LePore, Adeel Mirza, Brad Navin, J. Luis Nunez, Melissa Panszi Riebe, LCSW, Wendy Portnoff, LCSW, Tamaris Princi, LMSW, New Rochelle Public Library Board member Yadira Ramos-Herbert, Nakea Reed, Kemesha Salmon, Wendell Sears, PTA Council President Emeritus Suyen Taylor, Willeatha Taylor-Labate, MD, Yolanda Valencia.

New Rochelle High School students

Dylan Klein, Ever Mack, Francisco Maldonado, Andrew Sorota, and Mia Tamaro.

Community partners

Pastor DeQuincy Hentz, the Rev. Michelle Lewis, Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle Executive Director Lutonya Russell-Humes, Professor Alisse Waterston, New Rochelle NAACP President Dr. Carla H. Woolbright.

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Reducing Violence in the Lives of New Rochelle Children and Youth Introduction

The Task Force on Reducing Violence in the Lives of New Rochelle Children and Youth members were selected to ensure a diverse representation of New Rochelle residents. The taskforce included students, parents, teachers, administrators, law enforcement officers, social workers, psychologists, social scientists, members of the business community, and clergy. The diverse views presented were intended to ensure that the recommendations broadly incorporated ideas that the City School District of New Rochelle Board of Education and City of New Rochelle can implement in whole, in part, or in combination. The members developed recommendations but were specifically instructed to not consider the cost as it may inhibit their ability to develop the best recommendations.

The Task Force was charged with providing a comprehensive report with four deliverables:

- (1) specific and actionable recommendations related to the reduction of violence in the lives of New Rochelle children and youth;
- (2) a review and analysis both of recent incidents and broader trends;
- (3) recommendations for District and City entities, community partners, civic organizations, parents, and residents;
- (4) any other comments, records, exhibits, or observations that may help the group achieve its stated mission.

It is important to note that the Task Force did not discuss the murder of Valaree Schwab as this case has yet to go to trial or analyze the stabbing that occurred at NRHS. The Task Force did conduct school visits and examined policies and practices related to the overall management and climate and culture at NRHS. Throughout meetings and discussions, the focus centered on issues including open or closed campus, support for youth, safety at the NRHS campus, and city and community health and mental health resources.

Over the course of two months the Task Force met six times to review documents, listen to district administrators, teachers, students, and visit secondary schools. Subcommittees were established to delve deeply into four key areas related to policies and practices including; City School District of New Rochelle, New Rochelle High School, City of New Rochelle, and community resources.

Finally, while the Task Force convened to discuss issues in New Rochelle, a national conversation about school safety occurred due to the tragedies at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida and Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas. The discussion about whether to assign an armed school resource officer (SRO) on the (NRHS) campus, availability of mental health and wellness supports for students in the school and community, and social emotional learning as a way to build positive school climate and culture are timely given the incidents in New Rochelle, Parkland, and Santa Fe. No single recommendation has the potential to remedy all the issues youth in New Rochelle may experience but a combination of the recommendations could improve their chances of growing into successful adults.

The Charge of the Task Force

The Task Force was charged to develop recommendations for the school district, NRHS, City of New Rochelle, and community resources. Members chose to participate in one of four subcommittees and the Task Force determined that it was important for members to reach consensus regarding recommendations that would be presented to the community at large. During deliberations consensus was determined if members of a subcommittee or entire Task Force could accept the recommendation.

Recommendations

In order to ensure that Task Force members felt comfortable openly discussing the critical issues they needed to discuss the Task Force chose to conduct closed meetings. The public was provided opportunities to share their concerns via email and at a public meeting. The Task Force chair provided two general recommendations essential to district wide improvements. Each subcommittee was asked to develop recommendations, identify the top five recommendations, and place them in priority order. Prioritizing the recommendations is important in order to drive future discussions and decisions about what recommendations, if any should be implemented. Other ideas that were discussed are included in the Appendix.

Description of Report

This report has three parts; Subcommittee groupings with recommendations, Recommendations in Action, and Final Thoughts. Each area is explained below.

Subcommittee Groupings

The subcommittee groupings are City School District of New Rochelle (School District) recommendations, New Rochelle High School (NRHS), City of New Rochelle, and Community Resources. Each section includes the top five recommendations in priority order made by the subcommittee.

Recommendations in Action

This section provides points of reference and examples for the various recommendations. There are resources identified in this section that provide a starting point for information on each topic. In some cases, the Recommendation in Action

reflects a school, school district, city, or community organization that has been dealing with the issues highlighted in the recommendation.

Final Thoughts

This section is important because there are unanswered issues, questions, and it is important for the New Rochelle community to know that the release of the report is not the conclusion of the process but progress toward building a safer community for New Rochelle children and youth.

Task Force Recommendations

General Recommendations

1. Update City School District of New Rochelle Board of Education (BOE) policies.
2. The Student Code of Conduct should explicitly outline when police involvement is required and staff and students trained in its use.

School District Recommendations

1. Staff and students will have access to socio-emotional learning strategies, health and wellness practices, and alternatives to suspension in the event of minor behavioral incidents.
2. Implement Restorative Justice, PBIS, Cultural competence, and recognizing and dealing with implicit bias training for students, staff and parents across the district.
3. Increase educational opportunities for all students with a focus on underrepresented students to include expanding seats in the district gifted education programs (Kaleidoscope and AP classes for example).
 - Identify students who show academic potential and strategies as well as programs to prepare students with the skills to be successful beginning in elementary school.
4. Expanded use of data driven decision making with the building of a research department to evaluate curriculum, strategies, and student outcomes.
5. Increase communication, engagement, and outreach with students, parents and guardians, and staff.

New Rochelle High School (NRHS) Recommendations

1. Implement an online student discipline referral process [with specific deliverables for when teachers will be notified of the disposition of their referral] for teachers and administrators.
2. Revise the orientation process for students to include quarterly student development meetings to relay information, check for understanding, and create a sense of unity among students and staff.

3. Assign a trained and armed School Resource Officer (SRO) on campus with a MOU about how, what, and when school administrators and the SRO work together.
4. The Board of Education will update policy 5520 adopted July 1, 1989 Closed Campus to allow for NRHS to establish a modified open campus for seniors in good standing.
5. All students should wear ID badges and use them to swipe in upon entering campus, and seniors in good standing swipe in and out when going off campus for lunch.

City of New Rochelle Recommendations

1. City of New Rochelle and City School District of New Rochelle must invest in and expand student focused programming including diversion programs, peer mediation, My Brother's Keeper (MBK), and Youth Bureau outreach services to be offered until 9 pm weekdays, weekends, and during the summer.
2. Create and implement a process to ensure improved communication, connection and collaboration across relevant city offices with responsibility for supporting youth. Youth serving offices should participate in a monthly youth focused data stat process.
3. Utilize space in public schools and public libraries after school hours for youth programming such as Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle.
4. Hire a consultant to examine school overcrowding at NRHS, impact on traffic in NRHS community, and the use of NRHS campus and current City Hall building.
5. The city of New Rochelle and City School District of New Rochelle should explore new ways to increase funding for youth serving programs through hiring a grant writer and asking developers to create a youth programming fund.

Community Resource Recommendations

1. The city of New Rochelle and school district should access preventative and intervention programs funded by Westchester County including crisis stabilization and mobile mental health programs.
2. Partner with community-based organizations and county-based agencies for professional development for district teachers, staff, and security staff on unconscious bias, trauma and cultural competence.
3. Hire a community liaison to strengthen the relationship between district parents and students. Hire parent coordinators for every school, establish community resource guides, host community fairs and events.

4. Ensure all New Rochelle residents have access to affordable mental health, mobile mental health, and after school programs.
5. Expand partnership with local educational institutions to increase support services with schools. For example, if Iona College has a Master of Social Worker (MSW) program internship opportunities should be created for them in all of the schools in New Rochelle.

1. General Recommendation: Update City School District of New Rochelle Board of Education (BOE) policies

The New York State School Boards Association articulates that part of a board of education's role is to develop policy that is consistent with all applicable laws, establishes the objectives and goals to be met by the district, and are forward thinking so the district will be prepared to move forward.¹ City School District of New Rochelle Board of Education policy 8220 states:

"Policies are principles adopted by the School Board to chart a course of action. They tell what is wanted; they may include why and how much. Policies should be broad enough to indicate a line of action to be followed by the administration in meeting a number of problems; narrow enough to give clear guidance. Policies are guides for action by the administration, which then sets the rules and regulations to provide specific directions to school district personnel."

In reviewing the City School District of New Rochelle School Board of Education policies, the Task Force chair recommends that the BOE adopt a plan to review, revise, and develop new policies that articulate the goals and focus of the school district on an established calendar cycle. This policy review and revision schedule should be published so the community is aware of the policy development cycle.

Recommendation in Action:

Baltimore City Public Schools have a transparent policy development process that is explained at the following link:

<http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/Page/31372>

2. General Recommendation: The Student Code of Conduct should make explicit when police involvement is required and all staff and students trained in its use.

Creating positive school climate and culture is critical for student academic success, engagement, and leads to improved outcomes related to student attendance,

¹ New York State School Board Associations (2013). Essentials of School Board. Downloaded May 6, 2018. http://www.nyssba.org/clientuploads/nyssba_pdf/Events/NSBMA-05-31-06-01-13/Module-A-Slides-5-31-2013.pdf

decreased student substance use, and fewer disciplinary suspensions². Supporting students and monitoring the school/classroom environment requires collaboration with the entire school community; students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at large.

The Task Force reviewed the Student Code of Conduct. The Task Force chair recommends that the school district determine and include in the Student Code of Conduct when police must be contacted and involved in a school disciplinary matter. This recommendation is intended to ensure consistency when school administrators involve police and also should minimize unnecessary involvement of police in matters that should be handled by administrators. All staff and students should be trained to understand the Student Code of Conduct. This will increase consistency of application across schools and houses at NRHS.

Recommendation in Action:

The School District of Philadelphia has established an MOU with the Philadelphia Police Department and has implemented a diversion program for students who commit non-violent criminal offenses that occur in schools. The diversion program also requires counseling services be a part of the program. More information about when, how, and why police are authorized to get involved in school-based incidents in the School District of Philadelphia can be found at the link below:

<https://www.philasd.org/studentrights/wp-content/uploads/sites/67/2017/10/Final-Code-of-Conduct-SY-2017-2018.pdf>

² Payne, Allison Ann (2018). Creating and Sustaining a Positive and Communal School Climate: Contemporary Research, Present Obstacles, and Future Directions. National Institute of Justice Report. Downloaded May 6, 2018. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/250209.pdf>

School District Recommendations

1. Staff and students will receive training in socio-emotional learning strategies, health and wellness practices, and alternatives to suspension in the event of minor behavioral incidents.
2. Implement Restorative Justice, PBIS, Cultural competence, and recognizing and dealing with implicit bias training for students, staff and parents across the district.
3. Increase educational opportunities for all students with a focus on underrepresented students to include expanding seats in the district gifted education programs (Kaleidoscope and AP classes for example).
 - a. Identify students who show academic potential and strategies as well as programs to prepare students with the skills to be successful beginning in elementary school.
4. Expanded use of data driven decision making with the building of research department to evaluate curriculum, strategies, and student outcomes.
5. Increase communication, engagement, and outreach with students, parents and guardians, and staff.

School District Recommendation: Staff and students will receive training in socio-emotional learning strategies, health and wellness practices, and alternatives to suspension in the event of minor behavioral incidents.

Student well-being is increasingly viewed as a key component of effective schools and necessary given the need to personalize learning for all students.³ Students who do not have a positive sense of self may disengage and exhibit inappropriate behavior in school. Providing the opportunity for students and staff to learn wellness strategies may lead to increased achievement. Wellness activities such as mindfulness and yoga, character education programs such as character counts, and restorative justice practices are increasingly vital to create healthy school environments.

Recommendation in Action:

Well-being is experienced in a range of domains including cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. All of these aspects are important for schools to ensure they are addressing the whole child. The link provides an example of a Well-being Framework that could be used in building well-being in schools.

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/about/16531_Wellbeing-Framework-for-schools_Accessible.pdf

³ The Wellbeing framework for schools. Downloaded May 6, 2018.

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/about/16531_Wellbeing-Framework-for-schools_Accessible.pdf

School District Recommendation: Implement Restorative Justice, PBIS, Cultural competence, and recognizing and dealing with implicit bias training for students, staff and parents across the district.

Restorative Justice as practiced in schools is an alternative to traditional disciplinary practices and focuses on building a sense of community among students and helping the student(s) harmed and the student(s) that committed the harm to engage in dialogue to help students and the school environment heal⁴. The process is more time dependent than traditional disciplinary practices but has been demonstrated to support changes in inappropriate student behavior. All school staff and students can be trained in restorative justice practices.

PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports) is a program that helps to build effective school climate and cultures. PBIS can serve the entire school. Often schools will implement PBIS strategies that include developing school and classroom norms and a token economy for students exhibiting good behavior.

The National Education Association believes that culturally competent teachers are vital to connecting with students in meaningful ways and helping those students engage in learning.⁵ Culturally responsive teaching moves beyond educator awareness to implementation of teaching that is attuned to the cultural knowledge, past experiences, and performance styles of students with high expectations for student achievement.⁶

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University defines implicit bias as the, “attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.”⁷ All people possess implicit biases; the biases often do not align with an individual’s espoused beliefs, and the biases tend to advantage individuals from your same group. Understanding and addressing implicit biases is critical in education because of the daily influence and decisions educators make on behalf of students. Educators influence student’s lives in myriad ways such as, who gets suspended, who gets detention, and which students get admitted into higher level courses. Implicit Bias training for all teachers whether they are of the same or different ethnicity as their students is important.

⁴ Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles. (Amos Clifford Center for Restorative Process).
Downloaded May 8, 2018

Downloaded May 8, 2018

<http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/documents/RP%20Curriculum%20and%20Scripts%20and%20PowePoints/Classroom%20Curriculum/Teaching%20Restorative%20Practices%20in%20the%20Classroom%207%20lesson%20Curriculum.pdf>

⁵ Diversity Toolkit: Cultural Competence for Educators Downloaded May 6, 2018.

<http://www.nea.org/tools/30402.htm>

⁶ Diversity Toolkit: Cultural Competence for Educators Downloaded May 6, 2018.

<http://www.nea.org/tools/30402.htm>

⁷ Defining Implicit Bias. Downloaded May 22, 2018. <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>

Recommendation in Action:

Links to Restorative Justice, culturally responsive teaching, and implicit bias are below:

<http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/documents/RP%20Curriculum%20and%20Scripts%20and%20PowePoints/Classroom%20Curriculum/Teaching%20Restorative%20Practices%20in%20the%20Classroom%207%20lesson%20Curriculum.pdf>

<http://educationnorthwest.org/resources/culturally-responsive-teaching-guide-evidence-based-practices-teaching-all-students>

<http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/>

School District Recommendations: Increase educational opportunities for all students with a focus on underrepresented students to include expanding seats and supports in the district gifted education programs (Kaleidoscope and AP classes for example)

- Identifying students who show academic potential and strategies, as well as programs to prepare students with the skills to be successful beginning in elementary school.

Culturally and linguistically diverse students have been consistently under-identified and under-represented in gifted education courses and data indicates Black and Latino students have more than a 40% greater chance of not being selected for gifted programs.⁸ Black and Latino participation rates and percentage of these students scoring a three or higher on the AP exam are increasing albeit too slowly, but schools must focus on expanding access and student success.⁹

New Rochelle High School can be proud to have a number of 2018 high school graduates accepted into Ivy League colleges and universities. However, the task force raised a series of questions around academic course diversity. Has the district created enough seats (access), and does teaching and learning include culturally and linguistically diverse curriculum? Have appropriate gifted education identification strategies been implemented in primary grades? Are there ongoing and extensive support for under-represented students to receive supports that will help the student and their parents to feel comfortable participating in a gifted program where they may experience a sense of isolation from their friends?

Recommendations in Action:

⁸ Wong, Alia (2016). Why are there so few Black Children in Gifted Programs? Atlantic Magazine. Downloaded May 6, 2018 <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/01/why-are-there-so-few-black-children-in-gifted-and-talented-programs/424707/>

⁹ Griffin, A. and Dixon, D. (2017). Systems for Success: Thinking Beyond Access to AP. Downloaded May 6, 2018 <https://1k9gl1yevnfp2lpq1dhrqe17-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Thinking-Beyond-Access-To-AP.pdf>

A school district that is tackling the complex issue of expanding access to highly gifted programming is the Denver Public Schools. A link to their gifted education website is below:

<https://studentequity.dpsk12.org/gifted-talented/>

School District Recommendation: Expanded use of data driven decision making with the building of a research department to evaluate curriculum, programs, strategies, and student outcomes.

Expanded use of research tools to evaluate curriculum, programs, strategies, and student outcomes should be utilized. Some school districts have research departments that support their data driven decision making.

Recommendations in Action:

<https://www.lmsd.org/departments/program-evaluation/projects>

School District Recommendation: Increase communication, engagement, and outreach with students, parents and guardians, and staff.

Effective schools and districts have a communication and engagement strategy that recognizes the importance of a multi-faceted approach to engaging its constituents. The City School District of New Rochelle should communicate, meet and engage with students, parents, staff, and the community¹⁰. Additionally, some communities are best served by building relationships through home visits and other forms of outreach that schools may not normally implement.

Recommendation in Action:

The Washoe County School District has an extensive student, parent, staff, and community engagement strategy. Please refer to their website for additional information:

<https://www.washoeschools.net/site/Default.aspx?PageType=1&SiteID=4&ChannelID=55&DirectoryType=6>

¹⁰ Dual Capacity Framework. US Department of Education. Downloaded May 8, 2018
<https://blog.ed.gov/2014/04/departments-of-education-releases-new-parent-and-community-engagement-framework/>

New Rochelle High School (NRHS) Recommendations

1. Implement an online student discipline referral process [with specific deliverables for when teachers will be notified of the disposition of their referral] for teachers and administrators.
2. Revise the orientation process for students to include quarterly student development meetings to relay information, check for their understanding, and create sense of unity among students and staff.
3. Assign a trained and armed School Resource Officer (SRO) on campus with a MOU about how, what, and when school administrators and the SRO work together.
4. The Board of Education will update policy 5520 adopted July 1, 1989 Closed Campus to allow for NRHS to establish a modified open campus for seniors only.
5. All students should wear ID badges and use them to swipe in upon entering campus, and seniors in good standing swipe in and out when going off campus for lunch.

NRHS Recommendation: Revise the student discipline referral process [with specific timelines when teachers will be notified of the disposition of their referral] for teachers and administrators.

Classroom management is part of every teacher's professional responsibilities. In most cases, teachers are trained and able to quickly resolve issues in their classrooms and return their attention to teaching and learning. In the rare instance that student behavior is so disruptive to the classroom environment it exceeds consequences that teachers are able to implement, such as suspensions or expulsion, then a referral is written and the student is referred to the appropriate administrator.

All referrals should be recorded electronically, students should meet with an administrator and a decision made and shared with the staff who wrote the referral. The referral process should include an assessment conducted by pupil services staff for repeated low-level referrals (Levels 1 and 2) and for each significant referral (Levels 3 and 4). Working to understand what the student did, why they did it, and how they have harmed the community (Restorative Justice strategies or redirection room) should be a part of the available consequences.

Recommendation in Action:

An example of a school discipline referral process flowchart is listed below.

<https://uplandhigh.schoolloop.com/disciplinereferral>

NRHS Recommendation: Revise the orientation process for students to include quarterly student development meetings to relay information, check for their understanding, and create sense of unity among students and staff.

Orientation is a way to welcome students, share information, help students to get comfortable in new environments, and for staff to meet their new students. Orientation for 9th graders should be extended beyond the current process to include quarterly student development meetings. This would be a chance to check in with the students, find out how their year is progressing, and also share needed information about school academic, wellness, and extra-curricular activities. The meetings could be held quarterly on half days and be called student development days.

A key addition to the orientation process should be to assign students to staff for ongoing mentoring and support. This process may currently exist, but if so, it needs to be utilized on a regular basis. Programs or strategies that use this type of method to create a sense of connection between students and staff to mitigate against school size include AVID, morning meetings, and advisory periods.

Recommendations in Action:

The transition to 9th grade is the most challenging period for students and has the highest failure for students. Ninth graders who had academic, behavioral, and/or attendance issues in middle school are most at risk for not successfully transitioning to high school. Revising how 9th graders are orientated and supported during 9th grade is critical to helping these student begin high school on a successful pathway.¹¹

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/slcp/ninthgradecounts/ninthgradecountsguide.pdf>

NRHS Recommendation: Assign a trained and armed School Resource Officer (SRO) on campus with a MOU about how, what, and when school administrators and the SRO work together.

School safety is the most important responsibility of school districts across the country. Recent mass shootings on school campuses have increased debate about how to maintain the safety of students, staff, and campuses. There is no single decision that will keep schools safe but a combination of approaches that offer the greatest security. Mental health supports for students, student engagement activities, and security staff including SRO are all pieces of the safety matrix. If the mental health supports and

¹¹ Ninth Grade Counts. May 8, 2018

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/slcp/ninthgradecounts/ninthgradecountsguide.pdf>

community resources are not implemented and only an SRO NRHS will appear safer but likely not have addressed student’s health and wellness needs.

The recommendation for a trained and armed SRO was the most contentious recommendation made by the Task Force and as such deserves a thorough explanation of how the Task Force reached this decision. The level of debate led to a decision to conduct an online poll about the recommendation for a SRO. Twenty-Eight members of the task force voted on the SRO with twenty-one voting in favor of the SRO and seven opposed. Two members of the Task Force verbally declined to vote while the remaining task force members did not vote.

SRO Poll Questions	Yes Votes	No Votes
1. Would you want an armed SRO at New Rochelle High School if the SRO has been trained by a state or national organization?	18	10
2. If an SRO were placed at New Rochelle High School would you want a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) explaining the roles of school administrators and the SRO?	28	0
3. This past week another school shooting occurred in Santa Fe Texas. Have the recent events caused you to change your decision about the need for a SRO at NRHS?	3	25
4. Do you want an armed, nationally or state trained SRO, with a MOU between the school district and the police department assigned to NRHS?	21	7
Total Vote for an SRO	21	

Task Force Members that support the recommendation for an armed, trained SRO with a MOU identified three issues; 1. The need for safety of the NRHS campus, 2. Training of an SRO, 3. A MOU that clarifies the role of school administrators and police as they work together.

Safety of the Campus

NRHS has a significant security presence with approximately 30 full time and part time security staff but even this presence did not prevent a student from being stabbed on campus on January 18, 2018. Another concern in schools across the country is about preventing and responding to the type of tragedies like the recent shooting in Parkland, Florida and Santa Fe, Texas

Training of the SRO

The City of New Rochelle has trained five officers through the State of New York to be SRO. This is important because an SRO has different daily responsibilities than a police officer on regular patrol. A fully trained SRO with the highest level of certification would be required to be assigned at NRHS and this person should be consistently assigned to NRHS to develop positive relationships with students. The National Association of School Resource Offices (NASRO) outlines a 40-hour course of instruction to train SRO's covering topics germane to working with children and youth. The topics are listed below¹²:

- Foundations of School Based Law Enforcement
- Ethics and the SRO
- The SRO as a Teacher/Guest Speaker
- Diversity
- Understanding Special Needs Students
- Social Media
- School Law
- The SRO as an Informal Counselor/Mentor
- Understanding the Teen Brain
- Violence and Victimization: Challenges to Development
- Sex Trafficking of Youth
- Effects of Youth Trends and Drugs on the School Culture and Environment
- Threat Response: Preventing Violence in School Settings
- School Safety and Emergency Operations Plans
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) recommends that school districts and police departments that provide SRO have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which clarifies the role that school administrator play in school discipline, when school police are supposed to be involved and for what type of infractions. The MOU also includes information about data sharing and regular meetings between school district officials and police.¹³

¹² NASRO Basic SRO course. Downloaded May 8, 2018. <https://nasro.org/basic-sro-course/>

¹³ MOU Fact Sheet. Downloaded May 8, 2018. https://nasro.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2013_MOU-FactSheet_v2_091613.pdf

Opposition to the SRO

Opposition to the SRO was vocal, led to an online poll for Task Force members, and raised several important concerns that are detailed in this report.

Task Force members provided three reasons against having an armed SRO at NRHS; 1. Having an armed officer in the school, 2. The message it sends to students by having an armed officer on campus, 3. The potential criminalization of students, especially Black and Latino students due to police assignment at NRHS.

Having an Armed Officer on Campus

The opposition to having an armed officer on campus was partly about the fact that the officer would be carrying a firearm. A suggestion was made that the officer could carry some other form of less than lethal weapon as they patrolled the campus and worked with students and staff. Having an officer without a firearm on campus was not supported by law enforcement.

What message is being sent to students by having an armed police officer on campus?

Those Task Force members opposed to the SRO on campus believe students would feel they were being watched by the SRO and possibly not trusted. It was mentioned that some students would strongly oppose having an armed officer on campus. The views of students are important and any discussion about SRO must include students.

Would Black and Latino students feel criminalized by having police on campus?

Growing research indicates that the criminalization of minor student disciplinary offenses has led to disproportionate numbers of Black and Latino students arrested by police¹⁴. The last point of opposition was about feeling African-American and Latino males, maybe females, could potentially feel criminalized by having a SRO on campus.

The discussion in the room was pointed about not potentially exposing students at NRHS to law enforcement in an environment where students are present to learn, be with their friends, and to just be children.

Recommendations in Action:

The discussion about SRO led to the eventual task force recommendation to have a SRO trained by a state or national organization, who is armed on campus and with a detailed MOU between the school district and the police department. Three links below will provide information about national standards for SRO's, reasons to oppose an armed SRO on campus, and a school district with a SRO program.

<https://nasro.org/>

¹⁴ No Cops No Guns: Police are not the answer to school shootings. The Advancement Project. Downloaded May 8, 2018.

<https://advancementproject.org/resources/nocopsnoguns-investing-real-solutions/>

<https://advancementproject.org/resources/nocopsnoguns-investing-real-solutions/>

[http://www.auburnny.gov/Public Documents/AuburnNY Police/SRO](http://www.auburnny.gov/Public_Documents/AuburnNY_Police/SRO)

NRHS Recommendation: The Board of Education will update policy 5520 adopted July 1, 1989 Closed campus to allow for NRHS to establish a modified open campus for seniors in good standing.

The Task Force did not spend time exploring whether NRHS had operated as an open campus for lunch. The Task Force believes that NRHS did not strictly enforce board policy 5520. Students, business persons, and community representatives on the Task Force confirm that students often went to North Avenue businesses for lunch. After the incidents of January 2018, the campus began to strictly enforce board policy 5520. Observation of the cafeteria's during the three lunch shifts at NHRS reveals that they are crowded and other options must be found for students.¹⁵

There was some discussion in opposing some sort of open campus. Concerns were raised about which students (Freshmen through Seniors) would be able to leave campus during lunch, who would monitor students when on North Avenue, and congestion in the neighborhood.

Seniors were chosen as the grade level that should be able to leave campus for lunch. However, the recommendation was not a blanket recommendation for all seniors, but only those seniors in good standing based on criteria determined by the district and NRHS such as good attendance, grades, behavior, etc.

If NRHS students are able to leave campus for lunch and frequent businesses on North Avenue there remains the question of who would be responsible for monitoring them? One suggestion would be to add similar coverage at lunch like the coverage recently provided after school with members of the Youth Commission positioned along North Avenue. NRHS might also consider having a staff member walking school grounds near the playground to provide additional support. Finally, all students who leave campus for lunch should wear school issued identification badges and swipe into and out of campus.

During the discussion about open/closed campus a concern was raised about congestion in the neighborhood from students walking, driving, and parking. A suggestion was made that the city review traffic patterns near the school.

Recommendations in Action:

Information about open vs closed campus for lunch is listed below:

¹⁵ Miura, Marlo. 2009. Public Health Advocacy Institute. Off the Map: Extracurricular School Food Open Campus Lunch. Downloaded May 8, 2018. http://www.phaionline.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/otm_open_campus_lunch.pdf

http://www.phaionline.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/otm_open_campus_lunch.pdf

NRHS Recommendation: All students should wear ID badges and use them to swipe in upon entering campus, and seniors in good standing swipe in and out when going off campus for lunch.

Maintaining the safety and security of schools requires an integrated approach to school safety. Keeping exterior doors locked, practicing for potential incidents with evacuation-shelter in place-lock down drills, and staff and student wearing identification are among the best practices many schools follow. NRHS school students have the ability to enter the school by using their cell phones to scan in and don't always wear badges. While this may save time students should be required to wear identification badges.

Recommendation in Action:

The article identifies some of the changes made at Marjory Stoneman Douglas including students wearing identification badges.

<https://www.cr80news.com/news-item/marjory-stoneman-douglas-students-return-school-new-id-badges/>

City of New Rochelle Recommendations

1. City of New Rochelle and City School District of New Rochelle must invest in and expand student focused programming including diversion programs, peer mediation, My Brother's Keeper (MBK), and Youth Bureau outreach services to be offered until 9 pm weekdays, weekends, and during the summer
2. Create and implement a process to ensure improved communication, connection and collaboration across relevant city offices with responsibility for supporting youth. Youth serving offices should participate in a monthly youth focused data stat process.
3. Utilize space in public schools and public libraries after school hours for youth programming such as Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle.
4. Hire a consultant to examine school overcrowding at NRHS, impact on traffic in NRHS community, and the use of NRHS campus and current City Hall building.
5. The city of New Rochelle and City School District of New Rochelle should explore new ways to increase funding for youth serving programs through hiring a grant writer and asking developers to create a youth programming fund.

City of New Rochelle Recommendations:

City of New Rochelle and City School District of New Rochelle must invest in and expand student focused programming including diversion programs, peer mediation, My Brother's Keeper (MBK), and Youth Bureau outreach services to be offered until 9 pm weekdays, weekends, and during the summer.

Investment in children and youth programming has been proven to reduce juvenile crime, increase positive activity, keep more students engaged in school, and create an overall healthier community. These efforts often have a return on investment that far exceeds the initial investment such as increased educational attainment and life time earnings¹⁶. Two of the programs mentioned above will be discussed below, but the City and School district should not limit their programmatic offerings to just these options.

Diversions Programs

Programs that provide youth suspected of committing an offense with the option to have the charges delayed or eliminated while the individual has a chance for a less serious consequence are important. A benefit for youth that have committed an offense that are adjudicated through a diversion program is that completing the program may leave them without a criminal record.

¹⁶ Economic Costs of Youth Disadvantage and High Return Opportunities for Change (July 2015). Downloaded https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/mbk_report_final_update1.pdf

Peer Mediation

An effective peer mediation program can benefit both the students in the program and the students who use the program. Peer mediation serves as a way for students to learn about, provide empathic listening to their peers, and ultimately decide on consequences for the incident.

Recommendation in Action:

The link below can serve as a plan to build a comprehensive plan to invest in youth in New Rochelle.

<https://www.nlc.org/sites/default/files/2016-12/youth-master-plan-action-kit-sept08.pdf>

City of New Rochelle Recommendations:

Create and implement a process to ensure improved communication, connection and collaboration across relevant city offices with responsibility for supporting youth. Youth serving offices should participate in a monthly youth focused data stat process.

What data does the City maintain on the wellness of youth? Each month the City of New Rochelle should conduct a data driven or “Stat” process focused on children and youth. The data review will provide early information on the status of youth and help to more ably target interventions.

Recommendations in Action:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/children/Pages/default.aspx>

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/children/Pages/Performance.aspx>

City of New Rochelle Recommendations:

Utilize space in public schools and public libraries during after school hours for youth programming such as Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle.

Public facilities (schools, recreation centers, libraries) that could be used for after-hours youth programs should have a centralized system for coordination of use. The coordination of programming would allow for more efficient use of space and may open spaces to youth programming that could not operate due to lack of space.

Recommendation in Action:

<http://trythiswv.com/share-school-buildings-after-hours/>

City of New Rochelle Recommendations:

Hire a consultant to examine school overcrowding at NRHS, impact on traffic in NRHS community, and the use of NRHS campus and current City Hall building.

The issue of NRHS overcrowding should be examined. While classrooms seem to have enough space, the cafeterias are crowded. In fact, some students do not visit the cafeteria because it is too crowded. If the current City Hall building becomes available, then the City School District of New Rochelle should examine this space for future use.

Recommendation in Action

<https://www.mgtconsulting.com/services/facilities-master-planning>

City of New Rochelle Recommendations:

The city of New Rochelle and City School District of New Rochelle should explore new ways to increase funding for youth serving programs through hiring a grant writer and asking developers to create a youth programming fund.

A grant writer should be hired to write grants to support children and youth programming in the City of New Rochelle. The City of New Rochelle should contract with developers to underwrite in some manner children and youth programming in the City of New Rochelle.

Recommendation in Action

<https://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/funding>

Community Resource Recommendations

1. The City of New Rochelle and City School District of New Rochelle should access preventative and intervention programs funded by Westchester County including crisis stabilization and mobile mental health programs.
2. Partner with community-based organizations and county-based agencies for professional development for district teachers, staff, and security staff on unconscious bias, trauma and cultural competence.
3. Hire a community liaison to strengthen the relationship between district parents and students. Hire parent coordinators for every school, establish community resource guides, host community fairs and events.
4. Ensure all New Rochelle youth have access to affordable mental health, mobile mental health, after school programs, full menu of program.
5. Expand partnership with local educational institutions to increase support services with our schools. For example, if Iona College has a Master of Social Work (MSW) program internship opportunities should be created for them in all City School District of New Rochelle Schools.

Community Resources Recommendation:

The city of New Rochelle and City School District of New Rochelle should access preventative and intervention programs funded by Westchester County including Crisis stabilization and mobile mental health programs.

A full list of reasons for preventative and intervention services should be identified and made available to students and families

Recommendations in Action

<https://www.newrochelleny.com/205/Youth-Bureau>

<https://youth.westchestergov.com/>

Community Resources Recommendation:

Partner with community-based organizations and county-based agencies for professional development for district teachers, staff, security staff, and parents on unconscious bias, trauma and cultural competence.

Utilize resources from the New York area to train on cultural competence, trauma informed teaching practices, and implicit bias. Community wide efforts to become knowledgeable about cultural competence are vital to moving beyond tolerance to acceptance of people from different cultures, religions, etc.

Recommendation in Action:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/applying-strategic-prevention/cultural-competence>

Community Resources Recommendation:

Hire a community liaison to strengthen the relationship between district parents and students. Hire parent coordinators for every school, establish community resource guides, host community fairs and events.

Building a culture of respect for all citizens includes having staff that can help people navigate essential city and county services.

Recommendation in Action:

<http://www.clevelandmetroschools.org/Domain/165>

Community Resources Recommendation:

Ensure all New Rochelle youth have access to affordable mental health, mobile mental health, and after school programs.

What is the health of New Rochelle children and youth? How is their mental health? Do they have access to services that will help them to thrive? The absence of these services mean that some children and youth are disadvantaged and likely not on a path to success later in life.¹⁷ As a city, state, and country we need to take a proactive approach to supporting all our children and youth.

Recommendation in Action:

<http://health.westchestergov.com/services>

<http://mentalhealth.westchestergov.com/>

¹⁷ Economic Costs of Youth Disadvantage and High Return Opportunities for Change (July 2015). Downloaded https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/mbk_report_final_update1.pdf

Community Resources Recommendation:

Expand partnership with local educational institutions to increase support services with schools. For example, if Iona College has a Master of Social Work (MSW) program bring in students who have to do internships into all of the schools in New Rochelle.

Mental Health services are vital to helping youth receive the treatment necessary for them to be successful. According to National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI), 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, 70% of youth in juvenile justice have a mental illness, and suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24.¹⁸ Mental illness also cost the U.S. nearly \$200 Billion in lost earnings each year.¹⁹

Recommendation in Action:

In some cities, the local university provides graduate interns to the local school system to provide additional mental health support free of charge to students and funded through the city. This should be considered in New Rochelle.

<https://www.iona.edu/academics/school-of-arts-science/departments/psychology/graduate-programs/ma-in-mental-health-counseling.aspx>

¹⁸ Mental Health Facts Childrens and Teens. Downloaded May 8, 2018. <https://www.nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/Infographics/Children-MH-Facts-NAMI.pdf>

¹⁹ Mental Health by the Numbers. Downloaded May 8, 2018. <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers>

Final Thoughts

The Task Force has completed its charge but there is much work to be done to fully support children and youth in New Rochelle. Some children and youth are meeting with success while others are struggling and need the community to help them find their path forward.

During the Task Force process, many students, teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and community members have shown how important the New Rochelle community is to them. There is much to celebrate in the community. However, a coherent and collaborative plan to support children and youth must be implemented because the long term costs and unrealized potential of children and youth would mean that the City and community of New Rochelle would not reach its promise.

The Task Force was able to work together and develop recommendations that have the potential to make New Rochelle a much different and better community for children and youth. To that end the Task Force, a group of over 45 dedicated members of the community should be enlisted to continue discussions and work on behalf of children and youth in New Rochelle.

Lastly, issues of race, racism, implicit bias, cultural competence, access and opportunity, and community services all play a role in sending the message that some children and youth in New Rochelle are loved and cherished while others are not. The impact of countless slights, small or large, are cumulative and exponential. The New Rochelle community should review the recommendations in this report and commit to building preventative and recuperative programs and strategies that support all children and youth.

Other Ideas that were considered

City School District of New Rochelle Subcommittee

- Increase staffing available to provide expanded school-based counseling and psycho-education via individual and group modalities to students around issues related to social and emotional wellness, mental health, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES education).
- The district should consider creating a full-time coordinator role to oversee the delivery of services and supportive curriculum with fidelity throughout the district to ensure that mental health services and socio-emotional learning (SEL) are evenly distributed/available at each district school.
- Consider the establishment of school committees comprised of school administrators, teachers, school clinicians, parents, and community partners to help raise awareness and maintain the urgency of SEL, Mindfulness and ACES education.
- The district should remain abreast of the proposed amendment to Sections 135.1 & 135.3 of the Commissioner's Regulations Relating to Health Education, which may begin to include instruction in mental health by classroom teachers.
- Cultivate trauma-informed learning environments through the training of staff and teachers in trauma-informed educational practices (ex. Mindfulness rooms, peace corners, using Kendra's curriculum in our elementary schools, ACES education for teens, and possibly expanding alternative high school programs that are based on a trauma-informed model. (Resources include: [CASEL](#) and [TraumaInformedSchools.org](#))
- Expand the mindfulness programs which are currently being introduced to lower grade levels and some middle schoolers across all schools and all grades. ([Little Flower Yoga](#)).
- Provide SEL curriculum that specifically focuses on core competencies of SEL: SELF-AWARENESS (ex. Emotional literacy, ACES education, mindfulness skills, social-emotional health and well-being), SELF-MANAGEMENT (ex. Mindfulness skills, emotional-regulation skills, social-emotional health and well-being, distress tolerance skills), SOCIAL AWARENESS ex. community connectedness, empathy, cultural competence, cultivating perspective, restorative practices, bullying prevention), RELATIONSHIP SKILLS (ex. communication skills, interpersonal effectiveness, conflict resolution, the impact of bullying, restorative circles), and RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING (ex. problem-solving, ethics, analyzing situation, identifying problems, reflection). (Resources: *Educating the Whole Child*, *Engaging the Whole School: Guidelines and Resources for Social and Emotional*

Development and Learning in New York State, adopted by NYS Board of Regents, July 18th, 2011).

- Engage families, businesses, houses of worship and other community partners in the SEL of our district's students - build bridges to other supports and services in the community. Engage community partners in promoting wellness and SEL health initiatives and support the formation of additional community programs which students and families may access. (*Resources: Educating the Whole Child, Engaging the Whole School: Guidelines and Resources for Social and Emotional Development and Learning in New York State, adopted by NYS Board of Regents, July 18th, 2011).*)
- All staff must receive cultural competency (implicit bias) training and be evaluated for this competency in their yearly evaluation. It's not enough to just participate in cultural competency training. For example, Domain Four of the Danielson Rubric (Professional Responsibilities) should be included in a teacher's yearly observation. All staff must demonstrate evidence of continuous growth in cultural competency, use of culturally relevant curriculum and culturally responsive instruction. (*National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems*).
- The PBIS framework of practice lists equity/cultural competency as a building-wide practice that undergirds positive student behavior. We are wondering if NYU's training team could help the district weave this PBIS strand into Domain 4. (<http://www.pbis.org/school/equity-pbis>)
- The district should strongly consider implementing cultural competence training for all students via age appropriate teaching of implicit bias from k-12. This information should also be made available to parents and caregivers via parent workshops.
- All new hires must be asked to demonstrate evidence of cultural competence throughout the interview process. Furthermore, the district must provide implicit bias training during orientation and monitor growth in this domain during the tenure process.
- The district should strongly consider hiring those applicants who speak a second language. This is especially key for positions that engage the public on a daily basis-- security, clerical staff in school buildings and central administration.
- Administrators must be willing to support staff in making amends and growing when a complaint is made.
- The Code of Conduct should be updated to include additional statements regarding cultural competency and the steps that will be taken to address the concern once a complaint has been made against a staff member or student.
- Every student should have access to a School Counselor, Social Worker or School Psychologist who speaks his/her native language or have access to an interpreter (language line?) for all sessions.

- Engagement in school and extracurricular activities are correlated with positive behaviors and youth development. The district should expand access to competitive academic programs as well as vocational programs for all type of student learners. Additionally, there should be greater collaboration with community organizations to create out of school opportunities for students across all academic achievement levels. Specific policies should include the following: (1) expand UPK spots to full day to allow children of working parents greater access to consistent early childhood education (2) garner interest in and allow students and parents to prepare for the Kaleidoscope program by distributing information about these programs as early as Kindergarten (3) increase the number of students who may enroll in Kaleidoscope or Magnet programs (4) allow for the preparation for the entry to AP courses to begin at the elementary school level. (Resource: [AVID](#))
- The district has been cited for a high suspension rate among Black & Latino boys. Students who are not working at grade level and do not have the academic intervention in the early years often express their frustration in the upper grades. This frustration in turn is often interpreted as "aggression", which often leads to suspension. Each year, each feeder school moves up a large number of students who are reading / doing math well below grade level. Therefore, equitable funding needs to be allocated for RTI/AIS services in reading, writing, and math at the elementary and middle schools. While technology support is great (i.e. Fast Forward, Dream box, Razz-Kids, Castle Learning, Achieve 3000, etc.) the district needs to invest in more reading and math AIS teachers who will help our kid's close academic gaps before they get to the middle-schools.
- Special education students are our most vulnerable learners--especially our Black & Latino boys with IEP's. However, not all special education students have equitable access to the programs and services they need such as specialized reading instruction with consistency and fidelity, co-teaching across all content areas, access to shared aides for behavioral support during AMPELS, lunch and recess. Therefore, the special education department (and budget) needs to undergo a thorough review of what each building currently offers and, what each building needs to help special education students make annual yearly progress.
- Expand existing vocational programs via BOCES and other local partners (i.e. The Gathering of Men) and ensuring that various trade programs are available students. (*Citizens' request during the Open Task Force Community meeting on 4/14/18*)
- The district should evaluate the obstacles to enrollment for underrepresented students in advanced level academic courses and should implement strategies to address such

obstacles. (<https://www.lohud.com/story/has/education/2018/04/03/white-plains/social/diversity/advanced-courses>)

- The Code of Conduct should be updated annually to reflect changes in policies and practices, changes in key staff positions (ie DASA Coordinators), and community resources. The Code of Conduct should be widely distributed throughout the community such as houses of worship, local businesses, and community partners.
- All district staff need to be effectively trained in PBIS and restorative practices as is outlined by the Code of Conduct. (Resources: Educating the Whole Child, Engaging the Whole School: Guidelines and Resources for Social and Emotional Development and Learning in New York State, adopted by NYS Board of Regents, July 18th 2011).
- All Staff should be evaluated for their implementation of PBIS & Restorative Practices competency in their yearly evaluation. Again, use of Domain Four of the Danielson Rubric (Professional Responsibilities) should be included in a teacher's yearly observation. All staff must demonstrate evidence of continuous growth in their understanding and implementation of PBIS strategies & Restorative Practices.
- The district should consider creating a standalone, full-time district-wide coordinator position to oversee the PBIS, Restorative Justice, and Bullying Prevention programs/practices so that these processes are implemented with fidelity in each school building.
- With regard to the disciplinary process, all administrative referrals systems should be streamlined and digitized.
- Responses to discipline referrals ought to be prompt (24-48 hours) and with some level of detail related to the response (how it was handled, what intervention was implemented) without violating confidentiality laws. A response from administration should be reasonably prompt (24-48 hours).
- The district should ensure that all schools are effectively equipped with a full-time trauma-informed staff who can provide de-escalation strategies in separate in-house time-out areas or in-house suspension rooms. This location provides a unique opportunity to focus on what is causing this student to engage in behaviors that are not safe, disruptive. It provides an opportunity for restorative justice, counseling, addressing academic deficiencies, and sometimes just allowing a student to decompress.
- Teachers taking classroom time to use restorative practices to address issues related to classroom climate and culture needs to be supported by administrators.
- The district should consider partnering up with the local business association and create signs (a logo) that reminds New Rochelleans (but especially students) of

the behavior expectations that all students are expected to demonstrate when they walk into a business, the local library, play in the park, etc.

- Policies should be reviewed yearly and updated in conformance with current best practices.
- A process for the systematic collection, review and implementation of feedback from frontline staff, students and parents needs to be part of the review and updating process. This may include surveys or dedicated district level staff and/or QI team.
 - The district should conduct continuous performance measurements in the form of teacher, student and parent input (i.e. surveys). These should serve as a means of assessing satisfaction with training, communication, support services and to provide input on future improvements for the board of education and individual schools. (<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0899764009359942>)
 - The district should incorporate CQI and Root-Cause Analysis (RCA) as part of their operations so as to best assure quality of service and student success.
- Ensure that any new additions to the Code of Conduct are conveyed to staff in writing as well as in the form of a comprehensive meeting/training session as necessary and in a timely manner.
- Ensure that any new additions to the Code of Conduct are conveyed to students and their caregivers in writing as well as in the form of a comprehensive workshop or assembly.
- Students, staff, parents, and administrators need to be held accountable for their role and impact on the social-emotional health of the school community. Measures must be taken in alignment with stated written policies that are in place to guide our district.
- The district should place high priority on improving its current methods of communication with parents as well as within the school buildings themselves, between teachers, staff, students and administrators. All communication must be timely, current, accurate and available to families whose first language is not English.
- The administration should establish policies and infrastructure for regular communication between school staff and parents for all students, particularly for those students at high risk and for whom coordination between staff and parents is critical.
- Building administrators must improve the communication with staff by creating a minimum response time for critical issues such as disciplinary referrals and requests for student interventions.

- The district should strongly consider hosting at least three forums and town hall style meetings per year for students, caregivers, local businesses, residents and community partners to raise issues and express concerns.
- The district should consider updating current methods of communication by implementing technology such as Class Dojo or other apps/programs which are readily available. This will provide timely feedback to parents on such things as attendance, classroom behavior, academic performance.
- An assessment (survey) of the information presented on school websites should be conducted to ensure it is addressing the needs of all constituents.
- Information about school policies, improvements, efforts aimed at addressing concerns as well as time sensitive communications should be made available in the form of in-page alerts, FAQ's and perhaps regular blog type updates/letters from key Administrators as well as members of the Board of Education.
- The current websites should be reviewed and organized by an Information Architect and a UX (user experience) Designer to make the most salient information easily found and accessed and improve navigation of the site in general.
- Each school building, but especially the high school, has various efforts to support student success--student clubs, various mentoring programs, and community agency support. Could the district streamline, coordinate all these school resources to facilitate student/parent access, avoid duplication of services, and help all the groups/service providers collaborate for optimum efficiency?

NRHS Sub-Committee Ideas

Six areas of Discussion:

- Climate & Culture
- Discipline
- Mental Health
- Open Closed Campus
- Security
- Timely Actions implemented without additional expenditure

Climate and Culture

- Accountability/Consequences: There needs to be clear paths of accountability and defined consequences that are implemented universally. Available resources need to be determined.
- Clear Understanding of rules and Expectations for students: to create a pervasive climate and culture of mutual respect and understanding,

students/faculty meet regularly during their four years at the high school to revisit and discuss what the code of conduct expectations are and the rules governing those expectations.

- Presence: Administrators, Faculty and staff are to walk the hallways to create the climate of accountability and take a “pulse on the building”. This will create a sense of safety and security for students and staff and will facilitate a sense of community. We are recommending that there be an administrator and nursing staff in the building whenever there are students in the building during the normal academic day (7:30am-3:30pm). Also, one staff member per floor per wing trained in hands-only, non-bleeding CPR.
- Job Descriptions: All administrators, faculty and staff should have clearly defined job descriptions that are readily accessible to the public which include measurable objectives.

Discipline

- Clear Understanding: Administrators should have access to a clearly defined set of consequences for infractions.
- Policy Review: Align consequences with code of conduct. District review of Policies which have not been updated, in some cases, for decades.

Mental Health

- Assessments: If a student has a level 2 or Higher or, there are 4 or more level 1 violations, there is an assessment done. This assessment could be the screening tool and then the social worker evaluates the form.
- Repeat Assessments: any repeat or high-level assessments, especially fighting, should require a mental health professional assessment.
- Off Campus: if a level 3 or 4 violation happens off campus we need to recommend a mental health assessment from school social worker or psychologist. Rules are clear and well stated with clear expectations and consequences. This assessment occurs the minute the student steps on campus.

Open/Closed Campus

- It was determined by the sub-committee that more information was required to make recommendations.

Security

- Entrance and Exit: Implement ability to “swipe out” on exiting in addition to “swiping in”.
- Equipment: More machines are needed at entrances to facilitate smoother entrance especially during busy morning hours.
- ID’s: anyone within the building should have the identification visible always.

Timely Actions, Implemented Without additional expenditure

- Bell Schedule: Add one minute between classes to facilitate easier movement between classes. This will allow students enough time to traverse the building (new wing to old and vice versa). This will eliminate the “15-minute rule” which allows students to enter classrooms within the first 15 minutes of class and fosters a climate of disruption.
- Full Day orientation: provide a full day orientation for students, perhaps spending the first hour with the principal followed by break-out sessions with House Principals to review policies and procedures in detail.
- Referrals: all referrals to house principals processed within 72 hours. Computerize the process to create a time-stamp on each referral will keep the process timely.
- Maintenance: a team of 10-12 task force members should be created to follow-up on all recommendations and their implementation.

City of New Rochelle Subcommittee Ideas

- As we were focused on narrowing down our recommendations from the many to the few, we do not have a list of additional recommendations, with the exception of the following:
- Involving students in revising the code and in developing creative ways to disseminate the code to students and staff.
- Another earlier recommendation was about how to use the time/space and captive audience of students in in-house suspension in specific ways to engage restorative justice practices. I do hope you still have those sheets with those recommendations written out in detail.
- We recommend NRHS be a "closed campus," conducted in such a way that students may go outside on school property only (e.g., the bridge, the fields and other outdoor spaces that are school property), and that these spaces are properly monitored. (This is opposite of the Task Force recommendation).

Other Community Resources ideas:

- Suggest Nonprofit services funded through Westchester County.
- Youth mental health USA training for all staff members
- Staff members introduction at orientation
- Crisis Stabilization Program
- Partnership with educational institutions with internships

- Pre-K, elementary, middle school and high school support with more clinical workers
- Community liaison in each school
- Staff training on culture competency, racism
- Recommendation of flyers around schools with referral services to clubs
- Hiring of grant writers for future RFPs
- Parent coordinators in schools
- City to create a community resource guide
- Satellite health clinics and mental health clinics for children at all schools
- Access to career services for all students
- Community fair/night events
- Full day pre-K program
- Review kindergarten registration process
- Truancy attendance personnel