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Posted June 30, 2015

Sag Harbor Schools Step Up Security

by The Sag Harbor Express



Sag Harbor's Pierson School security will be stepped up over the summer according to State guidelines. Photo by Carrie Ann Salvi

By Carrie Ann Salvi

The implementation of stepped-up security procedures and the purchase of new equipment to make them possible, mandated by New York State, will be on the agenda this summer for Sag Harbor School District administrators.

"We are already doing the most important things," Superintendent Katy Graves said last week. That has been confirmed by four audits, she added, citing, as an example, lockdown drills with the Sag Harbor Village Police Department.

A new system to lock exterior and classroom doors, and notify police and emergency service workers with an incident location map will also be installed. It will be accessible by "panic" buttons to be installed at the front desks of both school buildings as well as through administrators' cellphones and computers. The one-touch button will send pre-recorded announcements in the principal's voice over the PA system. Messages will

also be sent to teachers, staff, and parents via text message and email.

One press of a button will let parents know when there is a practice drill or if there is a true lockdown emergency. "It will be crystal clear if we are in an emergency state," Ms. Graves said.

Additional cameras will also be added. A device that determines if a door is ajar when it shouldn't be will be installed this summer in both buildings. If a door is open, a screen shot will be sent to all administrators' phones and computers.

The district will work with first responders, including those with the county, town, and village police, fire and EMTs, on its security plan over the next two months.

Ms. Graves said that it is important that all of the security enhancements are in place before a building project starts next spring. Lee Mandel, the CEO of Intralogic Solutions, which manufactures the security cameras and alarm systems, will train the district free-of-charge and help it implement the procedures.

Initially, the school monitors will be trained on the use of the new equipment over the summer, and then the faculty and staff at the start of the school year, according to Ms. Graves. "We have to make sure they know how to utilize it all to its fullest, for the safety of the children," she said.

"It will be a cultural shift that will be tough," Ms. Graves told the school board last week. She later explained that teachers will be required to wear their photo IDs. Students will have an ID card that will also work for lunch and library materials.



Those who walk the halls in Sag Harbor Schools will carry identification starting in the Fall. Photo by Carrie Ann Salvi

Visitors will have to present their driver's license, and their picture will be on an ID tag as they walk through the buildings. Those who deliver to the school will also need to show their license, and it will be scanned and compared to a national database of sexual predators.

Board member Chris Tice suggested last week that those involved in school recreational programs this summer be notified of how they will have to enter and leave the building. She warned that the school could be vulnerable with propped-open doors during its annual influx of seasonal visitors to the community.

The security upgrades will be paid for by the board's captured savings in personnel throughout the current school year, Ms. Graves said. "That worked out perfectly," she added. The Smart School Act funds will be received and re-invested later on to meet other identified needs in the district, she said.

The requirements for schools, parents, and first responders, including the five emergency response protocols, will be identical throughout the state. Details can be viewed by the public at safeschools.ny.gov.

The district's confidential plan must be submitted and implemented by October 1. "As the new year starts, we should have everything implemented," said business administrator Jennifer Buscemi.

To help families plan for the upcoming school year, all departments came together to create a district-wide master calendar for 2015-2016, and it is now live. <http://www.sagharborschools.org/calendar_events.cfm?master=419833&cfm=end>

It includes orientation dates, musicals, college application night, homecoming weekend, and teacher conferences. Still to be added are dates for sports physicals, which will be announced after the contract with a school physician is announced. A paper calendar will also be sent to the students' houses.

The district's summer school program was also discussed by Matthew Malone, the principal of Sag Harbor Elementary School, at the June 22 meeting. He said that academic intervention classes would be provided to students in special education as well as to those in the English as a Second Language program from July 6 to August 14 to prevent regression over the summer months. Students who have been recommended by instructors can also take part in the courses.

Mr. Malone planned to reinvigorate a summer enrichment program offered by SCOPE, a private, not-for-profit organization chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. That was canceled, though, due to low enrollment. He said he hopes to work toward an improved offering next year, that incorporates the town's resources.

Ms. Tice suggested soliciting the opinions of parents and students. Board member Diane Kolhoff who is an elementary school mother, shared

feedback she has already heard from other parents. Many said that enrollment in the courses presented a challenge because it was at the same time as camp offered at Mashashimuet Park. She has also heard from parents that the sessions were too short. A one-and-a-half-hour course doesn't help with child supervision for working parents, or allow the parent to get anything done during that time. "Making them longer to have a bigger chunk of time might generate more interest," Ms. Kolhoff suggested.

Courses range from fitness through yoga, games, hula hoops, and jump rope to reading classes that enhance skills as well as self-confidence and creativity. Music offerings will include instruments as well as dancing, and art classes will incorporate both in and out-of-class projects.

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5
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4:00 pm French with Cecile @ The Hampton Library in Bridgehampton (http://sagharboronline.com/event/french-with-cecile/?instance_id=4111)

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4:00 pm Spanish with Nancy @ The Hampton Library in Bridgehampton (http://sagharboronline.com/event/spanish-with-nancy/?instance_id=4109)

JAN
12
Tue

5:00 pm Memoir Writing with Eileen Obser @ The Hampton Library in Bridgehampton (http://sagharboronline.com/event/memoir-writing-with-eileen-obser/?instance_id=4102)

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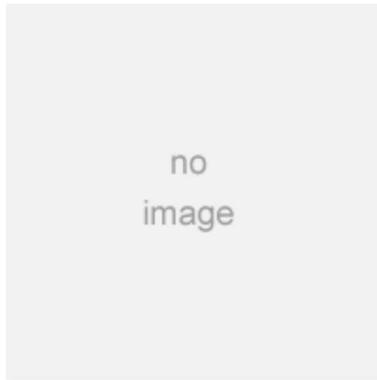
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