

## **Clarence Bee Article – September 2018**

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### **School Safety Initiatives**

In March, the school district convened a School Safety Task Force for the purpose of examining elements of our existing school safety plans along with best practices for safety and mental health across the region. Participants chosen for the Task Force included parents from all six schools, individuals who work in law enforcement, homeland security, the security field, teachers, support staff, administrators, and interested community members.

The Board of Education heard recommendations from the Task Force last May. The Board allocated \$370,000 for safety initiatives in the 2018-19 budget and spent the majority of the summer prioritizing recommendations to be implemented.

With help from the Town of Clarence, the school district was able to add an additional School Resource Officer (SRO) whose home base will be Clarence Middle School. Clarence will now have two SRO's, one based at the high school and the other at the middle school. The SRO's will be scheduled to visit the four elementary buildings on a regular basis. Adding an additional SRO was a consensus recommendation from the Task Force.

Creating a Family Support Center (FSC) is another consensus recommendation which the school district was able to implement. The FSC's purpose is to collaborate with school personnel, parents, students, community organizations, and area service providers to assess mental health needs and determine appropriate interventions. The funding supports a Family Support Center Coordinator and a clerical position. This year the FSC will be housed at the middle school, but it will serve students and parents from all six buildings. Our new Family Support Center Coordinator is Kevin Modlmeyer, a certified social worker who has a wealth of experience. Kevin, along with our counselors, psychologists, and administrators, are working out the details of the FSC and we are hopeful to announce the grand opening after Thanksgiving break.

The final recommendations for implementation in 2018-19 involve enhanced entry procedures and building safety protocols. Every school will have a monitor at the single point of entry during the school day who will check the identification of all visitors. Visitors will need to show a driver's license which will be scanned by our new T-Pass system and checked against a law enforcement database. The system will print a temporary photo ID badge for the visitor and log entry and exit. The monitors can trigger an immediate message to the 911 system in case of emergency. Additional safety protocols were instituted at each of the six buildings.