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Safe Schools Forum – Notes

Breakout Room #1

- Build awareness for students, i.e. ERASE, process if bullied
- Building relationships between adults and students is key
- Connections with adults – otherwise students only connect with each other
- Size of schools: Are Mission's Middle Schools too big? This is a complicated issue, but a long-term exploration of relationships is key to success.
- 'Youth Working Group' – youth council that meets to discuss issues like violence etc. to communicate with School District.
- Increase counselling time at the elementary schools.
- How can phones be used as a tool, i.e. promote safety and accountability.
- Where do students feel safe? - In groups.
- The issue of social media rewarding shock value. Youth assume adults know about it.
- Peer Mentoring and support (i.e. gr 9 buddy for gr 7)
- 2001: Aboriginal Community Healing circles were used. Very powerful and impactful. (Joint counselling with victim and bully also mentioned in a similar model). Round table restorative discussions all persons involved in an incident
- Suggestion for peer mentoring
- Talk - survey children to learn where they feel safe

Breakout Room #2

- Safe people students can go to
- Boredom at lunch – middle schools have less to do
- Importance of educating about policy
- Have students involved in policy preparation.
- Peer to peer support (i.e. Kindness ambassadors) and student ownership
- Ensure students feel heard; hold safe space forums for students from various groups
- Emphasize empathy, kindness, respect
- Relationship skills, de-escalation skills, teach kids to assume the best of each other

Breakout Room #3

Question 1: How can we improve safety in Mission Schools?
1. Love the student feedback. What can we do for students to be safe? Listen to the student voice.
2. Lunch hour / recess. Lack of things to do.
3. Consider physical safety and emotional safety.
4. Every student should have a strong connection to at least one adult
5. Belonging - students need to feel like they belong to the school / community
6. Building allies
7. SOGI education should begin sooner than grade 6. SOGI Education needs to start at younger ages. Note: SOGI resources and education begins with Kindergarten
8. Stave Falls needs SOGI resources

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9. SOGI education lacking at Hatzic Middle school
10. At the high school level – need greater police presence – where the violence happens. Students need awareness that grown-ups are watching
11. Develop empathy in students – build allies amongst all groups – need a sense of belonging
12. A strong connection to at least one adult – strong relationships
13. Need smaller settings
14. Student input is needed first. Get to the Kids – what do they think is lacking?
15. Inclusion education needed too
16. Develop Professional Development sessions for connecting students to adults
17. Used to have safe spots at Heritage Park – an LGBTQ club – need more of these programs and activities
18. Teambuilding activities – where teachers assign the teams so that teams can be more diverse and inclusive
19. Set strong goals and rules, and review regularly
20. How is the district going to roll out programs to all schools? i.e. Summit is not connected to students and parents in the same way as other schools. Students "belonging" is an issue.
21. Teacher / staff connection – some teachers go above and beyond to connect with students. Can the SD create incentives for teachers / staff to connect with students?
22. How we roll programs out – unique environments like Summit

Questions 2: How can we improve children's safety more broadly as a community?
1. More education – events at parks, support from the District of Mission
2. Foundry Program – mental health supports, nutrition education
3. Mission community services looking to submit application for Foundry
4. Mental Health – working with MLAs on expanding community resources, Foundry for Mission. Currently, there is one in Abbotsford and one in Ridge Meadows.
5. Mindset that children are "all of our kids"
6. Collective mindset to care for children – community partners
7. Eliminate the organization silos
8. Work with the professional organizations in the community
9. Police presence where the violence happens – connected with the police
10. Kids are not feeling safe when they out on the playground/ afterschool, etc.
11. Sense of belonging
12. District of Mission to be a part of the conversation
13. It takes a whole community to raise a child – bring more community partners to the table – have them become part of the conversation
14. Mission needs to stand on its own, and stop being viewed as the poor cousin of Abbotsford

Question 3: Where do students feel safe?
1. They feel safe among adults, and safer within the school
2. Students do not feel safe outside of the school building (lunch, recess, before and after school). Need more adults outside with the students
3. When students feel alone, they do not feel safe.

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Breakout Room #4

- Bring back restorative justice that was once part of the district
- Community within schools – what are schools teaching children – conversation continues at home
- Need other adults outside of teachers who make students feel safe
- Embedded curriculum that looks at conflict resolution
- How can we improve safety in Mission schools?
- Rotary played a role in the past: The 4-way test from Rotary:
    1. Is it true?
    2. Is it fair?
    3. Does it build goodwill?
    4. Does it build better relationships?
- Members of the community being part of student wellness activities and information
- Share what is happening with the community
- Seek out the difficult conversations and engage in them in good faith
- Focus on changing hearts, minds, and attitudes
- Define processes for bullying, consequences, and respectful behaviour
- Advocate for students to learn to voice their opinions in a respectful way
- How can we improve safety?
    - Provide tools for communication in the school setting
    - Coaching students how to speak to each other. Help students develop the language surrounding their feelings. Develop empathy and understanding.
    - Improve the role the school takes in facilitating conversations between parents who have children in conflict
    - Focus on areas of schools that students know are hard to monitor
- Are more cameras an option?
- We need to have clear policies and procedures and guidelines in creating safe spaces in schools and in the community
- Bring back conflict resolution courses
    o Some are embedded in the curriculum
    o Look at grade 7 and 9 mental health curriculum
    o Improve counsellor and youth care worker time
    o Work more closely with CYMH
- Use the Open Parachute program more widely in the district
- Focus on developing school-wide strategies for character development
    o Integrity
    o Honesty
    o Respect
    o Kindness
    o Fair play
- Where do students feel safe?
    o In the classroom but not with all classrooms
    o At home for some kids
    o With some principals but not all of them
    o Some other adults at school
    o In groups of their friends

Other comments/information:

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- Teachers, supervisors, and principals need to take a bigger role in connecting with students.
- Parents need to take more responsibility for their kids.
- Schools and parents need to improve communication
- The importance of having strong connections with trusted adults was a theme that came up multiple times
- Focusing on better communication from teachers, and principals with the community.
    - Connect in ways that parents connect
        1. Social media
        2. Emails
- There has been a significant reduction in counselling time, admin time, and other good practices over the last 7 years. Can we bring them back?
- We need to improve the visibility of principals and other adults

Breakout Room #5

- Education
- Public and purposeful conversation – safe spaces for children to talk, communication is deliberate and purposeful – connections – transitions to middle school
- Adults connected to students naturally – want the students to rely on us/ adults and view us as partners
- Okay to talk to an adult
- Issue – massive unsupervised online environment – promote the positive use of social media – have students work with adults
- More opportunities to come together. Communities where you can walk to your neighbourhood school - people walk together. Schools of choice are more disconnected with more people driving.
- How do we facilitate the safe use of social media

Breakout Room #6

- Reps of teachers, parents, DPAC
- Supervision
- Communication – consistent between admin and parents, between teachers and parents - a weekly communication
- Within the school amongst the staff – helpful for teachers to know the needs of the vulnerable students
- New parents do not know where to go – maybe a guidebook – guidelines or steps for when there is an issue at school with their child
- Zero tolerance phrase is overused and outdated
- The difference between bullying and peer conflict
- Consequences for bullying – what are the consequences?
- Positive relationships with their teachers
- Some kids don't feel safe in class due to subtle things that happen behind the teacher's back
- More counsellors in elementary schools

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Comments Post Break Out

- The student to adult connection – can teachers connect with students and include them in these conversations/ forums
- Be the change that walks the walk
- Presence to have admin on the playground during breaks
- Including the students – go to the students who are in the outskirts i.e. Mac's
- Is there another forum scheduled – will it be opened-up to parents/ the public and members of the community
- Valuable exercise – keep the momentum going – a natural part of how we operate for our students and the community
- Round table discussions – have them at individual schools – have Superintendent sit in – gives students a voice