

FINNEYTOWN LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Meeting
Secondary Campus Media Center
February 9, 2023
6:30pm

The Finneytown Board of Education met in special session on Thursday, February 9, 2023, in the Finneytown Secondary Campus Media Center, 8916 Fontainebleau Terrace, Cincinnati, OH 45231. Mr. Gast, Ms. Lee, Mr. Rea, Ms. McMullen, Grant Anderson, and Laurie Banks were present. The President called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

Mr. Rea nominated Lindsay Lee to be Treasurer Pro Tempore.

20-23 Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Ms. Lee, that the Board dispense with the Opening Ceremony and Approval of the Minutes from the Regular Meeting on January 17, 2023. The President declared the motion passed.

Discussion - Pupil instruction required by Ohio Revised Code around school evacuations and securing in the school building due to threats specified in Ohio Revised Code

Mr. Anderson went through the A.L.I.C.E. document provided to the board. We are required to perform 3 safety drills per year, and we are required to provide staff instruction. A.L.I.C.E. is one of 2 primary trainings. Ms. Cheryl Lero Jonson, employed at Xavier in Cincinnati, researches around effectiveness of different approaches. Mr. Anderson has reached out to other districts and all use one of the 2 primary trainings. Most have different approaches for students, however. There is a definite shift between elementary, middle, and secondary schools. Forest Hills provided slides. Mr. Anderson expressed he wants age appropriate training where everyone knows what to do and where to go without creating extra anxiety or trauma. This is highly dependent on age, maturity, and individual needs.

Mr. Gast noted that to be compliant with O.R.C, the threshold is low.

Mr. Anderson clarified that A.L.I.C.E. is not required, it's just the model. What is required is to provide students with instructions to follow. The lessons provided from guidance counselors was not part of the process.

Dr. Banks stated the guidance counselors felt a need for different conversations. They developed lessons and activities. They did not read the whole book. This was shared with Mr. Yeargin. Dr. Banks spoke with the Union president, who appreciated the lessons and practice.

Both Ms. Lee and Mr. Rea shared that staff had expressed a very different opinion, and at least one had said she had emailed Mrs. Baker.

Mr. Gast mentioned that teachers had provided similar training in the past, but it was never uniform; it was always left to the teacher.

Ms. Lee vehemently opposed training students based on the book "I'm not Scared, I'm Prepared", stating it has caused some students to have nightmares, others believe their siblings will be killed, the school is no longer seen as a safe place, parents have cried, and students with high anxiety are struggling with personal fears.

Dr. Banks disagreed, saying we need to prepare our students. If a situation arises, parents will ask why students weren't prepared.

Mr. Rea discussed studying lots of resources. There is no proof that any of the training for students works. There is lots of evidence that the training traumatizes children.

Discussion continued around the value of teaching elementary students based on the A.L.I.C.E. method.

Ms. McMullen discussed that her own children are taught about this at home and will fight.

Discussion regarding what needs to happen began. All agree that we need to teach our staff in the A.L.I.C.E. model. The staff need to know what to do, the students need adults who are calm and direct and know how to respond and talk so everyone understands what to do.

Mr. Anderson is looking at the Run/Hide/Fight model for staff and students.

Ms. McMullen asked are there kid friendly companies we can hire?

Dr. Banks answered MindPeace encourages prep work and providing context for students.

Ms. Lee brought up a suggestion from a parent to hold a parent night where parents are provided the training that their children would receive.

Dr. Banks loved the idea of a parent night.

Mr. Gast clarified what the board has authority to do, stating that if the Board has 3 members who want to prevent this training, they have the authority to make that change.

Mr. Rea discussed there are more than 2 models, but the A.L.I.C.E. model and the Run/Hide/Fight model are the most well-known. Run/Hide/Fight is more individualistic and was developed by the FBI. Mr. Rea is still weighing the definite trauma in the short term against the potential trauma in the long term.

Dr. Banks asked can we meet with the counselors and develop a plan, then go over the plan with the board?

Aligned Board Criteria for any discussion or lessons with students:

- Generic wording on reasons – not mentioning persons/unsafe people and instead say “unsafe situation”.
- Do not teach children under 5th grade anything regarding the “Counter” portion of A.L.I.C.E.
- Guidance counselors will develop a plan for 5th/6th grades

Ms. Lee noted that not all lockdowns are caused by people in the buildings, and teaching this as the context for lockdown drills will create assumptions that won't always be true. An example was given if there was an active shooter 2 blocks away – if the school locks down, we don't want children immediately assuming there is an active shooter in the building.

Mr. Gast expressed a need to understand what will be taught. There are various levels, and the best choice is finding a middle ground where parents are provided context around what will be taught.

Mr. Anderson appreciated the conversation and reminded everyone that we are all invested in keeping our kids safe and we are all there for the right reasons.

Discussion - Communication around the instruction related to school evacuations and securing in the school building due to threats specified in Ohio Revised Code

Aligned Board Criteria for Communication:

- School district needs to communicate at least a week in advance in multiple forms – newsletters, one-call-now, paper flyers, etc.
- School district will provide dates
- School district will provide if there is any practice
- School district will provide a single point of contact for any questions
- All communication will be translated into other languages (Spanish and Nepali)

Mr. Rea discussed other translating services available. Accuracy Now is much more affordable than Affordable Language and is used at the Court House.

Mr. Rea was disappointed in the response to [parent]'s email, stating it felt very dismissive and inappropriate.


Dr. Banks stated that Ms. Baker and she agree the response was short and intended to not be emotional. After reflection, they felt this was a missed opportunity to have a conversation. She will be reaching out to the parent.

21-23 There being no further business, Mr. Rea moved, seconded by Ms. McMullen, to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0. The president declared the meeting adjourned at 7:54 pm.



Tony Gast, President

ATTEST:



Lindsay Lee, Treasurer Pro Tempore