18 May 2017

To: School Committee
From: Steve Rocco, Transportation, Safety and Security Coordinator

RE: School Committee Safety and Security Update 2017

During this past fiscal year, the School Department has continued to make significant progress in enhancing the overall security posture at all our schools.

School Video Surveillance Cameras (VSC): Shrewsbury Public Schools (SPS) has fully installed and integrated an IP based video surveillance system throughout the school district, which was initiated approximately a year and a half ago. These individual and tailored school site systems connect to our Local Area Network (LAN) and can be viewed by authorized users via the ExacqVision software program. Video is archived directly onto the School Department's computer server. If a crime or incident occurs, archived video can be quickly and easily searched by date and location.

The following schools VSC system's were both enhanced (replaced older cameras with new updated cameras) and expanded by adding additional cameras:
- Oak Middle School
- High School

The following schools, which previously had no VSC capability, had cameras installed:
- Parker Road Preschool
- Paton School
- Beal School
- Spring Street School
- Coolidge School
- Floral Street School

A VSC system was installed at Sherwood Middle School as part of that building project.

Overall, IP video surveillance brings many new benefits and capabilities to campus video surveillance. These include everything from easier operation, less expensive installation, and better image quality to automation and improved cost effectiveness. By installing IP video surveillance, schools can both significantly improve their security operations and assure students, parents, and teachers that appropriate measures are in place to enhance their safety.

Standard Response Protocols (SRP): SRP's have been fully integrated and deployed throughout the school district with continuous and varied training involving emergency response based scenarios. The training and associated drills have continued to evolve in complexity and scope (i.e. unannounced drills to both staff and students, Lock Down drills while students are outside the building or classrooms, blocked pathways in order to alter routes and stimulate critical thinking during a fire drill, and incorporating severe weather scenarios in addition to continuous ongoing active shooter and fire drills). A site survey and subsequent evacuation were conducted at the High School in order to identify severe weather "safe" zones located within the school with the assistance of school administrators. On March 28, 2017 a severe weather drill (tornado) was conducted and successfully completed in less than four and a half minutes for approximately two thousand students and staff. As result of the drill, which was the first at the high school, we were able to identify and safely shelter within the school confines all students and staff. Subsequently, the severe weather emergency response protocols and plan for the high school were re-written and put into policy.

Emergency Management Table Top Exercises (TTX's): We continued with emergency management Tabletop Exercises (TTX's) wherein key Police, Fire, Town, and School Department personnel discuss simulated scenarios in an informal setting. This type of exercise can be used to assess plans, policies, and procedures or to assess the protocols and systems needed to guide the prevention of, response to, and recovery from a defined incident. Participants are encouraged to discuss issues in depth and to develop decisions through slow-paced problem solving, rather than the rapid, spontaneous decision making that occurs under actual or simulated emergency conditions. The effectiveness of a TTX is derived from the energetic involvement of participants and their assessment of recommended revisions to current policies, procedures, and plans.

During October 2016, key School Department personnel (Central Office Administrators, Principals and key staff members) were provided emergency management Incident Command System (ICS) training by both fire and police professionals. The overall training objective was to promote school safety by:

1. familiarizing critical School Department designated emergency management personnel with how ICS principles can be applied in school-based incidents.
2. preparing School Department personnel to interface with community response personnel.

During March 2017, a town-wide emergency management TTX exercise was conducted centered around a suspicious white power discovered at the High School.

Participants included the Town Manager, various Town Department Heads, School Department, Police and Fire Departments, and Public Health officials.

During May 2017, the School Department in conjunction Shrewsbury Police and Fire Department conducted a school-centric emergency management TTX. The scenario centered on a severe weather event (tornado) subsequently approaching and impacting a school site.

Building Assessment Team (BAT) Security Survey: The ongoing annual objective of the BAT, which is comprised of members from the School Department, Shrewsbury Police and Fire Departments, and Town Buildings Department is to provide enhanced protection for students and staff by pinpointing high-risk areas in school buildings where potential problems or emergency situations might occur. This may also be known as "Target Hardening". "Target Hardening" refers to strengthening the security of a building, and in this case the various schools, so that it is difficult for an individual(s) to attack. The goal is to increase the time and effort (creating a "Time Barrier") needed to compromise a school facility to the point where a perpetrator will move on to a softer target. The BAT accomplishes this through a "Physical Security Survey" and walk through of each school site location. The survey is a comprehensive, detailed, technical on-site inspection and analysis of the current security and physical protection conditions. As a result, numerous improvements were deployed to include the following samplings: installation of an emergency radio repeater for both police and fire (paid out of town budget), repair or replace classroom door locking mechanisms, provide replacement magnet door locks to numerous school locations in order to expedite the securing of classrooms during an emergency situation, procure additional hand held radios on behalf of school administrators to enhance their overall communications capability, and evaluate the various schools public address systems to ensure they are maintained and in good working order. Parker Road, Coolidge, and Paton schools will need upgraded and or replacement PA systems due to expiring shelf life and or no longer working properly.

The School Department assisted with the communication site survey and vendor selection for the purchase and installation (Town Budget) of an emergency PD/FD radio repeater located within the Sherwood Middle School (SMS) for enhanced radio communications. Prior to the installation, emergency radio communications were sporadic at best ("dead zones").

Training: The School Department, in conjunction with the Shrewsbury Police Department, during February 2017 conducted Active Shooter Training and classroom instruction at the Sherwood Middle School during winter school vacation. Because there is no way of knowing which Police Department employees might be the first to arrive at the scene of an active shooter event, the thought process behind the training was to train all officers in the skills that would be needed to perform

critical tasks. These skills and tasks include immediate assessment of an active shooter scene, room entry techniques, building clearing, building formalization and victim rescue. Active shooter incidents are fundamentally different from hostage situations and other critical incidents, because of the extreme pressure on police to respond as quickly as possible to stop the intruder. Active shooter training is built around the reality that even a one-minute delay in responding may result in multiple additional fatalities.

Additional training and drills pertaining to other emergency type scenarios were conducted to include Lockout, Shelter, Evacuation, and Fire.

The Future of Security and Safety in the School Department: Again, with our eyes focused forward the School Department throughout the year will continue to build upon, improve and refine our security and safety procedures to meet the challenges of ever evolving threats. Continued standardization and institutionalizing our emergency response protocols, communications and equipment, along with training will remain the cornerstones of this program. Enhancement and leveraging technology surrounding the existing school video surveillance systems and capabilities is critical for several reasons. School security cameras help maintain safety around our campus, they also discourage misbehavior, and act as a deterrent. Conspicuously placed school surveillance cameras have been shown to reduce threats of violence and vandalism drastically. Additionally, school security cameras at entrance doors can assist administrative staff in the monitoring of visitors and ensure they are properly signed in, while still allowing students and staff to move freely around the campus.

Lastly and most importantly, we will continue to work with school administrators in support of a robust High School Student Support Team (SST), which consists of school administrators, guidance counselors, psychologists, and students to help proactively prevent violence and or inappropriate behavior in the schools. The efforts of the SST, which meets on a weekly basis, can go a long way toward mitigating the threat of such occurrences. Although not an exact science for predicting school setting violence or adverse behavior, students and staff can take certain actions to reduce these incidents. First, it is critical to understand that these types of behavior do not just happen at random or "out of the blue." Rather, perpetrators usually display some behaviors of concern. Thus, awareness of these indicators and the subsequent implementation of an action plan to de-escalate potentially violent situations and/or unwanted behavioral issues form essential components of a school violence prevention program.