ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Emergency Preparedness & Safety Audit

The information contained herein may be privileged or confidential.

Emergency Preparedness & Safety Audit

Background

- *At the September 2025 School Board Meeting an Emergency Preparedness and Safety Audit was approved and included on the Annual 2025-2026 Audit Plan.*
- *Emergency Preparedness and Safety are considered high risk business functions and place a focus on the importance of having good safety and preparedness measures in place at APS.*

Summary of Findings

Summary of Audit Findings

- The SSEM management team and support staff have the professional skills and knowledge in safety and security applications.
- SSEM management appears to demonstrate a dedication to constantly evaluating the environment for all schools and APS properties for ways to enhance the control environment.
- Continuous efforts are made by SSEM staff to ensure that threat assessment measures are applied throughout the district.
- The department's major goal is to promote a safe and secure environment for all members of the APS community. This includes physical inspections of all school and APS buildings.

Summary of Findings

- There are unannounced visits at the schools to evaluate the safety and security control environments.
- The management team was noted to promote continuing professional education for support staff in best practices for school safety and security measures.
- The SSEM management team has made it a priority to remain aware of State and Federal code requirements for school safety.
- The SSEM management team ensures that the department addresses the needs of special education students.

Summary of Findings

- Training, drills, and related safety practices are not provided at Syphax and Trade Center locations.
- There are gaps in safety, security, and emergency preparedness training for APS school, visitors, and students.
- Use of Raptor is inconsistent across schools and Extended Day.
- There is a need for formal policies and procedures in certain areas (i.e. the Anonymous Threat Reporting line and Orders of Protection) and updates in others.
- The SSEM department lacks sufficient personnel dedicated to regular monitoring and inspections. APS does not have a designated safety response team with clear responsibilities or protocols.

Summary of Findings

- APS should clarify use of key and card access for facilities and identify a single communication system in the event of an emergency.
- It appears that SSEM management is responsive to special educational needs and regulatory requirements and that controls for the transporting of students between portables are adequate but should be continuously evaluated.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Training in emergency preparedness and safety and security for employees located at Syphax and Trades is not provided.

***Recommendation* (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)**

- *The SSEM Director and the Chief of School Support will collaborate and explore options for developing an enhanced training program for all employees. These discussions will include exploring funding options for training staff.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

Drills and related safety practices are not provided at the Syphax and Trade Center locations.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The SSEM management team will begin planning for the development of a drills and safety program for Syphax and Trades Center based employees.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

Safety, security, and emergency preparedness training appear to be inadequate for APS school staff, visitors, and students. Some schools are not using Raptor.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The SSEM management team will revisit training and support for Raptor applications at all schools.*
- *SSEM with support from the Communications Department will ensure that through constant messaging staff members, students and families will be reminded of the important of using Raptor.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

It appears that SSEM management is responsive to parent requests and inquiries regarding special educational needs and regulatory requirements.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *With the support of the Chief of School Support, the SSEM management team will make a continuous effort to stay informed on updated regulations and needs of special education students.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

The Extended Day Program does not use Raptor for visitor management.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The SSEM management team with support from the Chief of School Support will provide training for all Extended Day employees, families, and relevant parties.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

There are no formal policies or procedures covering the Anonymous Threat Reporting Line or the Online Reporting Form.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The SSEM management team with support from the Chief of School Support will prepare standard operating procedures covering the Anonymous Threat Reporting Line and the Online Form.*
- *Discussions will also be held with the Director, Policy and Legislative Affairs to discuss the policy implementation procedures for this subject area.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

The SSEM department lacks personnel that would be dedicated to regular safety and security monitoring, audits, assessments, and inspections of equipment and alarms at the schools.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The Chief of School Support will meet with the Business Officer to explore options a School Safety Audit and Inspections staff member within its operations.*
- *This would align with administrative code § 22.1-279.8. covering School Safety Audits.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

APS maintains a Policy Implementation Procedure covering Workplace Violence, G-2.33 that references Orders of Protection that is outdated (2018) and does not reflect current business practices.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The Chief of School Support and the SSEM management team will meet with the Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs to discuss updating standards for orders of protection*.

Recommendations and Next Steps

APS has both key and card access for all employees and facilities. The programs are not used in unison.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The Chief of School and the SSEM management team will review current key and card access levels to determine where changes may be needed and potential gaps in security protocols*

Recommendations and Next Steps

In the event of a threat or emergency, there is not a single communication system in place that is consistent across the district.

Recommendations: (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The Chief of School Support and the SSEM management team should consider exploring options for a central communications system across the district.*
- *APS should also consider implementing updated public safety radios/cell phones to enhance communication across APS and throughout Arlington County as part of the first net.*
- *First net is a priority cellphone/radio network by AT&T given to first responders, schools, and government entities.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

- APS does not have a designated safety response team with clear responsibilities or protocols.

Recommendations (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *The Chief of School Support and the SSEM management team will consider implementing the creation of a critical incident response team and should document clear designated responsibilities for each team member.*
- *Requirements we will consider include staff with knowledge in crisis prevention, crisis preparedness, crisis response, and crisis recovery.*

Recommendations and Next Steps

Controls for the transporting of students between portables appear to be adequate but should be continuously evaluated for any potential safety gaps.

Recommendations: (Kimberley Graves & SSEM Management Team)

- *It is recommended that student transportation protocols be continuously monitored and updated as needed.*

Questions and Answers

Questions?

Thank you!