

Chippewa Valley to hold security tele-town hall Tuesday



Chippewa Valley Schools Superintendent Ron Roberts will be one of the tele-town hall speakers for the Chippewa Valley Schools district on June 19. Photo courtesy of CHIPPEWA VALLEY SCHOOLS

By Nicole Tuttle, For **The Macomb Daily**

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Beth Pyden, the board of education president for Chippewa Valley Schools, will be one of the tele-town hall speakers for the district on June 19. Photo courtesy of CHIPPEWA VALLEY SCHOOLS

In the wake of an increase in school threats after the Parkland, Florida school shooting, Chippewa Valley Schools is planning to start the summer off with a re-examination of school safety.

Last month, the Chippewa Valley Board of Education heard a presentation on school security from Brian Smilnak, a security consultant and architect for Wakely Associates, Inc., who provided an analysis of its buildings.

Officials announced on June 12 that a security analysis showed the district needed to do more to prepare for possible new school threats though the same assessment concluded the school system is doing well with security and safety best practices.

“Keeping students safe has never been more important, and our top priority at Chippewa Valley Schools is the safety of our students, staff and families,” Superintendent Ron Roberts said. “While our district has tried to keep

pace with best practices for safety, the nature of school safety continues to evolve and our district must continue to adapt.”

Smilnak encouraged district stakeholders to become involved in the discussion.

The district will host a tele-town hall Tuesday at 7 p.m. to get public input on school safety. District families that have their phone numbers on file with Chippewa Valley Schools will receive a phone call asking them to participate. Speakers including Roberts, Smilnak Chippewa Valley Schools Board of Education President Beth Pyden and Macomb County Sheriff Anthony Wickersham will discuss school security and answer questions.

“The tele-town hall gives us an opportunity to connect with community members from the comfort of their own homes,” Director of School and Community Relations Diane Blain said.

Those who want to be contacted but are unsure if the district has their phone number can email it to dblain@cvs.k12.mi.us to become part of the call list.

The district is also planning to conduct in person town hall meetings on the topic of school safety in the next few months. Blain listed some of the things that the district currently does in the interest of student safety:

- Perimeter doors are locked at school after students have entered for the day.
- All employees have ID badges as part of a card access system to enter and move through buildings. Also, all classrooms have phones.
- Visitors must use the main entrance door and are screened by staff before entering buildings. Building visitors are also assisted by school personnel.
- Staff members monitor hallways and security system cameras monitor the interior and exterior of school buildings.
- At the high school level police liaison offers are available and the district has added more security guards at the high schools this school year.
- Student assistance and intervention specialists are available to work with students. The district also has social workers and counselors.
- Students and school staff participate in regular drills for fire, weather and school emergencies and lockdown procedures.
- School volunteers and staff undergo background checks