

Chippewa Valley maps out emergency plans

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By Nicole Tuttle
Voice Reporter



Jim Crowley of Clark Hill PLC gave the Chippewa Valley Board of Education additional information regarding its refunding bonds on April 13. (Photos by NICOLE TUTTLE)

Chippewa Valley teachers won't have to hunt through their desks to find the emergency preparedness plan in the event of an emergency, as it is now available on tablets and smart phones.

On April 13, Chippewa Valley Supervisor of Certified Services, Human Resources Dawn Leone made a presentation on emergency preparedness in the district to the school board.

"It was maybe a few months ago that the board expressed interest in understanding how our district prepares for any type of building emergency," Superintendent Ron Roberts said. "We have Dawn Leone and Dawn has been a liaison with the county agencies and our buildings in order to develop plans."

Chippewa Valley Schools has emergency plans consistent among all of the district's buildings, said Leone.

"This is required by the county. Peter Locke with the Macomb County Emergency Management Aid came out and provided training to all of our administrators at the start of the school year," Leone said. "He is a specially trained individual from Homeland Security, and he got together with a committee of individuals and they devised this countywide plan. So no matter what school building staff would go to, so if you have a substitute teacher that you know travels to the other districts, every district and every building has the same plan."

The plans contain staff and student emergency contact information, emergency staging locations and procedures for different types of emergencies, she said.

"There is a procedural checklist in there, drill schedules are to be contained in there, all the school maps. Each school building has their map in there and there are student and staff rosters. There are also communication forms just to help administrators if there is an emergency to have standard guidelines on how to communicate. Student accountability and student release forms, status reports on different types of emergency situations, and also there are role responsibility descriptions in the back. So those that are designated as certain emergency officials, know what their role and responsibilities are in the various emergency situations," Leone said.

Emergency plans will be reviewed annually by the county and the district to determine effectiveness and potential need for revisions.

Leone said that Locke has offered to come to district buildings, and some buildings have asked him to visit to review things such as emergency signage, door exits and maps or to do additional training.

“Other buildings have just taken it upon themselves to devise their own training and educate their staff on the plan,” Leone said.

An internal and secure web page is being developed for all of the Chippewa Valley Schools district’s building plans, so that staff will have access from electronic devices.

Leone said legislative changes have affected some emergency preparedness plans in the district.

“There is the Public Act 12 and this is effective July 1, 2014, which modified some of our existing drill schedules. So our fire drills went from six drills required by law to five. Lockdowns increased from two to three and tornado drills remained the same at two,” Leone said. “The law also stipulates when we have to have certain drills. There are certain times of the year. The deadline for example, tornado drills, you need to have done by March 3.”

Also required is that all of the district’s school buildings post all drill schedules on a website.

“We also have to submit the drill schedules to the Macomb County coordinator by Nov. 15 of every year. This public act also requires as of this school year, each of our school buildings to initiate a cardiac response team,” Leone said.

Each building in the district has designated individuals to be particularly trained in CPR and in administering medication for those that suffer from seizures.

“The majority of our buildings had an overwhelming response of individuals wanting to do this. So minimally every building has five, most of those have way more than five individuals to do this,” Leone said.

Leone also said that although annual drills are not required by law, these have been instituted in the district.

“We felt it was very important for our staff that have been trained to stay on top of that training. So annually we do require emergency response teams to have a drill and then training will be ongoing,” Leone said. “Their certification is good for two years, so every two years those individuals will be retrained. And as individuals move in and out of the building, we will train new individuals to be trained on those teams.”

Public Act 451 requires every K-12 building to have a minimum of two EpiPens at each school, Leone noted.

“The primary purpose for this legislation was because we have EpiPens on staff for those individuals that have known allergies, but there are not EpiPens on hand for those with unknown allergies. So that is the primary purpose for this legislation, are for those with unknown allergies,” Leone said. “We have EpiPens available to those individuals. The law requires that at least two individuals at each building be trained in administering EpiPens. We have more than two at all of our buildings that are trained, primarily the office staff and health aides that have been trained in the EpiPen.

“And then in addition to that, it required any time we use an EpiPen, whether it is one that is prescribed or one of the two that we are now mandated to have on hand, they are to report that to the human resources department, which in turn would report that to the state.”

Board approves refunding bonds

The Chippewa Valley School Board also approved a bond resolution authorizing the issuance by the district of

its 2015 refunding bonds on April 13. The action was taken in order to refund or refinance all or a portion of the district's outstanding 2005 refunding bonds, 2010 school building and site bonds series B, and its loans under the Michigan School Bond Loan Fund, said Chippewa Valley Assistant Superintendent for Business and Operations Scott Sederlund.

He said an estimate prepared by the district's financial advisors show that refunding the 2005 bonds and 2010 bonds and loans could result in a potential savings to taxpayers of about \$23 million.

"The potential savings exists because current interest rates are lower than the interest rates on the 2005 bonds, 2010 bonds and the loans that are under the Michigan School Bond Loan Fund," he said. "Adoption of the resolution authorizes proceeding with the sale and issuance of the 2015 refunding bonds if determined to be in the best interest of the school district."

The board also approved a motion for contracts of telecommunications services from Windstream, rejecting the previously awarded contracts to Wow. Sederlund said that this was due to the discovery that Wow could service only half of the district.

Nicole Tuttle is a freelance reporter. She can be contacted at ntuttle.reporter@sbcglobal.net.