

Ohio School Safety Center

Newsletter
Winter 2020-2021

Best Practices Spotlight

Logan-Hocking Local School District Awarded Grants for School Safety

With budgets remaining tight for Ohio's K-12 schools, one school district has diversified their safety related funds by applying for federal and state grant opportunities. This grant-funded approach has enabled this district to expand their safety and security features without taking away from other programs.

The Logan-Hocking Local School District has been the recipient of several grants including the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) School Safety and Security Grant Program, the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) Grant and two (2) Ohio Attorney General School Safety Training Grants. The district's interest in grants began several years ago during a flurry of school shootings. The school administration explored ways to increase the safety of their facilities for their students and staff and found great community support for their goal. A Community Safety Forum consisting of school personnel, first responders and community members was formed to explore ways to increase safety, in the schools and in the community. The district started their work by placing a school resource officer (SRO) in every school building but wanted to do more.

The **\$40,000 BWC Grant** required a 33% match by the district. The grant allowed them to install safety film on the windows and doors of all of their buildings.

The **\$375,000 COPS Grant** required a \$125,000 match and was used in cooperation with the county commissioners to upgrade the phone system, install security cameras and access controls systems in all the buildings, and purchase a repeater for one of the elementary schools. Being located in a valley, the building was unable to get a signal to first responders using MARCS radios until the repeater was installed. The lack of signal was discovered during a drill and became a priority to resolve.

The two **Attorney General Grants** were used to train SROs in the use of biometrics and hand-held metal detectors, and to label all doors and windows to facilitate first responder response.

When asked to describe the application process, it was called a "labor of love," that is sometimes challenging and intense. Logan-Hocking has one person dedicated to completing the grant applications. When applying for the COPS Grant, a grant writer was brought in for 3 weeks to assist.

The district continues to meet weekly with representatives of the local police department, the Sheriff's office and EMS and has found this invaluable, especially during COVID. They emphasized how critical it is to have strong relationships with local first responders. Superintendent Bainter described this as a "win-win" for the schools and community. He noted, "As the schools have become safer, so has the community." The community involvement has paid off in many ways, including the purchase of a drug dog for their district. "Tiger," a Labrador retriever, stationed at an elementary school with his SRO handler and is loved by all. His purchase was sponsored by the local Moose Lodge.



The district SROs continue to fill many roles. They are instrumental in preparing students for participation in drills and exercises, alerting them to what is going to happen and explaining the roles of the first responders. The school leaders, first responders and students all participate in the debriefing or "hot wash" that follows. SROs also interact daily with students, having fun and assisting them in unexpected ways like opening milk cartons during lunch. Building relationships with students has removed barriers to communication and made the officers approachable.

High school students have even sought out the SROs to report concerning activities and community members have contacted them on various occasions for support. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a grandmother contacted the school because she was unable to motivate her grandson. An SRO visited the student using the appropriate social distancing and safety precautions and was able to get them back on track. SROs have been packing and delivering care packages and student assignments during the shut-down, and making wellness checks to ensure no student goes without contact for more than a couple of days.

To find out more about how the Logan-Hocking Local School District has used these funds, reach out to the below contacts.

Superintendent Monte Bainter, Safety Director Andy Rice, SRO Ross Cowgill

Send inquiries to: mbainter@lhsd.k12.oh.us or arice@lhsd.k12.oh.us or call 740 385-8517

Do you want to have your school featured in the next Ohio School Safety Center Newsletter? Do you have a best practice to share with other K-12 schools or institutions of higher education?

Send an email to OhioSchoolSafetyCenter@dps.ohio.gov with your school's information and program details that you would like to feature. We will reach out to get additional details and help you share your story.