

Audit and Risk Management Advisory Committee
Jefferson County Public Schools
March 1, 2023
First Floor Conference Room

ARMAC Members Present: Chairperson James Rose, Co-Chairperson Rhonda Mitchell, Pedro Bryant, and Dr. Eric Russ

JCPS Staff Present: Dr. Katy DeFerrari, Dr. Chris Perkins, Dr. Dena Dossett, Jodell Renn and Shari Mattingly

Board Members Present: none

Public Present: none

Chair Rose called the meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Advisory Committee (ARMAC) to order at 2:15 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Rose requested a motion to accept the minutes of the November 3, 2022 meeting, which was made by Co-Chair Mitchell and seconded by Pedro Bryant. The minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Chair Rose introduced the newest member of the committee, Dr. Eric Russ, who gave an overview of his background and experience. All other committee members introduced themselves and backgrounds. Chair Rose reviewed the topics for the meeting and explained ARMAC's role as a committee.

Update on Start Smart proposal – Dr. Chris Perkins, Chief Operating Officer

Dr. Perkins discussed the proposed Start Smart plan which would change school start times and help address a critical bus driver shortage, and ensure all students get to school on time.

The committee discussed student walking times, bus monitors and optimizing efficiencies by reducing/ consolidating bus stops. Another topic was how to increase interest in the job of bus driving. The District provides training for drivers to obtain their required CDL license. Concern was expressed that drivers may obtain their license through JCPS and then leave to earn higher wages somewhere else. One suggestion to increase driver retention might be to offer tuition reimbursement; another could be requiring drivers to commit to working for a designated time as a condition of receiving their training.

Student school transfers and the adjustments required to keep them in their current schools was discussed, as well as the impact of community stake holders. The District is receiving feedback through the Community Forum and on the Start Smart website. Chair Rose inquired about getting all high school students to a later start time and what difficulties this may present. This will need to be evaluated every year. The District needs to consider if additional drivers will be needed, along with new school openings, changes to population, etc. They don't find that student drivers have much impact on decreasing the number of high school bus riders.

The Committee expressed their appreciation to Dr. Perkins and his team for their work on the proposed plan. The JCBE is expected to vote on the Start Smart proposal in March 2023.

School Safety Plan – Dr. Katy DeFerrari, Chief of Staff

Dr. DeFerrari reviewed the Student Safety Plan and the resources dedicated to increasing safety in schools. These include implementation of a Safety Administrator (SA), School Safety Officer (SSO) and JCPS Police Department, new Violence Prevention Team, along with community collaboration efforts and new grant opportunities.

Safety Administrators will be the prime resource available to students and will receive substantial training along with ongoing annual training. The manager of Safety Administrator Support, B. J. Ritter, will provide support to the SA's and ensure that they are kept on track and not being diverted to fill other staffing needs within schools. Support for any student depends on the type of need they require. There is now an online tool being used that makes sharing with the team easier.

The Violence Prevention Team will provide the unique services that are required for students found with guns. These include engagement with the student and their families, coordinating and aligning with mental health services, and providing access to adult services for parents. A five-year federal grant of \$3M titled Project PREVENT has been received and will allow for expansion of the current pilot with VOA.

The SSO implementation is getting close to being fully staffed and will provide proactive and responsive professional security and law enforcement services. Minimizing disruption of the education process will promote safe learning environments for students.

Research is being conducted to provide a proposal on Weapons Detection Systems, as the Board has requested. An AI system is currently being considered but is not for metal detection. It works by looking for particular shapes and will not catch everything, knives for example. And a student coming to school with the intention to cause harm with a gun may not be discovered with this system. However, in districts that use it, there has been a major reduction of gun incidents.

Council of the Great City Schools Update – Dr. Dena Dossett, Chief of Accountability, Research and Systems Improvement

Dr. Dossett presented an overview of the contract the JCBE has signed with the Council of the Great City Schools to provide professional services to assist with district governance. This will be a valuable resource to the District as they provide board training and coaching for student focused outcomes, based around what a public school system is designed to produce, which is productive citizens.

CGCS will work not only with the board members but also District management to set up goals and guardrails, and quarterly self-assessments will be conducted. Chair Rose inquired how this model can be sustained with board member terms/elections and being replaced by new members every four years.

Dr. Dossett stated that the model allows for sustainability with this training. Districts in other states that have received this training have seen twice as much growth and proficiency. The contract will run from February 28, 2023 through February 27, 2025.

Internal Audit Update – Jodell Renn, Director of Internal Audit

Ms. Renn's presentation was postponed due to time constraints and will added to the next ARMAC meeting agenda.

New Business

Co-chair Rose asked the committee to think about where ARMAC can provide the most value to the Board. Ms. Renn will reach out to Dr. Russ to set-up time for onboarding to the committee.

Adjournment

Chair Rose made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Dr. Russ seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.