

TSSTF Executive Summary of Actions Taken

The Town and School Safety Task force was created on August 28th, 2018, in the wake of the Parkland shooting tragedy to assess the safety of our school and town facilities and make recommendations to bring our safety levels up to best practice.

The committee recognized early that we needed to look broadly at the risks faced by our students, staff, families and residents and consider wellness beyond physical safety against an intruder. Many of our residents face threats of domestic violence, addiction and self-harm and comprehensive safety required focus on these areas as well.

To perform this work we solicited outside expertise both on physical security and threat assessment and on wellness.

For the physical security assessment we retained [Guidepost](#), a consultancy with extensive experience in school safety. Working closely with our school personnel, public safety leaders and town staff, a comprehensive assessment was created that highlighted several critical areas:

- Emergency communication
- Exterior access control to manage access to facilities
- Interior access control to manage an intruder event with minimum harm

These recommendations have been addressed by Westford in the following capital appropriations approved at Town Meeting:

- \$108,000 - STM 2019 - Communication equipment for various schools (Phase 2 of 4 Phones at Abbot, Nabnasset, Robinson)
 - Phase 1 was completed under a previous allocation for TSSTF
 - Fiber connection to miller was also completed under this initial allocation TSSTF
- \$245,000 - STM 2020 - First responder communication upgrade in various schools (Bi-Directional Amplifier at Westford Academy and Nabnasset)
- \$150,000 - ATM 2020 - Communication equipment for various schools (Phase 3 of 4 Phones at Crisafulli, Miller, Stony Brook)
 - Phase 4 is the town phones.
- \$570,000 - ATM 2020 - Exterior access control for all buildings to harden exterior access into the buildings to redo the hard key system.
- \$110,000 - ATM 2020 - Portable two-way radios, to increase and create a secondary means of communication to include the ability to communicate directly with first responders.

At this point the emergency communication upgrades are largely complete, the exterior access control is being piloted at Westford Academy and the interior access control will be the subject of a future appropriation request.

For the wellness assessment, we retained [Health Management Associates](#), a consultancy with extensive experience in wellness assessment. Their recommendations have informed the options we are now presenting to the community for consideration.

At this time we are also considering the recommendations of Guidepost that we add three additional School Resource Officers to both provide training in safety and incidence response and early intervention in risky behavior.

Once we have received community input, the TSSTF will make recommendations to the Select Board and School Committee regarding additional programming and staffing to ensure we are giving the right level of focus and support to wellness in Westford. These recommendations will inform future budgeting decisions for the town of Westford.

Other related documents and resources can be found at the [Town and School Safety](#) web page.