

**Summary Information from “Making Your Dayton Metro Libraries Safe: A Community Conversation”  
Held at the Main Library, Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6 pm**

DML= Dayton Metro Library

DPS= Dayton Public Schools

DPD= Dayton Police Department

Italics= Public Comment

**I. Submitted Online**

**Question:** Why was this date and location selected for this conversation?

**Response:**

- DML-This is the largest space available in the system and we wanted to be sure to accommodate as many people as possible. We wanted to make sure we addressed this issue as soon as possible.

**Question:** Some solutions seem obvious but have not been implemented. Why are these commonly suggested solutions not feasible? (i.e., blocking all teens, requiring teens be accompanied by an adult or show ID, only letting students participating in programming in the building, calling parents/guardians after an incident, hiring a police officer to be present after school, [DPS] providing yellow bus transportation, letting students stay in the school building after school, staggering bell schedules to lessen the number of students moving at once)

**Response:**

- DPS – this meeting is long overdue. We have had meetings behind closed doors but never a public conversation to get feedback. WE have done some version of all these solutions, including something called an “activity bus” that would take kids home after activities at 7 or so at night. Looking for tech- based solutions to keep students safe. Apologize for unacceptable behavior on behalf of the school system. It should not happen – no one should feel unsafe in public spaces.
- DML – nice to be here with partners, working together. Closing was not our first option, we want to stay open, safe, and available for everyone – do not discriminate even based on age, so that is why we cannot impose certain restrictions on teens. 99% of teens who come in are wonderful, good kids, despite some of the shocking and awful incidents that have happened. We have lots of programs, they will do homework, play games, hang out with friends. A few folks are causing a problem for others.

**Question:** Please describe the programming opportunities available for youth in the after-school hours?

**Response:**

- DML- At the Library, so many. Homework Help every afternoon at many locations including SE, partnering with CHA for afterschool snacks once building reopens, Visible & Resilient, Dayton Municipal Court, Teen job fair created by SE staff, Kite Club, STEM/STEAM programs, Drama club

- DPS- is a \$440 million enterprise. Comprehensive after school sports program, 45 sports year-round. Number of activities and clubs after school. Motto used to be “7 to 7”. Have opportunities for students, comprehensive space from 7am through 7pm. Diagnose the problem and assess where students are. What do they want to be doing? Needs to meet the needs of the children involved. We need to see more students, especially at events like this. Workforce dev training, paid internships.

**Question:** Please share what partnerships have been explored or created so far?

**Response:**

- DML - DPS/DPD - SROs after school, police coming through buildings and in parking lots. Pizza with the Police – to help people feel more comfortable with the police. WSU and focus groups, goal may have been to get students thinking about college and potentially attending WSU, but also gather info on the interests of the teens and what they want. Teen Advisory Boards at some branches that can give input, plan programs, and bring peers in.
- DPS – Omega works closely at Thurgood, EJ, Fairview. Would like to do more, other partners want to do more, but they are limited in terms of bus drivers and transportation. Cannot take kids to daycares, cannot transport all students. However it is still incumbent on us to make sure they are safe and that citizens are as well. Often students who disenroll say they want to be in a safe situation. Overtime for Chief Wright and his team is Est \$37,000 per month, half million per year.
- DPS transportation – all schools generally release conflicts with athletics trips. Extremely busy from 3-4 pm. If charter school students didn’t have to be transported, DPS could transport all their own students. Will require legislative support to change that law.

**Question:** What has been done to seek youth feedback or input on “what to do with the teens”? And, [For DPS] What avenues have been explored with RTA to modify the bus schedule to transport students more effectively? Please share what best practices have been explored or what consultation has been done with other urban libraries? [Same question to DPS re: other urban districts in Ohio]

**Response:**

- DML-Belong to peer library groups – in OH, meet every other week or once a month to talk. Share situation with those groups and nationally with the Urban Library Council, usually the response is “wow, you have so many teens! How do we do that?” Many around the country are looking to us to see what we do. Similar responses – afternoon programming, partnerships esp with local schools and police.
- DPS – used to be limited-service bus or restricted bus service through RTA. About 70% students when surveyed appreciate the bus passes because it allows them to get to work, and many of

them must be able to work in order to provide for themselves. We are glad that the passes are full service to help transport them to school and work.

**Question:** What limitations are there on staffing, and what is being done to support staff at Southeast or Main with these incidents?

**Response:**

- DML – staffing is limited, but we make sure everyone is out on the floor during the after-school period. Many staff who aren't regular public services staff come out of their offices to support staff on the floor. Additional support visits Southeast to provide extra support for the teens. We have an EAP program, and HR is active in checking in with folks after incidents, additional counseling support to help process incidents. Safety and Protective Services dept that tries to be proactive in training folks on how to keep themselves and others safe in advance.

**Question:** What are the next steps? When will the Southeast branch reopen with full hours?

**Response:**

- DML- Slow roll back. Nov 4<sup>th</sup> will restore some hours – closed 2:30-4, then by end of year 12/23 come back to full hours. Going forward the hope is to keep it open

## II. Audience Questions/Comments During the Event

- *60 years ago, we used to come downtown to shop at Rikes. My parents knew that I was responsible. Things have changed but maybe to go forward you need to go backwards. The more that is done, the worse it gets. Parents need to instill discipline earlier. Common sense, go back to trusting kids and have them disciplined.*

**Response:**

DPS- students often go home to a place where moral values or discipline isn't taught. Create familial environments at the school to try to teach them how to engage and deal with conflict

- *My children go to the SE branch for afterschool while I am at work in Trotwood. Personally challenging. People have been quick to blame the library, school, RTA. Need to make the conversation bigger. Vandalia library is as close to a school but doesn't have the same results. Needs to be a countywide conversation to drive more solutions*

**Response:**

DML- It was intentional to put libraries near schools.

DPS- Appreciate nuanced stance of the complexity of the solution. Used to be 66,000 students in DPS before charter schools were opened in the 90's. Demise of major cities leads to situations that are seen in Dayton.

DPD – point out the large group home population in the city. City and PD have been working to take care of it. Kids are not in their homes, have been marginalized and are having issues. Prioritize and identify solutions. Holistic approach

- *If the library intends to bring an increased police presence, are there concerns about how that might make some students feel unsafe? What can police do to gain students' trust.*

**Response:**

DPD would love to have visibility and presence everywhere. Staffing realities. We work to build relationships with teens – different programs, led by Officer Tony Murphy and Community Engagement. Build dialogue, dialogue and understanding builds trust.

DML – we want to be a community, not just for parents or library users. We want to be welcoming, one piece is being open and safe for everyone, ex Pizza with the Police. Get young people and police together to have a positive experience before fear or a negative perspective.

DPD- Need to hear more specifics to make crisis better, to make southeast a safe welcoming environment. Feels like we are trying to run a library in a busy bus terminal. Permanent changes to architecture, landscaping, etc. to make it less attractive as a cut through.

DML- Hoping to have more working group conversations after this session. Reach out with more detailed solutions

DPD- SROs at the library, principal Smith is often at the library. Invite more thoughts and ideas. Using this time-out/closure to create a safety plan. Trying to prioritize getting kids on buses as soon as possible. We have a violence issue in the community. 450+million weapons in this nation, simply a derivative of that issue here.

- *Dream Builders program, all are welcome. Athletes in Action, other groups, happy to help anytime. On the West side.*
- *Part of the problem of busing is the charter buses. When we took prayer out of school a lot of other stuff came in. Community businesses are ready to roll up their sleeves. We at DML are ready to do what we need to do, but we need partners to be part of the solution.*

**Response:**

DPS – had a meeting with ~30 clergy. We need to get people aligned and moving in the same direction. Assets, people, and purpose are here but we need to get moving in the right direction.

- *Chris Lockett runs a program Network and Chill to help with K-8 kids, help develop their dreams.*
- *Who has the final call on what decisions will be made in public spaces in Dayton? How is advertising happening for existing programs? Need to expand budget for these programs.*

**Response:**

DPS – community has the final say. How we pull our resources is critical. Develop an action plan to address needs and concerns. Taking place at a micro level with the schools under Omega’s partnerships.

DML – different space have different purposes but a common interest. Marketing happens via social media, schools, website. Expensive to do big media promotions, have to be thoughtful when we leverage those.

- *Staff concerns for personal safety. Service or action available if there is a student with a discipline action – they come back after a 7- or 30-day ban and probably have the same problem. Is there a bigger response for repetitive behavior, or a counseling option.*

**Response:**

DML – we have different processes for someone who breaks a library rule “banning” up to 30 days. Criminal acts result in trespassing – working closely with police. Cannot know if people are going to come back while trespassing. Partnership with Goodwill Easter Seals for peer support – help when patrons have issues outside the scope of a library staff member.

DPS – get notified, video footage, or photos. Students can be suspended for 10 days up to remainder of school year. Life Coaches conduct re-entry circles to work on the social emotional why of the behavior. School does have jurisdiction even outside school building and can respond.

- *Omega has capacity to serve more students and works closely with youth and be stewards for them. Need to get more community partners involved.*
- *There are good kids, even great kids. Suggestion – hold the kids accountable. Can you take their school ID when they walk in.*

**Response:**

DPD – school staff are invaluable in identifying students outside the schools.

- *Frustrating to be reactive instead of proactive. What about the library staff? These incidents are a regular occurrence and branch staff voices aren’t heard. Give them a greater voice in these forums.*

**Response:**

DML – we have had multiple staff meetings. We have made a lot of changes based on staff feedback such as rearranging furniture. WE do keep trying different things, including zero tolerance policy. Ultimately goal is to be open for all.

- *Old Main did not feel very welcoming. Did we have the same problems in the old building, or is there something about the new buildings being more welcoming that has instigated this?*

**Response:**

We have definitely seen more teens but most of them are really good kids. Over the last 3 or so years has been the real influx.

- *I hear a lot about alignment, but this is a good time for transparency. We need to focus on our young people. When are the library board meetings? There could be the opportunity to speak there.*

**Response:**

DML board meets 3<sup>rd</sup> weds. We do have a strategic plan, Youth Services is a big pillar of that plan

*This conversation should happen on a cadence. Community partners need to come together and work outside our silos, putting the resources together for the youth of our community.*

*Could you publish who to contact so that we can consolidate efforts. Librarians at SE do not see it as a problem, they see it as an opportunity.*

*Is there an advocacy effort around transportation and how to support it? What would you want to see from an organization that wants to support?*

**Response:**

DPS – legislative. Advocacy drives policy, policy changes the framework of the services we provide. Engage local and state politicians. We need to advocate for us. Have conversations when you see students in the community. Check your assumptions about what the students can or will do. Lose the fear factor. Establish relationships. These are our kids and we all need to work together and engage them in dialogue.

*Mr. Smith DPS Board president – when we have the issues, we have to understand what got us here. I went to the library to look at encyclopedias but now the libraries are the rec centers because we do not have those spaces anymore. We need to say why do kids do this at all, how are we as adults teaching them how to conduct themselves. They are doing what they see adults doing. We must provide the future our kids deserve. What are we doing to do better for our city?*

**Response:**

DML – one group probably can't step up. But so many groups have a piece of the puzzle, need to pull them together

DPD – need the support of the community, get guidance and direction from community about where they want the police to go