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Plum council approves more spending for school district safety improvements



MICHAEL DIVITTORIO  (<https://twitter.com/mikejdivittorio>) | Wednesday, Jan. 16, 2019, 12:51 p.m.



More Plum School District security upgrades will be paid for through a borough donation.

Borough officials last year approved a [\\$160,000 gift](https://triblive.com/local/plum/14313592-74/plum-council-to-donate-160000-toward-school-district-security-efforts) (<https://triblive.com/local/plum/14313592-74/plum-council-to-donate-160000-toward-school-district-security-efforts>) toward cyber security, facility upgrades and other initiatives designed to keep Plum students safe.

Council unanimously voted Jan. 14 to increase its contribution by approximately \$50,000 to help pay for a new security vestibule at the high school.

Funds would be taken from the borough's reserve funds and not impact this year's budget.

"We've got a great team up here and all we do is run surpluses," council President Mike Doyle said. "We're all in the same community. We're all in the same tax base. This was a no-brainer and we're thrilled to be able to do it."

Doyle said he wanted to do something to help improve district security following the February shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., where a gunman killed 17 people including students and staff.

The vestibule and other safety upgrades to be funded by the donation came from a facilities and security assessment conducted by California-based Bay Area Risk Management last year.

Superintendent Brendan Hyland said three vestibule plans are up for consideration by the board this month. The project can be put out for bid once one is chosen.

Hyland, school board Vice President Vicky Roessler and board member Sue Caldwell were at the council meeting to thank the borough for their previous commitment, and were pleasantly surprised to hear the latest development.

"We really would like to thank council in stepping forward and assisting us financially and otherwise being able to work to remedy some of these safety concerns," Caldwell said. "We all know with the nationwide crisis, as it moves on with individuals attacking students, that we have to be very aware like we never were in the past to protect our students' safety."

The district purchased software for student devices so parents can monitor their activity and ensure their focus is on academic activities. There are also plans to buy bollards (posts) and fencing for safety at all five schools.

Hyland said the increased borough contribution is another example of council and administrators looking out for Plum families.

"We all work and live in the same community," he said. "When we can work together as we are right now, I think it's important to recognize that and just come and say thank you."

Michael DiVittorio is a Tribune-Review staff writer. You can contact Michael at 412-871-2367, mdivittorio@tribweb.com or via Twitter @MikeJdiVittorio.

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