

**September 2022 BRIEFING FOR VIBE:
STANDING COMMITTEE MONTHLY REPORT ON
SCHOOL PLANTS AND FACILITIES**

PURPOSE

This brief aims to inform the 20th VI Board of Education of updates on the actions of the standing School Plants & Facilities committee during September. As the briefing is critical of the board's initiatives, the committee may receive questions from the Whole Board.

CURRENT SITUATION

In September, the Standing Committee on School Plants and Facilities held its monthly meeting with the VI Fire department to unfold the reports submitted in the 2022 School Management Accountability Report (SMAR). The purpose is to understand better VIFD's role in public school plants and facilities safety and monitoring.

The members in attendance approvingly support the entire board connecting and unfolding the various outside agencies' role in the SMAR, the VIBE's need for support, and addressing school safety concerns. Participating members highlighted ways VIFD can align with VIBE's approach by including the board when reporting on safety, drills, and school site infractions. The meeting agenda (Attached) confirms the committee's aim to ensure a systemizing reporting process while building a more accountable maintenance system. September meeting shows the committee's diligence in connecting the school structures, administration, and guidance division to the operation process of all mandated agencies and the work of the VIBE. The committee meeting established a quorum at 5:05 pm; members had no voting matters arise.

BACKGROUND

The SPF committee held a meeting on September 15, 2022. The meeting was chaired by Emmanuella Perez-Cassius and attended by committee members Nandi Sekou and Winona Hendricks and VIBE members Jennette Smith Barry, Terrance Joseph, and Kyza Callwood. A quorum was established at 5:05 pm, and the meeting began at 5:06 pm. While recognizing education and government sector responsibilities, the SPF Committee accepts the board's three main areas clearly defined by the law: Administration, Guidance division, School Plants, and Facilities maintenance. The single matter on the agenda was a presentation by the VIFD to understand the role and how to align with public school plants and the board's annual SMAR.

Members in attendance shared input in areas of school safety plans, the conducting of fire drills, responsible parties, and reporting processes. Other inquiries included The National Fire Protection Associations' rules and guidelines that govern school safety, VIFD annual training safety guidelines and procedure training for district and school leadership, and needed CPR certification-mandated legislation. The committee invited Director Antonio Stevens on July 15, 2022, after both agencies testified on the senate floor about our 2022 SMAR. The invitation request to the agency includes a short presentation on the VIFD role. The participants addressed communication challenges between the VIBE and the VIFD. Both agencies agreed inspections and reporting are missing cross-sector engagement often. Voided areas such as reports being submitted solely to VIDE, and VIBE must make a written request to access VIFD school findings at the end of each year. Based on the VI code, both agencies are equally responsible for the management and safety of school site maintenance. Director Stevens assured the committee he would work to ensure language is included in the VIFD reporting process and that reports are submitted to VIBE and VIDE simultaneously. This approach will ensure the committee can regularly monitor infractions and safety incidents and follow up during Board walkthroughs. After completing the standard walkthrough checklist, the committee agrees to create a standard of operation for monitoring and reporting School Plant and Facilities safety incidents, which is essential for informed reporting. The aim is to enhance the safety of schools and their occupants and encourage all mandated agencies to maintain a standard.

Follow-up matters:

- VIFD inspection is based on NFPA rules & regulations; however, VIDE and VIBE need training in NFPA guidelines.
- School annual safety plans approval and testing
- A proposed legislation by Senator Kenny Gittens on CPR
- School Fire Drill observation and process
- School Sprinkler systems repairs/upkeep/updated to meet national regulations
- No current written policy or law-making school safety plans accessible to the public

Standard Operation Suggestion:

- Committee standing meeting calendar, including quarterly check-in with VIFD
- VIFD and the SPF committee create SOP for future monitoring and reporting
- Update and standardize the Fire Drill process, including responsibility and timeline

- Standardize a walkthrough plan to include timeline and agency responsibilities

Committee members in attendance recommended facilitating other agencies' presentations before beginning the VIBE official planning phase. The attending members also recognize that this issue must go to the whole board for consideration because every member should share input on the board's current structure, role, and responsibility under the code. The intent is for all VIBE members to focus on standardizing the reporting process and ensure a stronger, more informed annual SMAR. Similar to curriculum, discipline, and other policies that drive educational expectations. The committee will continue to push VIBE to open spaces for structure and continuity in the reporting and monitoring of school site facilities that ensure clear responsibility and timelines for reporting in and out.

NEXT STEPS

Upon acceptance from the VI Department of Health, the SPF committee agenda for the October standing meeting will build on the inspection and reporting process. The SPF committee will hold a standing meeting on October 9, 2022, to meet with the VI DOH to review Standard Operating Procedures regarding School Plants and Facilities. This discussion includes past reporting and the role in supporting VIDE food, nursing, health, and safety infractions. The committee will utilize the information shared to incorporate for 2023 SMAR's report.