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## **Board addresses Tasers in schools District administrators give presentations on Taser policy suggestions offered by students.**

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Most of the suggestions a student group offered to the Wichita school board regarding Taser use have already been accomplished, district administrators said Monday.

Students United, a leadership group sponsored by Hope Street Youth Development, has been campaigning for a policy on Taser use for a year. The stun devices are carried by Wichita police officers who work in schools.

Recently, the students gave the board a list of 10 recommendations for the use of Tasers in schools.

Since school resource officers started carrying the devices in Feb. 2006, three students have been stunned by Tasers in schools, police said. Tasers have been drawn more frequently.

District administrators, gave a presentation on each of the students suggestions.

Most of the suggestions, eight out of 10, have already been put in place by either the district or the Wichita Police Department.

Among the students' suggestions: placing portable defibrillators in places where a Taser could be used and training staff in de-escalating conflicts.

The district is in the process of installing the defibrillators. School staff members have been training to use them since early 2006 and will be done by May, said Martin Libhart, the district's chief operations officer.

District personnel have also been trained in conflict resolution techniques, said Galen Davis, the district's executive director of safety services.

"The important thing in our action is to defuse and to restrain," he said. "The goal is to minimize injury to students involved in the incident."

That's what adults tried to do in the latest Taser incident, when a female student was stunned last Thursday at Southeast, said superintendent Winston Brooks. District personnel were also harmed during the altercation.

"The victim was asked five different times to stop and they refused," he said.

Some of the suggestions, Davis said, are things that the Police Department is responsible for, including using a community board to review Taser incidents.

"We aren't trying to hide anything with Tasers," said Deputy Police Chief Tom Stolz.

Talking about the use of Tasers won't stop their use, said board member Chip Gramke.

"To me, Tasers are not the problem," he said. "Tasers are a symptom of the problem. The real problem is that we have a very small number of students for whatever reason choose to do the wrong thing and those students are sent us by their parents out of control for whatever reason."

Consuelo Andrade, a member of Students United, said they were excited that the board discussed their recommendations.

"We got them to talk about it," she said. "We've been working on it for a year. Without us, they probably won't have talked out it."

Andrade said the next step is to make sure the district follows through with fulfilling the last two recommendations.

Michelle McConnell, whose son was the first student in the district to be stunned, said that Tasers don't belong in schools.

"I think the school board has a lot to learn about Tasers and that they really need them out of our schools altogether. This isn't a proper place for a Taser to be."

Regardless of people's opinions on Tasers in schools, one thing is clear, Stolz said: "If a Taser is deployed, someone is getting arrested."