

SCHOOL SAFETY WORKING GROUP

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2018 Interim

June 11, 2018

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 2nd meeting of the School Safety Working Group was held on Monday, June 11, 2018, at 3:30 PM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Co-Chair Wise called the meeting to order, announced the newly appointed ex-officio members and consultants, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Guests: Chris Barrier, Director of Law Enforcement, Montgomery County Schools; Mark Filburn, Former Commissioner, Department of Criminal Justice Training; and Frank Kubala, Staff Assistant to the Commissioner, Department of Criminal Justice.

Members: Senators Danny Carroll, Ray S. Jones II, Alice Forgy Kerr, Johnny Ray Turner, and Max Wise; Representatives John Blanton, George Brown Jr, John Carney, and Will Coursey.

Ex-Officio Members: Dr. Joe Bargione, Licensed Psychologist and Certified School Psychologist in Kentucky; Mrs. Jody Glass, Social Studies Teacher, Greenwood High School, Bowling Green, Kentucky; Mr. Keith Griesser, Principal, Paris Elementary School, Paris, Kentucky; and Dr. Henry Webb, Superintendent, Kenton County Schools.

Consultants: Dr. John Akers, Kentucky Center for School Safety; General Jerry Humble, Retired U.S. Marine Corp.

LRC Staff: Jo Carole Ellis, Yvette Perry, Lauren Busch, and Christal White.

The new consultants identified themselves as Dr. John Akers, Executive Director, Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS); and Retired Major General Jerry Humble, a 34-year military veteran specializing in world counter terrorism and counter narcotics. General Humble now assists in an active school safety training program with the Daviess County Sherriff's Department and also serves with the Joint Terrorism Task Force in Western Kentucky through the FBI, Department of Justice.

The six ex-officio members also gave a brief summary of their positions and experience.

1. Dr. Henry Webb is the Superintendent of Kenton County Schools.

2. Mr. Keith Griesser, Principal of Paris Elementary School, is enrolled in the Principal Partnership Project offered by the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).
3. Teacher Representative, Mrs. Jody Glass, Social Studies teacher at Greenwood High School, Bowling Green, Kentucky.
4. Student Representative, Ms. Nasim MohammadZadeh, a junior student at Dunbar High School, Lexington, KY, was announced by Senator Wise in her absence.
5. Representing Commissioner Alex Payne, Department of Criminal Justice Training, was Frank Kubala, Staff Assistant to the Commissioner.
6. Dr. Joe Bargione, Licensed Psychologist and Certified School Psychologist in Kentucky, has practiced for over 25 years in urban, rural and suburban school districts throughout different states. A major focus of his effort is concentrating on behavioral and mental health and ensuring children are college or career ready in academics, critical thinking, relationships, and social skills. He also served as a facilitator/crisis-responder team leader in two Kentucky school shootings.

Senator Wise asked members to share their email and contact information with Yvette Perry, Committee Analyst, upon adjournment of today's meeting.

Each legislative member identified the respective areas they represent.

Senator Wise said the ex-officio members and consultants were selected from a list of qualified individuals and includes a diverse group from various backgrounds with school safety knowledge. The presentations in the Interim Joint Committee on Education (IJCE) provided good information to start an honest and open discussion on school safety.

Representative Carney said while Kentucky has great policy, he questioned whether tracking is being done to determine how many districts are not participating in required trainings. Mr. Akers said each school and district must sign an assurance documenting that the required drills and review of emergency management plans have been completed. The KCSS conducts follow-up assessments with teachers, students and educational professionals to ensure drills are comprehensive. Mr. Akers stated that district requests for walk-throughs increased following the Marshall County incident on January 23, 2018. Representative Carney said it is necessary for districts to take advantage of any Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP) but even more crucial to make recommended changes identified as safety issues afterwards. Mr. Akers said the EOP Federal Grant was initially designed to work with school districts on developing a district plan in addition to a school plan.

In response to a question by Senator Carroll as to what schools are doing to ensure safety, Mr. Akers said the passage of Senate Bill 8, KRS 158.447 required school districts to go through a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) checklist,

including risks and opportunities children encounter between home and school as well as hazards and risks on school property. Mr. Akers said the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) developed the program where districts must sign off with the design professional, registered engineer, landscape architect, and superintendent or board's designee. He said upgrades such as the installation of metal detectors, dual alarm systems on exterior doors and cameras at exit doors are steps implemented toward school safety improvement. Additionally, schools are using private companies to watch social media in their areas, searching over 400 key words to identify any issues that could progress into a dangerous situation.

Dr. Webb said Kenton County has 17 schools being retro-fitted to safely secure the schools built prior to CPTED and said a lockdown procedure automatically dials 911 dispatch. Kenton County has a Security Resource Officer (SRO) in every school and has shifted from active-shooter drills to actual scenarios. Representative Carney asked to be kept informed on the progress of retro-fitting and expressed the need to streamline the BG1 paperwork process by KDE regarding retro-fitting guidelines in order to ensure timely installation/construction.

Senator Wise questioned if adding SROs is a funding or cultural issue in the areas where there is soft presence. Mr. Webb said Eastern Kentucky has a funding issue, but encouraged working with local municipalities, sheriffs, and county officials to provide additional funding. Mr. Barrier agreed that proper selection of an SRO is critical and referred to a map from KCSS that details SRO's throughout Kentucky. He pointed out that SROs in Pike County are less concentrated than the remainder of the state due to layout and size.

Dr. Bargione said a layered effect is needed to meet the needs of the students and schools, including professional development for all school employees. The SRO must gain trust by building student relationships and must possess key elements including observing students' mental health, identifying conflict, peer mediation, developing critical-thinking skills, and self-regulation. Dr. Bargione said this requires involvement from community mental health partners.

Senator Wise questioned whether the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) Program is being utilized for armed protection, including former law enforcement and former military. Mr. Barrier said many Kentucky school districts contract their SRO from local protection agencies and two SROs in Pike County are former military personnel. He is unaware of any programs that specifically seek out veterans.

In response to Senator Wise's question regarding standards for the number of training hours, whether to require conceal-carry permits, and administering quarterly background checks, General Humble said sharing both proven and ineffective practices with schools across the state is essential. Mr. Filburn said one practice is to lock rifles in a

cabinet and require ammunition be kept in another location. He said the SRO is important particularly in grade school due to the ability to build trust with younger children. General Humble favors highly trained and armed SROs.

In response to a question by Representative Blanton, Mr. Barrier said the statute requires basic and advanced SRO courses; however, the specialized courses which are required need a more clear definition. Representative Blanton said refresher training should be more consistent and include training with guidance counselors and mental health professionals on social issues, although the lack of funding exists.

Senator Kerr was pleased to see a teacher representative as an ex-officio member. Mrs. Glass said while she is pro 2nd Amendment, she does not believe teachers should be armed with guns since she feels it adds a negative component to teaching. She stressed the importance of building a relationship with SROs. Senator Kerr said engaging and noticing the characteristics of all children is crucial, not just those who involve themselves with the SRO.

Mr. Barrier said while Montgomery and Scott counties both have two SROs, most spend their time at the middle and high schools. He said only 118 out of 173 districts have SROs.

Senator Carroll praised the legislative funding provided in the 2017 budget which allows state police officers to work a part-time job.

Dr. Webb said financial issues are a reason many areas do not have an SRO, but further stated that partnering with existing law enforcement has been useful in districts that are thriving. Mr. Griesser asked to be provided a list of counties who have no SROs and if lack of funding is the cause.

In response to a comment by Representative Coursey, General Humble said the Department of Justice's Bureau of Statistics has FBI data to show 18-20 percent of the first shots fired often miss their intended targets in panic situations; however, that percentage is not solely related to school shootings. Other variables are distance, lighting, and weather conditions and is why consistent and constant training is mandatory.

Dr. Bargione said self-control is needed for young students to articulate important psychological safety. While some feel safe in schools, others may not.

Mr. Akers said increased law enforcement, mental health, and recovery treatment were provided for students, teachers, and staff following school shooting sprees. Shelby County does a good job of coordinating responders and school personnel once monthly to discuss issues, current plans, and changes that may be necessary. Violence on television

and in video games and the ability to enforce truancy with consequences more quickly are both issues that need to be addressed to adjust behaviors.

Senator Wise asked all members to bring future agenda topics and announced the next meeting of the SSWG will be held July 9, 2018, in Trigg County.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.