

# **SCHOOL SAFETY WORKING GROUP**

## **Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2018 Interim**

**September 10, 2018**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The 5th meeting of the School Safety Working Group was held on Monday, September 10, 2018, at 9:00 AM, in Glasgow, Kentucky at the Barren County Technology Center (BCTS). Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair; Senators Danny Carroll and Alice Forgy Kerr; Representatives John Blanton, George Brown Jr, and Brandon Reed.

LRC Staff: Jo Carole Ellis, Yvette Perry, Maurya Allen, and Christal White.

Representative Steve Riley welcomed members of the committee to Barren County and introduced the Superintendent of Barren County Schools, Mr. Beau Matthews. He also invited members to a meal prepared by the culinary class upon adjournment. Senator Wise recognized Barren County Superintendent Beau Matthews and welcomed the many other superintendents in attendance

Co-Chair John Carney was absent due to attending an NCSL Conference with school safety as the primary focus.

Senator Wise introduced the new working group member, Mr. Andy Smith, a social studies teacher from Woodford County High School (WCHS). Mr. Smith has more than 12 years of teaching experience and has served on the WCHS Safety Committee, worked with threat assessments, and served on the site-based council. Mr. Smith replaced Ms. Glass who was unable to fulfill her appointment.

### **Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Representative Blanton and a second by Senator Kerr, minutes of the August 13, 2018, meeting were adopted by voice vote.

**Superintendents  
Fayette County School District**

Dr. Manny Caulk, Fayette County School District, said finding viable school safety solutions was precipitated as state and national events unfolded throughout the country. On February 14, during the 2018 National Superintendent's Conference, a school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida precipitated calls from media outlets throughout the nation, prompting many superintendents to cast doubt if measures within their own schools adequately ensure student safety. Since the 1999 Columbine, Colorado school shooting, 425 students and educators have been injured or slain in our nation's school shootings, with nearly one-quarter of the shootings occurring from January through May 2018.

Fayette County Schools immediately enhanced safety procedures but quickly found the measures were insufficient. A tip from a student via an anonymous tip line prompted an investigation, resulting in a search which uncovered a student had purchased an AR 15 rifle and 500 rounds of ammunition. The student, who displayed no obvious warning signs and was on track to graduate, was charged with 2<sup>nd</sup> degree terroristic threatening. Following that incident, a student at Henry Clay High School brought a loaded gun onto campus, creating such fear among students that 80 percent of the student body did not attend school the following day. In yet another incident at Frederick Douglas High School a student smuggled a loaded gun into the school which accidentally discharged, injuring his hand. These incidents revealed that school shootings can happen anywhere and at any time.

Fayette County Schools formed a District Safety Advisory Council (DSAC) of internal and external stakeholders in the community to ensure schools are safe and successful. The DSAC was comprised of first responders, school leaders, district leaders, teachers, families, students, members of the business community, faith-based community leaders, civic organizations, representation from the district-wide PTA, and a governance team. The council was charged with providing research, evidence, and actual recommendations to ensure the safety of children in school, at home, and in the community. Fayette County Schools sought national and state experts to engage in discussions on school safety, social media, and mental health. The DSAC also received student-panel recommendations to create a safe environment and Fayette County Schools examined juvenile justice across the spectrum. Dr. Caulk said legislation passed by the General Assembly reforming the adoption and foster care system was a significant step to ensure children are safe at home. DSAC recommendations were proposed to increase the in-school safety of students through a 10-Point Safety Investment Plan.

Fayette County Schools proposed a comprehensive plan to increase safety in facilities while also being proactive regarding mental health needs. The plan included additional law enforcement officers, additional mental health professionals, exterior and interior facility upgrades, student and staff IDs, comprehensive adolescent assessment and health promotion, metal detectors and security ambassadors, secure vestibules, social media monitoring, education and training, and an upgraded emergency communication system.

The Fayette County School District has retained its own law enforcement division for more than 47 years at the high school level and have a goal to have one law enforcement officer in every middle and grade school as well. The officers provide protection in the event of a threat, facilitate Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) programs, and create a positive and healthy relationship among children and law enforcement.

Many in-state and out-of-state facilities have replicated Fayette County Schools model. Dr. Caulk said funding of legislation to hire retired law enforcement officers as School Resource Officers (SRO) is a positive step for a well-trained, well-versed support staff. The addition of counselors, social workers, and mental health professionals will enable schools to decrease counselor-student ratio from one counselor for 550 students to the nationally suggested practice of one counselor for 250 students. Dr. Caulk said many elementary schools currently have a ratio of one counselor for 650 to 700 students.

With over 1,700 entrances in Fayette County Schools, exterior emergency door alarms and interior facility door locks increase security. Dr. Caulk said visibility from windows is also a concern. For increased security, middle and high school students and staff will carry identification badges at all times.

Comprehensive assessment and health promotion is another component of the 10-point plan and includes a health assessment for each high school student at the beginning of the year. The assessments will expand to middle schools, providing appropriate support to reduce suicide and addressing mental health. Dr. Caulk said partnering with the University of Kentucky will allow the presence of full-time nurses in each high school and will eventually expand to middle and elementary schools.

Dr. Caulk said minor capital projects are necessary to ensure buildings are welcoming and safe. Fayette County Schools have added hand-held wands in every school and will move forward with stand-alone metal detectors at a single-entry vestibule. The addition of a computer application connected to the local emergency management system is part of the plan. Fayette County Schools will contract with an entity for social media monitoring and inform families of available resources to ensure student safety.

Dr. Caulk said Fayette County School's one-time investment will cost \$13.4 million and revenue from the five cent property tax will generate \$13.2 million in November. A timeline for implementation of the 10-point Safety Investment Plan has been finalized.

Additional meeting materials included a booklet entitled *Fayette County Public School's Annual Report 2017-2018, Champions for Children*. For a copy contact Fayette County Public Schools, 701 East Main Street, Lexington, KY 40502, or call 859/381-4100.

In response to a question by Senator Carroll, Dr. Caulk said Fayette County police officers serve in the school system's law enforcement division. Senator Carroll said a drafting error in 2017 legislation did not include continued health care coverage for all retired officers and because KRS language was specific to SROs, Senator Carroll said additional legislation will be filed in January to include Special Law Enforcement Officers (SLEOs) in the statute. Staff of Kentucky State Police (KSP) are designing contracts regarding structure and liability issues to allow troopers to contract individually with school districts. Senator Carroll commended Fayette County Schools for raising taxes for additional funding for the increased protection of children.

Dr. Bargione thanked Dr. Caulk for sharing the comprehensive approach of Fayette County Schools. With this being National Suicide Prevention Week, he is impressed with the physical and psychological safety of students in schools, homes, and community.

Responding to a question by Dr. Bargione, Dr. Caulk said the training provided in Fayette County Schools is the same training Kentucky law enforcement officers endure during a rigorous 32-week program. The training includes law enforcement agencies from other counties as well as Fayette County Metro officers. With the addition of officers in middle and grade school, Dr. Caulk said students can build trust and form positive relationships with them.

In response to Dr. Bargione's second question, Dr. Caulk said Fayette County administration is working with schools to identify the need for additional counselors, social workers, and mental health professionals. The five cent tax is separate from the general fund and can only be used for the initiatives in the comprehensive safety investment plan. Fayette County Schools plan to hire 37 officers through in-state and out-of-state job fairs.

Responding to a question from Mr. Akers, Dr. Caulk said parental responsibility regarding safe gun control and monitoring children's phones is essential. Fayette County School's STOP tip line enables students and families to facilitate safety in our schools through family education and training.

Ms. Mohammadzadeh thanked Dr. Caulk for taking corrective measures for the incident at Dunbar High School. In response to her statements, Dr. Caulk said the Fayette County School District will create a safer environment by moving forward with social and emotional K-12 curriculum and bringing in additional mental health resources. The district will ensure a welcoming and positive school climate and culture in peer to peer relationships as well as staff to students. The student voice at Dunbar High School has been phenomenal in helping shape a positive culture.

### **Hart County School District**

Mr. Nathan Smith, Superintendent, and Steve Caven, Director of School Safety, said structural security, communication, policy practices, and training are necessary moving forward.

Mr. Smith described the Hart County School District as a small district with 2,300 students, 450 employees, and the largest employer in Hart County. Hart County Schools consist of six school, 94 exterior doors, and a SRO in every school. The plan mirrors Fayette County School's plan. The district is looking for available resources to meet school safety needs.

The Hart County School District is building a new high school and vocational school ensuring the facilities are up-to-date, including camera placement and exterior door alarms. Mr. Caven said a common sense approach taken during the planning of the new schools included 20-inch thick exterior walls and bollards to prevent accidental or intentional collisions with the building. Foyers and vestibules are secure and opportunities are minimized for access to the buildings. Hart County Schools contracted with a local health professional to provide medical services in each building. Other initiatives include available mental health professionals to treat children who intend to harm themselves or others. Mr. Smith said two school psychologists are responsible for testing special needs students, administering mental health assessments, and building trusting relationships.

Mr. Caven said Hart County Schools assess building safety on a regular basis through active-shooter trainings with the Hart County Sherriff's Department. Regardless of district size, Mr. Caven said safety issues are identical while financial needs differ. Resources ensure a quality education and helps students to become productive citizens. Without funding, other areas of education are compromised and schools must seek financial resources through tax increases.

Mr. Smith's first achievement was putting a nurse in every building. His next priority is to generate new revenue to enable Hart County Schools to retain a law enforcement officer in every building, as currently-stationed deputies could be called away for an emergency.

Mr. Caven performs regular safety walkthroughs, ensures teachers are present in hallways during class changes, and advocates the importance of relationship building. With the utilization of the STOP tip line, children are less afraid. Students and teachers are taking responsibility to keep schools safe.

Moving forward, Mr. Smith said initiatives include having SROs in every building, increasing the number of school psychologists, and installing tempered safety glass and enhanced camera systems in all facilities. Bus and event safety are other critical issues on which he wants to focus.

In response to a question by Senator Wise, Mr. Caven said Hart County Schools entertained a proposal to use veterans as school safety officers, a veteran completed an assessment and provided valuable information, but no action has been taken.

Mr. Caven said Hart County Schools reached out to Tim Early, Director of Green River Regional Educational Cooperative (GRREC), who was unable to attend. He reported that GRREC has a quarterly meeting of a safety work group and Mr. Early provided correspondence to each legislator on school safety.

Senator Kerr said responsible gun owners should be informed that recent shootings were by a student with access to family-owned guns. Mr. Caven said information could be posted on the school Facebook page and other ways to share with the community.

Senator Carroll said while securing guns is critical, there is a great need to facilitate a balance to provide gun owners immediate access as protection for their families. In response to Senator Carroll's statement, Mr. Smith said this year's tripling of Title IV dollars was spent to have a nurse in every building. Mr. Akers said the Kentucky Council for School Safety (KCSS) staff continually searches for available funds from Congress. Responding to Senator Carroll's question, Mr. Smith said the addition of nurses has created a safer environment. Mr. Caven said having on-site health professionals has given districts insight into student mental health.

In response to a question by Senator Carroll, Mr. Caven said the Hart County Sheriff's department provides assistance at a cost of \$5,000 per year versus other resources at a cost of \$58,000 per year.

Responding to a question by Representative Reed, Mr. Caven said metal detector wands are not currently being used in Hart County Schools but administration has plans to visit Green County Schools to observe the effectiveness of the system.

In response to a question by Senator Wise, Mr. Caven said his schools have not asked for any training programs to arm teachers.

### **Shelby County Schools**

Michael S. Clark, Director of Student Services, presented *Shelby County School Safety Measures, 2018 and Beyond*. Shelby County Schools are focusing on three distinct categories including facilities, staff and students, and community. Comprehensive reviews after the tragic shootings determined safety measures used at the time were inadequate.

Shelby County Schools installed an Aiphone entry system at every school at a designated locked entry. All exterior doors are locked and numbered and visitors enter and exit through a single-entry system, providing visual and verbal contact as the first layer of protection. Should an incident occur, first responders are directed to the area of concern

with directionally-labeled floors. The Shelby County School District welcomes all first responders to become familiar with the layout of the district's 3 schools, students, and staff. First responders are provided with floor plans of the schools and conduct trainings after school hours to hone their skills. To decrease response time, at least three emergency notification systems have been installed in each school and sends a stress message to local law enforcement, all staff members, and district administrators.

Proactive staff and student measures include at least one SRO in every school, eight licensed mental health consultants on staff, three student counselors, a critical response plan, and first responders who attend school staff and student meetings. Mr. Clark said Shelby County Schools plans to expand mental health professionals in the district to help students affected by trauma, most often experienced outside of school. A recent study shows one in six children have some sort of mental health issue, translating to approximately 1200 students in Shelby County Schools alone.

Community measures include monthly meetings with first responders and administration from each school within the district, evacuation and reunification sites, incident response procedures, and agreements with the local health department and Red Cross. Shelby County Schools are also identifying the vulnerabilities and threats of industry and railroads in close proximity to each school and the traffic patterns for evacuation.

Shelby County Schools will implement additional measures including linking the camera systems to the local Emergency Management Center, active shooter training for school staff, delayed response procedures, additional mental health consultants, and additional SROs. Delayed response procedures are observed during a fire alarm to determine if the drill was planned, warranted, or unwarranted. SROs are provided by the sheriff's department but Shelby County Schools need on-site law enforcement and mental health professionals.

In response to a question by Senator Wise, Mr. Clark said local law enforcement will work with state police on active-shooter training for teachers.

Responding to a question by Senator Carroll, Mr. Clark said students who are comfortable with a trusted adult, parent, or another student can provide valuable information. Shelby County Schools conduct parent academies to aid parents in what to look for in a child's social media account. Mr. Clark said an anonymous tip line has been part of the discussion but has not yet been implemented.

In response to a question by Representative Reed, Mr. Clark said Shelby County does not utilize the Sources of Strength (SOS) program but pairs younger and older students using Link Crew. Due to the success of the SOS program, Representative Reed recommended the district check availability of federal grants.

Mr. Akers said Shelby County Schools received the Steve Kimberling Award at the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA) Conference for being a model district including first responders meetings, training for active shooters and responders, and other outside hazards. Mr. Akers said The Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) offers a free STOP tip line upon request.

Major General Humble commended speakers for three excellent presentations and said an easily accessible, broad program of best practices is needed for all districts since the need is the same but resources vary. In response to his question, Mr. Clark said the way to find best practices for school safety is through research findings regarding practicality, expense, and benefit. Mr. Akers acknowledged the need to consolidate school safety best practices into one easily accessible location. He is hopeful superintendents and central office staff will utilize 17-years of experience from KCSS staff and the STOP tip line.

In response to questions by Senator Carroll, Mr. Akers said KCSS and KASA partner for the KASA conference every year. Mr. Akers said a free, first-time School Safety Coordinators Symposium will be offered on September 26, 2018 at ECU in Richmond. Last year, KCSS met with school counselors throughout the state regarding school safety and mental health. Mr. Akers said KCSS trains on a regular basis at cooperatives, conducts symposiums and workshops, and hosts non-public symposiums for private schools. Senator Carroll will ask the General Assembly to support the efforts of KCSS.

Senator Wise announced there will be no IJCE meeting in October and said the next meeting of the SSWG will be held in Northern Kentucky on October 8, 2018 at 10 A.M. Senator Wise suggested reaching out to CPE and focus on school safety on college campuses as well.

Senator Wise said Moms Demand Action and Kentucky Youth Advocates are potential groups from whom the SSWG may add to a future agendas.

Expressing difficulty in hiring SROs, Mr. Griesser suggested Senator Carroll's proposed legislation regarding insurance for retired officers as a future agenda topic. Senator Carroll said McCracken County Schools operate on a budget of \$350,000 per year and staff includes a director who acts as chief of police with other administrative responsibilities within the district along with seven retired officers. Senator Carroll will contact the Justice Cabinet and recruit someone from SLEO to testify.

Senator Wise announced student-led tours of the Barren County Technology Center and lunch was provided by the culinary students of BCTC upon adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 A.M.