

# **SCHOOL SAFETY WORKING GROUP**

## **Minutes of the 8th Meeting of the 2018 Interim**

**December 11, 2018**

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

The 8th meeting of the School Safety Working Group was held on Tuesday, December 11, 2018, at 1:00 PM, at the Mountain Arts Center in Prestonsburg, Kentucky. Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Max Wise, Co-Chair; Senator Johnny Ray Turner; Representatives John Blanton and Brandon Reed; Jon Akers, Joe Bargione, Jerry Humble, Nasim Mohammadzadeh, Alex Payne, Andy Smith, and Henry Webb.

LRC Staff: Yvette Perry, Joshua Collins, and Chris White.

Senator Turner and Representative Blanton thanked the committee for hosting a meeting in Prestonsburg and recognized Mayor Stapleton, other local officials, and various students, teachers, and administrators in the audience. Clayton Case, Executive Director, Mountain Arts Center (MAC), welcomed everyone.

The minutes of the November 19, 2018 meeting were reviewed by committee members.

### **Kentucky Office of Homeland Security**

Mr. John Holiday, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Homeland Security (KOHS) and Mike Sunseri, Deputy Executive Director and 911 Service Administrator, KOHS, expressed appreciation for past, present, and future work by Jon Akers and the Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS).

KOHS is the strategic center for the accumulation and dissemination of critical information, providing relevant and timely intelligence, executive advice and resource allocation for the preparation, prevention, response, and recovery of all hazards or incidents affecting the state's safety, security, and health. KOHS's objectives are to increase capabilities to maximize public safety and security; to provide constant, strategic, and precise engagement with public and private sector partners to improve crisis planning, mitigation, response, and recovery; and to be a resource for Kentucky communities and first responders.

Mr. Holiday initiated a collaboration between KOHS, the School Safety Working Group (SSWG), and LRC, offering expert advice to ensure carefully planned and sustainable decisions regarding student safety. KOHS endorses legislation to reenergize Kentucky's Geographic Information System (GIS) efforts and include school resource officers (SROs) protection of personal and identifiable information.

Mr. Holiday said the Kentucky Intelligence Fusion Center (KIFC), networked to 78 fusion centers throughout the nation, can provide relevant and timely information to first responders in every regional, national, or global incident or emergency within hours or minutes. Through analysis and critical thinking, focus is placed on seven primary portfolios: international terrorism, domestic terrorism, cyber threat analysis, organized crime, real-time social media analysis, geospatial and GIS analysis, and critical infrastructure sectors. KOHS prioritizes local, national, and global threats and hazards based on incident activity, probability, and methods of critical thinking. The KOHS, the only state agency granted access to federal classified information, partner and engage with government and private sector agencies to produce and disseminate timely, accurate, usable, and relevant intelligence information when the state's safety and well-being is directly or indirectly threatened.

Mr. Sunseri oversees the Kentucky 911 Services Board, providing daily oversight and accountability over the collection and disbursement of more than \$30 million of 911 fees collected from wireless subscribers and providers. KOHS's top priority is to guide Kentucky's 115 certified call centers, or public safety answering points (PSAPs), to adopt Next Generation 911 technology systems.

Through the use of data and intelligence information in anticipation and prevention of terrorism and organized crime activity, KOHS advises and assists in response, litigation, and recovery of all natural or man-made duress or hazards. Efforts over the past three years have dramatically increased partner and mission effectiveness. KOHS has produced and disseminated hundreds of intelligence products, enhancing investigations and filling information gaps for state and federal law enforcement partners; responded to hundreds of requests for information from Kentucky law enforcement agencies, federal law enforcement agencies, other fusion centers, and law enforcement from other states; received and processed hundreds of Suspicious Activity Reports that met National Security Information criteria for entry into FBI eGuardian; conducted active aggressor/shooter awareness training for more than 7,500 state government and private sectors employees and created a training program for individuals to conduct training for their colleagues; trained over 600 new Intelligence Liaison Officers (ILOs) from both public and private sectors; produced threat and hazard briefings as needed; supported federal, state and local partners during numerous special events; and facilitated the completions of the Kentucky Annual Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment and State Preparedness Report.

Through identifying road blocks and challenges prior to actual events or incidences, KOHS's effort has decreased response times dramatically. Communities, facilities, organizations, and the general public receive resources through the Law Enforcement Protection Program and the Homeland Security Grant Program. First responders are provided with protective gear, body armor, tasers, ammunition, weapons, armor for canines, and other equipment. KOHS engages with local, state, federal, public, and private-sector partners to facilitate information sharing and to help communities and organizations protect themselves.

Kentucky school safety is a complex task given its unique school system structure and challenging budget issues. Government and law enforcement officials continue to evaluate security measures and develop technologies and strategies.

An analysis of safe school initiatives by the United States Secret Service (USSS) and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) identified key findings used by law enforcement to formulate preventive strategies. Identified as pathway steps to violence are grievance, ideation, research, preparation, and breach. The last step, the planned attack, absorbs astronomical resources due to response and recovery. KOHS's goal is to effectively engage with partners to eliminate the grievance step through constant assessment of community culture, organizational culture, and facility security.

USSS and USDOE analysis discovered that incidents of targeted violence at schools were rarely impulsive acts and others knew of the plan prior to most incidents. Mr. Holiday said 99 percent of shooters use social media as an outlet for Active Shooter Intent or Bragging (ASIB). He also said lack of reporting social media threats and absence of behavioral health intervention contribute to preventable attacks. Although today's children are less rebellious, more tolerant, and physically safer, many students are mentally vulnerable and unprepared for adulthood.

Mr. Holiday said collaboration and alignment of effort with stakeholders is essential in protecting students, teachers, and staff. Fundamental elements relate to standardization mechanisms, real-time systems, 24-hour-per-day threat assessment capabilities, and human intervention. Proposals to develop best practices with social media threat detection and triage must have consistent intelligence planning, data collection processing, analytical production, dissemination, and feedback groups. Although historical data can always be recovered, the need for current, real-time information is critical.

A positive correlation between social media growth and manic behavior has been validated. Regardless of how insignificant information may seem, suspicious activity or threats are powerful threat-detection tools. Social media platforms provide an opportunity to identify critical threats and implement intervention strategies but is often exploited by criminals to engage in illegal activities or spread fear.

KOHS's Safe Schools Resources Center (SSRC) envisions a coordinated training effort geared toward school safety by subject-specific intelligence analyst training, experienced mental health providers, and law enforcement emergency services. Federal agencies understand the importance of in-depth planning for complex, coordinated surprise attacks and the need to increase real-time, around-the-clock SSRCs to combat the rising trend of social media threats. Professional tools and tactics must be implemented immediately rather than reacting to the aftermath of attacks.

In response to a question from Major General Humble, Mr. Holiday said SROs are not currently enrolled in the ILO program. Before his tenure, Mr. Holiday said the program was open to law enforcement and emergency services only but now includes the private sector and currently, over 600 ILOs are feeding information to KOHS. Plans to implement ILO programs for SROs, school administrators, and principals are being established. Mr. Holiday suggested visiting KOHS's website at [kentuckyhomelandsecurity.com](http://kentuckyhomelandsecurity.com), calling 1.866.393.6659 (EYE ON KY), or following their social media accounts.

### **KY PBIS Network**

Presenting were Ms. Jo Craven, Director, and Misty Hedge, Area Coordinator, Kentucky Center for Instructional Discipline (KCID), Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS).

PBIS is a systemic approach to establish social culture and the individualized behavioral supports necessary for social and academic success for all students. Evidence-based features of PBIS include preventing behaviors, defining and teaching positive social expectations, acknowledging positive behavior, implementing consistent consequences for problematic behavior, collecting and using on-going data in decision making, creating a continuum of intensive individual interventions, and establishing administrative leadership and team-based implementation.

Ms. Craven gave a brief history of the establishment of PBIS in 1980 and modifications made over time through federal grants. In 2003, KCID was established, the first PBIS schools were piloted, and in 2005 the first group in Kentucky consisted of 13 schools. The network now includes 622 schools in 94 districts. Ms. Hedge said Floyd and Perry Counties have 100 percent PBIS participation while Pikeville Independent, Lawrence, Martin, and Pike Counties have at least one school with PBIS services.

In response to a question by Senator Wise, Ms. Craven said all districts are offered services but the PBIS program is voluntary. Information regarding districts receiving support through local cooperatives is unknown.

The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan including academic and behavioral systems. Tier one, universal intervention, is a preventive and proactive level and encompasses 80 to 90 percent of all students. Tier two,

secondary intervention, includes five to 15 percent of at-risk students who struggle with academic or behavioral issues, or both. Tier three, tertiary intervention, is assessment based, highly intensive, and includes one to five percent of individual students. Students are placed in tiers two and three only if they don't reach the fidelity level in tier one. PBIS is funded through grants and all services are free. Once needs for social, emotional, or mental health needs are identified, schools use MTSS, to assist students.

PBIS places emphasis on establishing universal behavior and academic supports with fidelity. PBIS fidelity schools consistently report one-third fewer out-of-school suspensions compared to all schools. Fidelity-level data is based on aggressive assessment indicators and documentation is verified. Fidelity-level schools reduce the number of students requiring intensive intervention, reduce the intensity of at-risk behaviors, provide a means for need-based allocation of resources, and lessen demands on limited schools or districts. Academic instruction is greatly increased as student social behavior improves. Ms. Craven said a child is taught how to read, swim, multiply, or drive and believes behavioral expectations must be measured as an academic area instead of continual punishment.

Responding to a question from Senator Wise, Ms. Craven said requests for PBIS trainings have increased between 13 and 17 percent each year although some were a result of changes in school leadership.

In response to a question from Dr. Bargione, Ms. Craven said districts may request district-wide implementation or individual school implementation from KYCID. Schools with district-wide implementation are more successful with the creation of a district leadership team. However, single schools are not turned away. On follow-up questions, Ms. Craven said full implementation of the program takes three to five years in grade schools and five to seven years for middle and high schools. She and Ms. Hedges agree leadership changes and turnover are barriers in districts implementing PBIS. Ms. Craven said sustainability training requires much less time than first-time training.

Mr. Akers said the Office of Civil Rights endorses PBIS nationwide as the best program addressing student intervention. He said predictability and prevention has a major impact on civility, addressing bullying, and connectivity with staff.

Mr. Smith, who implemented the program a year ago in Woodford County, said the key to success is teacher buy-in support. He said student and teacher groups worked independently yet arrived at the same core values and ideas relating to culture and communication regarding discipline and behavior. Consistency, care, community, and meaningful points of contact were common values mentioned. Ms. Craven suggested matching kids with meaningful adults and establishing systems of support.

In response to a question from Dr. Webb, Ms. Craven said KYCID is very willing to partner with school systems and welcomes any opportunities.

### **Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team**

Representing the Prichard Committee's Student Voice Team (PCSVT) were Ms. Nasim Mohammadzadeh, a junior at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School (PLDHS); Ms. Gabriella Staykova, a sophomore at PLDHS; and Ms. Ashley Barnette, a senior at Lafayette High School (LHS). Members of the PCSVT are a self-selected group of approximately 100 middle, high school, and college students across Kentucky who work to improve public schools.

Ms. Mohammadzadeh said students can and must be partners in finding and implementing solutions for safer schools. Prior to recent tragedies, the PCSVT conducted a school climate survey at three geographically-diverse Kentucky high schools. Of the 1,552 students responding, 47 percent reported they worried about violence at school and 19 percent said the worry occurred frequently.

National and local school safety conversations focus on what to do about weapons, how to "harden the target" or tighten building security, how to arm teachers, and how to reduce access to guns. While mass shootings are on the rise, they are exceedingly rare in schools and have actually decreased over the last few years. In contrast, a Center for Disease Control (CDC) survey indicated that over 20 percent of high school students have been bullied on school property and another 8 percent reported having been in a physical fight while on school premises. Ms. Mohammadzadeh said while these facts do not diminish the horrific experience students, families, and communities endure, the conversation must include school climate and student-teacher relationships. Norms, goals, values, and the nurturing of education will make schools, with students from a wide range of backgrounds, feel safe and welcomed, and enable students to learn.

Ms. Staykova said students can offer real value regarding policy-making about school safety and climate. With recent gun threats and gun confiscations in Lexington schools, Fayette County passed a school safety tax to mitigate school violence. This will generate over \$13 Million. Dunbar High School is one of the first schools in the state to implement metal detectors, mandatory identification badges, daily bag searches, and an increased presence of school police officers.

Members of Dunbar's SVT created and distributed a survey to students on recent policies and shifts in school climate. With over 600 students responding, 7.1 percent of students said they felt less safe and 19.2 percent reported still feeling unsafe. Over 40 percent of students felt the new procedures were unnecessary for school safety and believe resources would have been better spent on educational supplies or additional mental health professionals. In 6.3 percent of the responses, students used the words *jail* or *prison* to describe the school's atmosphere. Although the feedback does not undermine the decision

to install metal detectors, it suggests that adults who are making the decisions might do better in ensuring a smoother implementation by communicating with students.

Ms. Barnette said students from across the state expressed concern that the public could benefit from a broader understanding of school safety by focusing on preventative care. Addressing student marginalization in a timely manner may prevent school violence in the future. She said logic and research show the need to take pre-emptive actions in making our learning communities more welcome and hospitable, rather than reacting after tragedy has struck. Ms. Barnette said of 1,552 students responding to the survey, only 32 percent of students reported feeling valued as members of the school community, 47 percent felt they had a strong relationship with teachers, and 31 percent felt invested in learning. These numbers suggest a negative school climate. There is a direct correlation between a positive school climate, academic achievement, and healthy youth development.

Ms. Barnette said discipline policies should be constructive, rehabilitative, and fairly administered. Schools must use a softened approach by encouraging young people and adults to instill social and emotional support among each other.

Ms. Mohammadzadeh reported 45 states incorporated school climate in their accountability systems and recognized solicitation of consistent student feedback promoted a physically, emotionally, and socially safe feeling among students. She suggested the board consider measurement tools from other states with proven success rates.

In response to a question by Representative Blanton, Ms. Staykova said communication with parents, students, and administration establishing clear guidelines prior to changes being made would be beneficial. She said other essential elements are increasing mental health support and providing an inclusive school environment. On a follow-up question, Ms. Barnette said although some students are intimidated by uniformed officers, the SLEOs at LHS met with students upon their arrival and explained their roles as improving the academic and emotional school climate.

Responding to a question from Senator Wise, Ms. Mohammadzadeh sees school safety as both a local and state issue and recommended the legislature focus on successful school climates, referring to the effective accomplishments in 45 other states. In a follow-up question, Ms. Barnette said legislation affecting school safety should include both physical and mental sides of the issue. She said schools with higher student-to-counselor ratios will likely negatively affect more at-risk students. Ms. Staykova said as the legislature addresses this state-wide issue, the primary focus should include student interaction with counselors and security. She suggested non-intrusive security may help alleviate stress caused by physically secure methods, such as metal detectors.

Mr. Akers believes metal detectors create an opportunity for teachers to connect and chat with students as they enter school. He strongly encourages the model used in Marshall County.

### **State Interagency Council's Social and Emotional Task Force Update**

Vestena Robbins, PhD, Executive Advisor, Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, and Christina Weeter, Director, Division of Student Success, presented the State Interagency Council's (SIAC) Social and Emotional Health Task Force Update (SEHTF).

SIAC, a statutorily-established, multidisciplinary body is responsible for coordinated policy development, comprehensive planning, and collaborative budgeting for service and supports to children and transition-age youth at risk for developmental behavioral health needs and their families. For years, SIAC focused on children with the most serious level of needs until they realized a public health approach would have a greater impact. They unanimously voted to establish the SEHTF, whose nature and scope of work intersects with SSWG strategies.

Social and emotional wellness also impacts criminal justice reform as it relates to the opioid epidemic. The Family First Prevention Services Act will change the approach to child welfare as SIAC now will be able to allocate dollars typically used to prevent out-of-home placement for children to include upstream prevention services.

Dr. Robbins anticipated recommendations from the SEHTF to include promoting social and emotional well-being with all responsible agencies playing a critical role in early childhood development and expanding SIAC to age 25. She said a full set of recommendations will not be available until the completion of the work of the task force. And the remaining meetings will include information gathering and formulating recommendations for presentation to the SIAC by June, 2019. Final recommendations will be available from the SIAC Administrator, Lea Taylor at [Lea.Taylor@ky.gov](mailto:Lea.Taylor@ky.gov).

In response to a question from Senator Wise, Dr. Robbins is unaware of restrictions in statute preventing a legislative member to be considered as a member of the SEHTF. She said the SEHTF membership mirrors SIAC membership and further conversation may be needed to determine if regulatory changes are needed. Dr. Robbins said SIAC makes annual recommendations to the Governor and LRC before the legislative session and will include policy outcomes from the task force.

### **Jefferson County School Nurse**

Eva Stone, District Health Coordinator, and Barbara Colgan, School Nurse for Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), talked about available federal funding to help increase health services in schools, including school nurses. JCPS has benefitted from various presentations covering sources of strength, trauma, strengthening families,



resilience relating to adverse experiences, and the comprehensive approach supporting social and emotional health with community partners.

Ms. Stone identified types of violence in schools as bullying, mental health crises, physical assaults, sexual assaults, student-on-student altercations, student-on-staff altercations, staff-on-student altercations, escalating violence, or violent intruders. She said the school nurse assesses a situation, takes appropriate action, makes necessary referrals, and works with students, families, and school communities to implement a multi-strategy approach to identify purposeful misbehavior. Other behaviors identified as potential issues include sleeping in class, running away, or physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, and frequent trips to the clinic. These symptoms could be effects of trauma or other underlying issues. Other responsibilities of Ms. Colgan are to encourage parent and student engagement; coordinate care for student health needs; participate on school safety and school attendance committees; and facilitate partnerships between schools and healthcare agencies to implement multi-strategy approaches.

Ms. Stone said Seneca High School receives Level 2 support due to challenges within the school. Challenges include free and reduced price lunch eligibility for 75 percent of its students, 78 percent of students are not reading at grade level, 26 percent of students have reported health conditions, and 39 percent of students missed more than seventeen school days during the 2017-18 school year. Ms. Colgan received 1,865 visits to her office to date this year and had over 3,500 student visits last year. Ms. Colgan encourages kids to connect and gain her trust.

In response to a question by Mr. Smith, Ms. Colgan said she may suggest kids talk to the mental health counselor, let the student know about the resource, or ask the student if they want a referral. Ms. Colgan said many kids will consult with her before someone they view with more authority, such as a teacher, principal, or a counselor. The nurse often acts as an intermediate person students can relate to.

Responding to a question from Ms. Mohammadzadeh, Ms. Colgan said knowing an adult to whom a student can relate affects their mental health. In a follow-up question, she said nurses with different levels of training are needed, full-time school nurses in middle and high schools are essential, and accessing federal funding can help provide services for mental, physical, and social health.

In response to a question from Mr. Akers, Ms. Colgan said student assistance teams currently comprised of a principal, counselor, and teacher should include the school nurse as part of that team.

Responding to a question from Dr. Bargione, Ms. Colgan said communication among school staff can be beneficial in uncovering student issues. Ms. Stone said it is important to provide care coordination among agencies for families.

Senator Wise recapped the committee's travels, the knowledge gained on the topic of school safety, and resources in place. He reminded the committee a task force makes recommendations for legislation while a working group provides gathered information to the legislature throughout the course of the meetings.

Mr. Akers praised the SSWG for taking a measured, comprehensive approach on the important issue of school safety legislation.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.