

School Security and Standards Task Force
Liaison Subcommittee
Meeting Summary

Phone Call
Friday, September 25, 2015
8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Robert Bernat called the Subcommittee meeting to order at 8:03am.

Members

Robert Bernat
David Henebry
Jeff Vose
Tad Williams

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff

Hannah Rosenthal

Open Discussion and Progress on Reports Gathered from Other States

Robert Bernat said he believes there was an arrest in Barrington, Illinois. The high school was shut down after a potential threat was identified.

Chairman Vose revisited the topic of districts' annual reviews of crisis plans. He noted that there were some good things happening, particularly electronic floorplans. In the past, floorplans were required to go to state police, but he is not sure if they are going to the first responders. He said it would make sense to have these in open form.

Dr. Bernat said that what the Task Force will hear from David Esquith, and what he has heard from Texas and Virginia, is that school security is a moving target. As it changes, Illinois will need to find a way to keep up with it. Dr. Bernat believes the Task Force should tell the legislature that they are giving school security a structure, but that there is more. In particular, he felt it should be recommended that the Task Force continue on in some structure beyond the date of the current sunset provisions of its enabling legislation.

Chairman Vose reminded the Subcommittee of the purpose of the Task Force. They will need to report out to the State Assembly and the Board of Education. He asked if there was a way for Texas' task force members to review Illinois' plan and tell the Task Force where the plan is strong and weak. Dr. Bernat said that Texas will not vet Illinois' plans but he thinks Task Force members can do that. Texas spent more time on its plan than Illinois has been allotted. There is only so much Illinois has been able to do. David Henebry added that this is especially true in areas of mental health. Dr. Bernat said that he thinks Illinois can be a trailblazer in this area. He added that Texas' structure is an academic structure, part of a university and Virginia's is a law enforcement entity. Virginia does the same thing Texas does but they have to establish a relationship with the University of Virginia to do the academic research that is needed. These structures are well-established and well-funded. Dr. Bernat said that to bring Illinois to this level is going to take more time and he does not think the Task Force can reinvent the wheel during

this short time. He said that Illinois will not be playing catchup in the areas of intelligence and mental health.

Chairman Vose referred to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) task force and Mia Ray of the Statewide Terrorism & Intelligence Center (STIC). He said that there was a statewide security and standards task force where K-12 educators came to Springfield. Then, Mia visited the regions and gave updates on security concerns nationally and statewide. Chairman Vose emphasized that there is already a communication piece established. He said that he and Tad Williams had a brief discussion about piggybacking onto this through the Illinois Terrorism Task Force. The Task Force could make a recommendation on creating consistency in education and professional development, which would help sustain the work of the School Security and Standards Task Force over time.

Mr. Henebry added that Mia is a terrorism resource specialist. He said the Illinois Terrorism Task Force was not just focused on schools. He said he could find out the school subcommittee's budget, but he knows there is an 80/20 percent division and only 20% of the grant money can go to a state agency. The subcommittee is fighting to get more money because they do not have enough. Chairman Vose said that Mia was working on workshops with best practices for crisis management but that this process was stalled. He suggested that this could be a way to ensure consistency and updates based on what is going on in the field.

Dr. Bernat said that Mr. Henebry has shared with the Task Force school security reports from six states and he is adding two. He said that Virginia and Texas would be willing to speak with the Task Force. Mr. Henebry recommended that all members of the Task Force make a list of what they would like to see coming out of the Task Force; these topics could be put on the agenda for discussion. Chairman Vose suggested creating a SurveyMonkey survey with pointed questions and a narrative question about what members want to see out of the Task Force. Mr. Williams agreed that this was a good plan. Chairman Vose said Task Force members also need to write synopses of what other states are doing, with information about what is strong and what is weak. A spreadsheet of this information would help Task Force members write their report. Mr. Henebry said that some topics may take an hour to discuss and some may need to be discussed in closed session. He recommended starting a discussion at a Task Force meeting and concluding with a recommendation. Dr. Bernat suggested that all Task Force members take a section of school security and compare with what other states are doing. Chairman Vose asked if Illinois meets the minimum standards. Dr. Bernat said that Mr. Henebry may have other thoughts on what other states are doing well. Mr. Henebry replied that only some state reports talk about mental health. Only 4% of attacks are led by people with mental health issues.

Chairman Vose directed the subcommittee to identify five pillars of a model security plan, such as mental health, a structural piece (buildings), first responders and communication. Dr. Bernat referenced Jadine Chou's pillars: 1) slowing down someone who can do harm; 2) getting responders there faster; and 3) proactive efforts. Chairman Vose said that in the survey the Subcommittee sends out to the Task Force they should also ask Task Force members what their concerns are. Dr. Bernat said the Subcommittee should give all Task Force members a piece of school security to compare with other states. Chairman Vose brought discussion back to the issue of the survey and suggested there be a question asking which area a member would like to focus on. These areas could include training, first responders, communication, intelligence and design standards. He said that he could see the Task Force assisting with technical assistance. The Task Force could provide a framework with best practices. There are currently guidelines for crisis management plans but no one regulates them.

Chairman Vose would like Hannah Rosenthal to email out a survey to Task Force members. Mr. Henebry suggested that the first question be “What are the top 3 places where you can see improvement in school security?” Mr. Williams said the Subcommittee should ask members about their area of expertise instead of asking them what they want to review. He suggested that the second question be “Where do you see your expertise in this task force? What do you bring to the table? What can you help with?” Dr. Bernat warned that if the Subcommittee narrows what Task Force members can look at they will be doing a disservice. For example, there is an interface between training and physical security. Chairman Vose said that the subcommittee needs to review the survey and then direct Task Force members but he still thinks members need to work through the topics together during a meeting. Dr. Bernat agreed but emphasized that members need to do their homework before they come to the table. Chairman Vose suggested that the third survey question be “What components do you recommend need to be in a model security plan policy?” He said that the survey should have a strict deadline. He suggested that the survey include a statement such as “In order to fulfill our duties as members of this task force and submit our reports and create minimum standards and create model security plan for the State of Illinois, please complete following questions by... The subcommittee would appreciate your response...” The survey should be closed at COB on Wednesday, September 30. After the Subcommittee receives the results, they can make committee assignments. The Subcommittee agreed to speak by phone at 8:00 a.m. next Friday, October 2. Ms. Rosenthal will send out the survey today.

Upcoming Speaking Engagements

Dr. Bernat said the Task Force may want to schedule phone calls with task force members from Virginia and Texas. He also asked if the Task Force could allot time for North Shore School District 112 to share what they are doing in their beta test. Chairman Vose recalled the Task Force’s plan for public hearings across the state in north, central and south Illinois. He said that the North Shore SD task force members can speak for 10-15 minutes. Dr. Bernat said he could help identify names of people to speak to the mental health piece. He recommended Colleen Cicchetti, a staff psychologist at Lurie Children’s Hospital. Mr. Williams said he could bring in someone to speak to school floor plans.

Public Comment and Closed Session As Needed

There was no public comment and no closed session. Ms. Rosenthal was asked to check with Legal about the possibility of closed session in the future.

Adjourn

Mr. Henebry moved that the School Security and Standards Task Force Liaison Subcommittee meeting adjourn. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote. The Subcommittee meeting adjourned at 9:24 a.m.