

**School Security and Standards Task Force  
Meeting Summary**

Springfield - Illinois State Board of Education  
Alzina Building  
100 North First Street  
Videoconference Room, 3rd Floor  
Springfield, Illinois

Chicago - Illinois State Board of Education  
James R. Thompson Center  
100 West Randolph  
Videoconference Room, 14th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois

Thursday, October 22, 2015  
9:00 a.m.

Chairman Vose called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

**Members Present**

Jeff Aranowski  
Robert Bernat  
Laura Frisch  
David Henebry  
Catherine McCrory  
Roger Schnitzler  
Ben Schwarm  
Dave Tomlinson  
Jeff Vose  
Steven Wilder

**Members on the Phone**

Pat Hartshorn  
Pat O'Connor  
Carol Sente, Rep.  
John Simonton

**Members Absent**

Neil Anderson, Sen.  
Tom Cullerton, Sen.  
Tom Demmer, Rep.  
Tad Williams

**Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff**

Katherine Galloway  
Hannah Rosenthal

**Members of the Public**

David Esquith

Nick Giannini, Chief of Staff for Tom Cullerton  
Chris Goodsnyder  
Ted Kanellakas  
Dr. Peter Langman  
Gary Salgers

### **Approval of Minutes from September 10, 2015 Task Force Meeting**

*Motion for approval of the minutes:* Moved by Ben Schwarm and seconded by Pat O'Connor. Voice vote.  
**Motion carried.**

### **Mr. David Esquith, Director of the Office of Safe and Healthy Students in the U.S. Department of Education**

Jeff Aranowski introduced David Esquith. Mr. Aranowski said that last year Illinois was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for emergency management. As a result, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is entering into an intergovernmental agreement with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA). Mr. Esquith is the federal program lead and Illinois has received great support from his office. Mr. Aranowski said that Mr. Esquith will speak about what is happening nationally and Mr. Aranowski will interject with Illinois-specific information on the grant. Mr. Aranowski said that the ISBE and IEMA are creating the Illinois School Safety Center which will serve as a data clearinghouse for best practices and real time answers to questions, and will also provide regional trainings. Regional superintendents and district administrators in Illinois will be able to take the information back to their constituents.

Mr. Esquith thanked the Task Force for the opportunity to speak. He said he hopes to give Task Force members insight as to what ED is doing, as well as some of the emerging issues and concerns that the Department has about how states and school districts are addressing emergency planning and school safety. He added that he hopes Task Force members come away from his presentation recognizing that schools are safer now than they have ever been. ED has data from its indicators of school crime and safety which suggest that schools continue to be safe havens in communities across the country. Mr. Esquith said he would talk about thinking slow, rationally and statistically. The Department is finding that in emergency planning at the school and school district level, people are in a panic and are not thinking rationally and statistically about the real threats and hazards that they face. Mr. Esquith acknowledged that while schools are safer than they have ever been, there are still significant challenges. He said that emergency planning is an asset underutilized by school districts and schools. There is a great deal more that can be done with emergency operations plans that will allow schools to address some of their biggest social issues, threats and hazards in a systematic and thoughtful way. Right now schools are approaching safety inefficiently. They should use their emergency operations plans as the centerpiece of their planning so that it is done more thoroughly.

Mr. Esquith said that the data in his presentation come from a report that ED puts out annually with the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs called "Indicators of School Crime and Safety." The percentage of students who reported being afraid of attack or harm in school decreased from 12 percent in

1995 to 3 percent in 2013. Mr. Esquith said that this idea of kids feeling safe at school is very important to school climate and academic achievement. Students who are afraid or are concerned that they may be attacked or harmed could not be in a worse position to try to learn. Mr. Aranowski said that this statistic is interesting considering the supposed increase of things like bullying. Illinois administers a school climate survey every other year. Mr. Esquith noted that in school safety and emergency planning there is a difference between the perception and reality of what the threats and hazards are. The percentage of students who reported ever being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property has decreased over the last decade from 9 percent in 2003 to 7 percent in 2013. Between 1993 and 2013, the total reports of students carrying weapons once in the past 30 days in schools has declined from 12 percent to 5 percent. The percentage of 12 to 18 year olds reporting access to loaded guns without adult permission has decreased from 7 percent to 4 percent. Nonfatal student and teacher victimization is down from 11.4 percent to 1.8 percent.

Mr. Esquith concluded that there is significantly less victimization going on in schools than there was over a decade ago. Bullying had been hovering at between 28 and 32 percent from 2005 to 2011, but it dropped down to 22 percent in 2013. Mr. Esquith said that the Department thinks that some of this decrease is due to improved school climate. When schools try to approach issues such as bullying, substance abuse and teen dating violence on a case by case basis, they are not able to change much. It is an important lesson in terms of school safety and school climate to deal with issues broadly at the base and try to move the needle on a number of issues at one time. This efficiency applies to emergency planning as well. Laura Frisch asked if the decrease includes the fact that in earlier years of the study, the children did not realize that they were culpable for what they did via text or online. She is curious if texting and cyberbullying - and students understanding that they were culpable for this behavior - had any effect. Mr. Esquith replied that cyberbullying was down to about 7 percent in 2013 and it has since been stuck at 9 percent. He said that the statistics on bullying and cyberbullying are separate. Mr. Aranowski explained that Illinois had an anti-bullying task force five years ago composed of teachers, students, and lawmakers. The recommendation of the task force was that schools will not solve bullying by going after bullying. They need to create a climate within schools that is conducive to learning and peer-to-peer relationships. Mr. Aranowski said that the takeaway was comprehensive school transformation. If schools create this positive climate they will see a decrease in bullying and an increase in academic achievement. Mr. Esquith added that schools have wasted a lot of money buying and running anti-bullying programs with assemblies and speakers. These programs have no evidence behind them and have very little impact. ED encourages schools to invest in people as opposed to programs and technology. School shootings have been prevented when students have reported shooters to adults, and students are willing to do so when a level of trust has been built between staff and students. Schools have finite budgets and they have to prioritize where they are going to put their dollars to get the maximum use out of them and keep students safe. Mr. Esquith said that his two daughters are in elementary school and the last thing they need is an armed guard standing at the door of their elementary school. If the school could bring on one new staff person, he would want the school to bring on a reading specialist or a social worker. Mr. Esquith added that the rate of nonfatal victimization against students 12 to 18 years old significantly decreased between 1992 and 2013.

Mr. Esquith gave Task Force members a math problem. A ball and a bat together cost a \$1.10. The bat costs \$1 more than the ball. He asked Task Force members how much the ball costs. The answer that he receives

90 percent of the time within the first 10 seconds of asking this question is 10 cents, but the correct answer is 5 cents. Mr. Esquith said that there is a book called "Thinking, Fast and Slow." The premise of the book is that when people think quickly, it is a matter of reflex and habituation and when they think slowly, they think statistically. Mr. Esquith explained that this idea of thinking fast and slow can be applied to looking at school safety data. He encouraged those working to improve school safety to be analytic and systematic in terms of identifying the real threats in schools, and considering how best to prevent, respond to and recover from them. He said that too often those working to improve school safety think fast and respond emotionally instead of using a statistical narrative.

Mr. Esquith showed Task Force members a chart from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) 2013 report of active shooter incidents. He explained that active shooter incidents are not the same thing as school shootings. An active shooter incident is an incident when someone goes into an environment intending to kill everyone. Most active shooter incidents are suicides. The FBI concluded that there was a significant increase in the number of active shooter incidents. Their data caused a lot anxiety and stress and encouraged more people to direct their attention to active shooter incidents. ED did its own analysis of active shooter incidents in schools and found that there was one more active shooter incident in schools between 2000 and 2006 than between 2007 and 2013. Mr. Esquith said that the number of active shooter incidents in schools is not consistent with the FBI graph. He does not aim to diminish the impact of any active shooter incident in a school. He has visited Newtown five times since the tragedy and knows that there will be a cloud over the community for a generation. Still, he noted that an individual is 6 to 10 times more likely to be struck by lightning than to have an active shooter incident at her child's school. Mr. Aranowski asked if there is any evidence to suggest that there are an increasing number of fatalities in these active shooter situations. Mr. Esquith said that he is not sure that the difference in impact of an active shooter incident can be distinguished by the number of people that are killed. Active shooter incidents are tragic and their impact on the community is horrific. At the same time they are extremely rare. Mr. Esquith said that a challenge in school safety and security is identifying the proportional response that should be made after active shooter incidents in comparison with everything else that can happen in a school, recognizing how infrequent active shooter incidents are and how large their impact is. He said that active shooter incident drills are dominating emergency planning in many schools. Schools are not thinking slowly about school safety and as a result may be wasting precious time and resources and scaring students. Active shooter drills in schools provoke a secondary trauma for elementary school students as schools are conveying a message to students that they are not safe. Mr. Esquith asked how schools can hold drills or exercises without bringing in SWAT teams.

Mr. Esquith said that there have been a total of 111 school shootings since Newtown. He distinguished a school shooting from an active shooter incident. A school shooting can be everything from a gun going off accidentally in a school to someone getting into a fight with another person at school to a person coming to school intending to kill someone. School shootings are generally interpersonal deaths. Accidental shootings are not included in these data. Mr. Esquith said that one of the trends that he is seeing in school district is the arming of teachers. ED opposes this vehemently. Since the beginning of the school year this year, four guns that teachers have brought to schools have gone off accidentally. He said that insurance companies are thinking slow on this and pulling their coverage of school districts that are arming teachers or raising their premiums through the ceiling. He said that this indicates that a person is much more likely to incur a

serious injury from a gun going off accidentally than actually having an active shooter incident at their school.

Chris Goodsnyder of Safer Schools First said that his niece was at Sandy Hook and she had a close friend who did not survive. She is still coping with the after effects of losing a friend and what she witnessed that day. Mr. Goodsnyder asked if training schools and first responders on how to handle an active shooter situation increases survivability in the event of an incident or if regardless of the amount of training they receive, schools and first responders cannot outmaneuver an active shooter. He asked if there are any studies that focus on the effectiveness of training in terms of helping staff and students survive. Mr. Esquith said he is not familiar with any studies. School districts that have done exercises and are prepared generally say that the training was helpful. There are so few of these incidents that it is difficult to take away any in-depth analysis of how effective the training was and what would have happened had schools and first responders not been trained. Mr. Esquith said that there needs to be training for active shooter incidents, but it is just one of the threats and hazards that schools need to prepare for. He advised that schools be thoughtful about training and exercises to make sure they are appropriate for who they are training. Training teachers is different from training second and third graders so the messages that these groups receive may differ. Mr. Esquith noted that schools can train through tabletop exercises.

Cathy McCrory said that when shootings happen she has conversations with her kids. She asked if there is a way to educate parents about how to have these conversations with their kids and make their kids feel safe. Are any jurisdictions going beyond the schools and reaching out to parents? Mr. Esquith explained that if schools are doing their emergency operations planning correctly, parents will be involved. Parents should be part of the core planning team that will talk about what information needs to be provided to students, parents, and visitors in the school. Laura Frisch explained the lockdown drill that her school hosted the same day that a school in Washington had a lockdown drill. None of the teachers in her school spoke about a shooter or a person with a gun. Her school talks more about tornados and fires because these are things that kids can understand. Mr. Esquith commended Ms. Frisch's school for thinking slow. Ms. Frisch said that schools can prepare their students every day by teaching them to listen and to walk in a line.

Mr. Aranowski said that schools are in a position where they are checking boxes without thinking about if their efforts are making the school safer. State and federal regulations put administrators and schools in a position where they are reactionary, rather than giving administrators and schools the flexibility to do what they need to do and approach school safety from a more reasonable perspective. Robert Bernat agreed that if students are scared by the drills, schools have not accomplished anything. He explained, though, that police need drills as they have very few instances to tactically encounter what they would in an active shooter situation. Dr. Bernat said that what a lot of communities have and what others are working toward is, on days when school is not in session, letting police use schools for drills. Looking at a diagram of a school is very different from walking through or running through a school. Mr. Esquith agreed that it is important for first responders to be familiar with a school. They should not go into a school for the first time during an emergency. Fire and rescue departments also need to be familiarized with schools. Roger Schnitzler said that what schools are told they are supposed to do is different from what Ms. Frisch's principal is doing and what he is doing. Mr. Schnitzler explained that the law is specific but he thinks it goes

overboard. Schools are supposed to have an active shooter during a drill but at his school they just go into lockdown. Ms. McCrory concurred with Mr. Esquith that all first responders need to participate. In the town she lives in, police have never include the fire department or paramedics in their meetings. Pat O'Connor said that the Illinois Campus Law Enforcement Administrators Association is training police chiefs in the State to do a comprehensive plan with their fire departments. Fire chiefs in Illinois are trained to stand down and not enter a building until it is secure. Mr. O'Connor said he does not believe that schools should use active shooter drills and he does not recommend that any of his chiefs in the State do live drills with students in classrooms. "Shelter" or "lockdown" drills should be the terms used. Bringing law enforcement into a school when students are present creates trauma and should never be done. Staff should be trained separately with the police department. Mr. Esquith said that school districts start paying attention when there are lawsuits. Parents are suing because their children are traumatized and teachers unions are suing because someone burst into a staff meeting with a gun drawn to replicate a real incident.

Mr. Esquith said that middle school is where bullying peaks. The best way to keep violence down in schools and the best prevention against active shooters is to establish trust between students and adults. Mr. Esquith added that a significant number of teachers are still victimized in schools every year. In 2011-12, 10 percent of public school teachers reported being threatened with injury by students from their school. In 2011-12, 6 percent of public school teachers reported being physically attacked by a student from their school in the past 12 months. Mr. Schnitzler said that in elementary schools, teachers are afraid of their students' parents, not the students. Mr. Esquith explained gangs are a significant issue in rural, suburban and urban areas. There is a heroin epidemic in the country as well as widespread abuse of prescription drugs. Mr. Esquith said that one of the issues that school administrators face is what incidents they report to the police. There is a lot of discretion that schools and administrators have in terms of what happens in a school and whether they report it to the police. That has ramifications for students. Twenty-five percent of middle schoolers experienced bullying last year and only half of them reported it to an adult. This suggests that students have tried reporting incidents to adults before and nothing happened, or that the consequences of reporting are worse than the bullying itself. When police are brought onto a school campus and a student is jailed, the student's life changes significantly. ED has data that show that more absences for a student mean a higher likelihood of ending up in prison. More encounters with police also mean a higher likelihood of ending up in prison. There are a significant number of school districts in rural, urban and suburban areas that are dealing with young girls being lured into prostitution by gangs. Mr. Esquith said that gang involvement, drug and alcohol abuse, and human trafficking can be addressed in a school's emergency operations plan. Schools tend stovepipe these issues with school committees but they can use their emergency operations plans to figure out how prevent, respond to and recover from these issues.

Mr. Esquith said he has been doing a lot of work recently on countering violent extremism and the radicalization of students in schools. He advised schools to build this into their emergency operations plans through their threat assessment processes. ED puts out a guide with DOJ, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Homeland Security, the FBI and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that lays out a six step process for developing a school emergency operations plan. ED also has training and technical assistance that it provides to school districts and states. Mr. Esquith said that the grant Mr. Aranowski is leading is a grant ED made to states to promote building state capacity as well as to

help school districts develop their emergency operations plans. Most school emergency operations plans are not comprehensive. Usually someone at the school district level develops a template and gives it to the assistant principal of a school to check boxes. There is little planning and minimal training. ED and the other agencies recommend that schools develop a core planning team made up of teachers, administrators, parents, students and community partners. A school's core planning team should then conduct threat assessments, site assessments, and school climate assessments, determining the school's vulnerabilities and the probability that something will happen. After identifying the threats and hazards that a school may face, the school should develop goals and objectives for how to prevent, respond to and recover from these threats and hazards. Most schools just have response plans and do not include prevention. A school's plan should be shared with the community. Mr. Esquith said that if his children's school had \$20,000, he would not put it into bulletproof glass. When first responders, administrators, parents, and teachers are involved, schools make much better decisions about where to spend their money, rather than quick emotional decisions.

Dr. Bernat asked Mr. Esquith if he would advocate that each school district form its own local task force to examine these things and determine what's appropriate for them. Mr. Esquith replied that this should happen at the schoolhouse level. Every school is different and has different vulnerabilities. There are things that will make schools safer that do not cost anything. Every kid knows where the incidents occur in a school building. ED recommends that core planning teams at the high school level involve high school students. Mr. Esquith added that building trust should be part of emergency operations planning. With kids on the core planning team at the high school level, they will talk about vulnerabilities and school climate. Ms. McCrory asked if middle school is the formative period psychologically for future school shooters? Mr. Esquith explained that it is important to move away from the idea of the school shooter's mentality. There are so few incidents that there is no profile. Mr. Esquith does not think it is productive to try to make associations with students in middle school and who becomes a shooter. Schools are better off putting their time and attention into building trust with middle schoolers than trying to do behavioral profiles of middle schoolers who may become shooters. Mr. Esquith congratulated Task Force members for their work and encouraged them to continue working to improve the school system. He said that it is important for policymakers to keep these issues on the table and to hear from a diverse group of stakeholders. Without this kind of feedback and input, it is easy for people to start thinking slow.

**Dr. Peter Langman, Psychologist with Langman Psychological Associates, LLC and author of *School Shooters: Understanding High School, College, and Adult Perpetrators* and *Why Kids Kill: Inside the Minds of School Shooters***

Peter Langman introduced himself as a psychologist who got into the work of school safety and security in the wake of Columbine. He was working in a psychiatric hospital with children and adolescents and a string of potential school shooters started coming through the hospital. His job was to evaluate them for the potential risk of actually carrying out mass murder. Since then, he has written two books on the topic and he maintains a website [Schoolshooters.info](http://Schoolshooters.info). Dr. Langman explained that his focus is what is going on in the minds and lives of the perpetrators. He currently has 95 perpetrators on his website with close to 350 documents relating to school shooters, school safety, threat assessment, and violence prevention. He tries to understand the perpetrators' behaviors, warning signs, and what kind of events pushed them to

violence. He looks into the rejections and failures that have made them feel rage, as well as depressed or suicidal. Dr. Langman said that if schools can identify youth at risk and if they know the warning signs, school shootings can be stopped. He emphasized the importance of early intervention through threat assessment. Schools all over the nation are well trained in emergency response but many schools are not doing the early intervention threat assessment piece to recognize warning signs, evaluate threats and intervene when appropriate. Emergency response is vitally important, but the first pass should be training faculty, staff and students in threat assessment.

Mr. Goodsnyder commented that there seems to be a false causation where people attribute shootings to psychiatric problems. From his perspective, having Asperger's, for example, may make a person a recluse or alienated from his schoolmates and vulnerable to being bullied. He asked Dr. Langman if it is the actual disorder that many school shooters are suffering from that is somehow predictive of violence as opposed the disorder making them vulnerable to being ostracized. Dr. Langman said there is no direct line between a psychiatric diagnosis and acts of violence. The diagnosis may have secondary effects such as causing alienation. He said there is a fine balance to maintain between mental illness and acts of violence. For example, schizophrenics are no more likely to be violent than the average population. When you look at the population of school shooters, many of them, especially as they get older, are schizophrenic but many of them are not. Dr. Langman emphasized that it is not the schizophrenia that causes the violence: it is a combination of what is going on psychologically and what is going on in their lives. The diagnosis is not predictive of violence but there may be mental health issues that could be caught a lot earlier and help prevent people from becoming violent.

Dr. Bernat asked Dr. Langman if he thinks a community in general should be sensitized to potential warning signs. Dr. Langman said he calls perpetrators average adults when they are 19 years old or older and have no apparent or recent connection to the school they attack. It can be very difficult for a school to prevent attacks by people who have no relationship with the school because the school does not even know they exist. Dr. Langman said that on his website, users can search for shooters by the kinds of the schools they attack, and whether or not they were secondary school perpetrators, college perpetrators or average adult perpetrators. Mr. O'Connor said that in higher ed, Illinois has been successful in its threat assessment processes in terms of prevention or engagement of people who may be suffering from isolation or mental health issues. He said that K-12 has not moved to threat assessment in the way higher ed has. In K-12, schools are dealing with parental mental health issues as well as student, faculty and staff mental health issues. Mr. O'Connor asked Dr. Langman if he thinks there is a strong need for threat assessment at the K-12 level. Dr. Langman said it would be helpful at the middle and high school levels, but students in elementary school are not carrying out attacks. Mr. Schwarm asked Dr. Langman about the ways to intervene and prevent attacks. When should school district personnel say they have identified a student as a possible threat, and then what? Dr. Langman said it depends on when the student is identified as a threat. If a student is caught early, he recommends counseling or evaluation for mental health issues. This becomes a matter of resources (if a school has counselor or psychologist on staff). If the issue is more serious and if the student is on edge of suicide or homicide, then he recommends hospitalization and treatment. If the student has accumulated guns or bombs, then it becomes a legal issue. Dr. Langman said that law enforcement can do what schools cannot do, including searching the home, looking at computers, etc. Secondary school shooters often come from really dysfunctional families. There may be physical abuse

in the home, parental alcoholism, or sexual abuse, so child protective services may need to get involved. Mr. Schwarm asked Dr. Langman at what point school personnel should go to the student's parents and say their child may be a threat to the school. If school personnel are not licensed psychologists, how do they make that determination? Dr. Langman said that schools should have trained threat assessment teams made up of administrators, faculty members and counseling staff. Before schools refer students to services, they need to investigate the threats. Mr. Schwarm asked if schools can do anything before there is actual proof of a threat. Dr. Langman explained that a student would have to do something to come to the attention of school personnel. It may be comments to a friend or something he writes in a paper to a teacher and not a violent threat. Dr. Bernat reiterated that building trust will help a school interdict a potential incident. If a student is aware of something, he will feel comfortable speaking with an adult. Dr. Bernat asked Dr. Langman how, on an age appropriate basis, schools should acquaint people with warning signs, particularly younger students. Dr. Langman suggested that schools present the material at an assembly or in smaller groups. He said schools should educate around what to look for by using examples of shootings where students knew something and did or did not come forward. Dr. Langman emphasized the importance of distinguishing snitching or tattletaling from reporting a safety concern. Schools should encourage students to report their friends, too. Dr. Bernat said that he would not know how to share this message with younger students without scaring them.

Ms. McCrory asked how teachers are trained if they are being asked to get involved in threat assessment. Do teachers take classes in social work or psychology to help them recognize these threats? Dr. Langman responded that most teachers are not being trained, which is why he emphasizes the importance of training for professionals in mental health, law enforcement and education that teach common warning signs. He presents training participants with actual student writings and asks them how they would respond if they were handed a given piece of writing. David Henebry reiterated that mental health does not always indicate who is going to perpetrate a violent attack but he wonders if there is a way to identify the percentage of the population that is inclined to perpetrate. Dr. Langman said he looks at school shooters in terms of three categories: psychopathic personalities, psychotic shooters who are often schizophrenic, and traumatized shooters. He noted the concept of leakage - sharing violent intentions - which shows up in comments to peers, assignments students hand in, and on social media. Schools and law enforcement should be looking for leakage.

Dave Tomlinson asked how Task Force members can translate all of the information they have received into actionable recommendations for policymakers and educators to actually make schools safer. Dr. Langman said that there is no one thing that is going to take care of the problem but there are many things that can be done, some at the governmental level in terms of funding for child protective services, mental health services, and more counselors in schools. There is also training schools in threat assessment and the physical security piece. Dr. Langman noted that there is a lot of work being done in architecture for safety, such as how schools are built and what kind of locks they have on the doors. There are multiple angles to minimize risk. Mr. Aranowski noted that the Task Force may not need to recommend additional legislation but could instead recommend flexibility for districts to meet the needs of their communities. Task Force members could focus on best practices, professional development and increased state support. Chairman Vose said that at the elementary level, his school had a behavioral threat assessment team composed of the school psychologist, social worker and assistant principals. The team met every Friday to evaluate

where students were. He asked Dr. Langman if the schools he works with have threat assessment teams. Dr. Langman said that he thinks that a weekly meeting among key school personnel is an excellent system but he does not think most schools have it. Some schools in Pennsylvania have a student assistance program where they track kids who are struggling and get them the help they need. Oftentimes school personnel with different information do not communicate.

### **Subcommittee Assignments**

Chairman Vose reminded Task Force members of the survey that the Liaison Subcommittee sent out asking each individual about the three areas where they would like to see improvement, their areas of expertise, and the components they recommend need to be in a model security plan. Chairman Vose asked Hannah Rosenthal to share the results of the subcommittee survey. Hannah sent out an email on October 15 with subcommittee assignments and chairs. The four subcommittees are physical plant, training, communication, prevention. Chairman Vose said that the subcommittees should review the reports of the seven states, identify best practices and form recommendations. They need to work through Ms. Rosenthal to schedule meetings and post agendas, and designate someone to take minutes at every meeting. Chairman Vose emphasized that Task Force members need to move quickly so that they have a draft by December to submit to the General Assembly on or before January 1. Mr. Aranowski reminded Task Force members that if they need to convene additional full group meetings, they can also hold strict teleconferences. Chairman Vose said he thinks the Task Force may need at least three more meetings. He thinks that there are good things currently in law but the Task Force may need to fine-tune. If the Subcommittee chairs get their groups together the Task Force will be on the right track. Mr. Schwarm said he likes Mr. Esquith's approach of focusing on the school and what the school can do. The Task Force does not have to have legislative recommendations. Mr. Schwarm said that Illinois' Safety Drill Act is really good, which he did not realize until he looked at the reports of the other states. The other states seem to be trying to get to where Illinois already is. Mr. Schwarm added that the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) writes policies for school districts and right now about 70 percent of all school districts in the State use the policy service. IASB's school board policies regarding school safety include having safety teams in the district and by school building, and involving parents, community members and first responders. He will give Ms. Rosenthal a sample policy to send out for Task Force members to look at as they begin their subcommittee work.

Bernat reminded the Task Force that the North Shore School District 112 school security task force can serve as a model. There are 12 schools in District 112. He asked Ms. Rosenthal to resend the reports from District 112 to Task Force members. Ms. McCrory asked for clarification on what "communications" means in the context of the Communications Subcommittee. Should the Subcommittee be looking at how schools are communicating with parents, first and second responders, or internally with students and staff? Ms. Frisch asked if the Subcommittee should think about how the Task Force communicates with the public. Dr. Bernat said he thinks about it in two ways: the message that is being communicated and how it is being communicated to students, parents, etc. He said the Communications Subcommittee should also consider what systems work to communicate something if there is an issue and how schools communicate with first responders to reduce response times. Dr. Bernat reminded Task Force members about the blue boxes used by District 112 to reduce response times. Ms. McCrory confirmed that the Communications Subcommittee

will study both mode and message. Mr. Aranowski said that there is a communications appendix in the federal guidance developed by ED. He encouraged the subcommittees to use the federal document as a blueprint. Chairman Vose asked Task Force members to let him know if they are uncomfortable with their subcommittee assignments. The Liaison Subcommittee tried to match people with their areas of expertise. Mr. Esquith referred Task Force members to ED's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center website (Rems.ed.gov) with model practices and training guides that school districts across the country are using. Chairman Vose asked Ms. Rosenthal to send the website link and federal guidance out to the Task Force again. Mr. O'Connor reminded Task Force members that they should plan for the lowest common denominator in putting financial pressures on some of the smaller districts. If the bar is too high, the districts will not achieve what they need to achieve. Dr. Bernat again shared his recommendation that local task forces be mandated. He reiterated that school security changes over time so some semblance of the Task Force should continue on as an advisory body. Mr. Schwarm noted that the Illinois Terrorism Task Force has an ongoing subcommittee on school safety. Mr. O'Connor said he thinks it would be easy for the Task Force to recommend that there are working groups at the local level.

### **Public Hearings/Testimony Logistics and Scheduling**

Chairman Vose shared his plan to host one public hearing in Springfield, one in Lombard, and one at John Logan College in Marion. Chairman Vose, Mr. Aranowski and Ms. Rosenthal will work together to set up dates.

### **New Business and Open Discussion**

Chairman Vose said that Tad Williams is going to bring Mark Beagles to speak with the Task Force about collecting floorplans. Chairman Vose also found a group called Navigate that can hold floorplans and pictures of buildings online. Dr. Bernat said he would like to know more about the capabilities of police when it comes to prevention. Police will follow up on social media if they are given leads but they are not trolling social media sites. John Simonton said that Aaron Kustermann with the Illinois State Police is an excellent resource. Chairman Vose said he would like to have a full meeting scheduled for early in the third week of November. Dr. Bernat reminded Task Force members that he circulated the rough draft of his prevention document. Representative Sente said that usually when committees are writing a report, a committee member starts thinking about what will be included in the report. She asked if the Task Force is ready to do this. The topics for a table of contents may come from the subcommittees. Chairman Vose said that Task Force members should discuss this after the subcommittees meet.

### **Adjourn**

*Motion to adjourn:* Moved by Ben Schwarm and seconded by Steve Wilder. Voice vote. **Motion carried.** The meeting was adjourned at 11:31 a.m.