

School Security and Standards Task Force
Physical Plant Subcommittee
Meeting Summary

Phone Call
January 19, 2016
9:00 a.m.

David Henebry called the Subcommittee meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Members Present

Robert Bernat
David Henebry
Carol Sente (Rep.)

Members Absent

Pat Hartshorn
Steve Wilder

Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Staff

Hannah Rosenthal

Recap Subcommittee Recommendations

David Henebry shared a document with ballistic glazing ratings to address a question about ballistic glazing that was raised at the December 15, 2015 Task Force meeting. He summarized the last meeting, noting that the Task Force recommended the adoption of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and Federal Emergency Management Agency 428 (FEMA 428) standards. Since the last meeting, he has spoken with several other architects about FEMA 428 who concluded that FEMA 428 is not mature enough to use as a code. It is so broad that depending on the architect and the quality of the guidance, it could be more confusing than helpful. Mr. Henebry said that the Task Force should keep it as a recommended reference and not take it any further. Representative Carol Sente asked if the CPTED design requirements would be satisfactory by themselves or if there is an applicable section that the Task Force could point people to. Mr. Henebry said that CPTED was created by a private security organization. FEMA 428 references CPTED. The Task Force adopted the basic principles in CPTED as guiding principles but not as a code. Mr. Henebry said he was pushing for a baseline because he knows that many architects continue to design bad schools. He reiterated that these guidelines, if followed, will require people to spend more money. Representative Sente emphasized that the Task Force is saying that these are best practices for school districts and their architects, not mandates. She asked if the Task Force wants to offer any items that are less costly or if there are a few things that the Task Force can suggest for school districts to think about. Her firm used to do police design and they would identify lower cost items for communities that could not spend a lot of money. She can ask for help to identify low cost improvements for schools. Subcommittee members discussed products that could make a difference such as panels and ballistic film.

Robert Bernat agreed with the other Subcommittee members that they cannot add mandates because there is no money or political will. He asked if it is possible to instead require school districts and private and parochial schools to read the Task Force's written product. Representative Sente said she think they will read it even if they are not instructed to, but she would happy to sponsor or co-sponsor a bill. She has an engaged group of superintendents in her district and can pass the idea by them. Dr. Bernat said that an instruction will at least ensure that schools and school districts have the tools. He thinks this is the best alternative the Subcommittee will come up with. He would eventually like to see the "See, Hear and Speak Up" policy included as a tool. Representative Sente noted that they could also include "Run, Hide, Fight," which is provided by the federal government.

Mr. Henebry said that the dates he included in the recommendations were his reasonable expectations. He wanted to set deadlines because physical plant improvements will otherwise be pushed under the rug until the next event happens. For new schools, the changes would be made immediately. If the design of a new building started before the municipality adopted the new code, the design falls under the last code. Schools can look at the new code and incorporate the changes if they choose but they do not have to. Mr. Henebry said that some school boards will differentiate between what they have to do and what they can do. Many superintendents have asked him what is required so that their school districts can at least get that done. Mr. Henebry said that a sub-code that districts have to follow is probably a decade down the road and will likely be similar to one of the peripheral codes that have been adopted. Representative Sente expressed concern with the one size fits all approach. She noted that a school district down south has a higher likelihood of disasters like flooding or tornadoes than active shooter incidents. Subcommittee members discussed politically-motivated attacks, including the incident in San Bernardino. Dr. Bernat noted that the "See, Hear and Speak Up" memo does not address politically-motivated attacks but he thinks that it should.

Open Discussion and Next Steps

Subcommittee members wondered who will read the Task Force's products. Representative Sente said that the Task Force may want to add a third mandate, which is that school districts have to read the reports. The Subcommittee also talked about outlining the sections schools should look at in FEMA 428.

Representative Sente said she would like to run the costs by the superintendents in her district, as she thinks they understand the differences throughout the state. Representative Sente said that the Subcommittee should identify "low-level," "better," and "best practice" recommendations for new schools and existing schools. She said that many school districts are looking for money from the state, but it would be unforgivable for a wealthy school to wait until 2040 before making changes. Still, she thinks it is important that Subcommittee members understand the implications of what they are asking districts to do. They need to identify what deadlines are too soon and what deadlines are reasonable.

Representative Sente asked Mr. Henebry what three to five things he would say are highest impact things schools should have. Mr. Henebry said that for most schools, the highest impact change would be designing how to control traffic approaching the school. He would also recommend applying the CPTED principles to existing schools. Mr. Henebry explained that cameras do a great job recording events and are helpful in identifying bullying and curtailing threats, but they have a limited benefit in active shooter incidents. Sandy

Hook had cameras. Dr. Bernat added that pull stations are valuable for notifying police officers. Mr. Henebry noted that fire departments say they can enter any building, but they would have a hard time getting through a properly prepared entrance. Subcommittee members concluded that security professionals should complete the renovations and that maintenance people should not put up the blue boxes. Dr. Bernat said he will find out how much the blue boxes cost. Mr. Henebry confirmed that there is no one make or single vendor for these items. Mr. Henebry said he will add blue boxes to the physical plant recommendations and he will identify principles from FEMA 428.

Dr. Bernat noted that many of these recommendations are technical. He asked if the Subcommittee could add commentary in plain English for superintendents, assistant superintendents, school board members and principals. If they are mandated to read the recommendations, Dr. Bernat said that it would be useful to give the readership background information. Mr. Henebry said he can add footnotes. Representative Sente said that she could be helpful in this area, as she has experience putting architects' language into layman language.

Representative Sente said that the Task Force will need ISBE's support in drafting a bill if it is going to be in this session. Regarding sponsorship of the bill, Dr. Bernat said that he had dinner with Senator Tom Cullerton, who is also on the Task Force. Dr. Bernat asked if the Subcommittee will need the buy-in of the Task Force before moving forward. He said the mandate should go with the other two mandates. Ms. Rosenthal said that the clause in the report to the Governor and General Assembly would have to be modified. Representative Sente explained that the legislation can still be drafted but just held. When the Task Force reconvenes, the Subcommittee can ask for approval. Representative Sente said that telling school districts to read the documents by certain time should not be a problem and she thinks the Task Force can get the mandate through. Ms. Rosenthal clarified that there are two reports. The report with the mandates (Report 1) was sent to the Governor and General Assembly before January 1. The July report (Report 2) will include the recommendations the Subcommittee is considering. It is due to ISBE, not to the Governor and General Assembly. Dr. Bernat asked if it makes more sense for the Task Force to propose this mandate after the next session, when both reports are complete, as Report 1 requested that the legislature extend the Task Force for another year. Representative Sente asked what the protocol is after ISBE reads Report 2. She wonders if the Task Force needs ISBE's "blessing" to move forward with implementing the recommendations. Mr. Henebry said he thought that Report 2 would also be conveyed to the Governor and General Assembly. Representative Sente asked Ms. Rosenthal to have someone from ISBE call her.

The Subcommittee will reconvene on Tuesday, January 26 at 8:30 a.m. Representative Sente asked Subcommittee members if they would like any of the superintendents in her district to be on the call. She could host the meeting at the FGM Architects' office, at her office in Vernon Hills or at a neighboring school. She will look into the availability of the superintendents and architects and share the confirmed meeting information with Ms. Rosenthal.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.