



North Carolina Department of Public Safety

N.C. Center for Safer Schools

Pat McCrory, Governor

Frank L. Perry, Secretary

Governor’s Task Force on Safer Schools Hammond Business Place, Raleigh Sept. 18, 2014

Members

Robert Holland
Tyree Davis
Buddy Collins
Jim MacCallum
Tom Kilby
Wendy Jordan
Evonne Moore
Rob Kindsvatter
Luke Stancil
Mary Jane Ferguson
Donna White
Joe Pass
Ben Matthews
Greta Metcalf
Chip Hughes
Frank Perry

Guests

Doug Coley
David Huffman
Andrew Cagle
Mark Bridgeman
Mike Ollis
Tony Carver
Jeff White
Barbara Leland
Matt Knight
Dawn Johnson
Tony Lee
Jeff Rink
Diana Rodriguez
Jerusha Marsh
Mark Strickland
Mike Sprayberry
Ben Baughman
Rachel Johnson
Rep. Bryan Holloway
Rep. Marvin Lucas

Michelle Guarino
Danya Perry
Gary Bell
Robert West
Susan Robinson
Johnny Hawkins
JP Guarino
Pamela Boudah
John Tucker
Brian Neil
Don Cole
Freddy Johnson
John Dorman

Diana Kees
Kym Martin
Susie Reeves
Dick Hayes
Ricky Parks
Starr Barbaro

Staff

Jeff Goldsmith
J.R. Gorham
William Lassiter
Mike Anderson
Lisa Partin

- Chairman Chip Hughes called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m., and made a motion that the minutes from the last meeting be accepted. The motion was seconded by Ben Matthews and the motion passed. Chairman Hughes recognized the following guests: Sheriff Huffman, Rep. Bryan Holloway, Mike Sprayberry, Rep. Marvin Lucas, Andrew Cagle, Lt. Gary Bell, Major Robert West, Trooper Coley, Jeff Rink, Matt Knight, Tony Lee and Mark Strickland.

Chairman Hughes announced that the Center for Safer Schools will participate in a series of symposia beginning this month focusing on prevention and response to school violence.

Chairman Hughes introduced Secretary Frank Perry of the Department of Public Safety. Secretary Perry commended the Task Force and the Center on its outstanding work, and expressed appreciation to Dr. Ben Matthews, J.R. Gorham and William Lassiter for their contributions.

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Secretary Perry discussed that law enforcement within DPS takes gang threats seriously, and looks upon them as a threat to the security of the homeland. Secretary Perry briefly touched upon four recent very serious gang incidents in North Carolina, two of which involved kidnappings. He recognized Johnny Hawkins, director of Security Services in the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice, for the attention and commitment he brings to this initiative.

- **Executive Directors Report**

Executive Director Kym Martin recognized Diana Rodriguez and Jarusha Marsh from the Governor's Office.

Critical Incident Response Training has been completed in 90 local education agencies and the remaining counties have the video and scheduling is occurring to meet 100 percent completion. In addition, one hundred charter schools have been trained. Community Colleges are asking for the training as well.

The Critical Incident Response Training is in the process of being incorporated into the Basic Law Enforcement (BLET) training curriculum, which is basic training required for every first-time law enforcement officer. The approval process flows through the N.C. Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission and includes an October and December meeting, for a January adoption.

Funding received during the 2013 session of the General Assembly provided the ability to hire 200 SROs. School superintendents are being surveyed to determine which middle and high schools do not have an SRO and whether they would like to have one. Information should be received by the end of the week.

The anonymous reporting app is in the final negotiation phase with the vendor to determine whether they can meet specifications given funding availability. A decision will be made by the end of the calendar year.

Deputy director Starr Barbaro reported that the Center is working on two grants:

- 1) The first one is with the ABC Commission/Underage Drinking initiative using a program called Media Ready. This is an activity-based media literacy program designed to delay or prevent alcohol and tobacco use. This is an evidence-based program.
- 2) The second is a grant with GCC to provide critical incident response, safety and security planning for schools with special needs kids. The first pilot project will be at a school in Conover that serves kids ages three to 22 with severe mental and physical disabilities. This is a large school with 150 kids, set up in groups of eight, with one teacher and two aides per group. A full security assessment of this school will be completed in October.

- **Presentation**

The main presentation for the meeting was on the topic of gang involvement among school-age children. The presentation was in three parts: 1) understanding activities of gangs

among school-age children, 2) understanding the social and psychological aspects of gang membership among school-age children, 3) a four-person panel who answered questions from the Task Force and audience.

Jon Paul Guarino, the N.C. GangNET Administrator with the N.C. Highway Patrol and former gang officer with New Hanover County Sheriff's Office, provided a presentation on understanding what activities criminal gang members are involved in and how their activities affect the learning environment in schools. He described intimidation both in school, on the bus and in the neighborhood that can affect a student's performance in school, whether they are gang affiliated or not. He described both the process of entering a gang and the difficulty of leaving a gang.

The second presenter was Michelle Guarino, a licensed clinical social worker and the Crisis Unit Supervisor for the Chapel Hill Police Department. Her presentation addressed the psychological and social impact of gang involvement among youths and the corresponding effects on non-gang-involved students. This presentation focused on why kids join gangs and how this gang involvement impacts their lives by giving them the warped perception of power and respect.

The final element of the presentation allowed Mark Bridgeman, president of the N.C. Gang Investigator's Association and Lt. Michael Ollis, the School Safety Coordinator and gang officer with the Burke County Sheriff's Office, to join with the first two presenters to form a panel of experts to answer questions from the Task Force and audience.

- **Steering Committee Reports**

- Physical Security and Emergency Preparedness*

- Subcommittee chairman Sheriff Robert Holland acknowledged his appreciation to Secretary Perry for the letter sent to law enforcement throughout North Carolina regarding the Critical Incident in Schools training and also to Director Martin and her staff for their efforts in regard to this training. Sheriff Holland told those present that the word he heard used more than any other in the presentation was school resource officer. He encouraged counties to use SROs, and for the state to continue to provide funding for SROs.

- Ricky Parks with the Center discussed the lockdown drill coordinated by local emergency management at a Nash County / Rocky Mount School. Parks said the drill was very realistic, testing the policy the school had in place, and it worked very well.

- School Climate*

- Subcommittee chairman Dr. Ben Matthews reported that the subcommittee plans to focus in the coming year on ways to promote a positive school climate and alternatives to suspension.

- Mental Health and Students with Special Needs*

- Subcommittee Chairman Greta Metcalf reported that the subcommittee during its last meeting reviewed the action steps assigned to DHHS in the Report to the Governor.

Members addressed what school districts can do, and what parents can do, such as addressing school safety plans, and creating blended funding streams. The committee felt its focus in regard to the school safety plan issue can be part of the intervention piece. Chris Minard was asked by SAMSA to develop a module addressing the role of schools with suicide prevention and intervention. A protocol is being developed to recognize those early warning signs and intervene quickly and have a community collaborative approach so the child can get the services they need.

The committee is also working on the kindergarten assessment done by the pediatrician that addresses behavioral concerns. Eventually sixth grades will have an assessment which addresses middle school readiness.

In August an event was co-hosted with DPI and Smokey Mountain Center for the Carolina Network for mental health in schools. The purpose of the group is “connecting schools and school personnel with mental health providers.” One major focus of the meeting was identifying ways to combine Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and school mental health services (SMH).

- **Partnering Agencies Updates**

Department of Public Safety

John Dorman with **Emergency Management** presented a slideshow to demonstrate what schools would be required to complete for the web-based emergency tool. Dorman updated the Task Force to the concept for the school plan he first introduced six months ago. Two applications are being created: one is the digital school risk management planning tool and the other is the school emergency response plan. Floor plans are being collected from 2,600 schools and these plans will be digitized and managed through the emergency management office. A risk management portal is also being developed to provide information to counties regarding physical and environmental hazards.

William Lassiter, Deputy Commissioner for **Juvenile Justice**, informed the Task Force that the National Partnership for Juvenile Services conference is coming up in October in Greensboro, with more than 800 people registered from 48 states and 13 countries. Lassiter will be conducting a four-hour bullying presentation on the first day and some of the accomplishments of the Center for Safer Schools will be highlighted.

As a follow-up to the earlier gang presentation, Lassiter reiterated that gang-involved youth can break free of gangs. Intervention within the first year is more successful in getting them out of the gang before it becomes part of their culture. Juvenile justice statistics show that Juvenile Crime Prevention Council programs that provide prevention and intervention strategies are successful almost 75 percent of the time in getting gang-involved youths out of gangs.

Department of Justice

Mark Strickland with the **N.C. Justice Academy** reported that very good results have

occurred with the money allocated for school resource officers this year. One hundred forty one SROs have been trained this year, and there are two classes left with 18 in each class. This will result in a total of 177 SROs receiving basic training.

On Sept. 2 a Stakeholders Symposium was held in Salemburg. Representatives from the departments of Justice, Public Instruction, Public Safety and Health and Human Services joined to discuss how to make our schools safer. Strickland thanked Mike Anderson from the Center for Safer Schools for coordinating this symposium. Mental health issues, bullying and the role of the SRO were some of the topics. Two more symposia are scheduled for Sept. 29 in Dallas and Sept. 30 in Asheville.

Department of Health and Human Services

Rob Kindsvatter, the director of **Early Childhood Development and Early Education** at DHHS, reported that while visiting childcare facilities for children ages 0-12 (of which there are 7,200 in North Carolina), he has found one of the biggest issues for teachers is dealing with kids with challenging behaviors. Across the state, 21 specialists work with these facilities to help keep these kids in school. Data from last year shows that of the children identified as having a challenging behavior, 99 percent were able to stay in class. Of those children who required an intervention, 95 percent of kids were able to remain in class.

Susan Robinson with the **Division of Mental Health**, reported that within the last year 4,000 people were trained in mental health first aid, a one-day training that teaches people how to recognize the signs and symptoms of a mental health issue. Robinson reported that there are now more than 138 instructors across the state. DHHS has received \$500,000 from the legislature to use for mental health first aid training.

Robinson also reported that the first cohort of 30 licensed practitioners trained in child psychotherapy (evidence-based practice) is complete. The training is 18 months long and can be home or clinic-based.

Department of Public Instruction

Dr. Ben Matthews with the **Department of Public Instruction** reported that he took part in presenting the lockdown exercise that occurred in the Nash/Rocky Mount school to the State Board of Education, where he also presented other issues regarding school safety, and Chris Minard presented the Mental Health Report.

Dr. Matthews distributed a handout announcing the 19th Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health. Chris Minard with DPI and Mike Anderson with the Center were invited to present during this conference on *Understanding the Role of School Resource Officers* and *Understanding the Schools' Role in Suicide Prevention*.

Dr. Matthews updated the Task Force on panic alarms, indicated that as of Sept. 10 an additional 500 requests for panic alarms had been received. As of the end of last school year, 1,332 schools had installed panic alarms. The final application period is Dec. 1.

- **New Business**

Director Martin announced the next meeting will be December 11th.

Jim MacCallum moved to adjourn the meeting, with a second by Luke Stancil. The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.