

MINUTES
SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Thursday, January 18, 2024
- TIME:** 3:00 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW55
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Lent, Vice Chairman Toews, Senators Den Hartog, Nichols, Carlson, Herndon, Lenney, and Semmelroth
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Ward-Engelking
- NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies, and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.
- CONVENED:** **Chairman Lent** called the Senate Education Committee (Committee) to order at 3:01 p.m.
- RS 30891:** **Relating To School Boards of Trustees (Board).** **Senator Herndon** stated that this legislation made a small change to Idaho Code § 33-510 which related to what constituted a quorum at a school board meeting. He stated that the proposed change to Idaho Code § 33-510 could be found on line 25 of page 1. The code stated that a majority of the members of the Board constituted a quorum in order for the Board to do business. The majority of the members of the Board was three out of five members. This proposed change stated that a quorum must consist of a majority of the currently filled seats in order to conduct business. **Senator Herndon** stated that this issue came up in a school district in his legislative district this summer. This school district only had three out of five seats filled on the school board which meant that if one of those three could not attend the meeting, then business could not be conducted. This change allowed school districts like the one in his legislative district to still conduct business.
- MOTION:** **Senator Toews** moved to send **RS 30891** to print. **Senator Nichols** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.
- PRESENTATION:** **State Department of Education. Mike Munger, Program Manager, School Security**, gave a brief overview on school safety and security. **Mr. Munger** stated that his program made five goals out of the Idaho School Safety and Security Program (ISSSP) Statutory Mandates (Attachment 1, Page 3). He reported that vulnerability assessments were completed in schools every three years and further explained they were currently on track to catch up on delays that happened during the COVID-19 years. **Mr. Munger** stated the program provided the information gathered in the assessments to the schools. He reported that there were four statewide vulnerabilities seen. Those were behavioral threat assessment, uneven school resource officer capacity, confidential reporting gaps, and persistent security infrastructure weaknesses. They were working to solve these vulnerabilities by implementing behavioral threat assessment training, Idaho Association of School Resource Officers (IDASRO) revitalization, "See Tell Now" Statewide Confidential Hotline, and Securing Our Future (SOF) grant program.
- Mr. Munger** reported on the statewide solution of School Resource Officer (SRO) support. He stated that there were approximately 200 SRO's statewide. There was an ongoing effort that determined what activities SRO's were doing and what their assignments looked like. He stated SRO training standards were currently in development and they were working closely with IDASRO to create these. **Mr.**

Munger also discussed the first SRO annual conference in 2024. This conference allowed SRO's to be trained together and to discuss what they were seeing at their schools.

Mr. Munger reported that the use of the "See Tell Now" confidential hotline had increased and was a good thing. He showed a graph that outlined what the tip severity was from "See Tell Now" (Attachment 1, p. 12). In 2023, 14 of the tips sent to "See Tell Now" were marked as "critical" with a direct threat to the lives of students. He stated that each of these tips had a story about a real child's life and were taken very seriously.

Mr. Munger addressed the need for grants to help improve high level security concerns (Attachment 2). Last legislative session, a \$20 million grant was approved for funds to invest in facility security throughout the State. He stated that this grant was used in phases. Phase 1 included allocating \$20,000 to each Idaho school to address vulnerabilities found during the vulnerability assessment. The vulnerability targets that were identified were access control, emergency communications, life safety systems, and security cameras. The largest vulnerability target that schools used their funding for was access control. This vulnerability target included fixing doors and making these doors more secure for those entering the building. This phase was completed with a total funding award of about \$13,000,000. Phase 2 opened for applications the next week for any additional vulnerabilities schools had found.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Lenney asked where the State was with teachers and school staff being able to personally carry for safety. **Mr. Munger** stated that they were at about the same spot as last year with this issue. This issue largely rested with local school boards and few had heard this issue. **Mr. Munger** stated that he was happy to assist these local school boards with training and screening efforts.

Senator Semmelroth asked about the 200 SROs in the State and if this number was enough for the schools. **Mr. Munger** replied that it depended on the role of the SRO. He stated that the general consensus of school administrators was they would like more SRO's.

Senator Nichols asked if there were any schools that were hiring private businesses for their security. **Mr. Munger** replied that he had heard that there were some schools that were hiring third party providers, but it was very rare. He stated that this was not verified. Some schools used these third parties for patrol of buildings at night. **Senator Nichols** asked Mr. Munger to find out which schools were using third party providers for security. **Mr. Munger** stated that he would find out and get back to the Committee. **Senator Herndon** stated that he saw some nodding heads in the Committee room when they were discussing third party security and asked if anyone in the room was able to answer this question. **Matt Freeman**, Executive Director, State Board of Education, replied that Twin Falls School District was the only district he was aware of that used third party providers for security.

Senator Herndon asked how many people worked with Mr. Munger for school security. **Mr. Munger** replied that he had four analysts, one part-time administrative assistant, and the "See Tell Now" coordinator. **Senator Herndon** asked what would be the next big step in an ideal world for school security efforts. **Mr. Munger** stated that they had a statutory mandate to support higher education and they fell below the expectation in this area. Additionally, the vulnerability assessment was the foot in the door with schools, but most change came from sitting down with the school district for consultation. He stated that these assessments were lengthy and required more analysts, as each analyst currently had 150-200 schools.

Senator Den Hartog expressed appreciation for the analysts getting back on track after falling behind during the COVID-19 years. She also thanked him for the information on what the grant money had been used for in schools in the State.

Senator Herndon stated that Lake Pend Oreille School District adopted a model with an SRO, armed security officer (ASO), and were using consultation to work towards school security. He asked if this was a good model. **Mr. Munger** stated that whatever worked best for that individual school district was the best model for them. He stated he did not think State level oversight was necessary for everything if the local school district felt like their system was working and were willing to work with the State School Security Program to evaluate vulnerabilities.

Senator Nichols asked if there were any school districts who were using biometric data with security. **Mr. Munger** stated that biometric data was not asked about in the vulnerability assessment so he was not aware of any. **Senator Nichols** asked if they were able to find out if biometric data was being used. **Senator Nichols** stated that she could provide a list of what she was specifically thinking of as biometric data. **Mr. Munger** stated that he could do a survey on this because if it was included in a vulnerability assessment it would take another three years to receive those answers as that was how often these assessments were completed.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Lent** adjourned the meeting at 3:39 p.m.

Senator Lent
Chair

Lisa Stein
Secretary

Madison Schrader
Asst. Secretary