

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Friday, March 09, 2018
TIME: 8:00 A.M.
PLACE: Room EW41
MEMBERS: Chairman VanOrden, Vice Chairman McDonald, Representatives Shepherd, Boyle, Clow, Mendive, Kerby, Cheatham, Amador, DeMordaunt, Moon, Syme, Ehardt, McCrostie, Toone, Gannon(5)
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Boyle, DeMordaunt, Syme, Gannon(5)
GUESTS: None

Chairman VanOrden called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

Brian Armes, School Safety And Security Program Manager, Division of Building Safety, gave an overview of what the School Safety and Security Office does. He said the goals were developed from the intent language of Idaho Code § 33-5902. One goal added this year is to research and develop effective practices. Mr. Armes also explained the structure of the agency does. The staff include the manager, an administrative assistant, and three regionally-based analysts in the Coeur d'Alene area, the Meridian area, and the Pocatello area. Mr. Armes said the agency will have assessed the security of 375 schools by the end of the year, and \$82,900 worth of radio equipment was donated and placed in schools.

Mike Munger, regional analyst for South-west Idaho, explained the strategies used for assessment. There are 650 points of assessment in three areas, including the facility, the school community, and the school operations, or how things are being done on a day-to-day basis, said Mr. Munger. After an assessment, the agency provides the school with an exit interview and an executive summary and observation spreadsheet, both of which are protected from public disclosure, said Mr. Munger. The goal is to have strategies for improvement in security and safety. The radio component has helped several schools, he added.

Mr. Armes said consulting is very time intensive. The agency offers prioritization assistance, which is the most effective for the cost, infrastructure and operations consulting for communication, and operational plans consulting, he said. The agency also offers safety training, said Mr. Armes. Federal funding is available from FEMA if the school is compliant. Safety training can be included in professional development for school personnel, he added. The agency also trains schools on behavioral threat assessment techniques, to address someone with a behavior of concern and how the community addresses the concern. Additional support provided by the agency helps with school and community outreach and interagency coordination. Mr. Armes said the National School Safety Association, which represents school safety in the state, meets once a month to share best practices.

In response to questions from the committee, **Mr. Armes** said the National Association of School Resource Officers offers specialized training beneficial in a school environment. By state statute, the district school boards have the most responsibility for the safety of students, said Mr. Armes. The training of students is best left to the local control of the school districts, he added. Mr. Armes said balancing security with feelings of safety is a challenge. Schools want to invite the community in. He said early detection and behavioral assessment are good tools, because in the majority of school shootings many people knew the student had threatened violence. Mr. Armes said Idaho should look at a statute to address electronic threats. Mr. Armes said the agency works closely with principals and groups outside of the Security Advisory Board. Idaho Code §33-5902 and §33-5903, which exempts safety reports from public disclosure, is the only local protection at this time, he said. Mr. Armes said the recommendations the agency gives schools varies widely, from policy to infrastructure recommendations, and depends largely on the age of the school building. If the recommendation is related to infrastructure, and the school is not able to implement the infrastructure recommendation, sometimes there is a lower cost infrastructure solution or a policy solution which can be implemented instead. Mr. Armes gave an example of a low-cost safety measure for safety improvement to infrastructure. For schools which do not have a main office at the front door, the school could relocate the office or use a site-based doorbell ringer with a camera, said Mr. Armes. He said the decision to arm teachers must be made at the local level, and the local school board has that power. The decision depends partly on the proximity of law enforcement, he added.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

Representative VanOrden
Chair

Jenifer Cavaness-Williams
Secretary