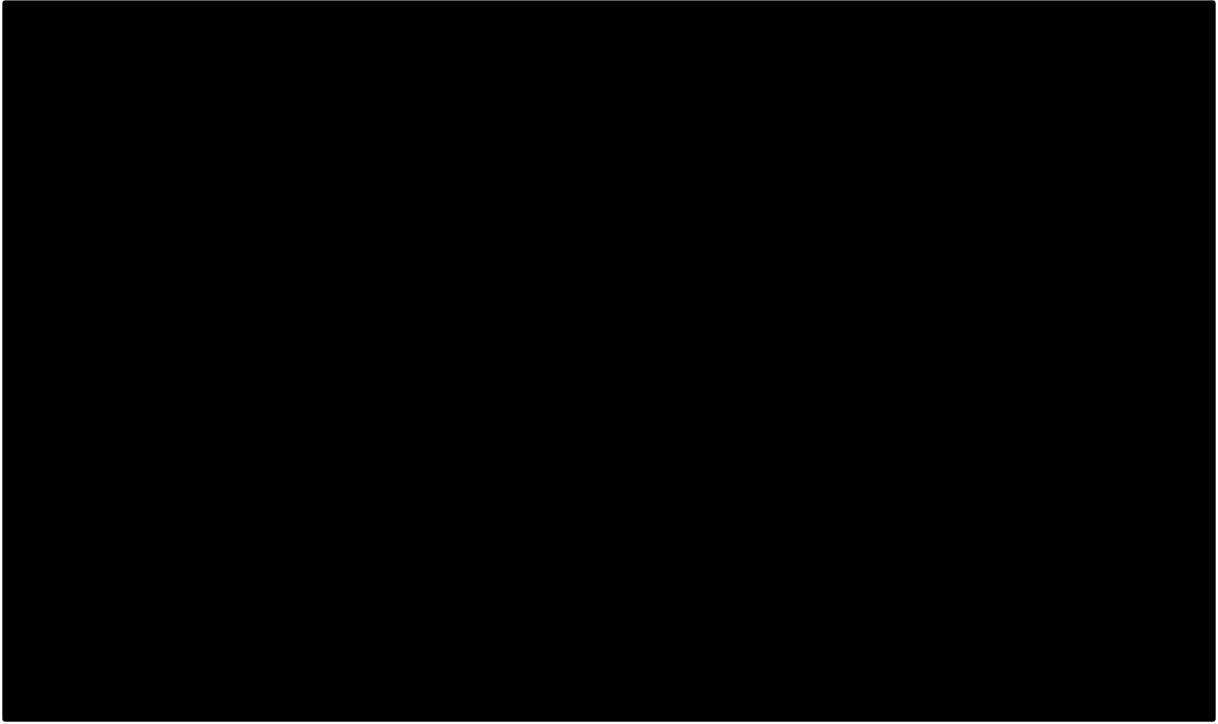


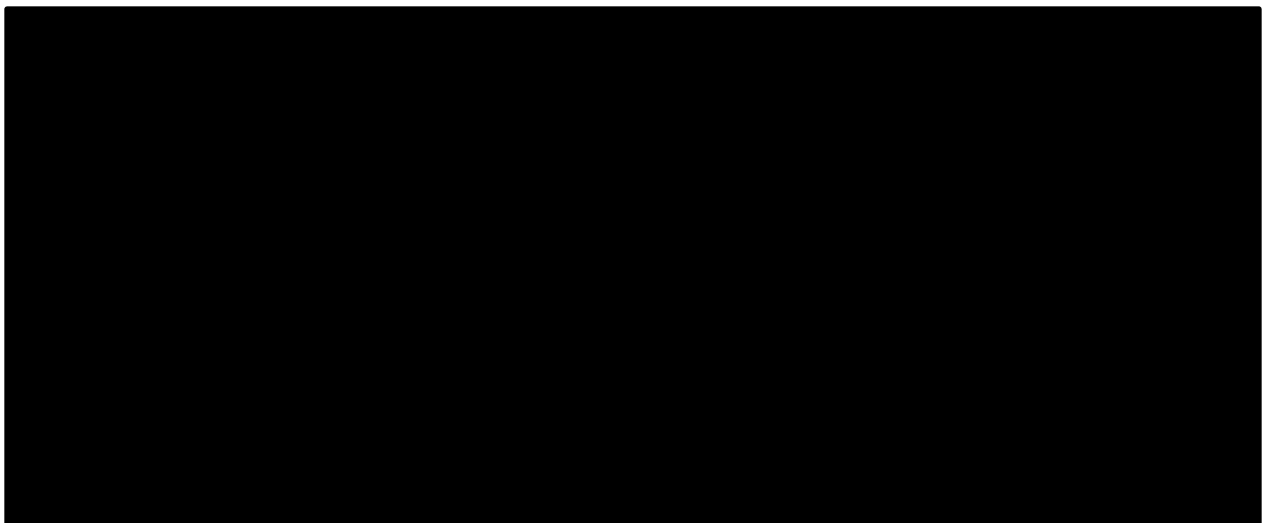
School Safety Committee Report

September 26, 2013

Members:



Acknowledgements



Goals of committee

In the wake of Sandy Hook and other school shootings we need to ask the question 'are we doing enough to protect students and employees against these incidents, and if not, what more could we do, and what more should we do.'

Ideally, the goal from these meetings is to be confident that we have taken all reasonable measures (or devise a plan to get there) to protect employees and children against an active shooter in our buildings. There is no doubt that "reasonable" is where we will have considerable and perhaps vigorous discussions.

Understandably, safety is on the minds of students and staff. Last year, a survey of ██████ high schoolers revealed safety as their top issue. This year, our committee learned of the relief some employees felt when they were informed that they had alternatives to "lock down" under the ALICE concept.

Unfortunately, we can no longer just assume this won't happen in ██████. Last April, a shooter entered Cincinnati LaSalle Catholic HS. Tragically, the student shot himself in what the media called "a suicide." LaSalle, was a whisker way from becoming the next school tragedy. If a troubled student can get a gun in LaSalle, it CAN also happen in ██████.

Confidentiality

While our committee meetings were public meetings, the open meetings law permits security details to be discussed privately in executive session. It was necessary to do that on occasion. Likewise, it is necessary that certain elements of this report remain confidential so that our plans for protecting employees and students and vulnerabilities that we discovered to not become known by potential adversaries. The confidential aspects of this report are included in an Executive Appendix which is not for public disclosure.

Participants are be bound to maintain confidentiality for discussion items that are identified as confidential. While curiosity is understandable, we must request that citizens and the media respect the fact that certain things, if revealed, would make ██████ students and employees less safe. None of us want to put employees or students at any greater risk. We need to agree to keep confidential those things which would help and adversary.

Committee Work and Findings (Non-Executive)

The committee was comprised of representatives from the ██████ Police Department, the ██████ Fire District, School Board and Administration, school employees, and parents. In addition to emergency management personnel from ██████ the committee also benefited from other experts. ██████ is an emergency management professional at ██████ shared her expertise in working with troubled individuals and families. The committee also engaged the services of ██████ from the Church Security Alliance.

In addition to their own expertise some committee members informed themselves through other sources, including training offered by Ohio's Attorney General, the Ohio School Protection Plan, the State of Virginia's investigation into the Virginia Tech shooting and other sources.

The committee held several meetings to educate ourselves with respect to the active shooter/killer problem and then to formulate plans.

The committee also commissioned a School Safety Assessment Team to evaluate each building. Mr. [REDACTED] served as the assessment team and performed walkdowns and interviewed building staff. It proved to be particularly useful to include outside experts on the team. [REDACTED] of the Church Security Alliance, and [REDACTED] who is a security specialist at [REDACTED], were experienced in doing these types of assessments. Security experts view situations and consider possibilities that do not occur many of us who do not think in the realm that they must to protect their clients. In addition, familiarity with the surroundings and the routine of operations can naturally cause one to overlook potential problem areas. The assessments generated many valuable recommendations. Many of the team's findings have resulted in committee recommendations. Because of the nature of their findings and recommendations, their report is confidential and included as an executive appendix to this report.

How best to handle active shooters in the school setting is an evolving art and there are no easy answers. While everyone agrees that kids must be kept safe, school boards find themselves in the impossible position of balancing societal attitudes towards gun control and self-defense, security and freedom, and the expense to prepare for an event that we never expect to occur.

Our public report presents several recommendations as to how we can first prevent an active shooter/killer situation. Next we discuss preparations - what can be done in advance that will protect employees and students and minimize casualties if the unthinkable occurs. Since no amount of prevention or preparedness can stop a determined killer, we also present some strategies for responding to the event and for rescuing victims. Not every item we present in the report reaches the status of being a "recommendation;" however, all of the items are presented and should be reviewed from time to time and reconsidered. Timing, events, and funding that are beyond what our committee could know will necessarily determine the implementation schedule for this work.

The committee investigated and discussed the active shooter/killer threat in two contexts – insider and outsider. An outsider is someone who does not have routine access to school buildings for example a parent, former student or employee, or citizen. An insider is someone who has routine access to the building typically an employee or a student. In assessing whether to implement, and to what extent to implement, particular measures it is important to recognize that what impedes outsiders may be entirely ineffective with respect to insiders and vice-versa. It is also important to recognize that some measures can be bypassed in situations with multiple assailants or accomplices. Because of these complexities it is important for the board and administration to seek the advice of security professionals when implementing the items in this report.

This report presents several recommendations that a consensus of committee members believe will improve safety for employees and students. The committee acknowledges that we did not evaluate the cost, the potential risk reduction, or the difficulty in implementing the various recommendations. As such, we understand that the Board and Superintendent will need to consider these factors when determining the feasibility and timing for implementing these recommendations.

Prevention

Prevention of an active shooter event is of course the most desirable of all circumstances. The committee spent considerable effort discussing the intervention activities of district social worker [REDACTED] and School Resource Officer [REDACTED] with troubled students and their families. In addition, the committee members heard and read about the reports from shooting incidents such as Columbine and Virginia Tech.

What is consistent and apparent in school shootings by troubled/mentally ill individuals is that they fit a particular profile and typically leave a trail of information describing their troubles and intents. The Virginia Tech Review Panel studied several shootings in the US and found these red flags: violent drawings and writings, anger management issues, fascination with weapons or militant activity, boasting or practicing fighting or combat, socially withdrawn, depression, stalking, disciplinary problems, imitation of other murderers in appearance, victim mentality, strange and aberrant behavior, paranoia, cruelty, history of aggressive or destructive behavior, emotionless, use of drugs particularly psychotropic drugs. If parents, teachers, counselors or school administrators can identify these warning signs and problems and successfully intervene, there is every likelihood we can prevent the utter despair that prompts these individuals to kill others and themselves.

With the knowledge that there is no guarantee we can always detect and prevent a potential school killing, the committee generated several recommendations aimed at identifying troubled individuals and intervening to assist them.

Parental monitoring of children

The profiles of school shooters indicate they are usually quite open regarding their intentions. They will write articles, send text messages, post on Facebook, and leave other documented warning signs indicating their violent intent. In some cases these signs were undetected and in other cases they were ignored or not taken seriously. Prevention involves discovering these warning signs and then intervening in the life of the potential perpetrator.

A consensus of the committee believes the district would reduce risk and possibly prevent violent incidents at school if parents are informed and engaged. The district should provide parents information on these best practices:

- Parental monitoring their children's Facebook and on-line activity
- Disallow on-line activity unless children provide parents with account names and passwords
- Inform parents of the warning signs/profile of previous assailants
- Provide communication avenues and resources for parents to identify children meeting profile characteristics

The committee also discussed these items but did not reach consensus sufficient for these to be considered a recommendation:

- Encourage parents to monitor their children's text and phone messages
- Permit students to have cell phones in school provided they have provided their parents with online passwords.
- Implement anonymous reporting of suspicious activity to the School Resource Officer
- Establish a parent support group for children with problems

Hardening the Target

The most challenging aspect of a school shooting situation is the time between when an assailant arrives and law enforcement responds. The committee presents several recommendations designed to make entry into buildings more difficult and time consuming for an assailant. Increasing the amount of time required for an assailant to enter the building provides more time for building occupants to react and for law enforcement to arrive.

It is important to recognize that while these measures may delay some assailants, there may be little or no protection in situations with multiple assailants, or when the assailant is someone routinely granted access to the building (such as an employee or student). Therefore, careful study is advised in implementation of these recommendations.

The committee reached consensus on these recommendations:

- Install security glass in exterior doors and/or windows
- Install a key card system for entry and key control
- Establish a daily routine to monitor doors to assure they are locked and secure

The committee also discussed these items but did not reach consensus sufficient for these to be considered a recommendation:

- Install key card access to mechanical and electrical rooms
- Install metal detectors

Election Day Vulnerability

The committee identified a potential vulnerability associated with allowing election day voting in school buildings on school days. On Election Day, numerous unscreened visitors are granted open access to schools that act as polling places. The committee recommends using gates or other devices to segregate voters from student areas of the building. Alternatively, the district could disallow use of the building for voting or close the building to students on Election Day.

Visitor Control

The committee believes that there are several measures the district should implement to screen and control visitor access to school buildings.

The committee reached consensus on these recommendations:

- Train building front desk staff for risk awareness
- Assure building front desk staff have visibility of visitors as they approach the building
- Train all staff on visitor procedures
- Train staff to challenge visitors for ID
- Perform cross-check of parent/guardian data with student data on arrival (positive identification of visitors)
- Address vulnerability presented by unscreened outsourced personnel
- Eliminate student as visitor's first contact

The committee also discussed these items but did not reach consensus sufficient for these to be considered a recommendation:

- Use visitor key passes to log entry and exit with picture badge
- Require ID/security checks at front desk
- Provide escort for visitors from the office to their destination

Information Sharing

By promoting the sharing of information internally, and with parents, when significant circumstances relating to health and safety arise the district can reduce risk. The committee recommends increasing student and teacher awareness of factors related to school tragedies and encouraging them to refer those circumstances to school administrator for follow-up. The committee also considered increasing avenues for student reporting such as creating a hotline for reporting bullying and similar circumstances.

Counseling

Counseling can reduce the risk of a school tragedy by providing intervention and resolving problems before they escalate to the point of tragedy. Counseling is only effective if problems are identified and referrals are made.

The committee recommends the following actions to promote identification and referral to counseling staff.

- Develop and communicate standards for referring students for counseling and coordination between teachers and counselors.
- Arrange monthly meetings between social worker, SRO, and Building counselors, building administrators to coordinate efforts
- Arrange quarterly meetings between social worker, SRO, and all counselors
- Consistent guidelines for when to contact social worker and SRO

Preparing

While preventing an assault at school is most desirable, we must acknowledge that in spite of best efforts no one can assure that every problem situation will be identified and resolved. Just as we take many actions to prevent a fire, we still take actions to be prepared for one. While fire inspections and fire safety rules and procedures prevent fires, we still conduct fire drills and install fire extinguishers so we are prepared should a fire appear. While we expect the preventative measures will make a fire very unlikely we still prepare. Likewise, we need to be prepared for the possibility that an active shooter/killer could gain access to our schools.

Planning

With respect to planning for assaults or shootings the committee has several recommendations.

- Assist every teacher/staff member with developing a security plan/checklist to increase ability to respond in a crisis
- Assure materials to barricade rooms are available, barricade kit
- Establish a district-wide security team or committee
- Establish a volunteer building emergency medical team and provide enhanced first-aid/CPR training
- Develop security plans and evacuation plans for large gatherings of parents/evening performance
- Develop security checklists/quick response checklist to quickly remind staff members how to respond
- Use inspections to assure compliance with procedures
- Customize response plans to include duties for building security team
- Repeat building safety and security assessments annually

Training

The committee believes it is important that the district create time to train employees about how to respond to an active shooter threat. In 2012, the district adopted the ALICE (alert, lockdown, inform, counter, evacuate) philosophy to improve the chances for survival. Unfortunately, training on this concept has not been completed at all school buildings. While the ALICE concept provides alternatives to the traditional “lockdown” approach to security situations, we believe it is necessary to also develop the classroom specific plans previously identified so that each employee has knowledge of the options most likely to be successful for their classroom.

The committee has these recommendations with respect to training:

- Provide security training for all staff (consider a safety day)
- Provide staff training on emergency plans including guidance/experience using them
- Provide ALICE training for staff and students in all buildings
- Establish a volunteer building safety/security team and provide enhanced training to assist in identifying security risks
- Consider training program offered by the Attorney General or other providers for building security team volunteers
- Continue district level safety committee meetings to advise Supt. and Board on best practices for building security
- Conduct annual drill including school staff, police, fire (consider including students)
- Assure substitute teachers are trained on safety/security and when hired through the pool are not strangers

Building changes

The committee identified several improvements that can be made to school buildings to make entry by an adversary more difficult and to aid in a response should a security situation arise. Many of the recommendations are the result of the School Safety Assessment Team’s work.

- Assign door numbers to each exterior door
- Put room numbers inside and outside of every door and cross-check with building floor plans.
- Modify building interiors for multiple layers of access/entry
- Assure perimeter of buildings are clear of obstructions
- Assure classroom windows provide clear view into classroom and have blinds that can be pulled in event of a security incident

- Install more video cameras, consider camera upgrades
- Perform preventative maintenance checks on building security features
- Develop checklist for emergency generators and procedure for restart
- Establish a method (and backup method) to issue a crisis alert to the building staff
- Install momentary contact push button master control for door locks
- Provide an intercom that is accessible at multiple locations within the building (investigate current phone system for PA ability)
- Provide additional walkie-talkies and two-way radios

Additionally the district should consider providing additional door lock control stations at a secondary location. State or federal grants may be available to provide financial assistance for building security improvements.

Response

If, despite all the best efforts to prevent and prepare, a shooter gains access to a school building, how will ██████████ personnel react during an assault or shooting incident? Unfortunately, the first notice that a shooter has gained access to a school building may likely be a gunshot. The district's current emergency plans do a fine job of establishing a command and control structure to manage the incident. ██████████ Police also have expertise in emergency management and would take control of the situation as soon as possible.

Of particular interest to the committee is what can be done immediately to minimize casualties during the time required to place an emergency call, dispatch that call, for law enforcement to arrive and gain entry to the building. If there is no interdiction, a shooter can create many casualties in a very short time.

The district should consider these recommendations to assure prompt notification of emergency services and to aid in response before/after police arrive:

- Assure land telephone lines are available and marked in case cell lines are blocked
- Provide additional two-way radios for staff communications in an emergency
- Provide intercom access from outside the building
- Install additional video cameras to observe event remotely
- Provide police access to school radio frequency
- Provide means to alert security team members (perhaps by pager or panic button at office)
- Train building security team to help implement ALICE and detailed security plans during an incident

The committee reached consensus and recommends the district request an increase police presence at school buildings by:

- Offering police and fire personnel free lunch at school, or suggesting they may take their lunch break in school buildings
- Being present at arrival and departure times
- Including random school visits in patrol routes

The increased presence will not only be a deterrent but also provides trained and armed personnel at key times during the school day.

The committee also debated three options with respect to stationing fully trained armed personnel in school buildings without coming to consensus. These options were:

- Provide at least one fully trained and armed uniformed police officer in every building

- Hire at least one fully trained and qualified and armed dual role employee (part security/part other duties) with previous police or military experience
- Permit building safety/security team members to volunteer for extended training to become fully trained and qualified to interdict a school assailant and to possess a firearm on school grounds

There is universal agreement that school shooters are madmen and are only stopped when armed personnel arrive to stop them. The best situation of all is to have armed persons already on-site and prepared to interdict a shooter. As one might expect, differing attitudes about gun safety and whether armed personnel should be permitted on school grounds reflect the national debate on this topic.

Some committee members, including the [REDACTED] Police, believe that only uniformed officers have sufficient training to interdict in these circumstances. Further, the [REDACTED] Police suggest there are legal and insurance underwriting issues that need to be addressed before armed (non-law enforcement) persons can carry a firearm in a gun free zone. They also point out that under the current tactics they employ for a school shooting situation any non-uniformed person displaying a firearm will be shot.

Other committee members, including board members [REDACTED], believe that the most effective response to a shooter in the building would be to have multiple employees trained and prepared to intervene with deadly force if necessary. They cite the Ohio Attorney General Opinion Letter issued January 29, 2013 as confirming that School Boards may allow employees to carry firearms. They also point out that school districts have liability if they fail to adequately protect students and that any company hiring armed security personnel face similar insurance issues.

Ultimately, an internal security team's response must be in conjunction with the police department. Today, the [REDACTED] Police response tactics do not accommodate the option of armed school personnel.

While there is no consensus on the best response in [REDACTED] today, police response tactics around the state are evolving and school district philosophies are changing. In March, Sidney City Schools Board of Education adopted a new safety plan where staff members trained by the Shelby County sheriff's office and selected by the district's administration will become part of a response team that has access to firearms. In July, The Edgewood School Board approved a plan to let principals, assistant principals, and others such as finance officers, carry guns in school after receiving peace officer training. Lakota and Centerville are investigating similar policies. [REDACTED] should continue to monitor trends and evaluate its options.

Rescue

The committee also considered measures that would provide quick response and assist rescue workers should a medical response ever be necessary. The committee recommends:

- Developing volunteer building emergency medical response teams
- Provide first-aid/cpr training for response teams, consider including students
- Assure appropriate emergency medical supplies are on hand. Request fire department assist with identifying emergency supplies that should be on-hand.

Appendix 1: The School Safety Assessment (executive)

Attachment 1: Attorney General Opinion Letter Regarding ORC 109.78

Attachment 1. Ohio Attorney General Opinion ORC 109.78



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January 29, 2013

James Irvine
Chairman
Buckeye Firearms Association

Via Email - jirvine@buckeyefirearms.org

Dear Jim,

In the aftermath of recent tragic school shootings, there is a growing national debate on whether local school boards should allow their employees to carry firearms. I've been asked whether Ohio law gives local school boards the authority to arm administrators, teachers, or other staff.

Ohio law does not prevent a local school board from arming an employee, unless that employee's duties rise to the level that he/she would be considered "security personnel." In other words, a school may allow a teacher to go armed on school property. But if that teacher is required to, in essence, become a security guard as well, the teacher must either have a basic peace officer certification from the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy or he or she must have 20 years of experience as a law enforcement officer. R.C. 109.78(D).

I do not believe that R.C. 109.78(D) applies to non-security personnel. Put simply, it is unlikely that the General Assembly intended this language to reach *every* school employee. Had they intended to do so, they would have simply said that no school may employ "*any person* who goes armed." Instead, the General Assembly's use of "special police officer, security guard, or other position" suggests that "other positions" applies to security personnel. Thus, a board of education or governing body of a school may give non-security personnel written authorization to carry a weapon onto the premises. R.C. 2923.122(D)(1)(a). That person, however, is still subject to the carry and conveyance restrictions under Ohio's Concealed Carry Laws. R.C. 2923.12.

Of course, how a school classifies a particular employee's duties is a question that can only be answered by the local school district's employment practices and policies. For example, in a time of crisis, every employee may be expected to help secure the children on the premises, but that does not necessarily mean that every employee is a security guard. Conversely, if the school were to require an assistant principal to perform

specific, routine security sweeps of the facilities, it might be functionally converting the position into one that falls under R.C. 109.78.

These are all fact-specific factors that will vary from school district to school district. That is why I believe this subject requires legislative review and hope the General Assembly will address this issue. This is an important question that is part of a wider public debate across Ohio.

Very respectfully yours,



Mike DeWine
Ohio Attorney General



Robert Fiatal
Executive Director
Ohio Peace Officers Training Commission