

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Place: Agency of Education, Secretary's Office

Address: 219 north Main Street, Barre, VT 05641

Date: October 16, 2018

Present:

Council Members: Brooke Olsen-Farrell, VSBA; David Manning, VPA; Jay Nichols, VPA; Erica Bornemann, VEM; Sunni Eriksen, VEM; Don Tinney, VT-NEA; Jeff Francis, VSA; Rob Evans (via phone), DPS/AOE.

Agency Staff: Daniel French, Maureen Gaidys.

Call to Order/Roll Call/Introductions

French convened the meeting at 11:14 a.m. and asked members to introduce themselves. Francis, Olsen-Farrell, Manning, Nichols, Bornemann, Eriksen, Tinney and Evans did so. French shared that Bornemann had been appointed chair and turned the meeting over to Bornemann.

Review attached Draft Report and Recommendations

Bornemann shared background for the Advisory Group and distributed Act 190 of 2018. She spoke about DPS testifying to the Senate and that the language was duplicative of what already existed, but that the House put the language back in. She noted the last page (36 of 41) – and that they are looking for a report on findings, any best practices and any necessary actions to ensure safety in Vermont schools. There was question on the due date of the report and if that was a typo. Bornemann explained that the language went into the bill in April/May and then there was the \$4 million of school safety grants that needed to go out and that took priority over getting this report done. Bornemann explained that they have asked about the report and are aware that it is drafted. Bornemann asked the group for feedback on the draft report. There was none. There was discussion on the five issues addressed by the act, resources and information guides for parents, school egress guides, and other resources on the VT School Safety website. It was further discussed that the idea is to explain the work that has been done, the work that is already in progress, what this group needs to accomplish, and what the legislature needs to do.

Bornemann spoke about the recommendations: 1) formalized and institute interim agreement on school egress and lockdown 2) having an emergency operations plan formalized in every school/district 3) schools having capacity to conduct behavioral threat assessments 4) and schools controlling access to their buildings through electronic access control systems.

Evans acknowledged Bornemann for the background provided and the best practice of the School Safety Center and commented that we are doing the right thing by bringing all the stakeholders together to have these conversations. Evans spoke about some impressive work that has been done around process but also on the planning side, the importance of collaboration with the VSA, VPA and VSBA, and staying true to the idea of an open and inviting educational environment, but at the same time ensuring safety. He also spoke about the

importance of prevention, that the Governor's Community Violence Task Force is doing similar work, and that he is ensuring that efforts are not duplicated across these groups.

Bornemann stressed that the group needs to be clear on the recommendation put forward. Evans spoke about pushing the envelope on conducting training and exercises to build competence so that drills are more option-based and that up until now there has not been a formal reporting process for this. French suggested this information be collected by the AOE, so that there is only one collection point. Tinney spoke about the drills being beyond a nuisance for classroom teachers and he asked about the types of drills and if there was a directive. Evans responded with the idea of recommendations, which require training and more time and that there would be an impact on the back end. Nichols asked about the legislative mandate to quantify drills and if this would stay as specified in statute. It was suggested that schools be given some level of creativity for option-based drills over mandating what type of drill is practiced. Tinney spoke about the decision making no longer resting in a single office and potential liability issues with identifying the right or wrong tactic.

Bornemann spoke about working in a changing environment and that guidance/support materials would be provided, that the group needs to be clear about the outcome, and that option-based drills are being incorporated to better support the decision-making mindset.

Francis asked if the option-based exercise is two exercises, one with faculty and staff and one with students. Manning spoke about his experience with this and emphasized that practicing with teachers and staff until they were comfortable is important. Francis concurred that record keeping of the drills should rest with the AOE and suggested a website survey. Lastly, Francis inquired about looking at the requirements of the schools and coordination with local emergency professionals and noted that the involvement of emergency responders would be at varying levels and wondered what legislation might say about preparedness of emergency responders.

Bornemann spoke about adding language for emergency services and incorporating them into the planning process and suggested aligning with one planning/response model or that the State looks at the promulgation of one method. There was discussion on confusion around this, standard response protocol and how this aligns with option-based responses, that greater clarity is needed, opportunity for minimum standard that schools could move beyond, that the current RFP and training available will offer clarity, and that the community would be best served to have our best thinking scale a model that is periodically revisited.

Manning spoke to second bullet, a school emergency operations plan, and that it is important to stress all hazards, and that it is important to stress not putting all resources into the school shooter scenario and saving some for the more common, daily hazards instead. It was noted that additional funding and resources will be available in the second half of the school year, the bigger issue is capacity at the district level.

Bornemann asked for additional comments and said that she would also welcome comments post-meeting. There was discussion on data on buildings around security, locked vs. unlocked, need to confirm this data, that access controls are not addressed, that threat assessment is a high

priority, that experience supports that this strategy works, that it is a continual process and an important priority, and the need to simplify and put our resources where they have the most impact.

Tinney spoke about defining capacity, minimum standard, professional development, not excluding paraprofessionals from professional development and implementation, role identification, requiring all school staff (bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians) to participate in this training.

Francis spoke about who was left out of the Advisory Group (VSA, VPA, VSBA) and asked for these education organizations to have time to explain to stakeholders what is being discussed here. There was discussion on defining “normal business hours” and using VSBIT to assist with the mandatory policy/guidelines. Chair Bornemann clarified that the education organizations were asking to share this with stakeholders prior to rolling out and cautioned about the time frame. There was discussion on having a nearly finished product before going to the Legislature.

Bornemann offered to work with Evans to tighten up the draft language and then will share this with the education organizations. French said he respected Evan’s professional judgement on dissemination. Bornemann spoke about the balance between being as clear and concise as possible and not leaving too much wiggle room for interpretation.

Bornemann asked if the group wanted another meeting or to work through this electronically. There were no clear indications on this. Bornemann said there would be a tentative date set to meet in November. French offered the resources of AOE to assist with this.

Adjourn

Bornemann adjourned that meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by Maureen Gaidys, Agency of Education.