**School Safety Advisory Committee**

**Retreat/Planning Ahead**

**August 7, 2018**

**ESD 121, Renton**

**9:00 – 3:00**

**GOAL FOR TODAY:** Develop a plan to recharter the School Safety Advisory Committee (SSAC)

**OBJECTIVES:** Understand the history of the SSAC in WA

Understand the current state of school safety, nationwide

Identify key stakeholders and issues for WA

Initiate a plan of action for the coming year.

Martin Mueller and Brian Smith welcomed participants to the School Safety Advisory Committee (SSAC) Retreat/Planning meeting day. They briefly reviewed the day’s agenda. Participants introduced themselves around the room. Martin also again noted and thanked our two risk pools, the WSRMP and Clear Risk Solutions for providing morning coffee and lunch for the day.

To open the retreat, there was a brief recap of the previous day’s 3rd Annual Safety Summit. Several of today’s participants had been in attendance; however, there were also several new participants. This time provided an opportunity to review the processes, discussion and results of the 3rd Summit. It also set the stage for this current SSAC Retreat and Planning session.

The group looked back at the establishment of the SSAC and at some of the changes throughout the years. It was noted that the SSAC was initially established, by statute, at the same time as the School Safety Center was established. [ESSB 61154, 2001](http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/lbns/2001-03Omni6153-S.SL.pdf) says that, *“The superintendent of public instruction shall participate in a* ***school safety center advisory committee*** *that includes representatives of educators, classified staff, principals, superintendents, administrators, the American society for industrial security, the state criminal justice training commission, and* ***others deemed appropriate*** *and approved by the school safety center advisory committee.”*

Initially called the *School Safety Center Advisory Committee*, the original advisory committee established operating procedures in 2001. Included in these procedures were committee selection procedures, chair selection, meeting dates and locations and for representation by additional associations and organizations on the committee. These original processes and procedures were revised in 2008, further spelling out the purpose of the Safety Center, its governance and membership, and meeting locations and timing.

In 2012, after reflection on its mission and discussion among its members, the committee renamed itself the *School Safety Advisory Committee*. This was done, in part, as recognition that the committee itself, included many partners and had undertaken many efforts beyond providing advice to the Safety Center, alone. Rather, The SSAC has provided advice and guidance to districts and schools through the Safety Center. SSAC functions, governance, membership, meeting times and locations were also revised.

At the time, the Advisory Committee also established its working definition of “school safety.” As defined by the **School Safety Advisory Committee**, the term **“school safety”** refers to and includes the critical and necessary environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place.

**School safety** supports student learning by creating and promoting a physically, emotionally, socially, and academically secure climate for students, staff, and visitors. A focus on **school safety** helps create a learning environment which has a positive impact on behavior, attendance/drop-out rates, and ultimately, academic achievement. It involves planning for the prevention, intervention, and mitigation of, and recovery from the variety natural, physical, social and technological threats to the school and the entire school community.

It was noted during this discussion that funding procedures for the Safety Center had changed over the years, but that funding amounts had not changed since 2001. In the original language, funding went directly to OSPI for both the Safety Center and for training funding for school administrators and school safety personnel. OSPI retained the Safety Center portion and contracted with the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) to provide training for school administrators and safety personnel. In 2011, funding was shifted to the CJTC, with the Safety Center allocation contracted back to OSPI. (*Currently*, all dollars are allocated to CJTC; however, all dollars are contracted back to OSPI to maintain the safety center web site and train administrators and school safety personnel.)

Two items are important to note:

* School safety considers all manner of threats and hazards: natural, technological, biological, and man-made/adversarial, and
* Over time, the legislature has given the SSAC tasks to perform. The annual Safety Summit is one example of such tasks.

With all of this as backdrop, participants considered the current state of “school safety” within Washington and nationwide. What have we seen or do we see here? What are other states doing? And ultimately, how do we brand “school safety” in Washington moving forward?

Nationally, in particular as a result of recent school shooting tragedies, there have been different studies and proposals coming out of different states. Guns – weapons, in general – is a major topic of discussion. Arming school staff has been proposed and is being considered in some states, and even locally within WA. It was noted that both our risk pools, the WA State Risk Management Pool (WSRMP) and Clear Risk Solutions indicated that they will not insure districts which allow for armed teachers.

With respect to “safety centers”, Mike gave a brief overview of a recent study out of VA. Across the country, many states have resources analogous to our WA School Safety Center. However, they are housed in a variety of institutions and agencies, and are funded at very different rates across the country. Some of this was also captured in the ESSB 6620 [WSIPP Report](http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/Reports/607) which was discussed during the Summit.

With such diversity across the country, Mike also pointed to the National School Safety Center Alliance model ([NSSA State Safety Center Model](http://www.sbe.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/meetings/Jul-2018/1204%20NSSA%20State%20School%20Safety%20Center%20Standards_final%20draft_June%202018.pdf)) for state safety centers. The model provides guidelines for evaluating existing school safety center efforts. As developed, the guidelines are not all inclusive, but do begin to establish the common understandings and vocabulary which were mentioned earlier.

Several issues came out of the discussion. Accountability is an issue. There is neither mandate nor system to ensure accountability for comprehensive safety plans, required trainings, etc. There is also a widely recognized need for greater mental health resources and supports for schools. The school mapping system is a major issue for everyone concerned. In addition, participants noted the notion of ‘local control’, and within that context, the need for common understandings, processes and vocabulary; behavioral threat assessment; time and resources for staff training on a variety of safety-related issues; unfunded mandates, and well-intentioned, but unrealistic legislation. Post Parkland, there has been concern over response to fire alarms in buildings; there is a need for understandings of SROs and other school security personnel, their training and certification. Overall, there was recognition that school safety efforts are underfunded.

Martin provided an update on the most recent Operating Budget, [**ESSB 6032,**](http://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2017-18/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/Senate/6032-S.SL.pdf) which called for the establishment of Regional School Safety Programs. This is one of the recommendations which had come out of Summits 1 and 2, and which had been also addressed in proposed legislation this past session. The one-time funding calls for the establishment of regional school safety programs, with a particular focus on threat assessment as well as on school notification systems/processes and evolving safety technologies. To add to this funding, OSPI and the 9 ESDs have coordinated in a [BJA STOP Grant](https://www.bja.gov/funding/SSVtraining18.pdf) application to further this work.

This background information reviewed history and looked at the current state of school safety in WA and nationally. It set the stage for the planning portion of the SSAC day;

* What are the goals for the School Safety Advisory Committee for the coming year – and years.
* Who are the members? Who might be members of work groups?
* What updates are needed to the SSAC charter?
* Within that context, who does the SSAC actually advise? OSPI? ESD? Districts? Schools? Legislators? Others?
* How do we know that we are meeting our goals? What accountability measures need to be in place?
* How do we achieve adequate funding? How does the SSAC move the work of the Summit forward?
* How does the SSAC market itself as Washington’s school safety committee? (How do we overcome the ‘media-driven’ vision of school safety?
* Ultimately, how do the SSAC and the Safety Center address the issues noted during the day’s discussions, and how do we most effectively and efficiently move that “advice” forward?

In practical terms, these questions, and the issues specific questions they contain, will drive the work of the SSAC during 2018-19. The processes will require input from both the whole SSAC as well as any subcommittees which may be established. It was decided that an initial subcommittee would meet in September to discuss SSAC membership and protocols. This meeting has not yet been scheduled.

A preliminary schedule of 2018-19 SSAC meetings follows:

**DATE: MEETING: TIMES: LOCATION\*:**

*August 7 – 8 3rd Safety Summit / SSAC Planning Retreat All Day ESD 121, Renton*

**September SSAC Planning Committee TBD TBD1**

**October 4 SSAC Meeting 9:00 – 12:00 OSPI / TBD2**

November **Subcommittee(s)3** TBD TBD

**December 6 SSAC Meeting 9:00 – 12:00 OSPI / TBD**

January Subcommittee(s) TBD TBD

**February 7 SSAC Meeting 9:00 – 12:00 OSPI / TBD**

March Subcommittee(s) TBD TBD

**April 4 SSAC Meeting 9:00 – 12:00 OSPI / TBD**

May Subcommittee(s) TBD TBD

**June 6 SSAC Meeting 9:00 – 12:00 OSPI / TBD**

July No Meetings

**\*** All regularly scheduled SSAC meetings will be shared via Zoom.

**1 TBD** - Meetings will be determined and shared out with all appropriate participants.

**2 OSPI / TBD** – There was discussion around holding meetings in locations around the state. We will hold

an OSPI meeting location in case there is no other location to be found.

**3Subcommittees** – Subcommittees will be determined by the SSAC and may include other participants

who are not regular SSAC members.

Martin thanked everyone for their thoughtful participation. The SSAC Planning Retreat was adjourned at 2:30 pm.