

APPROVED

## **Orange County Schools Safety Task Force**

### **Meeting Summary**

**Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 5:30 PM**

**Donna S. Baker Meeting Room  
Whitted Human Services Center  
300 West Tryon Street, Hillsborough, NC**

Members Present: Ari Schein, Cassie Rice, Kate O'Boyle, Richard Bradford, Evan Sredzienski, Jean Hamilton, Earl McKee, Rani Dasi, Nyah Hamlett, Andre Richmond, Paul Bell, Andy Simmons

Alternates Present: Tracy Holloway, Andre Stewart, Patrick Abele, Andrew Poole, Jonathan McVey

Members Absent: Monique Felder, Evelyn Estrada Hernandez, Tina Sykes

(Note: Student members from Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools had not yet been determined and the representative from the Carrboro Police Department was not known.)

Facilitator: Jay Bryan, Retired District Court Judge

Staff Present: Greg Wilder from the Orange County Manager's Office

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Commissioner and Task Force Co-Chair Jean Hamilton welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed appreciation for members' willingness to serve on the Schools Safety Task Force (SSTF). Commissioner and Task Force Co-Chair Earl McKee also welcomed everyone and thanked them for their service.

Facilitator and Retired District Court Judge Jay Bryan introduced himself and welcomed everyone.

All Task Force members and alternates briefly introduced themselves.

#### **2. Review of the Task Force Charge and Timeline**

Co-Chair Hamilton shared comments on the background and events which led to the establishment of the Task Force and noted the resolution adopted by the Orange County Schools Board of Education in October 2021 and the resolution adopted by the Orange County Board of Commissioners in November 2021. Co-Chairs Hamilton and McKee

shared information on the efforts and options the Board of Commissioners had discussed during the previous year.

Task Force members further discussed:

- the Task Force Charge
- the applicability of any provisions within both the municipalities and in the unincorporated areas of the County
- the applicability of provisions to all groups
- safety concerns not only for students but also for teachers and all school staffs

### **3. Review of Responsibilities of the Facilitator and Co-Chairs**

Judge Bryan moved the Task Force forward to discussing the “Schools Safety Task Force - Responsibilities of the Facilitator and Co-Chairs” document that had been provided with the agenda package. Judge Bryan noted several aspects of the proposed responsibilities to help coordinate efforts and complement each other. He shared that his role was to focus on the process, encourage everyone to share thoughts, and guide the group time-wise. He opened the floor for questions and discussion on any portions of the roles detailed in the document. There were no topics for discussion.

### **4. Review of Discussion Guidelines for Schools Safety Task Force Meetings**

Judge Bryan referenced the “Discussion Guidelines for Schools Safety Task Force Meetings” document that had been provided with the agenda package. He noted that the document originated with Roger Schwarz from the UNC School of Government, with some minor refinements. Judge Bryan opened the floor for questions and discussion on any portions of the document. There were no topics for discussion.

### **5. Discussion on Framework for Task Force Decision-making Process**

Judge Bryan addressed the Co-Chairs’ desire for Task Force decisions to occur by consensus, as consensus brought everyone to the table. Any motions and voting would hopefully be limited and occur only on an as needed basis. Co-Chair Hamilton noted that the group, with its expertise and diversity, could work through the issues, collaborate, and figure out how to come together. Judge Bryan opened the floor for questions and discussion on any portions of the document. There were no topics for discussion.

### **6. Establishment of Task Force Meeting Schedule with Specific Dates**

Judge Bryan shared that it would benefit the Task Force if a general meeting schedule was agreed upon to help with planning meetings and with everyone’s calendars. He inquired, and it was confirmed, that 5:30 pm was a workable meeting time for everyone.

Judge Bryan further inquired if Thursdays were a good day of the week for SSTF meetings. It was noted that the Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools Board of Education had meetings on the first and third Thursdays of each month, so those Thursdays would not be feasible. It was confirmed that meetings could be pursued for the second and fourth Thursdays of each month.

Co-Chair Hamilton commented regarding any potential interest in having meetings at locations other than the County's Whitted Building, perhaps at schools. Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools Chief of Operations Andre Stewart shared that meetings could occur in schools and that he and others with CHCCS could assist with the next Task Force meeting. It was noted that Orange County Schools Deputy Superintendent Patrick Abele could help with meetings at OCS locations.

## **7. Discussion on Potential Topics, Speakers, and Background for Upcoming Task Force Meetings Leading to Potential End Product**

Judge Bryan noted that there was tremendous expertise in the room, and asked Task Force members to share any thoughts on discussion topics, speakers and otherwise to be considered as the Task Force moved forward. Co-Chair Hamilton shared that the "top 3" threats might be worth thinking about.

Mr. Abele noted that, for obvious security purposes, school staff would be limited in what they could share publicly, but that external and adjacent threats were of concern. Co-Chair Hamilton referenced protests and active assailants.

Task Force member Kate O'Boyle commented that some communication to the public on the steps and efforts the schools systems were already making would be helpful.

Co-Chair McKee asked if a general overview of protocols, security measures, etc. that the schools already had established was a possibility. Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools Safe Schools Director Tracy Holloway responded that it was possible and that he was thinking about signage and consistent communication.

Task Force member Ari Schein noted an interest in information regarding the permitting process to protest and where controls could be injected.

A brief discussion then occurred regarding making contact with other school districts as well as the Center for Safer Schools with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to provide information and insight.

Co-Chair Hamilton commented that the three focus areas appeared to be Protest/Demonstration, Active Assailant, and Public Access to School Property During School Hours.

Co-Chair Hamilton then inquired with the group regarding a potential survey of students to find out their concerns. It was noted that both school systems already had survey data from students and staff that would be helpful and met that need. It was referenced that the Center for Safer Schools had data from students on a statewide basis.

Lastly, it was noted that students and schools staff members presenting thoughts to the Task Force might be beneficial.

## **8. Meeting Evaluation**

Judge Bryan asked for feedback from Task Force members on the first meeting. Several members shared positive feedback.

## **Adjourn**

With no further items to discuss, the Task Force adjourned at 7:04 pm.

This Meeting Summary was approved at the March 23, 2023 Schools Safety Task Force meeting.