

Orange County Schools Safety Task Force

Meeting Summary

Thursday, April 13, 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, Monique Felder, Andre Richmond, Tina Sykes, Chris Attack

Alternates Present: Andre Stewart, Patrick Abele, Andrew Poole, Tracy Holloway, George Griffin

Members Absent: Evelyn Estrada Hernandez, Rani Dasi, Nyah Hamlett, Paul Bell, Andy Simmons

Alternates Absent: Jonathan McVey

(Note: Student members from Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools had not yet been determined.)

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. All Task Force members and alternates briefly introduced themselves.

2. Approval of March 23, 2023 Meeting Summary

Task Force Facilitator Jay Bryan asked if there were any changes to the March 23, 2023 Meeting Summary that was distributed with the meeting agenda materials. With no changes, Task Force Member Richard Bradford motioned to approve the Meeting Summary. Task Force Alternate Patrick Abele seconded the motion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

3. Presentation by Karen Fairley with the Center for Safer Schools

Facilitator Bryan introduced Karen Fairley from the Center for Safer Schools, sharing her biography with the Task Force.

Karen Fairley with the Center for Safer Schools addressed the Task Force and expressed her enthusiasm with the establishment of the Task Force, noting that she was not aware of any similar effort ever before in North Carolina. She shared that 2023 was the 10th anniversary of the Center, and that she joined the Center in 2016, becoming its Executive Director in 2021. She noted her passion to make the 1.35 million kids in North Carolina schools safer.

Ms. Fairley shared a PowerPoint document (attached to this summary for reference purposes) as part of her presentation to the Task Force. She discussed the Mission, Vision and Values of the Center. She referenced Prevention, Mitigation, Response and Recovery, noting that a majority of the Center's efforts were focused on Prevention and Mitigation. There is definitely a need for Response and Recovery, but focusing on Prevention and Mitigation hopefully limited Response and Recovery. She added that every school safety event presents new issues, questions, and concerns and brings attention to things that were previously missed.

Ms. Fairley shared information regarding the delineation of North Carolina into eight regions, and the plan for the Center to utilize eight school safety specialists in the regions to support the respective school districts. She noted that all the areas were different and schools were different, and safety in Dare County where students are transported by ferries is different from safety in the NC mountains.

Ms. Fairley moved forward to discuss Physical Security and Design, noting Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). She highlighted the need for emergency management and fire officials to build relationships with schools. Ms. Fairley also discussed the use of natural access control, demarcation of school property, natural surveillance, landscaping, and windows and lighting as tools to promote safety.

Ms. Fairley then addressed Vulnerability Assessments and Comprehensive Safety Plans and the need to conduct reviews and updates on an annual basis to address changes and include up to date information, including schematics which are required by state law.

Ms. Fairley shared information and statistics from the Anonymous Reporting System, noting definite concerns related to bullying/cyberbullying and suicide. She also addressed Threat Assessment Teams, as well as the need for mass communication to stakeholders in preparation for potential events.

Ms. Fairley referenced the four phases of emergency management, State Emergency Response Application (SERA) and School Risk Management Plans (SRMP). She noted

the importance of consistent annual drills, including reunification plans, and the need for physical security audits.

The presentation moved to School Resource Officers (SROs), with Ms. Fairley commenting that the Center provides grants to school districts for SROs. She cautioned that SROs should not be utilized for student discipline activities, as use in that manner would hurt the comradery between the SROs and the students.

4. Discussion/Questions & Answers with Karen Fairley

Facilitator Bryan moved the discussion forward to questions and answers with Ms. Fairley. Task Force Member Bradford inquired about the costs for physical changes in facilities for safety. Ms. Fairley responded that the Center allocated \$28 million for safety equipment such as cameras, secure doors, etc. She noted that the more prosperous school districts were self-sufficient in addressing these needs, while other districts had to start small with windows and lighting based on limited available funding. She added that the Center allocated \$74 million for SROs and grants during the last year.

Task Force Member Cassie Rice asked what parents could do to help enhance safety in schools. Ms. Fairley shared that volunteering in schools, continually communicating with school officials, and mentoring, especially with students who lacked adult connections, were worthwhile activities. She added that the Center would be establishing a group of parent liaisons, with three parents from each of the eight regions, to assist and advise the Center on school safety concerns.

Task Force Member Monique Felder asked Ms. Fairley about metal detectors in schools. Ms. Fairley responded that the Center did not take a position on metal detectors, and that it was likely dependent on the particular school or district. If District A had encountered a lot of guns, then maybe detectors were advisable. If District D had few gun issues, then probably not. She noted that input from SROs was important.

Task Force Member Andre Richmond inquired about maintaining safety and security at after-school events and at school board meetings occurring at schools. Ms. Fairley commented that setting boundaries was important, posting rules and keeping to time limits was necessary, and that identifying a specific person to discuss and connect with protesters was important, allowing them to be heard.

Co-Chair Earl McKee asked about Ms. Fairley's knowledge of potential ordinances in other jurisdictions in the state to address school safety concerns and impacts, noting Orange County's previous uncertainties related to the First Amendment. Ms. Fairley responded that the Center was not aware of any relevant ordinances other than noise ordinances that might apply. She agreed regarding the First Amendment issues related to ordinances, and that a permitting system for protests may be an option.

Task Force Member Evan Sredzienski shared that his school had lockdown drills twice each year, including one earlier in the week that went well and included law enforcement follow-up. Ms. Fairley noted that it was important to communicate with parents ahead of time about how to work with their kids on lockdown drills. Task Force Alternate Andre Stewart commented that CHCCS conducted lockdown drills on a quarterly basis. Ms. Fairley added that there was a need to develop consistent language statewide regarding lockdowns to help parents and the public better differentiate the circumstances that might apply during differing lockdown events.

Co-Chair Hamilton inquired regarding the Center's grant funding for SROs. Ms. Fairley shared information on the application process to access the \$33 million available, and noted that the Center utilized an average salary statewide of \$55,000 per SRO, which was workable in some communities and not in others. Low wealth communities had to provide \$1 for every \$3 of grant funding, and all other communities were required to provide \$1 for every \$4 in grant funding. She added that the Center attempted to maintain funding to a grantee for a two-year period.

Facilitator Bryan conducted a time check with the group, and it was agreed the group would extend past 7:00 pm if necessary.

Co-Chair Hamilton asked about parents being on school grounds after hours, and Ms. Fairley responded that communicating with parents ahead of time regarding rules and directly explaining that rules were in place for the safety of their own kids was important.

Task Force Member Sredzienski asked about resources available to students when not on school grounds, like on a school bus or at a off-campus sports event. Ms. Fairley shared that students can use the Anonymous tip line anywhere, and that she was aware students had even utilized it when outside the state.

With no additional comments or questions, Facilitator Bryan thanked Ms. Fairley for her presentation, with Ms. Fairley responding that she was glad for the opportunity and would be glad to help in the future.

5. Update Regarding Potential Attorney Presentations

Co-Chair Hamilton shared that the plan for the next Task Force meeting, likely on April 27, 2023, would be discussion with County Attorney John Roberts and with an attorney from the UNC Law School.

6. Future Task Force Meeting Dates/Schedule

Facilitator Bryan referenced the potential future meetings information included in the meeting agenda package and asked if there were any concerns. There were no comments.

7. Other Issues

Co-Chair Hamilton referenced a previous Task Force discussion regarding an amendment to the Task Force charge to include teachers and school staff. Co-Chair Hamilton shared that the proposed change was scheduled on the Board of Commissioners' April 18, 2023 Business meeting agenda for consideration.

8. Meeting Evaluation

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

Adjourn

With no further items to discuss, the Task Force adjourned at 6:59 pm.

This Meeting Summary was approved at the April 27, 2023 Schools Safety Task Force meeting.

N.C. Center for Safer Schools

*Presented by Executive Director
Karen W. Fairley*

About the CFSS



- The Center for Safer Schools serves to promote safe learning environments for North Carolina K-12 schools.
- The CFSS serves as a hub of information and technical assistance on school safety to school faculty and staff, law enforcement, youth-serving community agencies, juvenile justice officials, policymakers, parents/guardians and students.
- CFSS staff focuses on school climate, school discipline and emergency preparedness concerns for North Carolina's public K-12 schools.

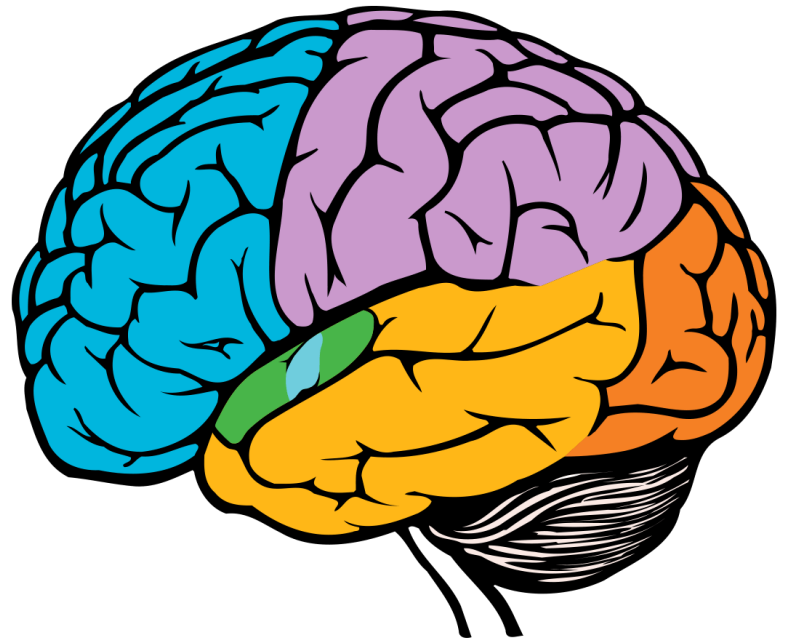
What we stand for

- **Mission:** Develop and implement strategies to ensure that students are safer in schools.
- **Vision:** All schools in the state are safer, secure and offer an environment conducive to learning.
- **Values:** Consistency, transparency, integrity, professionalism, respect

How it's done

Prevention, Mitigation, Response and Recovery (focus on Prevention/Mitigation)

- **Physical safety**
 - Trainings
- **Emotional safety**
 - Mental Health First Aid
- **Positive school climate**
 - Student engagement
 - RISE



Physical Security and Design

CPTED

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is a multidisciplinary approach of crime prevention that uses urban and architectural design and the management of built and natural environments.
- CPTED strategies aim to reduce victimization; deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts; and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas, reduce crime and minimize fear of crime.

CPTED Principles

- Natural access control
- Natural surveillance
- Territoriality
- Activity support
- Maintenance



Vulnerability Assessment

- Identify risks
 - Rate of crime in neighborhood
 - Most commonly committed crimes
 - Number of people with access to facility
 - Number of facility entrances and exits
 - Lack of monitoring systems
 - Lack of personnel
- Review current site and facility security
- Review facility operating procedures
- Review physical security systems

Anonymous Reporting



- The Say Something Anonymous Reporting System is a program in which students in grades 6-12 can anonymously report safety concerns in 27 categories. All tips are monitored by a crisis center that is staffed 24/7/365.
- Lifesaving tips are sent to law enforcement emergency centers for possible intervention by law enforcement, as well as school counselors, school administrators and school resource officers.
- Non-lifesaving tips are sent to each school team and can be handled by counselors and administrative staff.

Top 5 Tips

Aug. 1, 2022-April 11, 2023



Event Type	Count
Bullying/Cyberbullying	3,988
Cutting/Self-Harm	1,961
Drug Use	1,823
Suicide/Suicide Ideation	1,661
Depression/Anxiety	1,167

We have had nearly **22,000** tips since the inception of the Say Something Anonymous Reporting System.

Threat Assessment Teams

- A threat assessment team should be assigned the task of reviewing threats and assessing them to determine necessary responses.
- Provide guidance to students, faculty and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior posing a risk.
- Threat assessment teams should include individuals with expertise in education, school administration, mental health, and law enforcement
 - Best teams include faculty, staff, administrators, coaches, SROs

Emergency Preparedness

Rave Panic Alarm



- N.C. Panic Alarm
 - App is free and optional; districts and charter schools must opt in
 - Doesn't replace emergency operations plans or standard operating procedures
 - Schools enter information (floor plans, etc.) into system
- More information
 - **North Carolina resource page:**
<https://www.ravemobilesafety.com/ncpanicbutton>

Key Elements

- Access control
- Vaping sensors
- Weapon detection
- Mass communication
(including
communications with
law enforcement)



Preparedness Steps

- Evaluate current school security measures
- Conduct a physical security audit
- Evaluate communication systems
- Strengthen partnerships with public safety officials
- Improve your school cybersecurity systems
- Ensure staff receive proper training

4 Phases of Emergency Management



SERA/SRMP

- The State Emergency Response Application (SERA) is a web-based, secure application designed to assist first responders, law enforcement and emergency managers in efficiently responding to hazards and threats at school facilities.
- The School Risk Management Plan (SRMP) application is a web-based tool that guides school officials – in concert with first responders, law enforcement and emergency management – through the creation of a digital school risk management plan.

Best Practices for SROs

Definition

- A School Resource Officer is a certified law enforcement officer who is permanently assigned to provide coverage to a school or a set of schools.
- The SRO is specifically trained to perform three roles:
 - Law-related education specialist
 - Counselor/mentor
 - Law enforcement officer

Role of SROs

- SROs serve as comprehensive resources in the schools to which they are assigned.
- SROs are not punitive.
- NASRO recommends that agencies select officers carefully for SRO assignments and that officers receive at least 40 hours of specialized training in school policing before being assigned.

SRO Goals

- The goals of well-founded SRO programs include:
 - providing safe learning environments in schools
 - providing valuable resources to school staff members
 - fostering positive relationships with youth
 - developing strategies to resolve problems affecting youth and protecting all students, so that they can reach their fullest potentials

SRO Best Practices

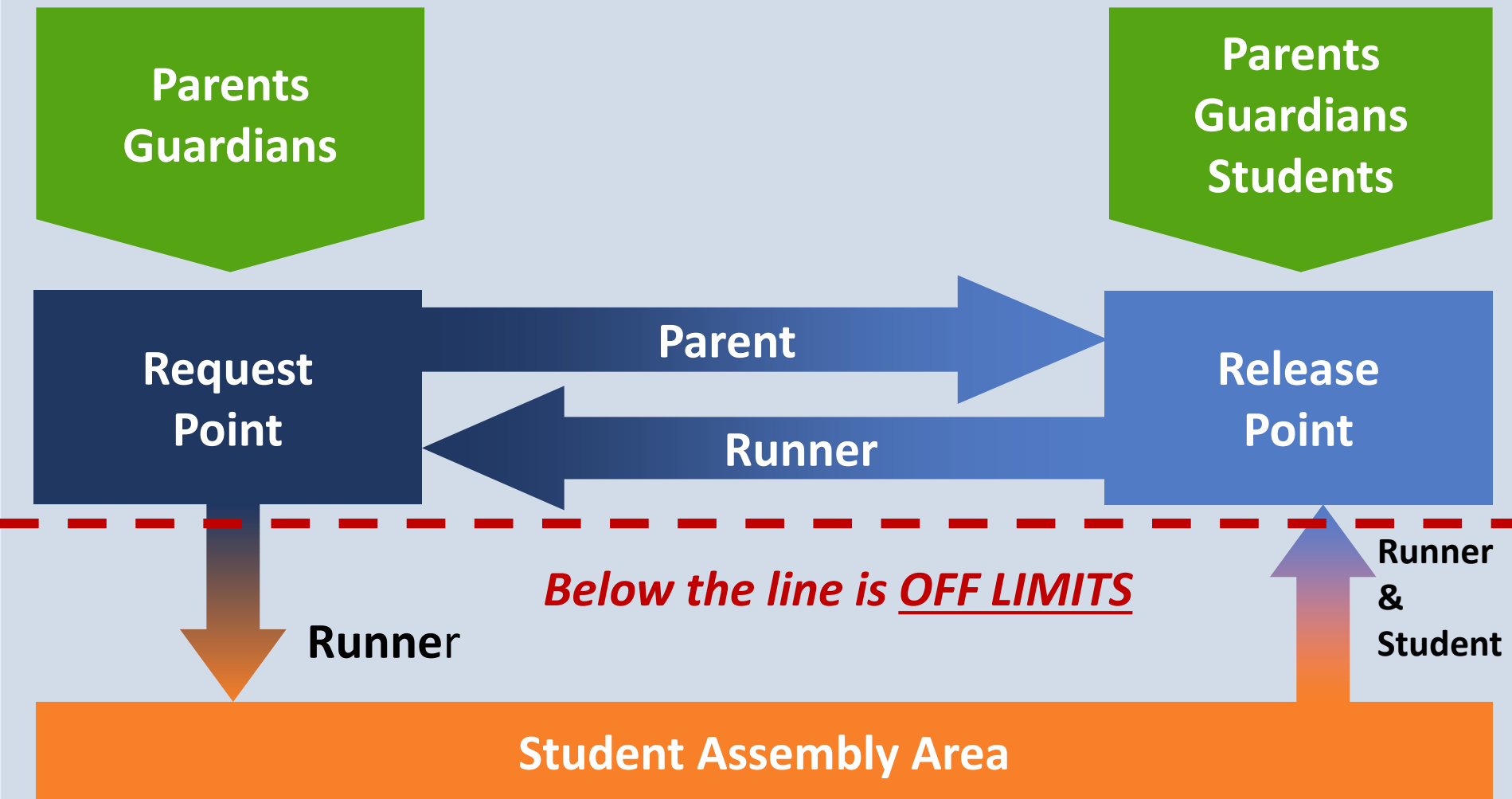
- The National Association of School Resource Officers considers it a best practice to use a “triad concept” to define the three main roles of school resource officers:
 - educator (i.e. guest lecturer)
 - informal counselor/mentor
 - law enforcement officer
- Encourage officers to have a positive presence at the school through co-teaching classes, coaching, working with the school community at afterschool events, etc.

Reunification Training

Definition

- Reunification training addresses the means for safe, orderly and documented reunion of students and families in the event of an emergency evacuation or school closing.
- In the event of a crisis, it will be necessary to evacuate students from the school grounds and reunite them with their parents and guardians.
- Depending on the magnitude of the event, reunification can take place at the school or at an off-site location.

Reunification Process Summary



Before	During	After
<i>Mitigation/ Preparedness</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Recovery</i>
• Develop Plan	• Activation of Plan	• Mental Health
• Train	• Mobilization of Teams and Supplies	• Memorials
• Exercise the Plan	• Deployment	• Return
	• Set Up of Reunification Site	• Reconstruction
	• Complete Reunification Process	

Considerations

- Students with Disabilities/Medical Needs
- Availability of Staff and Supplies



Considerations

- Type of Incident
 - Hazardous materials release
 - Major fire
 - Severe weather event
 - School violence
 - Bomb threat
 - Active shooter



CFSS Trainings

- Critical Incident Response with Reunification
- Active Shooter and Armed Aggressor
- Behavioral Threat Assessment
- State Emergency Response Application/
School Risk Management Plan
- Say Something Anonymous Reporting
System

Training Center

- First in-person training (Reunification) held in March 2023



Contact me



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