

OREGON TASK FORCE ON SCHOOL SAFETY



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SCHOOL SAFETY TASK FORCE NEWSLETTER

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TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Jeff Barker

Representative
Oregon House of
Representatives

Richard Evans (Vice Chair)

Superintendent
Oregon State Police

Eriks Gabliks

Director
Oregon Department of Public
Safety Standards and Training

Susan Graves

Safety Coordinator
Oregon School Employees
Association

Peggy Holstedt

Director of Board Development
and Policy Services
Oregon School Board
Association

Betsy Johnson

Senator
Oregon Senate

Ted Kunze

Oregon Fire Chiefs Association

Daniel Ledezma

Education Policy Advisor
Governor John Kitzhaber's Office

Heidi Moawad

Public Safety Policy Advisor
Governor John Kitzhaber's Office

Dave Novotney

Superintendent
Oregon Association of
Educational Service Districts

Craig Roberts (Chair)

Sheriff
Oregon State Sheriff's
Association

Reed Scott-Schwalbach

District 14 Board Director
Oregon Education Association

Geoff Spalding

Chief
Oregon Association of
Chiefs of Police

Matt Utterback

Superintendent
Confederation of Oregon School
Administrators

Task Force Mulls Adopting 'Standard Response Protocol' Statewide for Critical Incidents

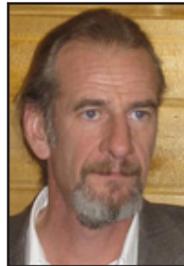
At its third meeting, held on October 27, 2014, the Oregon School Safety Task Force (OSSTF) heard from John-Michael Keyes about the "I love u guys" Foundation, established by Keyes and his wife Ellen after their daughter was killed in a school shooting on Sept. 27, 2006.

Prior to her death, their daughter Emily sent them two text messages in the midst of the crisis, which read, "I love you guys" and "I love u guys. k?" In response, her parents established the foundation with the goal of developing a uniform system of responses to critical incidents in schools. This came to be known as the "Standard Response Protocol" or SRP for short.

Like the Incident Command System (ICS) used by law enforcement, firefighters and other first responders, the SRP is built around a clear vocabulary of specific words with carefully defined meanings, understood by students, teachers, parents and public safety officials.

Within the SRP, there are four basic commands: Lockout, Lockdown, Evacuate and Shelter. Their basic meaning is refined by a series of specific directions. For example, the command "Lockout" would be followed by the phrase "Secure the Perimeter," and would be used to secure the school against external threats, such as an ongoing police response in a local neighborhood.

"Lockdown" would be followed by the phrase "Locks, Lights, Out of Sight." In a lockdown scenario, there is a threat inside the school, and students and teachers are being directed to secure their classrooms.



John-Michael
Keyes

The command "Evacuate" is followed by a specific location, such as a nearby athletic field — in the case of a fire, for example — or an interior hallway, in an instance of severe weather. "Shelter" directs students to hunker down with specific instructions to follow.

By promulgating the SRP throughout entire school districts and regions, the "I love u guys" Foundation hopes to provide continuity for students as they change schools. It also makes the public safety response to a crisis faster and more efficient, because local police and firefighters are conversant with these same terms and can quickly understand the current status of the school and the people inside.

The SRP is available for free on the foundation's website: iloveguys.org.

Following Keyes' presentation, the members of the OTFSS discussed whether or not they should recommend the SRP be adopted as a statewide standard for Oregon. Some members of the task force voiced their concerns that the SRP is very specific and might not work in certain school districts, as well as the fact that schools utilizing the SRP must sign a memorandum of understanding with the foundation which does not allow it to be customized to address specific, local issues.

As an example, under the SRP, a lockout procedure still allows people to move inside the building. Another example is that not all schools believe it's appropriate to leave exterior doors unlocked during a lockdown.

At the conclusion of the discussion, task force member Peggy Holstedt volunteered to follow up with Keyes, to see whether or not it would be acceptable to modify some of the provisions of the SRP to be a better fit with local concerns in Oregon.

In Future, PACE Premium Discounts May Encourage Schools to Address Safety Issues



Lisa Freiley from the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA) addressed the Oregon Task Force on School Safety (OTFSS) during its October 27 meeting at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training Academy in Salem. Specifically, she described PACE — the Property And Casualty Coverage for Education insurance program.

PACE was established in 2006 through a partnership between OSBA and the Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO), to address the specific needs of educational institutions, including: public school districts, charter schools, community colleges and educational service districts. The program was an outgrowth of a property-casualty insurance pool established by OSBA in 1985. Today, PACE insures more than 200 educational organizations.

The program is governed by a nine-member board of trustees, all of whom are full-time employees with local school districts across the state. The current chair of the board is Adam Stewart, the Chief Financial Officer for Hillsboro School District 1J. The Vice Chair is Mike Schofield, the Chief Financial Officer for the Gresham-Barlow School District.

Freiley serves as the Director of Labor & PACE Services at

OSBA, as well as serving as the organization's staff counsel. She has been with the organization since 1990 and holds an MBA and JD from Willamette University.

After hearing Freiley's presentation, of particular interest to the members of the OTFSS is a practice that PACE has had in place for several years: offering discounts on members' insurance premiums for developing and implementing policies and procedures to address potential sources of liability. This approach allows PACE and the OSBA to encourage schools to adopt new standards to address emerging issues without legislative action or other statewide mandates.

As an example, earlier this year PACE offered a five percent discount on general liability premiums for schools that implemented its Boundary Invasion Toolkit, aimed at helping members of the education community recognize signs of potential sexual



Lisa Freiley

misconduct. Not only is sexual misconduct a major source of potential liability for schools, but in 2010 the state legislature passed a law requiring intensive training on this subject for educators.

Most teachers have received this training, but other members of the educational community — such as education support professionals, school administrators, school board members, district human resources personnel and others — have lagged behind. To address this shortcoming, PACE developed the Boundary Invasion Toolkit, which is available online to members, as well as offering free one-hour trainings about its implementation.

Following her discussion with the task force, Freiley indicated a willingness to consider helping implement the recommendations of OTFSS through a similar PACE premium discount — a possibility that remains under discussion.

Looking Ahead:

OTFSS Plans How to Move Forward While Awaiting Procurement Process

The primary goal of the Oregon Task Force On School Safety (OTFSS), to develop a plan to create a database containing maps and other critical information about every school in the state, immediately accessible via the Internet by law enforcement officers, firefighters and other public safety personnel, is expected to take a minimum of five years.

The procurement process is not anticipated to begin before January 2016, with the map-making expected to be complete in late 2019. Eager to make some headway on this core component of its mission, members of the OTFSS discussed initial steps that they could take to move the process forward at their October 27 meeting.

One idea that was proposed was to form local teams to begin the conversation between schools and public safety officials, with goals such as: pre-determining the location of a command post, triage center and other resources during a critical incident, as well as addressing other needs unique to each county and school district.

Members of the task force agreed that not only would having this information available streamline the development of the database when the process begins in earnest, but it would also help diffuse concerns across the state that a one-size-fits-all, top-down mandate will be imposed by lawmakers in Salem without regard to specific local concerns and issues.

Another suggestion was to bring together large and small school districts, to discuss response protocols and establish a baseline, minimum standard, as well as what options are available for districts with additional resources.

The task force also considered hosting a future meeting or potentially a public event in eastern Multnomah County, to give the community a voice following the Reynolds High School shooting earlier this year and promote healing. The OTFSS held its subsequent meeting on November 17 in Milwaukie, at the offices of the North Clackamas School District.