Georgia General Assembly

House Budget and Research Office

This report is submitted pursuant the following resolution,

HR 1414

which created the House Study Committee on School Security to which members were appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Representative Rick Jasperse, Chairman

THE FINAL REPORT OF THE
GEORGIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STUDY COMMITTEE ON SCHOOL SECURITY

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Honorable Rick Jasperse, Chair
Representative, District 11th

Honorable Mandy Ballinger
Representative, District 23

Honorable Eddie Lumsden
Representative, District 12

Honorable Tommy Benton
Representative, District 31

Honorable Randy Nix
Representative, District 69

Honorable Heath Clark
Representative, District 147

Honorable Brian Prince
Representative, District 127

Honorable Katie Dempsey
Representative, District 13

Honorable Valencia Stovall
Representative, District 74

INTRODUCTION

House Resolution 1414 (2018 Session) created the House Study Committee on School Security. The committee was formed to study various factors affecting school safety, including mental health concerns, infrastructure designs, equipment, the training and tasks of personnel, planning, and the availability of resources. The study committee was charged with making recommendations to be shared with state and local governments, including school systems, to help curb incidents of violence in schools and to facilitate life-saving responses when such incidents occur.

The committee was chaired by Representative Rick Jasperse (11th) and included eight additional members: Representative Mandi Ballinger (23rd), Representative Tommy Benton (31st), Representative Heath Clark (147th), Representative Katie Dempsey (13th), Representative Eddie Lumsden (12th), Representative Randy Nix (69th), Representative Brian Prince (127th), and Representative Valencia Stovall (74th). The House Budget and Research Office staff member assigned to facilitate the meetings was Ms. Sara Arroyo. The Legislative Counsel assigned to the committee was Mr. Julius Tolbert.

The committee held four public meetings across the state to hear from local school systems, local agencies, local law enforcement, state law enforcement, state agencies, and a federal agency. This included presentations and testimony from the US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI), Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Highland Rivers Community Service Board, Motorola Inc., school resource officers, school counselors, and others.

The following individuals presented testimony to the committee:

May 14, 2018
Dr. Garry McGiboney, Deputy Superintendent of External Affairs and Policy, Georgia Department of Education; Sheriff Mitch Ralston, Gordon County; Sheriff Jeff Johnson, Dawson County; Sheriff Dan Kirby, Fannin County; Sheriff Donnie Craig, Pickens County; James Jones, Director of Crossroads Alternative School serving Fannin and Gilmer counties and Safety Coordinator for Gilmer County Schools; Benny Long, Assistant Superintendent of Fannin County Schools; Dr. Damon Gibbs, Superintendent of Dawson County Schools; Todd Shirley, Chief Operations Officer for Forsyth County Schools; Dr. Carlton Wilson, Superintendent of Pickens County Schools.

August 21, 2018
Dr. Lina Alathari, Chief of the Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center; Dr. Joel Meyers, Director of Georgia State University's Center for School Safety, School Climate, and Classroom Management; Justin Hill, Director of Georgia Department of Education's Positive Behaviors and Interventions Support Program; Layla Fitzgerald, Program Manager at the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; Dr. Ann DiGirolamo, Director of Behavioral Health at the Georgia Health Policy Center and Director of the Center of Excellence for Children's Behavioral Health; Melanie Dallas, Chief Executive Officer of Highland Rivers Health; Gail Smith, Member of Georgia School Counselor Association.

October 30, 2018
Justin Demone, Regional Sales Director at Avigilon, a Motorola Solutions Company; Tino Rugerio, Area Sales Manager at Motorola Solutions, Inc.; Rick Rigsbee, Area Sales Manager at Motorola Solutions, Inc.; Vernon Keenan, Director of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation; Andy Mossman, Director of the Georgia Information Sharing Analysis Center Fusion Center; Bill O'Brien, Operations Manager Homeland Security, Georgia Emergency Management Agency; Sgt. Jesse Hambrick, Douglas County Sheriff; Kathryn Bedette, Associate Professor of Architecture at Kennesaw State University and President of the American Institute of Architects Georgia; Dr. Garry McGiboney, Deputy Superintendent of External Affairs and Policy, Georgia Department of Education; Sarah Morris, Budget Research Analyst, Georgia Department of Education; and Gerald Williams, Architect, Georgia Department of Education.

November 29, 2018
Antoinette Tuft, Founder of Kids on the Move for Success (included testimony from student mentors: Jordan P., Symone B., Joshua H., and Zion C.); Mike Rodgers, Sales Manager for BAE Systems; Brandon Thompson; Architect, ACG Solutions.

May 14, 2018
Dawson County Board of Education, Dawsonville, GA

Dr. Garry McGiboney's presentation to the committee highlighted the Department of Education's (DOE) role in school safety and security. Georgia Code (over 41 sections) and State Board of Education rules govern some aspects of school safety, such as bullying, mandatory reporting, and, most recently, expanded guidelines for school safety plans. The federal government also requires school safety compliance, with the Gun Free Schools Act and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA); the ESSA focuses on school climate, internet safety, and mental health and safety planning. The Department also provides safety and security resources, in conjunction with GEMA, to school systems through trainings and toolkits. School security guidelines not directed in Code or state board rule are left to the discretion of the local school system.

Dr. McGiboney's presentation listed 35 discipline incident categories school systems are required to report to DOE, such as bullying, breaking and entering, sexual battery, and trespassing (this data is ultimately sent to the federal government). Data from the last three years shows that many types of discipline incidents have decreased, such as arson, bullying, larceny, and theft; however, four types of incidents have increased over the last three years: academic dishonesty, computer trespass, vandalism, and handguns. Dr. McGiboney emphasized while the number of handgun incidents has increased over the past three years, the percentage is still relatively low compared to other states.
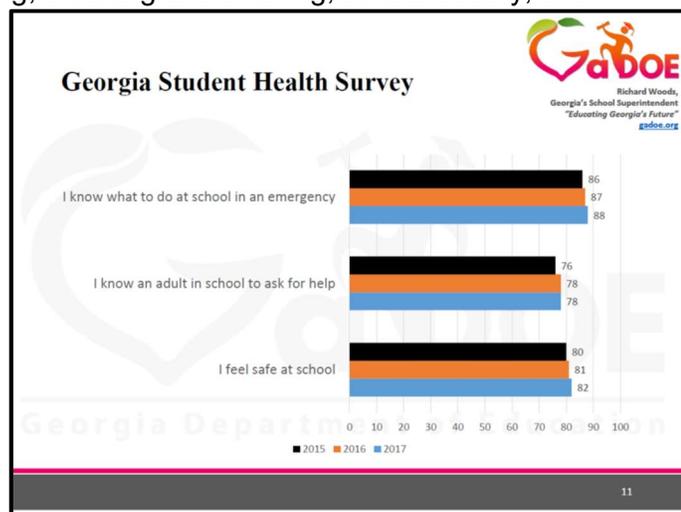
The Georgia Student Health Survey was developed by DOE, in collaboration with the Department of Public Health and Georgia State University.   In 2017, over one million students were surveyed and the results showed that 22% of students don't know an adult in school to ask for help. Dr. McGiboney stated one lesson to learn from Columbine is that schools can have no secrets and adults in schools must have open relationships with students so they feel comfortable providing information.

Lastly, Dr. McGiboney highlighted the significance of school climate. With the passage of HB 763 (2018 Session), Dr. McGiboney stated that Georgia is one of the first states to put school climate in state statute. The school climate star rating is a diagnostic tool to determine if a school is on the right path to school improvement and addresses many elements of school safety. The rating is split equally into four categories (all 25% of the ultimate score): student, parent, and staff survey; student discipline data; survey discipline data, and student and staff attendance data. In closing, Dr. McGiboney stressed the main takeaway from his presentation is that to increase school safety, the school climate must be improved.

Next, a panel of local law enforcement officers from north Georgia gathered to discuss school safety from their perspective. Sheriff Mitch Ralston, of Gordon County, expressed his concern with funding for school resource officers. The committee learned that the cost for school resource officers (SROs) is often split between the school system and local law enforcement (with larger school systems having their own force). Panel members agreed that the number of SROs must be more than the number of schools to provide for adequate coverage. Fannin County Sheriff Dan Kirby discussed active shooter training in his district, modeled after "Beyond the Active Shooter" training used in Gwinnett County that places paramedics into the initial response team, so casualties are responded to sooner. Lastly, Sheriff Donnie Craig, from Pickens County, testified Pickens County Schools installed cameras in classrooms, and cited positive results from putting cameras in patrol cars, which made law enforcement more conscious of their response in certain situations.

Lastly, a panel of local school officials from north Georgia convened to discuss school safety from their perspective. All members of the panel stated that a working relationship with local law enforcement was critical and all members agreed that the responsibility for school safety should be a partnership between the local school system and local law enforcement. James Jones from the Crossroads Alternative Program stressed the importance of prevention and intervention when the student is showing signs of needing mental health assistance. Todd Shirley, from Forsyth County Schools cited their new program that provides vertical tracking of students by assigning a mentor to a student that follows them from kindergarten to 12th grade. Damon Gibbs, Superintendent of Dawson County Schools, spoke to the need for further flexibility in funding through the use of ESPLOST; currently, the Constitution of Georgia only allows ESPLOST for capital outlay. Superintendent Carlton Wilson, from Pickens County Schools, suggested school safety become a variable in the QBE funding formula to infuse more funds into school security. Superintendent Wilson also testified to the need of opening

ESPLOST for school safety, providing tax exemption/credit for donations for school security, excluding the creation of school safety plans from open records (done in executive board session), and creating a POST certification designation for law enforcement in schools.

August 21, 2018
Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Atlanta, GA

Lina Alathari, from the US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center presented to the study committee regarding the importance of threat assessment teams. In July, the National Threat Assessment Center released the School Safety Guide, which is an actionable guide on how to develop a tailored threat assessment team at the school or district level. Virginia was one of the first states mandating threat assessment teams in schools in response to the shooting at Virginia Tech in 2007. In addition to reducing violence, Dr. Alathari cited University of Virginia research that has shown other unintended consequences of threat assessment teams, such as lower rates of bullying, more positive perceptions of school climate, fewer long-term suspensions, and greater rates of counseling services and parental involvement.

Threat assessment is used to reduce the risk of targeted school violence. At a minimum the school level threat assessment team should include the following individuals: school staff, guidance counselors, teachers, school administrators, school resource officers/local law enforcement, mental health professionals, and coaches. The teams should meet regularly, even when a threat doesn't exist, to participate in table-top exercises and training. The threat assessment team would be responsible for defining behaviors that would trigger a threat assessment, developing a reporting mechanism, establishing a threshold for law enforcement intervention, and establishing assessment procedures. In the development of the reporting mechanism, Dr. Alathari stressed the need for the reporting mechanism to provide anonymity, monitoring, and accountability, and gave the example of Safe2Tell, Colorado's reporting mechanism that was developed after Columbine. Lastly, the threat assessment team should look at protective factors that would mitigate a student from engaging in an attack, including a good school climate where students feel safe to come forward. Dr. Alathari also emphasized training needs to be part of every plan where everyone is trained on identifying behaviors, what to report, and how to report (including teachers, students, and parents). On a final note, Dr. Alathari stressed that early intervention is key to deterring violence and threat assessment is a significant piece of early intervention.

Dr. Joel Meyers is Director of Georgia State University's Center for School Safety, School Climate, and Classroom Management, which was created soon after Columbine to collaborate with schools and provide helpful school safety research. At the request of a school district, the Center conducted research on how to effectively respond to bullying. The Center conducted interviews with teachers, staff, students and parents, created scales, and developed intervention strategies. Interventions were created for victims of bullying, bullies themselves, and bystanders of bullying. After the interventions, victims of bullying and bystanders knew more

about bullying and how to cope and over half of the bullies stopped bullying. Dr. Meyers cited bullying leads to serious school safety events and the most important factor in reducing bullying is to create a positive school climate.

Dr. Justin Hill, Director of Positive Behaviors and Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program at DOE testified to the success of the program. The PBIS program trains teachers on clearly defining behavioral expectations, engaging in positive and proactive discipline, actively
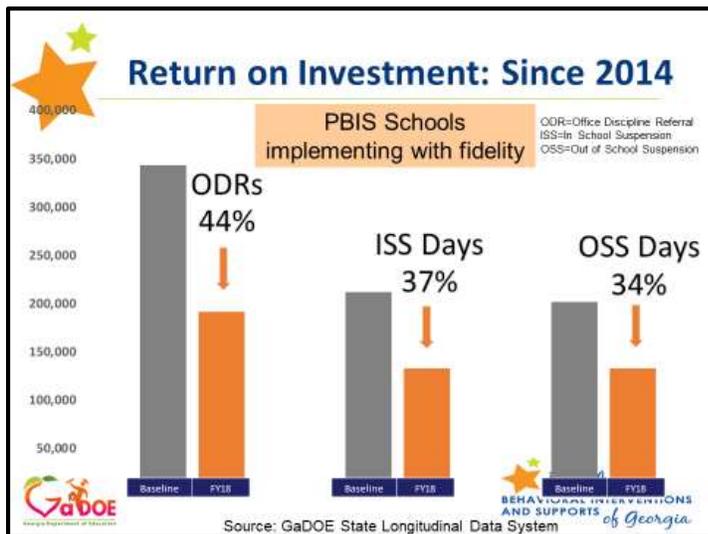
supervising and monitoring, providing positive acknowledgement, and offering parental training and collaboration. Georgia is among only eight states with more than 1,000 schools trained in PBIS; the number having been increased from 566 in 2015 to 1,361 in 2018 (this was accomplished by funding $2.73 million for RESA based school climate specialists in the state budget since FY 2015). Since 2014, the number of office discipline referrals is down 18%, in school suspension is down 22%, and out of school suspension is down 25% in PBIS schools, regardless of fidelity. When the frameworks are implemented with fidelity, meaning school personnel is implementing the program as designed following the proper guidelines and standards, the number of discipline issues drops even further (see above slide). Dr. Hill suggested expanding PBIS to focus on the importance of school climate and the link to school safety and increase behavior support to classroom teachers.

Layla Fitzgerald, Program Manager at the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) discussed the Georgia APEX program. The goal of the program is early detection of mental health issues, increased access to services, and enhanced coordination with community partners. The APEX program uses a tiered approach to provide services, focusing on tier three, which is intensive intervention; this includes individual therapy for the student, behavior assessment, crisis management services, and group therapy. For tier two, considered early intervention, the APEX program does offer some support including individual therapy, group therapy, and targeted screening. Tier one is considered universal prevention and PBIS would fall into this category. The APEX program does provide some services in this tier level, such as parent education, mental health awareness, classroom observation, and mental health first aid.

Dr. Ann DiGirolamo, Director of the Center for Excellence for Children's Behavioral Health, stated the program has grown over 166% in the past three years providing licensed clinicians in 396 schools in Georgia. Schools that participate in APEX or APEX/PBIS have seen greater increases in average school climate star ratings, including safe and substance free environment scores, than the statewide average.

Melanie Dallas, the Chief Executive Officer of Highland Rivers Health, the community service board serving northwest Georgia, spoke about mental health as it relates to school safety. Highland Rivers Health provides behavioral health services for over one million people, 10% of

Georgia's population. Highlands Health is an APEX provider and has 21 participating schools, serving over 250 students in school based behavioral health services.

Gail Smith from the Georgia School Counselor Association highlighted the role of the school counselor in school safety. In Georgia, school counselors must complete master's level preparation and participate in a school setting internship program. During the preparation program school counselors are trained in group and individual counseling, but only work with students on a short-term basis and don't diagnose or provide mental health counseling.

School Counselor	Therapist
• Requires a master's degree	• Requires a master's degree or higher
• Requires certification	• Requires licensure
• Works in a school setting	• Works in an office/clinical setting
• Focuses on student behavior, academic, or career needs	• Focuses on a broad spectrum of needs
• Does not diagnose	• May diagnose and treat mental health disorders
• Works with individual students short term	• Works with clients long term
• Teaches/utilizes standards in classroom and small group	• Evaluates, treats, and improves mental health conditions
• May recognize early signs and symptoms of behavioral/mental health concerns	• Uses assessment instruments
• Does not use assessment instruments	• Develops treatment plans
• Does not develop treatment plans	

Ms. Smith testified that Georgia is second in the number of awards given by the National School Counselor Association for having a comprehensive school counseling program (model program) in place. A model program is standards based, data driven (school/district data, Student Health Survey, and school climate); addresses the academic, career, and social/emotional development of students (but not therapists); and delivered via classroom lessons, small group, and individual consultation. Ms. Smith highlighted inadequate school counselor funding in Georgia and that it increases the individual caseload; Georgia ranks 36th in the nation in the number of school counselor caseloads.

A panel comprised of Dr. Hill, Ms. Fitzgerald, Ms. Dallas, and Ms. Smith assembled at the close of the meeting to discuss mental health needs in schools. Georgia's APEX program occupied most of the panel's time. Ms. Fitzgerald testified that most APEX referrals come from teachers, but they've had some referrals from school counselors and even janitorial staff. Ms. Fitzgerald indicated that the APEX program pays for the program start-up in a new school and asks providers to attain a 60% billable threshold to sustain the program; then the APEX program shifts funds to a new school. Ms. Dallas and Ms. Fitzgerald testified to obstacles of the program including workforce shortages, funding constraints, and salary competition in rural areas. Ms. Dallas stated that Highland Rivers has between 50 to 80 open licensed clinician positions they can't fill because of workforce shortages. Ms. Fitzgerald stated that GA APEX offers families an entry into services because the program offers family therapy.

October 29, 2018
Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Atlanta, GA

Justin Demone, Regional Sales Director for Avigilon, a Motorola Solutions Company, presented to the committee new products available for districts to increase school safety. Used by Fulton County Schools, the Avigilon Control Center and Avigilon Appearance Search Technology provides high definition cameras with self-learning video analytics and access control solutions. For example, the camera can find a person in real time who was spotted earlier on the video system. Currently in development is the ability of video software to detect a gun as soon as it enters the scene. Monitoring is done through live dispatch at the Fulton County Schools Emergency Operations Center. When asked about the cost of the system, Mr. Demone stated Avigilon's contract with Fulton County Schools was approximately $5 million for 18 schools. Other school systems working with Avigilon include Clayton County Schools, Forsyth County

Schools, Marietta City Schools, Fayette County Schools, Calhoun City Schools, Trion City Schools, and Cartersville City Schools.

Tino Rugerio and Rick Rigsbee spoke about the communication gaps that exist in Georgia between multiple law enforcement agencies responding to an incident. Georgia is one of six states that doesn't have a single statewide radio communications network. Georgia has several P-25 regional systems, which covers 75% of the population. On the adjacent slide, only the areas shown in green are covered. The benefits of a consolidated statewide radio communications system are interoperability between agencies; increased school, staff, student and officer safety; efficient incident response and recovery; and high availability communications during the worst case scenarios.
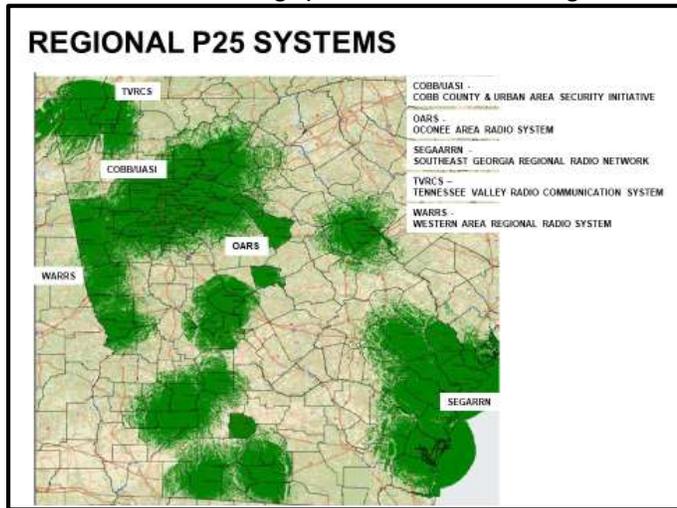
Andy Mossman, Director of the Georgia Information Sharing Analysis Center (also called the Fusion Center), briefed the committee on the See Something Send Something app the public can use to report suspicious activity (can be downloaded for free through the App Store or Google play). This app would allow a student sitting in class who sees something suspicious to send a message through the app to the 24/7 watch desk. Mr. Mossman testified to a recent incident where a student saw a threat posted on social media and sent a message through the app. Within 15 minutes the student who made the threat was identifed, in custody, and law enforcement had recovered a weapon. Mr. Mossman noted that the student reporting the threat didn't go to the principal or School Resource Officer (SRO), instead they sent an anonymous message through the app. The Center would like additional promotion of the app to increase participation. Further developments to the app would be guaging adoption rates and building an immediate referral system for someone who is in need of mental health assistance.

Mr. Mossman also spoke about the need for multidisciplinary threat assesment review boards and threat assessment teams. The boards would provide district level oversight, including approving school safety plans, mandating training, and providing direction and guidance. Composition of the board would include the superintendent, sheriff or police chief (depending on jurisdiction), mental health professional; GBI; GEMA; and any other individual the district determines is necessary. Each individual school would have an action team comprised of the principal, SRO, and counselor. When a threat is detected, a threat assessment would be

conducted. Georgia does not have a threat assessment form. Mr. Mossman testified the action teams must be authorized by the state, as there are barriers in state law that keep school officials from sharing information.

Kathryn Bedette, Associate Professor of Architecture at Kennesaw State University and current President of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Georgia highlighted the role architecture plays in school safety. During the planning process, architects have a number of hazards to mitigate while still prioritizing the learning environment. These hazards include fire, natural disaster, and emergency situations. Ms. Bedette indicated that every school design project is tailored to the local community so projects can be quite different across Georgia; however, there are some best design safety practices that can be applied across all situations. These best practices include providing multiple layers of protection, at the site perimeter, entry areas, interior circulations, and classrooms; natural surveillance of the interior and exterior of the school to create a "see and be seen" environment; and developing areas of refuge to allow students and teachers to shelter in place, such as a classroom with reinforced wall materials, solid doors, and the ability to lock the room from the inside. AIA Georgia has a Committee for Safe and Secure School Design comprised of architects, so when questions from stakeholders arise or when information/research on school safety design is needed, the committee can respond.

Bill O'Brien of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) testified that GEMA has eight regional homeland security coordinators (soon to become law enforcement certified) who work with school systems to provide school safety training and technical assistance. School systems can request trainings from GEMA, such as those listed in the inset slide.

GEMA also provides technical assistance to school systems by helping schools create safety plans, conducting site assessments in coordination with the DOE, and drill/evacuations. Mr. O'Brien

indicated that some school systems don't do site assessments through GEMA, instead local law enforcement or a private company conducts the assessment. Mr. O'Brien also expressed concerns with the limited number of active shooter drills conducted in schools each year and suggested mandating more lockdown and intruder drills in schools (most schools only do one or two a year).

Sgt. Jesse Hambrick, from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office supervises 15 SROs who cover 10 middle and high schools and one alternative school. Sgt. Hambrick cited a study done by Pepperdine University that showed Georgia is one of only a few states that does not have a law outlining the expectations of the SRO. Sgt. Hambrick testified that the Georgia Public Safety Training Center (GPSTC) offers a one week course for SRO training that is in addition to basic law enforcement training SROs receive. Given the range of issues that SROs must deal with from vandalism to sexual assault, Sgt. Hambrick suggested that SROs should receive longer training, similar to that of a police officer or deputy sheriff, which would include an intermediate, advanced, and supervisory training course. Also, Sgt. Hambrick expressed concern that

Georgia's terroristic threats law does not cover threats made on a social media platforms and a lack of state funding for part-time law enforcement after hours (Friday night football games or field trips) puts students at risk. He also encouraged the creation of threat assessment teams.

Garry McGiboney, of DOE, spoke regarding facilities and school safety.   State law authorizes DOE to adopt policies, guidelines, and standards to govern improvements, expansion, modernization, safety and energy retrofitting of existing facilities. School systems have to meet all federal state and local laws for new construction and renovation. Gerald Williams, testified that GA DOE is open to having discussions on what safety infrastructure guidelines should be mandated, but to be aware of the cost to poor, rural school districts.

School systems are still in the process of requesting reimbursement for the $16 million in bond funds authorized in the FY 2019 appropriations bill. Examples of items requested for reimbursement are cameras, secuity doors, locks, fencing, radios and intercom systems. GaDOE's facility's office is working with lcoal facility/safety directors on prioritizing their school safety needs.

November 29, 2018
Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Atlanta, GA

Antoinette Tuff, Founder of Kids on the Move for Success, recounted her experience with a successful resolution (no injuries or casualties) to an active shooter at a DeKalb County elementary school in August 2013. Through that experience, Ms. Tuff founded the organization Kids on the Move for Success, which provides mentoring to underserved students in STEAM subject areas. Ms. Tuff brought four high school mentors to speak to the study committee. They spoke on the issues of gun violence, bullying, suicide, and mental health. Joshua H. told about his experience witnessing a fellow student attempt suicide at school and Zion C. spoke about the number of her classmates that are suffering from mental health issues and her unsuccessful experience trying to engage a school counselor.

Michael Rodgers, Sales Manager at BAE Systems discussed their collaboration with ACG Solutions in the creation of collaborative response graphics (CRG) and how that increases school security.   The creation of CRG involves overlaying blueprints and satellite maps to create an accurate grid type map of the school to create
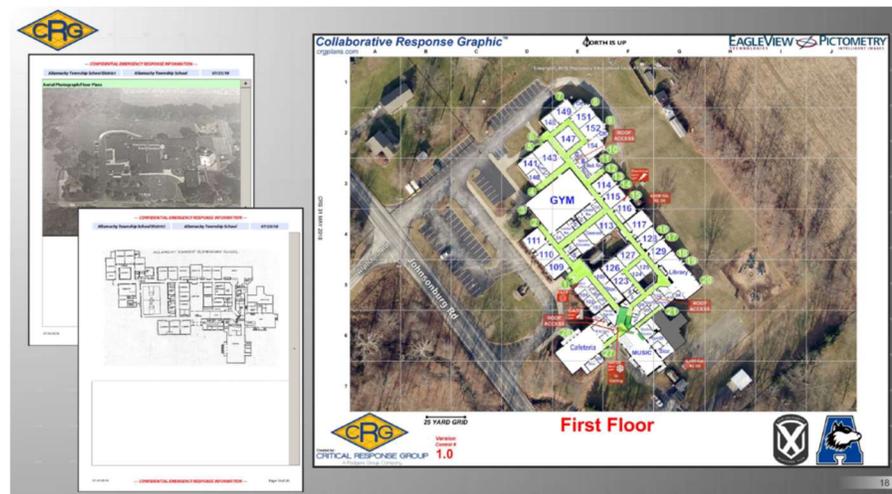
efficient and accurate law enforcement response to a major school safety incident. A CRG increases the law enforcement response rate by 62% on average. Mr. Rodgers stated many schools don't have current blueprints (after renovations and additions), and if they do, they aren't properly labeled for entrances, exits, and directional accuracy. Brandon Thompson, Architect at ACG Solutions, discussed how the cloud-based maps can also include live video trip responses to doors opening or gunshot sensors. The application is designed to work with any camera system already in use at the school. ACG Solutions is currently in the process of mapping all Habersham County schools. The cost is $1,000 per map and each school story is one map and the exterior is considered one map; the average cost is $2,500.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create a statewide threat management team to coordinate school safety and security resources from executive branch agencies and other stakeholders, including local school districts, local law enforcement, and mental health agencies.** This team would also be tasked with developing school safety/security models, standards, and best practices for local school systems and local law enforcement. The study committee heard from several organizations, including the GBI, GEMA, GSU's Center for School Safety, School Climate, and Classroom Management and DOE, that suggested a central school safety organization.

- **Develop a threat assessment model outlined in the US Secret Service School Safety Guide to be used in all districts and schools in Georgia.** In addition to mitigating threats of violence, Dr. Alathari, from the US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, stated Virginia saw a reduction in bullying, an increase in school climate, fewer long term suspensions, and greater community and parental involvement as a consequence of mandating schools implement a threat assessment model.

- **Increase the number of mental health counselors available in schools to meet the needs of all students.** The APEX program demonstrated the importance of having mental health counselors in schools. Dr. Ann DiGirolamo stated schools that participate in APEX or APEX/PBIS have seen greater increases in average school climate star ratings, than the statewide average.

- **Explore legislative remedies to expand ESPLOST to include school security as an allowable expense**. Currently, the Constitution of Georgia only allows ESPLOST funds for capital outlay. The study committee favors legislation that would expand the use of ESPLOST to include operating expenses for narrowly defined school safety uses.

- **Increase school climate through the expansion of the PBIS program to all schools in Georgia.** Dr. Justin Hill, from DOE, testified that PBIS has been implemented in over 1,300 schools in Georgia, with about 1,000 schools not trained. The result of PBIS is a reduction in student behavioral issues and an increase in school climate. Furthermore, Dr. McGiboney, from DOE, testified (and echoed by Dr. Joel Meyers and Dr. Alathari) that increasing school climate will increase school safety.

- **Direct the Department of Education to establish best practices for safety infrastructure in new construction and renovations.** Kathryn Bedette, from AIA Georgia, discussed several school safety design best practices, including multiple layers of

protection, natural surveillance, and developing areas of refuge. In crafting school safety design best practices, the Department of Education should explore revisions to the capital outlay formula in statute or state board rule that consider school safety design best practices.

- **Investigate the creation of a statewide radio communications network and the utilization of network communication within schools.** Andy Mossman, from GBI, testified the average active shooter incident is over within six minutes, so law enforcement response is critical. Tony Rugerio, from Motorola Solutions, Inc, stated that 75% of the population in Georgia is covered by a P25 network, but 25% of the state's population is not covered. A statewide radio communications network would increase law enforcement response and coordination to all areas of Georgia. Also, during the field trip to Douglas County's active shooter drill, the study committee learned that radio communication within schools is lacking due to the brick and metal construction of most schools. School systems are encouraged to assess, and if needed, improve radio communication within schools through technology system upgrades.

- **Expand awareness of the GBI's See Something Send Something app.** The GBI launched the See Something Send Something app in July 2018; however study committee members discovered that many people still don't know about the app due to the newness of it. Similar to requiring Human Trafficking Notices (O.C.G.A. §16-5-47) in certain businesses and establishments, a notice for the See Something Send Something app should be required to be posted in every school in Georgia.

- **Examine current school resource officer (SRO) training to determine what is necessary and whether the role of the SRO be codified.** Sgt. Hambrick stated SROs receive basic law enforcement training and one week of specialized SRO training; but he believes one week of specialized SRO training is not sufficient because SROs respond to a variety of issues in schools (everything from bullying to sexual assault to vandalism). Furthermore, Sgt. Hambrick cited research a Pepperdine University professor conducted for Douglas County that found Georgia is the only state where the role of the SRO is not defined in Code.

- **Explore the safety of other school and student-based locations, such as FFA and 4H Camps, field trips, sporting events, as well as school bus safety.** Sgt. Hambrick testified that many school systems don't offer security at school and student-based events, which leaves students and teachers vulnerable for targeted school violence.

- **Increase participation in training and assistance offered by the Department of Education and Georgia Emergency Management Agency.** This includes training for Stop the Bleed, Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE), the creation of school safety plans and more. School safety plan creation and assessment is offered by GEMA; however, Bill O'Brien, from GEMA, testified that many schools don't use GEMA for safety plan assessments and instead hire third party contractors resulting in a cost to the school.

- **Explore legislative remedies for the creation of school safety plans not subject to open records.** Georgia Code (OCGA § 50-18-72) excludes school safety plans from open records requests; however, meetings where the school safety plan was created and discussed are still subject to open records. Closing this loop would further protect the privacy of those plans.

- **Examine the need and scope of lock down drills, in conjunction with other drills in the school environment.** Bill O'Brien, from GEMA, testified that many schools only conduct one to two lock down drills a year, but conduct as many as ten fire drills. The state should look at the number of lock down drills schools are conducting and the time of day they are conducted (not always while students are in class).