
Committee Meeting

of

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*“The Committees will receive testimony from invited guests
on issues related to school security”*

LOCATION: Committee Room 4
State House Annex
Trenton, New Jersey

DATE: April 5, 2018
10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES PRESENT

Senator M. Teresa Ruiz, Chair
Senator Shirley K. Turner, Vice Chair
Senator James Beach
Senator Michael J. Doherty
Senator Samuel D. Thompson
Assemblywoman Pamela R. Lampitt, Chair
Assemblywoman Mila M. Jasey, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Joe Danielsen
Assemblyman Eric Houghtaling
Assemblywoman Patricia Egan Jones
Assemblyman Gary S. Schaer
Assemblywoman Britnee N. Timberlake
Assemblywoman Serena DiMaso
Assemblyman Edward H. Thomson



ALSO PRESENT:

Kathleen Fazzari
Anita M. Saynisch
*Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aides*

Elizabeth Mahn
*Senate Majority
Rebecca Panitch
Senate Republican
Committee Aides*

Kaylee E. McGuire
Jade Mostyn
*Assembly Majority
Natalie Ghaul
Assembly Republican
Committee Aides*

***Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey***

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COMMITTEE NOTICE

TO: MEMBERS OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: SENATOR M. TERESA RUIZ, CHAIRWOMAN
ASSEMBLYWOMAN PAMELA R. LAMPITT, CHAIRWOMAN

SUBJECT: COMMITTEE MEETING - APRIL 5, 2018

The public may address comments and questions to Kathleen Fazzari, Anita Saynisch, Committee Aides, or make bill status and scheduling inquiries to Larkin Cugnitti, Secretary, at (609)847-3850, fax (609)984-9808, or e-mail: OLSAideAED@njleg.org. Written and electronic comments, questions and testimony submitted to the committee by the public, as well as recordings and transcripts, if any, of oral testimony, are government records and will be available to the public upon request.

The Senate Education Committee and the Assembly Education Committee will meet on Thursday, April 5, 2018, at 10:00 AM in Committee Room 4, 1st Floor, State House Annex, Trenton, New Jersey

The committees will receive testimony from invited guests on issues related to school security.

Issued 3/28/18

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. Acting Commissioner Department of Education State of New Jersey	5
Robert Bumpus Assistant Commissioner Field Services Department of Education State of New Jersey	5
Ben Castillo Director Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning Department of Education State of New Jersey	5
Jared Maples Director Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP) State of New Jersey	33
Lieutenant Colonel Steven Shallop Deputy Superintendent Administration New Jersey State Police Office of Law and Public Safety State of New Jersey	38
Detective Sergeant Timothy P. Gerity President New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers	39
Melanie Schulz Director Government Relations New Jersey Association of School Administrators	49

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Scott R. Rocco, Ed.D. Superintendent Hamilton Township School District	50
Thomas A. Smith, Ed.D. Superintendent Hopewell Valley Regional School District	52
Michael Vrancik Director Governmental Relations New Jersey School Boards Association	55
Steven W. Kairys, M.D. Chair Department of Pediatrics K. Hovnanian Children's Hospital Jersey Shore University Medical Center (JSUMC), and Medical Director New Jersey Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics, and Co-Principal Investigator Pediatric Psychiatry Collaborative Pilot Project (PPC)	56
Ramon Solhkhah, M.D. Chair Department of Psychiatry Jersey Shore University Medical Center, and Co-Principal Investigator Pediatric Psychiatry Collaborative Pilot Project (PPC)	58
Donna M. Chiera President American Federation of Teachers New Jersey, AFL-CIO	59
Maureen A. Brogan Statewide Traumatic Loss Coordinator Traumatic Loss Coalitions for Youth University Behavioral Health Care Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey	62

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Patricia Wright Executive Director New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association	65
Michael Vinella, Ph.D. Principal East Brunswick High School	67
Ralph Aiello Principal Cumberland Regional High School	69
John F. Donahue Executive Director New Jersey Association of School Business Officials	70
George V. Corwell, Ed.D. Director Office of Education New Jersey Catholic Conference	71
Kevin J. DiPatri President National Force Security	71
Judith A. Nicastro Associate Director School Services Diocese of Trenton	72
Joshua Caplan Executive Director Teach NJS Orthodox Union	75
Chenai Okammor Senior Consultant Center for Educational Innovation	77

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Michael Kohlhagen Chief Executive Officer Center for Educational Innovation	77
APPENDIX:	
Testimony submitted by Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D.	1x
Power Point Presentation submitted by Department of Education State of New Jersey	8x
Testimony submitted by Scott R. Rocco, Ed.D.	24x
Testimony submitted by Thomas A. Smith, Ed.D.	27x
<i>What Makes Schools Safe?</i> <i>Final Report: NJSBA School Security Task Force</i> <i>October 22, 2014</i> submitted by Michael Vrancik	29x
Overview <i>New Jersey Collaborative Health Care Pilot Program, and</i> <i>New Jersey Pediatric Psychiatry Collaborative (PPC)</i> <i>Performance Monitoring Data Summary</i> submitted by Steven Kairys, M.D. and Roman Solhkhah, M.D.	140x
Testimony submitted by Maureen A. Brogan	190ax

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

APPENDIX (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
Testimony submitted by Patricia Wright	190x
Testimony submitted by Michael Vinella, Ph.D.	192x
Testimony submitted by Ralph Aiello	194x
Testimony submitted by John F. Donahue	196x
Testimony submitted by George V. Corwell, Ed.D.	198x
Testimony, plus attachments submitted by Kevin J. DiPatri	203x
Testimony submitted by Judith A. Nicaastro	211x
Testimony submitted by Joshua Caplan	219x
Statement submitted by Patrick R. Brannigan Executive Director New Jersey Catholic Conference	221x
pnf: 1-82	

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PAMELA R. LAMPITT (Chair):

Good morning, everybody.

We very much appreciate everybody being here, hosting the Joint session for the Senate and the Assembly, in reference to school security.

We have a line-up of experts here; I think everybody has been given sort of the ground rules for today. We certainly know that everybody around-- The members have a very active day as well; and this room is going to be very active, in reference to the Senate conducting their Budget hearing, as well.

I'm going to allow the Senator to make some opening comments, and then I will make mine as well.

SENATOR M. TERESA RUIZ (Chair): Good morning, everyone.

First I want to take the opportunity to thank Assemblywoman Lampitt, who reached out, really, in the moments of the aftermath of a crisis that impacted this nation, and resonated in all of our communities in ways that we still can't understand. Certainly, when we drop our children off at school, we never want to get a text or see, you know, during a press clip, that there's a school on shut-down -- that something is occurring.

I look forward to listening to testimony today from, really, a cross-sector of professionals, including the Department of Education, as to what we're doing, how we can improve things, what kind of investments we need to make.

The Assemblywoman was much kinder and gentler in her approach. We are very time-sensitive today (laughter). I know that a lot of

us have a wealth of information that we're all going to get through. If you have written testimony, I would just kindly ask you to summarize and highlight the points that will really help us and staff move policy forward that will protect the children in the State of New Jersey.

And I also want to thank the staff of both houses for going above and beyond, and assembling a group that will get us to a change in policy to protect our students.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you, Senator.

And I, too, want to thank the staff for putting together these three Committee hearings. We are going to be conducting, on April 9, a hearing down in Cherry Hill; and then, on April 23, a hearing in Newark. We really wanted to take it to the public so that we hear from the parents, and the teachers, and the principals, the janitors -- everybody who's involved in our community of our schools. So this is going to be a three-day process, in which case we're going to be hearing a tremendous amount of testimony in reference to what we could be doing better.

We all know that we can be doing something better; but we certainly know -- through the credit of New Jersey and the great work that we've done before -- that we have in place great, strong pieces of legislation and laws that really help to guide our schools and our Superintendents towards providing what we hope to be the safest in the nation.

Parkland really struck a chord with all of us; we never want that to happen again in the United States, and we certainly don't want it to happen here in New Jersey. I believe some of the things that we have done already, be it the HIB legislation that we've worked on -- harassment and bullying -- we've been able to detect and really lower the amount of

incidents that have happened in our schools. We know that the active Parkland shooter was somebody who had some mental-related, behavioral-related issues. I believe that we have taken great steps in that facet. There's more to do. Mental health is something I'm very passionate about. I know that we have the American Academy of Pediatrics here. But knowing the fact that they have already determined that a child of the age of 12 and older should be evaluated for their behavioral and mental health each and every year, really does coordinate and collaborate with what we know -- that the sensitivity of our children is something that we all need to be mindful of. When our children go off to our schools, they are in a home of education; but that home is really filled with people who are supposed to be nurturers, to be able to support them so that they can not only be educated, but be educated safely.

And with all that said, we are going to be starting off with a panel of discussion.

SENATOR RUIZ: There has to be a roll call.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Oh, we have to do a roll call; thank you, Senator.

Let's do a roll call, please.

MS. FAZZARI (Committee Aide): Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Senator Beach.

SENATOR BEACH: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Senator Turner.

SENATOR SHIRLEY K. TURNER (Vice Chair): Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Senator Ruiz.

SENATOR RUIZ: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblywoman DiMaso.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DIMASO: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblyman Thomson.

ASSEMBLYMAN THOMSON: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblywoman Timberlake.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TIMBERLAKE: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblyman Houghtaling.

ASSEMBLYMAN HOUGHTALING: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblyman Danielsen.

ASSEMBLYMAN DANIELSEN: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblyman Schaer.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHAER: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblyman Jones.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JONES: Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblywoman Jasey.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILA M. JASEY (Vice Chair): Here.

MS. FAZZARI: Assemblywoman Lampitt.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Here.

We're very pleased to always call a Commissioner to our hearings; it's been a long time since we have been able to do so.

So after an eight-year stint of not having a Commissioner be present at many of our hearings, we have Dr. Lamont Repollet, New Jersey Commissioner -- Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Education.

And we have Robert Bumpus, Assistant Commissioner of Field Services, New Jersey Department of Education; and Ben Castillo, the Director of the Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning, New Jersey Department of Education.

Welcome, gentlemen.

Thank you.

ACTING COMMISSIONER LAMONT REPOLLET:

Thank you.

ROBERT BUMPUS: Thank you.

BEN CASTILLO: Thank you.

DR. REPOLLET: Good morning, members of the Senate and the Assembly Education Committees.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to talk about the wide range of school safety initiatives employed here in New Jersey.

As a parent and educator, I know that this issue is foremost in people's minds, particularly in light of the horrific tragedies that have occurred in Florida, Connecticut, Michigan, Colorado, and so many other states throughout the country.

I can tell you I'm personally and professionally committed to school security. It's why I participated in the Newark March for our Lives on March 24; it's why I'm participating in an Advanced Training for School Safety Specialist Academy roundtable in Indiana next month; it's why I was named Co-Chair of the School Security Subcommittee for the New Jersey Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness.

We know that school safety is not a partisan or political problem. Regardless of party, race, or creed, the senseless, vicious deaths of innocent children brings us together in anger and mourning. It has also brought us together in advocacy and action. The strength, courage, and wisdom exercised by the survivors of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, has inspired us all. They are as determined, as we are today, that these awful incidents never happen again.

That's why Governor Murphy provided an additional \$66 million in school safety funds for the Fiscal Year 2019 budget. The money will allow districts to develop, advance, and enhance new or current security strategies.

The Department has made secure schools a priority in its mission. Together, in partnership with our 560-plus districts, we have been vigilant. And while we cannot control individual student behavior, we provide guidance and support through training and resources to the school districts in order to assist their ability to identify promising practices and effective preventative strategies.

As you know, it is the local school boards that directly oversee the school districts and manage school-specific plans. Districts are required to annually report incidents through the Department's Violence and Vandalism data collection. This data provides communities information regarding the health and safety of their schools.

As you know, because of many of the Committee members here today, as well as legislators, school security legislation has been passed to address a variety of safety concerns, including the establishment of the New Jersey School Safety Specialist Academy; training conducted collaboratively

by schools and emergency responders; the presence of law enforcement for at least one of the monthly mandatory school security drills; and the designation of a Class III Special Law Enforcement Officer for use in schools and colleges.

Many of these laws are the result of a 2015 New Jersey School Security Task Force Report, in which recommendations were made pertaining to school safety challenges. Through legislation and local district accomplishments, incredible strides have been made to secure our schools.

The New Jersey Administrative Code requires all school districts in New Jersey to have a school safety and security plan. Each plan must be designed locally with the help of law enforcement agencies, emergency management, public health officials, and other key stakeholders. They must be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. These plans should address all hazards, which can range from bomb threats, fires, and gas leaks, to active shooter situations.

The format and content of school safety and security plans are established by the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force and the Department of Education. This summer, we will be working collectively to make any necessary updates and revisions. These written plans and procedures must provide for the protection of the health, safety, security, and welfare of the school population; the prevention of, intervention in, response to, and recovery from emergency and crisis situations; the establishment and maintenance of a school climate; and supportive services for staff, students, and their families.

We also have taken proactive measures to protect the safety and security of all our students and staff members. Through the

Department's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning, we are striving to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the school community by providing direct support to schools that are establishing safe and secure environments, and increasing their capacity to respond in the event of crisis.

Through the unit, the Department provides information and assistance to both public and nonpublic schools on topics such as site-specific observations, crisis response, contingency and continuity plans, target hardening, mitigation measures, and communication protocols.

It also provides technical assistance on school safety, security, and preparedness through our online School Safety Center that provides various tools to enhance and further develop school or district safety and security initiatives in the areas of school safety and security plan reviews, drill guidance/observations, conference/meeting presentations, table top exercises, in-service/professional development, and school site appraisals.

Since 2014, the Department has conducted 803 unannounced active shooter drill observations, 205 technical assistance requests, 121 presentations to educational organizations, and 91 trainings.

The guidance provided to the districts has evolved overtime through our collaboration with law enforcement officers and other statewide and national agencies. The Department is committed to continuous improvement of our own staff. Staff monitor national trends and receive training on the latest school security best practices, and those are, in turn, keyed to our districts.

There is a growing awareness around the significance of building strong, healthy, positive, school cultures through social-emotional learning -- almost a type of sensitivity training for students.

Together with our sister State agencies, including the Departments of Community Affairs; Health; Children and Families; Law and Public Safety; Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness; State Police; and many other Federal and local government and non-government partners, we have established the Intergovernmental School Safety Group, and we've made student safety a core part of our departments' value structure. In fact, it's because of this seamless collaboration and communication that we were able to monitor and react in real time to school walkout activities on March 14.

I look forward to working with all of you, the school districts and educators, to explore innovative ideas that further enhance the great work we're doing here in New Jersey.

Thank you.

MR. BUMPUS: Good morning.

Thank you so much for organizing this Joint Committee of Education, with the Assemblymen and Senators present.

My name is Bob Bumpus; I'm Assistant Commissioner for Field Services, and one of my offices in my portfolio is the Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning.

Ben Costillo, to my left, is the Director of that office; and I'm so proud of the work that he's been doing over the last three years.

Initially, with a Federal grant, we were able to fund his office. We now have six members of his team. Ben himself is a retired Lieutenant

from the State Police, and many of his team members are also retired from the State Police.

The funding -- we had to go to the State for funding to continue this program over the last couple of years, so I'm very appreciative of what the Legislature has done in helping us continue the funding of this very vital program.

My belief is that learning can only take place in a safe and secure environment. And what I mean by *safe and secure* -- it's not only physical safety and security, but emotional and psychological safety and security.

As an educator, I know that our students and staff need to be in climates that promote what is known in the literature as *relaxed alertness*; and that's where the brain is optimized.

We also know that it's not just the cognitive, but it's also the affect that's important in learning. So when our students feel safe and secure, they're primed to learn.

As Assemblywoman Lampitt indicated, we do have other innovations over the last few years that the Legislature has provided, including HIB -- *Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying* -- policies and procedures. As the Commissioner mentioned in his remarks, the SEL -- the ability to emotionally be secure to learn is, as I said, important.

I'd like to conclude my remarks with a quote from one of the premier professional developers and educators in New Jersey, Dr. Tracey Severns. She tweets, "For every one thing we do to improve how we protect our schools from the outside, do at least two things to improve how we foster positive, caring relationships inside our schools."

Thank you.

MR. CASTILLO: Thank you, Bob.

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Ben Castillo, and I'm Director of the Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning with DOE.

I, too, would like to thank you for your support.

I've only been with the DOE for about three-and-a-half years, and in that time -- I came in pretty much as a DOE representative on that School Security Task Force. And it's only through your efforts that a good number of the recommendations coming from that Task Force were codified, were made into law. So we certainly thank you for that.

I also had the opportunity to meet with a number of my counterparts from different states -- other school safety centers throughout the nation -- and I can tell you this. That here in New Jersey-- First of all, as the Commissioner had mentioned -- we try, but we wouldn't be able to stop everything. But here in New Jersey we're pretty well positioned. It may be because we're such a small state -- we certainly are the most densely populated state -- but the arrangement and configuration of police departments throughout the state would allow for a very good response time; in comparison to places like, maybe, Arizona, where there are some school communities out in the desert where it's going to take over an hour for a police response.

It also enables our members -- and Bob, thanks for the praise, but certainly all of that praise goes out to our team members who, each and every day, are at the grassroots level in all of our schools.

The Commissioner mentioned over 800 unannounced drill observations that we conducted. That's within each and every school. So certainly with a team of six, and myself, that's quite a task.

But certainly, the legislation, such as the School Drill Law-- If I can just give you one brief story. I was in Washington D.C., and we were kind of comparing what our precautions were, and those things in terms of training. And a number of states would say that, "Yes, we have to do school security drills; we'll do two a year." And finally, when it came to our turn, and we said, "Well, we have to do one security drill in addition to a fire drill every month," people looked at me and said, "Well, how do you do that?" And I had to give the praise to the Legislature -- because it's law.

And I'm sure with the number of things that the educators have to attend to, things that maybe they can kind of put on the shelf maybe one month -- they would tend to not do if it were not regulated, if they didn't have to do it. So I'd just like to thank you for that.

And I'd also like to give a shout-out to our State partners, as well as our partners at the county level, the local level. We do have very good partnerships with the Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness; that's where our physical office is, so it makes for a very good working relationship. New Jersey State Police come out on many of our unannounced drill observations. We contact the local prosecutors' offices, and they accompany us on our drills as well; as we do with the local police.

So it is a very strong partnership. As the Senator had mentioned, we always could do more, and we're looking to that. So we would look to you for support to be able to continue to do so.

Thank you.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you.

I just -- I have a few questions.

I would be remiss -- and I think Assistant Commissioner Bumpus you alluded to this. Our children need to feel emotionally safe. We have to remember that gun violence has been a public health crisis in many of our communities; and some of our students walk to schools in ways where gun violence is prevalent; or when they're playing during recess, where gun violence is prevalent. So as we have this discussion with the Department of Education, I want to besure that we also lend our policy-making decision to be more inclusive of our neighborhoods that are struck by this public health crisis on not one episode, but on, you know, weekly or monthly tragedies that occur; and things that occur and things that our students deal with.

A question to follow up -- we have the two monthly fire drills. How good are districts about complying with the law? I know it's a lot of paperwork that has to be submitted, but it's something that is well worth the initiative. I just want to know how the districts are doing with complying.

DR. REPOLLET: The districts are doing very well, Senator.

We have to fill out a school insurance --- with this, you have to fill out a school insurance every month to ensure that they are actually following up with regulations, in regards to our drills.

A comment on that: Most recently I was in Washington D.C., and we were with the Chiefs throughout the country. And the Chief from Florida -- she was talking about her experience with Parkland and going down and meeting with them. She talked about being at the White House

and speaking with the Secretary of Education and with the President. And she mentioned that Florida is thinking about having two drills a month; not just a fire drill, but more of an emergency drill. And I smiled and thought about the work that we do here in New Jersey, and it just-- One of the things that we actually have in New Jersey -- I think in the Department of Education -- is that we have skilled professionals who actually work in our office. And these skilled professionals, such as Ben and his team, retired State Troopers -- they have these relationships that normally regular Department of Education members wouldn't have. And that's an advantage to us in the state; because we talk about regulations and Memorandum of Understanding, and we talk about the relationship of law enforcement officers. And I think that's kind of key. And the guidance that we give to these districts is predicated on the relationship that they actually have with local law enforcement agencies.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you.

Just two more questions, and then I'm done.

The concept of *unannounced drills* has been discussed. I know there were some media reports that had indicated that some parents have mixed concerns about students having unannounced drills. Can you lend your opinion as to how important it is for this part of this process -- to have unannounced drills, or how not important it is? I'm not sure; I'm not an expert in this. But if you can share some insight.

And to follow -p with that -- are there any districts that are doing things that are innovative, on their own, that are things that we should replicate?

DR. REPOLLET: Okay; so I'm going to talk about the first part; and then I'll let Ben talk about being on the ground, as far as that.

So these observations, these drills -- unannounced drills -- they're effective for one reason. It's almost like a practice, or a scrimmage. It gives the educators -- and I say this because, just last year, I was in a situation where Asbury Park -- we actually had an unannounced drill. The Department of Education, led by Ben and his team, contacted the Superintendent. We informed the principal, and we did not inform the parents, because we wanted to see the drill done in a normal, actual, practice, right? We wanted to see if the backdoor of the cafeteria was left open during the drill; we wanted to see exactly what was going on. Were the doors locked or unlocked? So the advantage of actually having the unknown--

One concern the Senator had was coming in, tactical force, with guns; however, it does not happen like that. It's a coordinated effort with local prosecutors, local enforcement agencies, and with the school district; and it is done very professionally. And from that experience, we get to review and assess exactly what's going on with their practice; we reflect at the end of the unannounced drill and observation; we talk about things that they have done right -- best practices -- we talk about making recommendations to support what they're doing.

But I'm going to let Ben give you an understanding of exactly, internally, what actually occurs; because we do have parents who complained, but I think it's more of a safety--

MR. CASTILLO: Yes; thanks for the question.

I am a proponent of the unannounced drills. And I understand the concern about the effect that it may have on the kids.

My experience has been, once again, in these last three years -- at first, there was this concern of mine that I had, "Well, it might be drill fatigue," because I thought that, perhaps, with these unannounced drills, we would get to the point where we would be with fire drills. When the bell goes off, there's no real notification that, "Okay, this is a drill." It's sort of ingrained into the regular way of doing business.

And what I've seen is that our kids are pretty resilient. Anecdotally, if I might refer to one experience that our folks had -- remember the *swatting* incidents that were going on? I think there was even a member of the legislature that was swatted. This is a hoax call that's made just to get emergency response. It's a hoax; nothing is actually occurring. Many times they will mask -- or, most times they'll mask where the call is coming from. And that was rampant throughout the State of New Jersey.

There was one school that -- they would constantly say, "Okay, this is an active shooter drill," and that's the way that they did business.

On the one particular time when the school was swatted-- Now, the Administrators didn't know that this was a hoax call -- they had announced that it was an active shooter drill, when actually they didn't know. So what had happened -- by hearing *drill*, that started a whole process by which those members of the faculty -- who would normally, during a drill, go out and start checking classrooms to ensure they were locked-- Had that been an actual incident, that would have put all of those people in danger.

The other side of it is, if we take a look at it as an opportunity for training-- What we're trying to do is kind of like desensitize the students to that type of response. And from what I've seen, the kids are pretty resilient. There is one area that we're trying to work on, and it's the idea -- when substitutes come in to teach. They're in a new school; it's unfamiliar to them, they are maybe not sure exactly what the procedures are. And we've been happy to find that in many of those cases, the students will kind of let the teachers know what they're supposed to do. So we think that it's part of that training process that occurs.

And then one final thing is that, okay, so let's say we always let them know, or we always tell them that it's a drill. When we don't say *drill*, then that kind of adds to that panic. So what we may be doing is teaching these students and teachers to maybe save that panic for that actual event; and we really don't want to do that. We want a well-rehearsed type of response to those types of calls. So I think there is a lot of value in it.

We have seen that -- my apologies to many of the parents -- most of the parents seem very, very upset when the school notifies that we're going to have a change in the way we do things. We're not going to announce it as a drill; we'll let the parents know, as soon as possible after the drill, that we had one. And then everyone can kind of go back to normal.

So the students, at least from what we've seen, they've been pretty resilient and they've responded pretty well to it.

In terms of the number of things that are being done, when we do go into schools we will ask -- try to find out if they are doing anything outside the ordinary that maybe we didn't know. And we do see a number

of things. One of the questions that we ask is that if there are students with special needs, how their teachers deal with those alarms going off; it can be very disturbing sometimes. And as we get that information, we will share that with everyone else throughout the state -- as we go on these drills.

So with about 2,500 public schools, 1,500 private schools -- we've only done 800, so we have a few more to go. But we think we're pretty much on the right track.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank our very much.

I have a few questions as well.

Commissioner, when we spoke yesterday, we talked about the cost-per-pupil, in reference to the \$75 that is allocated today. You shared that Governor Murphy put in \$66 million more. But technology today, with the greater expense for trying to implement technology -- and technology is the way that some of our schools want to go -- how do you see that-- Do you feel that the \$66 million is enough; and how do you see it being distributed through our 2,500 schools?

DR. REPOLLET: I believe the \$66 million is an investment; it's an initial investment, as the Governor talked about moving towards full funding. I think the fact -- the commitment to school safety and security with the initial \$66 million investment.

However, districts will take that money and use it based on the needs of their district. Some districts are using it for SROs; some districts are using it for measures such as hiring additional security guards in the building as well. So they're using it based on the needs of their district.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Mr. Castillo, you talked about the parents and the drills. Would you ever consider having a drill

during a back-to-school night? Because parents-- Because what we've heard from parents is that they are fearful about these drills, and they are not aware of these drills, and they don't know what you do during these drills.

MR. CASTILLO: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Would there ever be a chance -- I facetiously say *back-to-school night*, but would there ever be a chance where you could have the parents actually be involved -- not with the children, but have the experience of what a drill actually looks like?

MR. CASTILLO: Absolutely.

I'm not sure, because we didn't have that training advantage to let them know, "Okay, this is actually what you should be doing," as we do with the kids.

However, there was one Principal -- up north, I believe -- who decided to have a drill. It was leading up to graduation, and there were a number of parents there, and he said, "Let's call it now; let's see what happens."

Now, there's a way to go about that. You might, at that point, when you know you have a lot of people who are not familiar with the drill process -- then maybe announce it, just for the benefit of those who would be there so they would get an understanding. And that's an area, as well, that we are looking to improve upon. You know, many times after the regular school hours, security kind of goes away. You know, doors are left open; there's no one there checking as they come in and out. So we do provide some training, in terms of after-school events and large venue types of things, which we think are helpful.

But for those people who are on the mark and trying to push the ball forward, we would suggest that they do that. A lot of planning has to take place beforehand; a lot of speaking has to be done.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: No, I understand that.

MR. CASTILLO: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: I think that that's one of the innovative things that the Senator was trying to parcel out.

MR. CASTILLO: Absolutely.

DR. REPOLLET: But you also go back to that agreement, right? If you're going to take a risk at a moment like that, when you have people who are not trained -- let's say parents may not know the exits -- then I would just continue to work with your local law enforcement agencies, with your agreement, so you can actually have some of those ideas in place. Because we don't want to put other individuals in harm's way as a result of an activity we're trying to do.

So we would actually take this recommendation back--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: I fully understand, Commissioner; but an active shooter can happen at any time.

DR. REPOLLET: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: It could happen during a back-to-school night. So if we're trying to be 360, in terms of our approach towards coverage of our schools -- it was just something that we're trying to just think about.

Another thing, Mr. Castillo -- you talked about the response from our public safety officers; and the Senator was talking about the District that she represents, and how her -- the children, as they are walking

to schools, have to walk past, maybe, situations where active shootings occur. But specifically, towards the response time -- a lot of our districts are rural; down in the southern part of the state we have very rural districts. Have you measured the response time from a police to a school district, given a rural situation, so that we have an understanding about the expectations?

MR. CASTILLO: I guess we're on the same wavelength there.

I tried to gather some information regarding response times. The best we can do is, as we're in a school, try to get some idea from local police departments in terms of how well their average police response may be.

It may be all over the map; but I can tell you, like nationally, because of the way we're situated, even in our rural areas -- because we do have the local police; and some areas will have State Police, or there might be another town -- we would have to rely on local police of a neighboring district. We have county sheriffs' officers who are traversing to and from.

So that gets to the issue of communication of those things; and I think with regard to what Colonel Patrick Callahan of the New Jersey State Police -- in terms of trying to get his personnel, as they're going to and from, to stop in and identify themselves and let them know that we're here. Just kind of -- for a presence; but also to kind of get an understanding of what the school layout is. Because if that call does come out when they're traveling, you know, between their home and work -- that would be a very good backup resource for the local officers.

So, yes -- the quick response is no, I really don't have a feel for exactly what that average response time would be. We do know in the rural areas it would take somewhat longer.

But our training is focused on the schools, not so much the tactical response. We'd leave that -- we stay in our own lane -- we'd leave that to our police officers.

What we want to focus on is what that school can do within those few minutes -- and it would be minutes, here in New Jersey, even in those outlying areas -- for that police response, for those police to get there. So that's pretty much where our focus has been. But we do continue to look to try to get some feel as to how long it might take.

SENATOR RUIZ: Any members of the Senate have any questions? (no response)

Any members of the Assembly?

ASSEMBLYMAN HOUGHTALING: I do.

Could we just get a brief understanding of what the minimum requirements are for the active shooter drill?

MR. CASTILLO: Would you want us to go through the whole type of process; or--

In their plans, there are 91 minimum requirements--

ASSEMBLYMAN HOUGHTALING: That's a lot.

MR. CASTILLO: --that must be included. Only in New Jersey can you have *minimum* and 91; that's a lot of minimums. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN HOUGHTALING: That's a pretty good minimum.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Mr. Castillo, if you could just send it through the Chairs, we can disseminate it to the members.

But that was a very good question; we appreciate it.

MR. CASTILLO: Okay; very good.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TIMBERLAKE: Through you, Assemblywoman Lampitt and Senator Ruiz.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Assemblywoman Timberlake.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TIMBERLAKE: I'm interested in what the effects are -- one, how are the parents communicated with that this is happening. Because, as parent, I would be very nervous -- *nervous* being a light word -- if I received a text from my child saying to me, "Oh, my goodness, there's a shooter," if that drill was not announced, and they were not aware that it was a drill. That's my first question -- is, how are the parents communicated with.

And then I have questions about the effects of this. What are the effects -- has it been looked into on what panic can do to a person; whether or not it's to that parent who receives a text message like that, or a child himself who is not aware that it's a drill -- heart attack can set in; a lot of things could happen in that event.

And I am also interested in knowing, what are the effects of desensitizing? Because when we start talking about *desensitizing*, it's very -- it can become very dangerous, and it can go either way.

So as you're desensitizing people to know what happens in the event of an active shooter, are we also desensitizing our children to not think that it's a big deal -- an active shooter? Are you desensitizing those

who are potentially thinking about being an active shooter, as many of the instances are people who have attended the schools themselves?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Let me just state, Assemblywoman Timberlake -- great questions. There are some other people who are coming to testify who may be able to answer the emotional status, the impact, and everything else. So you may want to save the response for those individuals.

Commissioner.

DR. REPOLLET: Yes. As far as the parent communication -- immediately after, districts normally e-mail the parents; they send a letter home regarding the drill, and they also do a phone blast. So those are the three measures which districts do.

Districts do inform parents after-the-fact. Now, the time in which they do it is normally within 24 hours.

And in regards to crisis teams -- there are crisis teams available in the buildings that can actually help, whether it's parents, students, or educators.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Assemblyman Schaer.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHAER: Thank you, Chairwoman.

I wonder if the panel could address the issue of integration with other police forces; specifically county and municipal, and how they interact with the program in the schools.

DR. REPOLLET: Yes; through that local agreement -- that Memorandum of Understanding is, kind of, the document that brings local law enforcement agencies and school districts together. They are a set of protocols in which they follow, as far as a security plan.

And one of those things that we talk about during our unannounced observation drills -- active shooter drills-- We actually have local enforcement agencies, we have county prosecutors, we have State Police officers as well. So there is a concerted effort when we are doing these active drills.

There also is a relationship-building piece annually that districts must sign with the local police department in regards to a relationship.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Any further members?

Assemblywoman Jones.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JONES: Thank you very much.

And of course I'm going to be looking at the gentleman who is in charge of all the security issues.

I had a mom in my District who reached out to me yesterday. She is an interior designer -- a commercial interior designer. She does a lot of work with door hardware, and is a consultant on security measures for large corporations.

She has two elementary school children, and she felt that we should consider, when the children are in the classrooms, that the doors be locked, and that we not wait until a situation occurs for the teacher, then, to then go to the door and lock the door. She feels as though we jeopardize the teacher at that point.

Of course, she knows that there are availabilities of hardware that would allow people to gain access -- get out of the classroom, even if they were locked, but no one could get in.

Have we any schools that are doing that? Is it an issue that you have looked at, that you would recommend to school districts?

MR. CASTILLO: Yes. One of the pieces of legislation requires that the doors remain unlocked unless during a drill or an actual event.

What we have seen, and what we've been recommending, is that -- not going into any changing of the locking mechanism or anything like that, but the use of a magnet; you know, one of those slim refrigerator magnets that you might see. If you just put that in between the latch and the catch plate, that will keep that latch from engaging. So you can have the door locked when it is still, in fact, open.

In the event that an actual event were to occur, all that would be needed would be to, number one, if possible, sweep that hallway and make sure there is no one out there -- to pull someone in; and then by pulling that magnet, that latch would engage and the door would be locked. Without having, possibly, the teacher and anyone inside do a check to make sure that there's no one out there -- of course, obvious signs of gunfire, or things of that nature -- but that's pretty much an easy fix.

There are number of schools that just have gone to the ability to just lock it from inside; without the key. And you're on to something -- we have seen, when we're doing these drills unannounced, of course, the stress level is high. The teacher will come out, try to find that individual key on that ring, and try to insert it into that small lock -- we're talking about fine motor skills here; under pressure is not the time to be doing that for the first time.

So there a number of things; you can go with a fire-rated lock or door, which might be pretty expensive. But you can also go through these things with regard to -- the use of a simple magnet to be able to make that process a whole lot quicker.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JONES: It would be a good thing if we could identify those districts that may already do that. Obviously, the district she lives in doesn't, but I'm sure she's going to let them know about it.

MR. CASTILLO: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JONES: She seems to have a very good head on her shoulders about what is possible, and the ability to do it at a relatively low cost. So maybe that \$66 million -- some of it could be directed to this thought.

MR. CASTILLO: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JONES: Thank you.

MR. CASTILLO: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JONES: Thank you, both our Chairs; thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Assemblywoman DiMaso.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DiMASO: Thank you.

Thank you very much.

Dr. Repollet, you talked about best practices; and Mr. Castillo, you talked about sharing information. So how important is it, in your opinion, that we use best practices throughout the state and have them unified, where each school district is actually doing the same thing when they do their drills, and doing the same thing, within reason-- I mean, our schools are designed differently, but how important is it that, maybe, on the law enforcement side or -- so that everybody knows exactly the same thing? If you're coming down to a school, you don't have to know, you know, over 600 different plans and processes, you know? Just curious.

MR. CASTILLO: Yes; there is being convened a School Security Task Force under the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, to bring those folks together, those plans together.

And once again, for familiarity of someone who was just passing through -- once again, that's left to the tactical side of the police response. I can tell you this: Since Columbine, tactics have changed drastically. It was that, I believe, in Columbine, people were waiting in excess of 30 minutes for a SWAT team to come before they entered the school. Now, it's upon that first responding officer to go directly to the sound of the fire. So that represents one change.

There are some programs out there that would enable the downloading of the school floor plan, so that a responding officer would be able to bring it up on their tablet, on their phone, which would aid in that.

But one of the issues is, as you mentioned, you know, we have a number of schools that are very old, as opposed to schools that were just constructed in the past few years.

And I believe it was perhaps a question made by someone else -- that in terms of, how do we go about doing that? When we do go to schools, we would encourage them, when they drill, to invite other police departments in as well. One that comes to mind is Matawan-Aberdeen; they have two police departments. When we did the continuity operations plan, training with them, both departments were there; and we do like to see that.

There may even be -- and I don't know how this would happen -- but in some of the more rural areas -- I'm thinking more up in North Jersey -- where, possibly, a local response might be closer from across the

river. So you know, how do you go about doing that? We're really not sure, but we want to make sure that we're not just looking just within our own district, or even within our own county; but, maybe, also looking outwards and make sure that other partners are being brought to the table as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DiMASO: And just to build on Chairman Lampitt's--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Just a quick question, right?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DiMASO: Sure -- just to build on Chairman Lampitt's request about doing it during back-to-school nights or some -- or maybe have a parents symposium; but also during a sporting event, because it could happen at any time. I know we announce where the fire exits are; I mean, it's mostly so you know where to go. But that kind of thing needs to be done at that time as well because, as the Chairwoman said, it could happen at any time.

MR. CASTILLO: Right.

DR. REPOLLET: So we're currently looking at all of our best practices, all of our manuals, working with Homeland Security, and working with the State Police to ensure that we have the best information, currently, at this time. We also have an intergovernmental work group that is working together, so we will be looking at this.

I'm going to Indiana to gather more information at the National School Safety Specialist Academy to bring back that information; because our goal is, by the end of the summer, to have all of our manuals revised.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DiMASO: Great; thank you so much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: That's a great segue to our next panel.

ASSEMBLYMAN DANIELSEN: Chairwoman--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: I'm sorry; Assemblyman Danielsen. I apologize.

ASSEMBLYMAN DANIELSEN: Thank you.

So I understand -- what are your expectations that a school should do when an active shooter situation happens?

DR. REPOLLET: My expectation is that -- follow the guidelines that were set forth in the Task Force; the recommendations, the policy of the State Legislature; the code -- to follow that as a guideline; to actually work with them, as far as the Memorandum of Understanding -- the relationship that they actually have with the local enforcement agencies, so they have a plan together.

Every year, every school must submit a security safety plan. And this is annual, so we hope that they look at this plan and work together to make sure that it is up-to-date.

ASSEMBLYMAN DANIELSEN: And in that plan -- from one school district to another, or one organization to another -- are there similarities that they have to follow? I mean, if an active shooter situation happens, do they send all the students outside; do they keep them inside; do they quarantine them; do they put them in the auditorium? What do they do with our children?

MR. CASTILLO: There are no hard-and-fast rules that say that, "This is the way you must do it." However, from the Department of Education, our number one option, let's call it, would be to *lockdown*. In all

those schools -- those 800 schools that we've been in -- we see classrooms that have lockable doors. So what we are saying is that, where we're situated in New Jersey, because of the police response time, because every classroom has a lock, we would say the number one option you should go toward would be to seek to lockdown, get within a safe corner, make it look like there's no one in that room.

Absent that, we realize that there may be students in the hallway; there may be students outside. We're all for options. We have to be sure that we instruct members -- like if there is a class out on the playground and there's an active shooter, a threat within the school -- that their plans include *do not come back in*. Now is the time to go to a prearranged area -- a refuge, somewhere far away from the school, to get away. So there are a lot of moving parts to this.

One of the problems is that in those open areas -- for example, open cafeterias with a lot of glass; gymnasiums -- where there may not be sufficient space to lockdown, or the ability to lockdown. In that particular case, we would say, "Well, you know, if you can get out, then get out." If you're in an area where there, now, is no area to get out, then we would have to say, "Well, now, it's going to be time to maybe, possibly, confront the shooter." How do you go about training for that? I don't know. My background with the State Police was with training; it's difficult to teach a skill that is not perishable when you need it under stress. So they present some really, really -- I won't say *insurmountable problems*, but, you know, some really hard and fast challenges.

But what we are saying is that the lockdown -- and we have a number of national experts who agree with us -- a lockdown, when possible, would be our best response.

ASSEMBLYMAN DANIELSEN: Thank you.

My colleague touched on -- I think you made reference to the mutual aid system of first responders, which has been in place for many years. Relative to what we've had for many years, has that mutual aid system for the schools been adjusted for situations like this? Or are the first responders, basically, just going to follow their prearranged mutual aid system as they have for decades?

MR. CASTILLO: From what we've seen, it's spotty. For those forward-thinking folks who want to do a drill where they bring in their emergency responders -- normally done, maybe, on a weekend -- we see other departments being invited to these things. But what we do like to see is when it gets kicked up to the county level, for their emergency operations center to go live so that they have the capability to communicate with the different agencies.

But, you know, up to this point, we haven't seen that many live drills to actually see that in action.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you, gentlemen; thank you gentlemen.

We have to move on to the next one; I apologize, Assemblyman. You can get the first shot at the next group; I apologize.

Commissioner, thank you very much; Mr. Castillo, we really appreciate it.

Thank you.

MR. CASTILLO: Thank you.

DR. REPOLLET: Thank you for having us.

SENATOR RUIZ: For the record, I just want to note -- Senator Doherty has joined us this morning; thank you.

SENATOR DOHERTY: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Next, we're going to be hearing from Jared Maples, Director, New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness; Lieutenant Colonel Steven Shallop, Deputy Superintendent of Administration, representing the New Jersey State Police Officers of Emergency Management; Deputy Chief Patrick Kissane, Executive Director, and Detective Sergeant Timothy Gerity, President, New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers.

Until they sit down, go right ahead, sir. State your name, and--

J A R E D M A P L E S: Is this on (referring to PA microphone)?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Yes.

MR. MAPLES: Jared Maples; Director of the Office of Homeland Security Preparedness.

I'd like to begin by thanking both the Senate and the Assembly Committees; Madam Chairwomen, thank you for hosting this today for this briefing.

Governor Murphy, Attorney General Grewal, Colonel Callahan, Commissioner Repollet, and other members of the Cabinet are focused on school safety and security across the State of New Jersey. It is also important to recognize the hard work and dedication of our local, county, State, and Federal partners.

As Director of Homeland Security, it is my job to lead our counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and preparedness efforts across the state. The safety and security of our children is paramount to our overall mission. Regardless of the scope of our individual mission, all of us leading the state have, and will continue to marshal a full contingent of resources towards the safety of our children and educators.

As we drive forward in our work we recognize that constant improvement is the only way to succeed. We recognize that across the country, and here in New Jersey, we must strengthen prevention efforts. Preventing an incident and avoiding the use of response tactics is our goal. As communities, we must embrace a culture of preparedness that invests equally in both prevention and response, and we will continue to take a whole of government approach to provide comprehensive active shooter training, including pre-incident indicators and pathways to report those indicators.

For example, we have double-downed our outreach efforts on the *see something, say something* campaign, which benefits our communities by bringing suspicious behavior to the attention of law enforcement across the state. Reporting suspicious behavior could potentially stop the next school incident or terrorist attack.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Mr. Maples, I'm sorry.

Did you submit your testimony to us so that you don't have to read it?

MR. MAPLES: I did not.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Okay.

If you can submit the testimony later, we'd appreciate it--

MR. MAPLES: We will, for sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: --through the Chair.

And for everybody who is coming up -- it would be better if you just spoke.

MR. MAPLES: Good deal.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Really, because we have a lot to hear; we have a lot to say; we have a lot to ask. Unfortunately, this room got double-booked, but this is a very important subject. And we know the information is really important to all of us.

MR. MAPLES: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: So if you could just speak from what you wanted to share, that's not been shared before -- is very helpful to us.

MR. MAPLES: Sure; absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you.

MR. MAPLES: So let me talk to you about what we've done since Parkland, then.

So Commissioner Repollet and Ben Castillo, etc., talked about the Subcommittee on School Safety. That's a subset of the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force, which is an entity that I Chair, on behalf of the Governor. It is represented by all Cabinet agencies. So when everyone was asking about the specific actions, and think policies, and best practices, and all the things that we can push out -- that is the body that is capable and able to do that, and that is exactly what we're focused on doing.

The first meeting of that Subcommittee -- which is Co-Chaired by myself, Commissioner Repollet, and Colonel Callahan -- is meeting next Tuesday; and out of that, over a series of meetings, we hope to have those policies and best practices pushed out and disseminated across the state for use in school districts. And I think it will address a lot of the concerns.

The other thing that I want to talk about-- I mentioned *prevention* in my comments before. We have a great first-responder capability. I don't want to get into the specific response times; I don't think that's appropriate for open hearings. But I can tell you that it is among the very best in the United States. I can tell you that one of the focuses that we are doubling down on, from Homeland Security, from our partners at State Police, the Attorney General, etc., is prevention, is getting out ahead of these issues before they become issues, and, God forbid, an attack occurs in one of our schools.

So when you hear *prevention*, that is a focus; and that is something I definitely appreciate working with you and this body on -- making sure we are as prepared and preventable as possible for any attacks out there that happen.

And the final thing I want to talk about is mindset. So a lot of the questions that came up in the last piece -- it really comes down to mindset. In my past profession, I spent a lot of my time overseas in Protective Operations for the Central Intelligence Agency. I protected everyone from the Director down to janitors, who are overseas in doing operations.

And one of the things you learn in that environment is a statement, “No plan survives first contact.” But you have to have a plan to deviate from. The more you practice, the more--

Ben Castillo mentioned *fine motor skills*. You have to practice these; you have to continually adapt and focus your mindset. Because if something does happen, we are focused on getting the mindset right as best as we possibly can so that those kids, those educators, those Administrators know what to do and know where to go. Because if we’re not talking about it in front of it, they won’t know what to do on game day.

The Special Agent in charge of the Newark FBI Field Office, Tim Gallagher, has a saying, “You don’t want to be exchanging business cards in the Command Post.” So we bring that exact mindset, that exact process to bear here from Homeland Security; and that’s exactly why we work with the Department of Education. We’re tied at the hip -- State Police, Department of Education, Office of the Attorney General -- to the point where we’re actually co-locating offices. Ben Castillo’s group actually has five desks right in Homeland Security. So when we say “tied at the hip,” we interact every single day with them; we interact every single day with the State Police; we have some of our folks at the Rock, they have State Police with our facilities. We are literally tied at the hip amongst these agencies. It’s something that I’ve been impressed with, as I have come in as Director. We’re expanding on that, we’re pushing that.

The partnership aspect is the only way to go to get those exercises, preparedness training, and best practices out to the communities. It’s a partnership, from the local to the Federal level; and I’m happy to say

that we're doing that very effectively here in New Jersey. We can always do more, and we're going to continue to focus on that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you.

Gentleman.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL STEVEN SHALLOP:

Good morning, Madam Chair Ruiz and Madam Chair Lampitt, and members of the Senate and Assembly Education Committees.

I'm Steven Shallop; Deputy Superintendent, New Jersey State Police. Thank you for hosting this very important Committee.

Very briefly -- I was a D.A.R.E. Officer, a Drug Prevention Officer, School Resource Officer; and a parent of a special needs child as well. This is near and dear to my heart, and I truly do appreciate the discussion here today, because it's only going to help our schools and our communities.

Just very briefly -- because many of the things have been mentioned already from the Commissioner -- we are partnered with OHSP and the Department of Education on many of the initiatives that have already been discussed, including the unannounced drills, the active shooter exercises that are hosted and trained by OHSP.

We also have our School Resource Troopers who are assigned to the high schools that fall under State Police jurisdiction. And we still teach in drug prevention programs, anti-bullying programs, anti-violence; and those programs are now under a program that we have developed, Youth Leadership Safety Program, as well as the L.E.A.D. Program. There are at least 50 Troopers, who are throughout the state who teach on these

subjects. That affords us an opportunity to get into the schools and to have a presence at all times in the secondary school systems.

The School Resource Troopers that we have are assigned to 9 of the 12 high schools that fall under State Police jurisdiction; the other 3 have private security forces outside of their jurisdictions.

We also do the new initiative that Colonel Patrick Callahan has pressed forward, and that is, basically, all Troopers in the State are encouraged to stop by any of the school districts that they traverse on their to-and-from work -- just another opportunity to expand the relationships with the school Administrators and to foster public trust. And it's putting a name to the face. Many of these schools fall under the communities where these Troopers live; and it's just encouraging them to get out and get to know their school Administrators, school officials, and the students within those bodies.

Some of the things that we're doing here -- I'm open to questions and responses. There were a host of questions I know that would be better posed here, as far as our response times, our tactical, and some of the other things that may be more relevant for us to address.

But thank you for allowing me to speak at this point.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you.

Gentleman.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT TIMOTHY P. GERITY:
Good morning.

My name is Timothy Gerity; I am a Detective Sergeant in a municipal police department in Bergen County; a 29-year law enforcement

veteran. And I am also the President of the New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers.

More importantly than both of those things is that I am a parent of three children; and I am a parent who shares the concerns when I send my children off to school in the mornings -- that I anticipate, expect, demand that they be returned home safely.

Some brief background: The New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers provides training pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-43.1. It's the Safe Schools Resource Officer's School Liaison Training program, and it's based upon a successful and effective community policing model and meets the mandates of the training.

And just to give you a brief background: In 2006, a law that our Association worked vigorously to get passed -- the Safe Schools Resource Officer's School Liaison Training -- we developed a 40-hour course, which we are currently still teaching throughout the state. We've trained, to date, since 2007, approximately 1,200 attendees, and that includes sworn law enforcement officers, school safety professionals, security officers, school Administrators. And as of last July 1, we now have Class III Specials in our courses. And we meet all of the mandatory and statutory training requirements.

Throughout the years we've worked to bridge the gap between education and law enforcement. I'm not saying that one exists; I'm merely saying that we've worked to improve communications on how law enforcement is to function in the schools, and so that our attendees --- our class attendees understand the roles and responsibilities of the Administrators and educators; and what their role -- our law enforcement

representatives, security personnel, safety personnel -- what their role in the building is.

In 2009, the ACLU released a report concerned with policing in schools. And generally, the concern was about the schools-to-prison pipeline; that by introducing law enforcement officers into a school environment you are creating -- you are introducing individuals, juveniles into the juvenile justice system, the criminal justice system long before they would if law enforcement was not in the schools. So we worked very diligently. If you read through the report, New Jersey meets -- exceeds many of the suggestions, recommendations that were in that report. But we're still mindful of it, and still convey that to our attendees.

We also talk to our attendees about -- that this is a community policing-based function; and that we also support restorative justice programs in education, where we're shifting the punishment modality towards a nurturing and structuring environment. And we encourage our law enforcement officers to be involved with that.

In closing, I'd like to thank you for having me here this morning. I'm very proud to represent the New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers. The gentlemen who have come before me, the gentlemen who are sitting with me -- we've worked with, partnered with, over the years in numerous events and numerous platforms. And I truly support their efforts, and the efforts of everyone in this room.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you, gentlemen.

Just the same question, as to the prior panel.

We do good things here; are there other things that we should be doing that we, as a Legislature, need to put in statute, or a code, or direct the Department of Education to put out through regulations? Any ideas or concepts?

You may not have anything now; if you do, you can share them; if you don't, it would be something to think about that you can provide, through the Chair, for our members. Because I think the key focus for all of us here is to learn what we're doing; but most importantly, to get a better understanding of what we can do to get better.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHALLOP: So with the unannounced drills that the Department of Education has put forward, I do support the initiative. And with those, and other initiatives that take place in our communities and schools, I think best practices are always emphasized. So as they're discussed with the schools as that drill takes place, and then afterwards during the assessment, we are always looking to evolve and to make our practices better.

So yes, they're discussed often; and as we see them unfold, that would be the advice that we would give to our schools and to our communities.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT GERITY: I think, in speaking to the question -- and we're working to address it, both through the State Association and locally -- that, generally, people have lost a sense of power and control over the situations that are unfolding across the nation. So one of our efforts is to increase community contact; holding panels and forums with school safety experts, including our communities in those discussions. Because people understand that there are security measures in place. But

sometimes just communication, and speaking with them, and sharing what you can about what it is that you are doing can be very comforting.

So I believe there is more and more communication and active engagement of the community, as best we can do. Just let them voice their concerns; give them a voice at the table.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you.

I just have two questions; and I believe Assemblyman Schaer had a question.

In reference to the School Resource Officers, I've been given some mixed responses to this question.

As they are sworn police officers, they can interact with the students by saying, "Hello; how are you?" But from an investigative standpoint, they're not able to -- if a student is under the age of 18, from an investigative standpoint, they can't inquire where they're going or inquire about something, because that would deem -- breaking the law. Is that true?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHALLOP: We -- in our course, we discuss with the officers FERPA -- the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; as well as HIPAA -- we're bound by HIPAA laws. But I am not aware that speaking with a student on that level is any violation of their rights or an--

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: And you guide your officers as such -- about the kind of communication that they can have with students?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHALLOP: Absolutely, absolutely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: What keeps you guys up at night? I mean, after Sandy Hook, after Columbine, after Parkland, what keeps you up at night?

MR. MAPLES: So, I'll answer on mine.

It's the unknown; it's the-- Every one of these events, when they become shocking to you -- 9/11, some of these issues that you just mentioned -- they were unknown before they happened. And so we have to continually evolve in Homeland Security and law enforcement and try to stay out ahead of those, and be creative in our thinking of defense against them.

So it is-- The known issues are out there -- they certainly keep me up at night -- across the state. I mentioned my portfolio; it's pretty broad. But it's the unknown that we have to really focus on. And again, it goes back to the prevention -- getting out ahead of it before it occurs.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you.

Assemblyman Schaer, you had a question.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHAER: Very quickly; and thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

First question: Our discussions that we're having right now -- does that include public schools, charter schools, parochial schools, private schools? Does that include the whole gamut, or is it centered, in fact, on public schools?

MR. MAPLES: So it is the whole gamut, from the Homeland Security side. We have focused on that -- that Task Force that I talked about is everything from pre-K in private and public -- pre-K to colleges and universities. So when we talk about bringing that group together, it is the

whole gamut. I think the Commissioner, Commissioner Repollet, was certainly speaking for the public education sector across New Jersey.

But collectively, together, we're going across all areas of New Jersey.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHAER: Okay, thank you.

And the second question, hopefully, equally as brief.

Do these procedures that we're talking about, that are in play and in discussion, are they recommendations or are they requirements, in terms of the local schools, be they public or private?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHALLOP: They're recommendations. We can't require a school district to perform certain security measures. Really, that resides solely with the Superintendent; they make the final call.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHAER: So if the Superintendent feels contrary to what the recommendations of the various departments are, he/she can *not* participate.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHALLOP: That's true.

MR. MAPLES: Broadly, however, there are requirements to have a plan. The School Resource Officer-- There are requirements within that; but to Steve's point, the lower level, the granular details are up to the Superintendent.

ASSEMBLYMAN SCHAER: Thank you, Chairwoman.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SHALLOP: We do the best we can.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Assemblyman Danielsen.

ASSEMBLYMAN DANIELSEN: Director Maples, one of the first things you mentioned today was prevention. Is there anything more important than that?

MR. MAPLES: In my mindset, absolutely not.

We have to get out ahead of the problem before it becomes a problem. We are effective in New Jersey; I mentioned we can always do better. It gets down to relationships. One of the gaps ends up being people reporting issues before they come out. People are hesitant to talk to law enforcement, they are hesitant to talk to teachers, they are hesitant to talk to guidance counselors -- all these folks -- and say, "Hey, there's a problem; this person made a threat," etc. And that's what we're really pushing out. We need to know about it. And we'll handle it in the absolute best way possible, following the privacy legislation, working with the School Resource Officers, working with the State Police, and make sure we mitigate those threats in a way that maintains the rights and privacy of citizens and individuals.

But, by the same token, we need to make sure we're aware of an issue, because we can connect dots. And it may be one school district here, another one a county away; that's where the State focal point really comes into play -- that we can disseminate those out and get ahead of the threats beforehand.

So if I had to pick one, we want to stop the incident before it becomes an incident. But we also have to focus on the response too. So we do a kind of a two-pronged effort at that as well, because it's the reality of the situation. We have to make sure we're able to respond.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you.

Assemblywoman DiMaso, for a quick question.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DiMASO: Sure; thank you.

To Chief Gerity -- Detective Sergeant, actually.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT GERITY: Thank you for the promotion. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DiMASO: Anytime, anytime.

You talked about School Resource Officers; and to Chairwoman Ruiz's question about doing legislation. I just recently dropped a package of bills for school security, and one of them talked about School Resource Officers. How do we pay for those; how do we -- currently, how are they paid for, and are they in every school district? How do we make it so that we can have those affordable to the community? How do we move it forward, and how do we legislate, if we can -- to my colleague's point about some of those programs that aren't legislated now and, perhaps, to some of those unknowns?

DETECTIVE SERGEANT GERITY: Funding. I know there are a number of -- at least the districts I've had experience with -- grants are a large source of funding for security initiatives. Districts that are more fortunate to be able to afford to implement some of those security procedures, we're seeing -- where it can be implemented -- security vestibules being built in schools. It is a costly task, however. And I think the Business Administrator is a better individual suited for that question. It was my understanding -- we were at a forum the other night -- that the Department of Education has released some funds from an emergency fund that can now be used on school security equipment.

So where-- I think everyone is looking at the *harden the target* perspective -- with all due respect to the gentleman here -- but I think we still need to work on the mental health side, and address -- to echo the comments that were made earlier-- Behavioral threat assessment teams in schools, early warning systems are much, much more effective than installing another camera or locking another door, in my opinion.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DiMASO: Thank you.

MR. MAPLES: Can I add one thing to that as well? And it's to your point too. That Task Force that I talked about -- it involves Human Services, Health, Children and Families, to get at that exact thing: that prevention isn't just going out and investigating it; it's also the mental health, it's also engaging with teachers, it's engaging with the community -- making sure people are aware of what those issues are.

So I echo the same thing.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DiMASO: Thank you very much.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you; thank you, everyone.

Next I want to call a panel of Melanie Schulz, Director of Government Relations; Dr. Scott Rocco, Superintendent of Hamilton Township School District; and Dr. Thomas Smith, Superintendent of Hopewell Valley Regional School District -- New Jersey Association of School Administrators; and Mike Vrancik, Government Relations Director for New Jersey School Boards Association.

And again, I will ask you -- if you have written testimony and you don't have copies, you can submit that through the Chairs, and we'll get that to our Committee members -- to really summarize. And I think the focus for many of us is to find out what innovative ideas we can do; what's

working; what -- obviously, the million-dollar question, no pun -- investment will have to be made into our school districts. We can't rely on districts to provide their own funding if we're going to move forward with a whole statewide initiative.

And I'm going to ask, respectfully, of our Committee members -- it is getting late in our timeframe. I think we want to wrap up by noon. So what I'm going to ask is that we provide our questions through the Chairs; and we'll forward them to all the panelists who are here so that we can get a broader depth answer-and-question section before we wrap up with our three public hearings, and come up with some kind of a package -- bill package that perhaps will come out of our conversation from these Committee hearings.

Thank you, Melanie.

MELANIE SCHULZ: Thank you, Senator Ruiz.

Melanie Schulz, on behalf of the New Jersey Association of School Administrators.

With me today are Dr. Scott Rocco from Hamilton Township School District, where I reside; and Dr. Tom Smith, from the Hopewell Valley Regional District.

I come to you today not only as a representative of my Association, but also as a grandmother; five pieces of my heart go to the Hamilton Township School District every day. And it is more than several times a week that I'm conscious about their school safety and security. And not because I don't believe that Dr. Rocco and his team are doing everything that they can to ensure their safety; but because these tragedies

have become a weekly incident in our lives. I don't know how people get through it; I hope I never have to.

I'm going to turn this over now to Dr. Rocco, to start off on behalf of our Association and our school district.

S C O T T R O C C O, Ed.D.: Good morning, everybody, and thank you for the invitation to speak to you today.

I'm going to summarize my comments, because I have submitted testimony.

First of all, it would be an understatement to say to you that school security is on the minds of every Superintendent, every Principal, every teacher, every student, every parent, and every community member. It's on our minds all the time.

But what I want the Committee to understand is that this is something that most of us did not go to school for. So most of the teachers, Principals, and Superintendents who are in our schools have not had a single school safety class while training to be a teacher, or a Superintendent, or a Principal; and I think that's important to understand.

It's on the minds of every child, every day. I know that both as a Superintendent, and I know that as a father. My three children go to Hamilton Township Public Schools. Last month, my high school student -- they had a lockdown at their high school. And he texted me -- and I know he shouldn't have been texting while the drill was going on -- but he texted me and said, "Is this real?" In a way, I'm happy that he took it seriously. And in another way I'm angered -- like many parents are angered -- that every time a fire drill goes off, or a lockdown is called, that children have to

worry, “Is my school next?” I don’t think that’s fair to our children, and I don’t think that’s fair to our community.

And that’s a challenge for all of us in education, and all of us in elected office to deal with.

I want to address three quick issues. First of all, when we talk about school safety, we need to talk about schools. And one of the issues we need to talk about in schools is the fact that our schools were not built for the security measures that they need today. Let me give you Hamilton as an example.

We have 24 schools; the average age of those 24 schools is 70 years old; 6 of my buildings are over 100 years old. My youngest -- the baby in our schools -- is 28 years old. None of them were built at a time of thinking about school safety and security.

As a result, we had to go out to the public and ask for a referendum. We passed a \$55.4 million referendum to address 6 priority areas; 2 of those priority areas were safety and security.

And the \$55 million only addresses about 56 percent of all the upgrades that we need in our schools to bring them up-to-date and comparable to some of our neighboring schools. So that’s item number one. With the referendum, we will upgrade security systems; we will upgrade doors and locks; we will upgrade a visitor management system, along with some other safety issues. But we need more. Retrofitting our buildings is a very expensive, but necessary, task.

Item number two: We can’t do this alone. We need relationships; we need to work with other organizations; we need to work with the Legislature. I’m happy and I appreciate the outstanding

relationships that we in Hamilton Township have with our local police and fire departments, the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, and the New Jersey Department of Education's Office of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning. They have all been out and worked with us in our planning stages and have run drills with us. And I think that's key to it.

Finally, I want to talk about the need for more funding. According to the New Jersey funding formula, Hamilton Township should receive a little over \$3 million. We are receiving a little over \$630,000; that's a zero percent increase from the year before. The difference of approximately \$2.4 million could be put to immediate use. It could be put to use to continue the improvements on our buildings; to put Special IIIs in our buildings; to provide training to our staff and to our community; and to put together tangible security features that our community could see immediately being put into place to secure the schools and to assure that our students and staff are safe.

What I think is important for all of us to understand, and it was said before, is for our students to learn they need to feel safe; for our teachers to teach effectively they need to feel safe. For our parents to send their children to school, ready to learn every day, they need to feel like the school is a safe place.

Until that time, I welcome our elected officials to join me and my colleagues in finding ways to make our schools safer for all who learn, teach, and visit.

Thank you.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you.

THOMAS A. SMITH, Ed.D.: Good morning.

I'm Tom Smith, Superintendent of Hopewell Valley Regional School District.

I'd like to echo the comments of Dr. Rocco; but I'd like to add a little bit more perspective, in terms of sheer logistics. This was discussed earlier, but I would like to give you a little bit of an insight into the world of a Superintendent.

In the 24 hours after the Parkland incident, I received no less than a dozen e-mails from solicitors selling me the newest, best devices for my school district. In addition, like was mentioned before, I had a number of parents who were sharing their best practices.

While I appreciate the State's flexibility in terms of curriculum, what I am asking for today is more direct guidance in terms of how we handle incidents in schools. It was mentioned previously, but I will give you a little bit more insight into the Hopewell Valley Regional School District. We comprise 62 square miles; several of our schools are on the outskirts of our boundaries. They will likely be reached by neighboring police officers before they are reached by the Hopewell Township Police. Those officers have never set foot in our schools, don't know our protocols, and don't know our practices.

In addition, many school districts have transitioned, over the last several years, from using different codes. At the beginning of my career, we used the *bear cub drill* for a lockdown; you didn't want to scare the students. Then we transitioned into *red, black, and gold drills*; and now we've transitioned to real talk. Have other districts done that? I don't know.

So what I'm asking, through you, is can you, will you put together one set of standard operating procedures that are universal across

all school districts in New Jersey; mandate that these are used by all police officers, all school districts, and all teacher? So, therefore, whether you are in District *A* or District *B*, we're using the same terminology; we're using the same processes. For us, that avoids a lot of confusion. Personally, I think it provides a level of understanding for our community -- some of the fear that's out there. But asking folks to just know that this is the New Jersey universal protocol of how we address all these incidents. For us, again, it would provide a lot of guidance.

It might be a daunting task to develop these; however, I think we are at a watershed moment in terms of school security in the State of New Jersey, and this provides us a tremendous opportunity to make those steps towards making all of our students safe.

Thank you.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you; thank you, Dr. Rocco and Dr. Smith.

We hear you loud and clear. You want a direct -- at least, baseline of SOPs; and it didn't go unnoticed that there was the call for funding as well.

Thank you very much.

ALL: Thank you.

SENATOR RUIZ: Next, I will call a panel up; Dr. -- and I apologize if I butcher your last name -- Dr. Steven Kairys and Dr. Ramon Sohlkhah, New Jersey American Academy of Pediatrics; with Donna Chiera, President of the AFT; and Maureen Brogan, Traumatic Loss Coalitions for Youth Program at Rutgers.

Oh; my apology, Mike.

MICHAEL VRANCIK: Do you want me to go--

SENATOR RUIZ: We will start with you first.

MR. VRANCIK: Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the Committee

I'll be very brief.

I circulated a copy of a Task Force report that we did, as a statewide Association, in 2014, after the Newtown tragedy; in large part, due to the fact that the President of the National School Boards Association is a New Jersey Board Member.

This has been circulated around the country; and a lot of other states are looking at some of the things that we've done, which found their way into the State's School Security Task Force report.

There are several things that I'll highlight very quickly in the report. Obviously, the issue of special law enforcement officers, Class III law enforcement officers. There are about 70 schools now that have them; funding is an issue, with respect to the rest of them.

There are a couple of other things, besides the obvious -- hardening of entrances, etc. School climate is a key focus of our group. There's a lot of information in our report about what's being done to create a better environment that limits -- or eliminates, hopefully -- the idea that there would be any aggressive individuals in schools.

And I think one of the other things that -- and I would echo the previous speaker from Hopewell -- the idea of having communication between local boards, school district employees, and local law enforcement is key. We have county-wide associations, and we have forums where we

invite people from the county police law enforcement agencies to interact with our Board members to create an ongoing dialogue.

Since the stuff that happened in Florida recently, we've reconvened the Task Force to refresh and renew this report, based on things that have developed since we last issued this report in 2014.

I think that pretty much summarizes everything.

The only other thing I'd like to add is that we support legislation -- that I think was passed by the Senate -- that includes \$250 million in school security grants; and we'd support legislation that would exempt, from the 2 percent levy cap, money for school security. When we survey our members -- which we do regularly -- that's frequently cited as one of the most important things that could be done to enhance local efforts.

Thank you.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you; and thank you for the 2 percent idea. Thank you very much.

Mike, can you just turn your mike--

S T E V E N W. K A I R Y S, M.D.: Now it's on? (referring to PA microphone.

MR. VRANCIK: There you go.

MR. KAIRYS: Oh, thank you.

Well, thank you for having us.

I'm Dr. Steven Kairys; I'm a pediatrician, Chairman of Pediatrics at Jersey Shore, and Medical Director for the New Jersey Chapter of the AAP.

I'm here with Dr. Solhkhah to discuss the very strong association between violence, and school violence, and mental health issues; particularly as it confronts children.

I think as the Senator said a while ago, violence and school violence is a public health issue. And like all public health issues, there's primary, secondary, and tertiary ways to try to work with the issues.

I think thus far today you've heard mostly the tertiary ways -- how to deal with the crisis after it's happened; how to deal with ways to limit the impact and the damage that occurs from violence and school violence. But I wanted to discuss the issues from a primary and secondary prevention way. Secondary prevention has to do with early detection and treatment for children who are both victims of trauma and who also become the perpetrators of trauma also.

Mental health (*sic*) in children is truly epidemic; 40 percent of children, by the time they reach adulthood, have been impacted by a serious enough mental illness that affects their daily function. And those are broad categories -- from the effects of trauma itself, to anxiety, depression, to behavioral and oppositional defiance sorts of issues, and substance abuse. And the range of issues that confront children are truly dramatic.

I think that New Jersey is fortunate in having a statewide system of care for kids with mental health illness; a children's system of care. But that really affects only those children who are already known to have mental health issues and who have such serious issues that they're now involved with the State in various ways.

But we're talking about 30 to 40 percent of kids with really significant issues. There's data that shows that 25 percent of kids who

come in for pediatric care, or family medicine care, have significant enough issues that it affects their daily function. Most pediatricians really don't get involved with early detection and care because they know the whole system of medical care has been a carve-out mental health. But our approach that we're going to be discussing today is an approach to try to get much better attention to early detection, and to have a management system that actually works.

Because in the end, this affects all of us; half of the adults with mental health illness had their start in childhood. And the data on trauma, as it affects children and adults, is really overwhelming in terms of its impact on adults, as well as its impact on children.

So we're going to be presenting an approach that we have been working on for the last three to four years; and Dr. Solkhah is going to be presenting that.

RAMON SOLKHAH, M.D.: Good morning, and thank you.

My name is Dr. Ramon Solkhah; I'm the Chair of Psychiatry at Jersey Shore University Medical Center; and I am also a child psychiatrist. And Dr. Kairys and I run the Pediatric Psychiatry Collaborative, which is a program that is funded by the Department of Children and Families. It started as a pilot project, with funding through the Legislature, three years ago; and has now moved to a statewide program.

Through this program, over the past three years, Hackensack Meridian Health, in combination with Cooper Health and Atlantic Health, has created a statewide network that allows, in the past three years, 70,000 kids to have been screened by their pediatricians for mental health issues;

and almost 3,500 children to have received direct service through our program.

The program -- the statistics that Dr. Kairys mentioned, in terms of 40 percent of children experiencing a mental health issue at some point during their childhood and teenage years, is very significant; and more concerning is the fact that statistics show that only 1 in 5 of those children actually receive treatment.

So the program that we have is designed to provide child psychiatry consultation to pediatricians. So when children come in for their well-child visits, they're able to pick up a phone and get a child psychiatrist on the other end to help make that diagnosis, to help implement treatment, recommendations; and to also provide some care management and make sure that those kids get connected to services.

So I'm happy to take any other questions, as we move to that point.

SENATOR RUIZ: Thank you.

D O N N A M. C H I E R A: My name is Donna Chiera; I'm President of AFT, the American Federation of Teachers New Jersey.

But I'm speaking today from my perspective of being a Perth Amboy elementary special ed teacher for 33 years. And for the last 10 years of my career, lockdown drills happen on a regular basis.

And Senator Ruiz, I am going to be quick and try to answer some of the questions and comments I heard brought up by the Committee.

First of all, we do have drills; we have fire drills, we have lockdown drills. I've lived through weather drills where, if something comes and glass is breaking, you need to get students away.

However, I believe the problem with the drills -- are usually during classroom periods when all students are in classrooms. And I do agree that we need to look at lunch, assembly, afterschool programs when it's not necessarily the school staff on site; dismissals, entering schools -- all of those situations. And when you think about programs and assemblies, where parents and communities come into a building-- If you're looking at when there is most likely someone who comes in and they want to do harm, those are the situations.

Generally, between 8:30 and 3:00, school's have procedures to screen people who come in. It's the afterschool care and the situations where students may go to a practice field -- what do you do? And while manuals, and policies, and laws, and regulations -- you can tell people what to do, but until they practice it--

I taught special ed in an elementary school; and I worked -- and my students knew why we were doing this. Students watch the news; they know these bad things are going on. However, if it really was to happen, I can look at my students and say, "We got this; we practiced this."

So my concern about the desensitizing is more at an older level, where older kids say, "This is just a drill."

And we're at a really good time to do this now, because we have students from Florida who are willing to come to communities and talk to students. And I truthfully think a middle school and a high school student, listening to what those students have to say, would take a lot more credence from those testimonials than the teacher saying, "Well, this is why we're doing it."

Old buildings and building security. Do doors work, do locks work, are there alarms on doors, do windows work? All of those things are important. We practice lockdown drills that may be 10 minutes; if there was a long lockdown, what about -- do we have provisions? No offense; I wouldn't want to be in a situation where I have to be locked down with a group of kindergarten children for 40 minutes if there wasn't a bathroom in that room. What do we do in those situations? How do you keep children calm? They're good about the quick drills; are there snacks? If you're in an old building, if there's no air conditioning, what happens? All of those building structures -- have to look.

We have to realize we do need prevention; we need-- And I'm not just talking guidance counselors -- and counselors, adding them on staff. We need to look at what their jobs are because, all too often, these counselors in high schools are focused on academic career, getting into college, scheduling. We don't have people-- And with the budget cuts, we lost a lot of the drug counselors; we lost a lot of the community agents. And I'm not just talking counselors; in the elementary schools, one of the most important people to me was my paraprofessional, because she ate lunch with my students and she worked on the playground with them. And they'd say, "Hey, Mrs. Garcia. Did I tell you last night the police came in my house and arrested my father?" I wouldn't have known that because that's not something, as a teacher, in a formal education structure, that students would tell me.

We also have to remember, as you were saying, many of the children in our schools-- I had 7-year-olds who come to school with more trauma than I have seen at the age of 63. And we don't know it's going on

at home. School is a building; but what the students bring into that building affects them.

SENATOR RUIZ: Donna, are you finishing up?

MS. CHIERA: Two more minutes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: No, no; one. (laughter)

MS. CHIERA: Okay.

The classroom is important. They talked about the magnets. Well, our planning in our Districts said you have to keep the doors locked. But every time a child went to a bathroom, you had to get up to unlock the door to let the student in. A magnet-- You need to include professional-- The people who have to implement these plans-- Once there's a big plan in each building, teachers, custodians, paraprofessionals, cafeteria people need to be part of that building plan because you need to plan for it.

And my last thing is, there needs to be a Plan B. Because we had a lockdown drill, and the lockdown drill said -- my principal came on and said, "This is a lockdown." However, one of my special ed students said to me, "Hey, Ms. C., but the Principal's Office is right by the front door, and if someone comes in and shoots everyone in the office, who's going to tell us this is a lockdown?"

So there needs to be not just -- this is the protocol; but, God forbid, something happens to the people who are instrumental in putting that protocol in, there needs to be a Plan B.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you.

Maureen.

MAUREEN A. BROGAN: Good afternoon; thank you.

I think most of what I would have to say has been covered by everyone earlier.

But I what I do want to make the point of is that, at Rutgers -- and I'm with the Traumatic Loss Coalition, and in New Jersey, the Traumatic Loss Coalition operates in 21 counties. What we do is, we respond to a school or community when there's been a traumatic event. In New Jersey, it could be illness, it can be car accidents; but usually we're called when it's a homicide or a suicide. So we also work with the schools, when we're invited in, on how do we stabilize, how do we offer psychological first aid, how do we support the schools in returning to what may be "the new normal" after there's been a traumatic event.

But more so than that, what we're focusing on right now is the trauma aspect -- working with our partners in the education system to help them with the trauma lens. People might have heard of the *ACE*; it's the *Adverse Child Experience*. And what we're looking at, too, is that the higher the ACE score that you have, the more trauma that you've experienced as a child. And I don't know any adult who was never a child, so that includes all of us that -- how many experiences have we had that have been traumatic?

If you have a high ACE score, you're more likely to have a whole host of not only physical ailments, you're at a higher risk of suicide. And also, too, when we look at school shooters, we're starting to look in the field, to be like, "What was their ACE score?" and how, as a society, did we miss this, and where was the breakdown in the disconnect of, "Well, he was on this radar, or she was on this radar;" but where do we miss the communication? How did this young person fall under the radar?

And also, too, we're working with schools too. There's one thing to be said about getting a child on the radar, and identifying risk factors and warning signs. Okay, that's great that we have identified risk factors; but then, what are we going to do with the child? I want everyone here to remember: *Hurt people hurt people*. If you walk away with anything today, that's the message. That's where we need to go, as a bigger issue.

I have minimal knowledge about drills. I can tell you about what schools report about some of the anxiety that it produces; how can we help them with the children, with their anxiety? And we enjoy supporting the schools and the community in that. But if we really work at it, this is not a mental health issue, this is not a school issue, it's not a police issue. This is a public health issue, and it's really joining all of our forces together, all of the people around this table to really say, "We're not going to let any children fall through these cracks; and what are we going to do to make sure our systems are not allowing that." And we have created that safety net.

So also, too, TLC -- we're free of charge; we have volunteers. That's the other thing that's beautiful for the State. We have teams in every single county. They're trained, and they're volunteers. And this is just how passionate the people in New Jersey are about this work -- that they're leaving their jobs to come volunteer to do a response to a homicide, a suicide, a death -- things that you don't want to think happen; and they're willing to do that.

So I thank you for your time. I think some great messages were sent here today, and we need to continue doing the work and not get discouraged. It's all about bringing hope.

So that's really my message today -- is hope.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you, Maureen, very much.

And you're going to provide some testimony so that we can distribute?

MS. BROGAN: Yes, I'll send it in (indiscernible). I just got back from Ireland, so -- talking off the top of my head. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you very much; and thank you all, to the panel. We really appreciate you being here and giving your testimony.

Next, we have Patricia Wright, Executive Director; Michael Vinella, Principal of East Brunswick High School; and Ralph Aiello, Principal of Cumberland Regional High School -- all from the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association; John Donahue, the Executive Director, New Jersey Association of School Business Officials.

Thank you.

Thank you very much for coming; go ahead.

PATRICIA WRIGHT: Good morning, and thank you for having us.

And we'll be very brief.

A lot of what was said -- what we want to talk about is covered. However, we really want to concentrate on understanding that schools can be secure, we can have locked doors, we can have emergency preparedness. But we need to keep students not only physically safe, but psychologically safe. And that's what we really want to concentrate on in our testimony.

We feel that there is a strong link in research between school climate and school safety. There's another strong link between school

climate and social-emotional learning; and there is another strong link between social-emotional learning and mental health. And we need the resources, and funding, and training that will help schools to make those links as connected as possible within their school environment.

So, for example, the first thing we need to be able to do is to foster the type of school climates that have lasting, long, trusting, caring relationships within the school; where bullying and other negative behaviors are least likely to occur. Because that's the bar in the ABR -- is that we create environments where bullying is least likely to occur; and that's through addressing school climate issues.

We need to have schools where students are deeply engaged in their learning -- both academic, and social and emotional learning. And let me just say about integrating social and emotional learning: We need-- The Department of Education has put out some SEL competencies that our schools are encouraged to embed in their curriculum. And I want to say that these skills, when taught with fidelity across a pre-K through 12 continuum, promote the mental health of our students. And these are skills like being able to communicate effectively, to identify and manage emotions, to resolve conflicts, to develop positive relationships with others, and to make responsible decisions.

And then, finally, what we need in schools, to provide this psychological safety, is a strong tiered system of support for students. We need interventions to happen immediately when there's a crisis with the students; and the first intervention happens at the school level. But we need the staff; the mental health professionals -- we need employed within our schools. School psychologists, school social workers who have a myriad

of other tasks within schools need to have sufficient time to work with students in crisis.

And at the third tier of support, we really need to have more intensive mental health services within the school community. And unfortunately, the Principals here today will speak of how the availability of mental health and behavioral services vary widely in New Jersey.

And that's one thing I could ask the Legislature to do. We need to think about a Task Force to look at how communities and schools, together, can more effectively provide these crisis interventions for students so that we have timely and targeted intervention happening for those who are really in crisis.

So let me introduce Mike Vinella and Ralph Aiello, who will give you just a little bit of what they're doing in their schools around the psychological safety of students.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you, Patricia.

MICHAEL VINELLA, Ed.D., Ph.D.: Thank you.

Two items that I'm briefly going to talk about -- the positive school climate and the intervention programs -- as we're seeing many more increases in student needs within the school.

First and foremost, I believe in a positive, connected, and proactive school climate. What we need to do is find ways for school leaders to engage all stakeholders. But what I like to focus on is engaging students.

We heard earlier today -- one of the best things we can do is see something, say something, okay? This also goes into social media; this is a big role that we see with our Principals in schools. We value students'

voice, and we need to provide -- continue to provide ways for students' voice to be heard.

We also need to find ways to leverage technology, in how we can use technology for that communication to take place with our students. We know how students are connected to their devices, and that's one way for them to share things.

I'd like to share one brief example of why this is so important within a community, where students feel belonging; where there are relationships that foster trust and communication takes place.

Recently, we had an online threat that took place. We had the opportunity where the student came forward, with a parent, and communicated directly with the school Administration. And we collaboratively went to law enforcement, where that was able to be taken care of before the school day took place. When you foster a positive school climate, that communication takes place and proactive steps can be taken.

The other thing that we heard here today, I know, was tiered interventions. And we heard a fact that there is an increase in stationhouse adjustments that are coming back to the schools.

I'm alarmed at the number of depression, school anxiety, and other issues that are taking place with our students. We need to find ways to emphasize our school counseling departments, our student assistant specialists, and school counselors; and for them to work with our students.

One way that we've been doing this, and something that we've done, is a high-tiered program called a *Flex School*. This program is identified where students in need or in crisis can go to the school that takes place from 3:00 to 6:30, after the school day. They can get treatment

during the course of the school day; and then come to this program in the evening, where they can not only get their academic supports, but they can also get the social and emotional supports that are needed as well.

So these tiered interventions, as well as a positive school climate, are ways Principals within the building can really help to ensure school safety.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you, Mike.

And anything you can add to the conversation to enlighten us, we'd appreciate it,

RALPH AIELLO: Yes; I'd like to just add -- I agree with everything that everybody has said; everything is great.

But you asked for best practices.

I'm lucky enough, down at Cumberland Regional High School -- for probably over 17, 18 years -- we have a health-based service organization that is actually located within our school. They are not employees of our school, but they work very closely; and that's because of a grant from the Department of Children and Family Services.

Had I not had them, we wouldn't be able to address a lot of the issues. Cumberland County is an extremely poor County; it's the poorest County in the state. We don't have the resources that, maybe, some of the other counties have.

This organization that we have not only provides the mental and social counseling that is involved; but they have become part of our school climate and community. So sometimes when I don't have the money to fund, say, an assembly on HIV or an assembly on mental health,

they're able to step up and help me fund those different types of organizations.

So that is one area that maybe we want to start looking into more of -- is getting more of these groups into-- They are in several schools, but they are not in all the schools. And without them, my one psychologist, my one social worker, and my five counselors would not be able to address the issues that we deal with down in Cumberland County.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you very much.

JOHN F. DONAHUE: I promise you I'll be brief.

I'll let my testimony here speak for itself.

One point -- we represent School Business Officials in the state. I asked them, a week ago, when I received notice about this meeting, "What are your greatest challenges in dealing with safety and security issues in schools?" They all said something that you just heard before from Mike Vrancik: the 2 percent levy cap. We cannot, in spite of -- notwithstanding the aid we get from the State for security measures, we can't afford it. We're making very serious decisions between those measures and necessary educational and academic programs in our districts.

Understand, putting something outside of our cap is not automatic, ladies and gentlemen. It is something that has to be decided upon locally by your local Boards of Education; it's not automatic.

And I'll say one more quick thing. I heard more times today something about *response time*. What a better time to respond than before the incident occurs? Why shouldn't we harden our buildings; look at interior and exterior ways to harden our facilities? I urge you to consider,

one, putting funding in place; or giving some local discretion in how (indiscernible) advances its budget to meet these needs.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you all very much.

And any testimony that you have, please submit so that we can get it to the members.

MR. DONAHUE: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: We have George Corwell, Director, New Jersey Catholic Conference; Josh Caplan, New Jersey State Director of the Orthodox Union. We have Michael Kohlhagen, Chief Executive Officer, and Chenai Okammor, Senior Consultant with the Center of Educational Innovation; and Kevin DiPatri, retired Captain of the NJSP, and President of K.D. National Force Security & Investigations.

I know this is a mixed group here.

But George, why don't you kick us off?

G E O R G E V. C O R W E L L, Ed.D.: Good morning -- or, good afternoon now.

It's George Corwell, from the New Jersey Catholic Conference.

And I have with me Judy Nicastro from the Diocese of Trenton, who is going to talk about a serious problem that happened there, in terms of cybersecurity.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: And I know, being the last Committee -- the panel coming up, that--

Kevin, you don't have a seat?

K E V I N D I P A T R I: No, I do not.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: You know, we'll call you up when somebody is finished; and then-- Okay.

Last panel -- but this is about value-add. And as you heard the Senator before, we know what we're doing; it's good to repeat it, but we want to hear from you, specifically, what more we should be doing.

Thank you.

MR. CORWELL: Sometimes people think the nonpublic schools are immune from security problems, but particularly in terms of sectarian schools, they're actually more vulnerable because of people having axes to grind against a particular religious faith.

In any event, I'd like to publicly thank Senator Beach and Assemblyman Schaer for initiating an opportunity for us to receive nonpublic school funding for security purposes over the last several years. That unfortunately, under Governor Murphy's budget, was frozen at \$75 (*sic*) this year, in spite of the additional \$66 million added to the public school fund; causing our parents some distress.

We do not qualify for School Resource Officers, so we are dependent upon the kindness of strangers when it comes to individual police departments providing us with that.

Now, as part of my testimony, I have included a wonderful list of opportunities that we can use the nonpublic school security funding for as a result of the Department expanding those uses. One of them broadly talks about *cybersecurity*, but this is one of our problems that I think will increase; and I'd like Mrs. Nicastro to just briefly talk about that.

JUDITH A. NICASTRO: Good afternoon, and thank you for having me.

My name is Judy Nicastro, and I am the Associate Director for School Services with the Diocese of Trenton, which encompasses Monmouth, Mercer, Ocean, and Burlington counties.

I also sit on the New Jersey Department of Education Advisory Committee for Nonpublic Schools.

I cannot claim an expertise in cybersecurity; however, you have repeatedly asked, “What can we do next?”

As a mother and former teacher, I can claim an expertise in letting you know what I think we should do next.

So I researched the ideas of cybersecurity and looked at what’s been going on. And I do have testimony; so again, I will make this very brief, because you can read it.

But essentially, cybersecurity is a very pressing issue in our schools. Our schools are extremely vulnerable to that; and each student in our school, at any one time, might have the following information compromised through a breach in their security: their names, birthdates, addresses, possible Social Security numbers, any custody issues, sports information, bus information, activities, etc. So you see that not only does this have an impact on potential identity theft; but it also, to someone, can pinpoint exactly where any student is at any one given time.

Compromising a school security system can also compromise things like bells and alarm systems within schools, heating and air conditioning and ventilation units within the school, announcement systems within the school, and any sort of building plans or sensitive information with regard to security.

So all of those things are vitally, vitally important. And I have heard many people today talk about the emotional security of schools and students. And I'm not just speaking to our school, but I speak for our students, I speak for our kids. I'm a former teacher, so I understand that.

Incidents of ransomware have, in fact, provided text messages to parents talking about violence to their kids; talking about potential threats; things like that. That impacts the emotional security of not just the kids but, as parents have talked about here earlier, the parents. Just imagine getting a text message from somebody about that.

Again, our schools are wide open. Today we talked a lot about doors, and locks, and security systems. Our information systems, our data systems, are not just unlocked; we have those doors wide open, and we really need to do something about that.

And in the words of our own New Jersey Task Force report and recommendations, "Protecting private and sensitive digital information from data theft and manipulation is important," so we must recognize that.

Additionally, as someone else mentioned earlier, the FERPA laws. Once that data is breached, those FERPA laws are also impacted.

So, on so many levels, we need to talk about cybersecurity. We need to address that. Years ago-- Someone earlier mentioned the unknown.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Are you wrapping up? I'm sorry.

MS. NICASTRO: Sorry.

Years ago -- 40 years ago, the unknown was an active shooter drill at school. None of us had to go through that. Now the unknown is

what could happen with a potential cybersecurity breach. And I do really think we need to think about that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you.

MS. NICASTRO: So thank you so much for your time.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: We appreciate the insight.

Josh.

J O S H U A C A P L A N: I'll try not to repeat some of the points that were already made; but I will submit my full testimony, so I'll kind of move through it rather quickly.

My name is Josh Caplan, and I serve as the Executive Director of Teach NJS. And we advocate for appropriate State funding for all nonpublic schools; and we also know that the Legislature cares about the safety of all children in the state, wherever they're educated.

You probably know that there are approximately 152,000 nonpublic school students in the state; it's a diverse population that includes Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Lutheran, Seventh Day Adventists, secular, as well as other denominations and ethnicities. And these families, of course, shoulder a huge burden, as they bear the cost of educating their children while paying the same local and State taxes that fund the public schools. Which, by the way, we support a good public school system and support the safety of all students, whether they go to public or nonpublic schools.

It was noted that Governor Murphy kept \$75 per student in his initial budget. That was promising because, in the past, that was not the case. Often that line was zeroed-out; so that was a positive sign.

We also noted that the public school funding -- we estimated it to be around \$190 per student, which is more than twice what the nonpublic school allocation is at this time.

I just want to point out a quick story -- because I testified a couple of days ago at the Senate Budget hearing, and I pointed out that one of my Coalition partners -- her name is Mrs. Eman Arafa; she is the head of the Noor-Ul-Iman School in South Brunswick -- and she was supposed to testify with me that day. And she could not attend, and I'll tell you why. Because in the United Kingdom, that day, which was April 3, there had been a *Punish a Muslim Day* message circulating in the United Kingdom that spread throughout the world. That created fear in her students, and parents, and teachers alike. And in an attempt to protect her school and allay the fears of her school family, she reached out to the South Brunswick Police Department, which did, thankfully, provide extra coverage; and, thankfully, nothing happened.

But she understandably felt the need to be with her students and her teachers that day; and fortunately, the day ended safely.

Clearly, all of our schools have reason to be concerned about the security of their children, and we encourage the State to bring nonpublic school security funding in line with public schools.

I just want to conclude by saying that while we are disappointed at the current level, we still are encouraged by the fact that it, at least, stayed level in the Governor's initial budget. And we are similarly gratified that many of the legislators, from both sides of the aisle, have expressed their commitment to working with the nonpublic school

community for parity in funding. Our nonpublic community is a broad coalition, and it represents the diversity that is New Jersey.

We look forward to working together with your Committees, the Budget Committees, and the entire Legislature to ensure that the commitment that we've heard from legislators is turned into responsible funding for Fiscal Year 2019; and that all students and teachers in the state are properly protected so they can move on with their most important task, which is the education of all children.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you.

Chenai, did you have anything to add?

C H E N A I O K A M M O R: Michael will start; thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Michael; go ahead.

M I C H A E L K O H L H A G E N: Good morning; thank you.

First, I want to thank the Assembly and Senate Education Committees; in particular, Assemblywoman Lampitt for having us here this morning.

I will be very brief.

My name is Michael Kohlhausen, CEO of the Center for Educational Innovation. I bring to you over 20 years of experience in urban and suburban schools.

Building on everything that was said today, we're going to focus our recommendations on the social and emotional wellness and resiliency areas.

We have a general recommendation, but they all emanate from your New Jersey School Security Task Force recommendations.

And I am actually going to focus on Issue No. 2, Item No. 8, which states, “We recommend school districts engage in activities aimed at promoting a positive school climate and establishing relationships that foster ongoing communication among students and staff.”

We ask that you take a look at your current practices; and we recommend a proactive, restorative culture, with things like a Code of Conduct that’s more restorative than punitive; tools to measure student social and emotional well-being; and implanting strategies such as restorative circles, peer mediation, and youth courts and supportive school discipline practices.

More specifically, we look at Issue (*sic*) No. 9 in your School Security Task Force recommendations; and we have two laser-focused recommendations for you, and both are to prevent targeted violence.

The first is to expand the data that is currently collected in the New Jersey Department of Education Culture and Climate Survey to include items that measure student social and emotional needs.

The second is modeled after our current child abuse mandates. We recommend establishing a similar mandated protocol to identify and respond to students who have demonstrated social and emotional distress. Those mandated protocols would include professional development to support school staff.

Both of these recommendations address acknowledged gaps and emerging needs.

We’re committed to assisting you in supporting and protecting all the students and adults in all of our public and private schools across the

state. We're happy to participate and assist in this yeoman's effort to keep us all safe and create strong learning environments.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: Thank you, Michael and Chenai.

MS. OKAMMOR: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: And Kevin.

MR. DiPATRI: Yes, thank you.

I'd like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to present today.

Again, I will be very brief; but I'm going to answer, I believe, your question: What keeps-- You asked some of the other panelists, "What keeps you up at night?" And from being a retired member of the State Police; and now a private specialist in school security, serving districts in southern New Jersey for the last five years, what keeps me up at night is the fact that, still, in today's time, that all schools in New Jersey do not have onsite trained, armed, first responders in place.

And it keeps me awake at night because, again, I heard people speak about response times. I used to be a member of the State Police, and response times were very important. A *critical gap* is truly the time it takes someone to be able to confront the threat in the event it does make entry into a school. You drastically reduce that critical gap, or remove it, by having somebody in place who is highly trained.

Currently, districts have multiple options: sworn law enforcement, highly trained private security, and also Class III options. Costs vary; I know that is a concern. But again, there are options; and I

would recommend that the Legislature and the members of this Committee strongly consider mandating that each school have trained professionals that can confront, and eliminate, or mitigate a threat.

Secondly, I heard talk about -- and I did submit it in my discussion points -- about emergency preparedness. There is no universal template that is being utilized. And I highly recommend that it is when you regard -- when you're speaking on behalf of emergency response plans. We go to numerous districts; every district has a different code, different (indiscernible) for their plan. *Code Red* should mean Code Red in Sussex County, Salem County -- universally.

The other thing -- there is no training. There's an ill-perception that teachers, and staff, and students are being trained on how to respond. A drill is a drill, but there is no training. We speak to non-certificated staff, certificated staff, Administrators; there needs to be training for all these members of the school population in how to react during a crisis. I believe you can mandate training for all; age-appropriate training for students. Training, as we know, in the world of education -- you learn, you build confidence, and then you're able to execute. That is nonexistent here in New Jersey, as far as training programs for preparation for emergency response.

I'm a parent of three high school-age students; one has functional special needs. My experience professionally, not only as a parent -- there is a drastic need. And I would request and respectfully ask that there is strong consideration, that there are mandates implemented by this panel, by the Legislature, on the drastic, specific needs for the functional needs of the special needs population within the school environments. It

does require additional resources. We have put together some training programs that devote resources to that. But again, with all due respect, it is very challenging to keep them safeguarded. And we have learned that in the schools throughout the state -- that is a population that really needs some drastic attention.

In closing, the other part is, there is no specialized training, no accredited training. I know the Department of Education is coming up with a School Safety Specialist Academy training. However, school personnel-- When you talk about inopportune times, drills -- sporting events, extracurricular, in transition -- those are the most vulnerable times, critical gaps. That's what keeps me up at night, knowing that my children, students, everyone's children are extremely vulnerable -- at lunch, upon arrival, during dismissal, in transition, out on the playground, attending a Friday night football game. There are ways that are very, very minimal in cost to prepare and train staff members and those in attendance how to keep themselves safe and, hopefully, reduce the risk of them being seriously injured.

I thank you for the opportunity; and best of luck in moving forward with keeping our schools and students safe.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LAMPITT: We thank you, panel, very much.

We thank all the people who came to testify.

And just a reminder: If you did not submit any testimony, please do so. You can do it later and get it out to all the members.

April 9 and April 23 we're going to be conducting, again, further hearings.

To the members here, thank you very much. We apologize for the confusion on the room and the inability to ask further questions. But I think we were enlightened greatly by the opportunities, that we still have here in New Jersey, to expand safety in our schools. We will be working collaboratively.

Senator Ruiz apologized, because she ran to the *Breakfast After the Bell* -- a press conference that I was at. But in partnership with the Senator, I feel we are going to continue to move New Jersey in the right direction.

So thank you all very much.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)