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PROTECTING OUR SCHOOLS: FEDERAL EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

FULL HEARING

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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PROTECTING OUR SCHOOLS: FEDERAL EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Thursday, May 17, 2007

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:10 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Bennie G. Thompson [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Thompson, Dicks, Norton, Etheridge, Langevin, Cuellar, Carney, Clarke, Perlmutter, Reichert, Dent, Bilirakis and Davis of Tennessee.

Also present: Representative McCarthy.

Chairman THOMPSON. The committee is meeting today to receive testimony on protecting our schools, to strengthen efforts of preparedness and response. Our Republican colleagues, they are in a meeting and will be over very shortly, but they indicated in the interest of time that we should begin.

The Chair would like to acknowledge one Member who does not sit on the full committee, the Congresswoman from New York Mrs. McCarthy, has asked to participate in today's hearing. Consistent with the rules and practices of the committee, we are pleased to honor her request.

I now ask unanimous consent to allow Representative McCarthy to sit and question the witnesses at today's hearing. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Good morning. I thank all of you for joining us this morning as we explore the Federal efforts available for our schools and administrators when developing and implementing emergency preparedness and response plans. I would like to especially thank our witnesses for working with my staff as we periodically change the hearing schedule.

The incident at Virginia Tech was just another reminder of the tragedies that children and students face in and around our Nation's school. In Marchµ1999, the tragedy at Columbine left over a dozen students and teachers dead. In September 2001, dozens of schools and over 6,000 children were evacuated from the area surrounding the World Trade Center. In Octoberµ2002, snipers struck fear in the hearts of D.C.-area residents when they shot a Maryland boy as he stood outside of school. In September of 2004, 186 children were killed and hundreds more wounded when terrorists attacked the schools in Beslan, Russia. Each of these tragedies re-

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mind us that our schools remain vulnerable to direct and indirect attacks.

Today we will discuss the resources that are available to our schools and look for ways to bridge the communications gap between local and State school administrators and the Federal Government.

Existing objective and anecdotal evidence suggests that most American schools are not adequately prepared to respond to a serious crisis. I have spent much time on this committee working on school preparedness issues. Last year I commissioned a survey as Ranking Member of the House Homeland Security Committee. I sent this survey to various schools and school districts within the Second District of Mississippi to determine the level of preparedness within the schools and to see how these respondents are relying on Federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Education in making their plans.

Unfortunately, the results of the survey indicate that most of the schools in Mississippi are doing the bulk of the work alone. The two major fellow agencies designed to deal with this issue, DHS and Education, are not even considered resources by school officials. Many of the respondents commented that they welcome a more proactive approach from the Department of Homeland Security in reaching out to schools and school districts as they develop their emergency plants. Unfortunately, the Department thus far has failed to take a leadership role in preparedness.

Our Federal agencies can do better in coordinating school preparedness materials for our the State and local governments. I hope that after today's hearing, officials from both Departments will work to create a comprehensive Web site that will serve as a one-stop shop for school administrators to use in planning for and responding to emergencies.

There is an abundance of resources available to State and local officials. Up until now these resources have been difficult to find. I think a well-publicized Web site will help solve some of these problems, but I am also deeply concerned about the priorities of this administration when it comes to providing financial resources to help schools confront these problems.

One must question the administration's priorities in light of the cuts that have been imposed on school preparedness funding across the country. For 2 consecutive years, in fiscal year 2006 and 2007, President Bush has sought to eliminate all funding for the State grant portion of the Safe and Drug-Free School program. This program provides grants to State education agencies which they can distribute to local schools for things like metal detectors, security cameras, and training for campus security personnel.

The number of awards under the Emergency Response and Crisis Management Plan Discretionary Grants program has also dropped from 134 awards in 2003 down to 100 awards in 2005.

We can't keep doing this to our children. The Federal Government can't prevent these tragedies from occurring, but we can help our schools plan better and prepare better. It is the very least we can do.

Chairman THOMPSON. In the absence of The Ranking Member, I will move forward with the introduction of the first witness, panel of witnesses.

I now welcome our first witness, Ms. Holly Kuzmich, Deputy Chief of Staff of Policy and Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Ms. Kuzmich oversees and works with the various policy officers at the Department on behalf of the Secretary.

Our second witness is Robert J. Sica, Special Agent with the U.S. Secret Service, having served in various investigative, protective and staff assignments in New York City; Wilmington, Delaware; and Washington, D.C. Currently he is serving as a Special Agent in Charge of the National Threat Assessment Center.

Without objection, the witnesses' full statement will be inserted in the record.

I now ask each witness to summarize their statements for 5 minutes, beginning with Ms. Kuzmich.

STATEMENT OF HOLLY KUZMICH, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, POLICY AND PROGRAMS, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ms. KUZMICH. Thank you, Chairman Thompson and other members of the committee, for inviting the Department of Education to come and share what we are doing in the area of emergency management as it relates to schools.

When parents send their children off to school or college, they expect them to be safe. Horrible events like the recent shootings on Virginia Tech's campus give us the opportunity to review our efforts on school and campus safety and look at ways that we can improve those efforts.

As part of this effort, in response to these deadly shootings, President Bush directed Secretary Leavitt, Secretary Spellings and Attorney General Gonzales to travel to communities across our Nation, meet with educators, mental health experts, and State and local officials to discuss issues raised by this tragedy.

The three Cabinet officials traveled to 12 States across the country over the past several weeks and held productive meetings. The President instructed Secretary Leavitt to summarize the information gathered at the series of meetings and report back with recommendations about how the Federal Government can help avoid such tragedies in the future. We expect to report to the President in the next few weeks, and we look forward to sharing with you the results of these meetings.

While my written testimony goes into much greater detail, I would like to provide some information about a few of our activities from the Department of Education that are most directly related to emergency management issues.

To help create safe schools, ED's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools carries out a broad range of activities. I am going to let Mr. Sica describe the joint Secret Service and Education effort under the Safe School Initiative in more detail.

Our collective efforts as part of this initiative include development of a final report on targeted school shootings, a threat assessment guide in interactive CD–ROM, and threat assessment training. We believe these activities have proven to be very valuable to schools around the country.

When school violence or a traumatic crisis occurs, a key function of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools is to help school districts provide education-related services and restore the learning environment. Project School Emergency Response to Violence, or Project SERV, is the Department of Education's primary funding source for this purpose.

Project SERV is designed to ensure a continuum of postincident services through two different tiers of funding: immediate services and extended services. Under the first tier, we provide emergency short-term assistance to affected school districts. Under the second, we assist school districts in meeting their longer-term needs in responding to the crisis.

In addition to supporting schools that are recovering from traumatic events, we support schools as they plan for potential crises. We administer the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools grant program to provide funds to school districts to improve and strengthen their emergency management plans.

Grant funds enable schools to work closely with local community partners and first responders as well as to provide training on emergency procedures, conduct practice drills and purchase supplies to support their emergency management efforts.

We also provide additional resources to support school preparedness efforts. Our Practical Information on Crisis Planning Guide provides schools and their communities with an introduction to emergency management as it applies to schools and basic guidelines for developing school emergency management plans.

In addition, since 2004, we have supported an Emergency Response in Crisis Management Technical Assistance Center that is available to support schools in their development of all-hazards emergency management plans. The Center supports a Web site and offers a series of school-based emergency management publications and training sessions to the public. And in an effort to provide crisis-planning information to an audience beyond our grantees, we provide training on emergency management planning for nongrantees twice a year, and this training has included attendees from over 40 States.

In addition, in October of 2006, the White House convened a Conference on School Safety in a response to a series of tragic shootings that took place in our Nation's schools. The conference was designed to provide an opportunity for educators, law enforcement officials, mental health providers, representatives of community-based organizations, parents and students to come together to share strategies for preventing violence and learn from one another.

Additionally, we hosted a special Webcast last November to review emergency planning and construct strategies to help schools mitigate, prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from a crisis. We updated our crisis planning guide and recently sent it to chief State school officers, key education associations, Safe School Centers, and school security chiefs across the country.

The Department of Education also works closely with other Federal agencies. We have worked with the Department of Homeland Security on a number of items including the Safe School Initiative

and the protective efforts related to schools as part of the National Infrastructure of Protection Plan.

In addition to the Department of Homeland Security, we will continue to work regularly with other Federal agencies, such as the Department of Health and Human Services, Justice, and the Office of National Drug Control Policy, on a variety of school safety initiatives.

Mr. Chairman, schools are generally safe, but all of us, Federal, State, and local government, community-based organizations, and parents and students share the responsibility to work to make them safer. I believe that by working together we can do so.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before the committee, and I look forward to answering any questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Ms. Kuzmich follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HOLLY KUZMICH

I. Introduction

Thank you, Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, and all the members of the Committee for inviting the Department of Education to come and share with you what we are doing in the area of emergency management as it relates to schools.

On behalf of Secretary Spellings I compliment you on your focus on the issues that are the subject of today's hearing, as well as the many actions you have taken prior to today. Whether we are parents or not, we are all touched by the lives of children. Childhood is a time of innocence, learning, and experiencing new things and we are deeply troubled when that innocence is shattered by senseless tragedy. When parents send their children off to school or college they expect them to be safe. And when horrible events like the recent shootings on Virginia Tech's campus happen, we are shaken to our core and need to take time, as a nation, to grieve for what we lost that day.

As you know, in response to the shootings at Virginia Tech, President Bush directed Secretary Spellings, Secretary Leavitt, and Attorney General Gonzales to travel to communities across our nation, to meet with educators, mental health experts, and State and local officials to discuss issues raised by this tragedy. This effort is under way, and some very productive meetings have been held. The President instructed Secretary Leavitt to summarize the information gathered at the series of meetings and report back with recommendations about how the Federal Government can help States and communities avoid such tragedies in the future.

But the events like those at Virginia Tech also require that we redouble our efforts to make schools even safer. As President Bush said, "Schools should be places of safety and sanctuary and learning. When that sanctuary is violated, the impact is felt in every American classroom and every American community."

I want to start by mentioning a few key facts and principles about schools and school safety.

Schools are safe places for students to be. While even one murder or one assault or robbery is too many, schools generally are much safer than the communities in which they are located. For many students, schools remain safe havens, places they can go to get away from violence.

Schools can't create safe learning environments by themselves. They need to establish partnerships with a variety of local organizations and agencies, including law enforcement, health and mental health organizations, faith-based groups, youth-serving organizations, parent groups, and student groups.

Issues related to the safety and security of our Nation's schools are primarily a State and local responsibility. While the Department of Education and other Federal agencies have an important role to play in helping make schools safer, that role is a limited one. Our priority is to have the greatest impact that we can, given the limited nature of our role.

II. Mission of the Department and of Schools

The mission of the Department of Education is to promote student achievement by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access. We work to supplement and complement the efforts of States, local school systems, and others to improve the quality of education.

We believe that supporting the efforts of States and localities to create safe and secure learning environments is a critical part of that mission. We know that while schools generally are safe and shootings are rare, we can and must work to make them even safer. When schools are not safe, when children are compromised because of drugs or alcohol, or when children are afraid to go to school because of bullying, the educational experience is diminished and academic achievement will be limited. Research on academic achievement indicates that students must first feel safe and secure and be healthy in order to have the best chance to be successful in school.

While the mission of schools is to teach all students to the highest possible standards, we know that teachers can't teach and students can't learn to their fullest extent if they are not safe or if they don't feel safe. In order to help students maximize their academic potential, schools need to create a climate which not only promotes learning but does so in an atmosphere where:

- inappropriate behaviors such as bullying are not tolerated;
- students are held responsible for their actions and are sanctioned consistent with discipline policies;
- the illegal possession of alcohol, drugs, and firearms is strictly prohibited;
- threats against schools, faculty, and students are diligently investigated; and
- all students feel connected to their school and know that they have a place to turn for help and advice.

III. ED Emergency Management Activities

To help create safe schools, ED's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) carries out a broad range of activities. We provide support to States, local educational agencies, and community-based organizations through a formula-grant program, and also administer a series of competitive grant initiatives. We also carry out a range of national leadership activities with funds appropriated under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act National Programs authority. We use these funds to support activities including training, technical assistance, data collection and dissemination, program development, and program support.

Many of these activities are developed and implemented in coordination and collaboration with a variety of other offices within ED, as well as with other Federal agencies and private organizations that serve youth. We work regularly with other Federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, including the United States Secret Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Homeland Security Institute, and other offices and councils; the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism; the Department of Justice, including the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the Office of National Drug Control Policy. We also work closely with a variety of private non-profit youth serving organizations, such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Details about some of the activities we carry out that are directly related to readiness and emergency management for schools follow.

Safe School Initiative:

I am going to let Mr. Sica, the Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service (USSS), National Threat Assessment Center describe the joint USSS and ED effort under this initiative in more detail. Our collective efforts as part of the Safe School Initiative include development of a Final Report on Targeted School Shootings; a Threat Assessment Guide; an interactive CD–ROM "A Safe School and Threat Assessment Experience: Scenarios Exploring the Findings of the Safe School Initiative"; a study on students that were aware of planned school shootings and took no action (in draft); and threat assessment trainings (339 sessions to over 77,000 persons). We believe that these activities have proven to be very valuable to schools around the country.

Project SERV

A key function of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools is to help school districts provide education-related services and restore the learning environment after a violent or traumatic crisis. Project School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) is the Department of Education's primary funding source for this purpose.

Experience has taught us that responding adequately to school-based traumatic events requires both an immediate and a continuing component. Project SERV is designed to ensure a continuum of post-incident services through two different tiers of funding: Immediate Services and Extended Services. Under the first tier (Immediate Services), we provide emergency, short-term assistance to affected school dis-

tricts; under the second (Extended Services), we assist school districts in meeting their longer-term needs in responding to the crisis.

Immediate Services grants are intended to provide support very quickly following an incident. Immediate Services grants under Project SERV generally are for a maximum amount of $50,000 over a six-month period. Applications received for Immediate Services grants are given priority and undergo an expedited review. Extended Services grants are intended to address the long-term recovery efforts that may be needed following a significant, traumatic event. They generally provide a maximum of $250,000 over a period of up to 18 months to help maintain safety and security in an affected school and to help students, teachers, school staff, and family members recover from the event.

Since the program's inception in 2001, the Department has awarded $24.9 million in grants under Project SERV to 34 school districts and nine States. These grants have included 45 Immediate Services and nine Extended Services grants. Funds have been awarded to districts in response to events such as school shootings and student suicides. In addition, Project SERV funds were awarded in response to large-scale events such as 9/11, the Washington, D.C., area sniper incidents, and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Project SERV funds have enabled schools to restore a critical sense of safety and security after a crisis. Funds have been used for mental health services, additional security services and temporary security measures, training for staff, and other services needed to restore the learning environment.

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools

In addition to supporting schools that are *recovering* from traumatic events, we support schools as they *plan* for potential crises. We administer the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) competitive grant program to provide funds to local educational agencies to improve and strengthen their emergency management plans. Since 2003, OSDFS has awarded 413 grants under this program totaling over $112 million for K–12 school preparedness. Funds are used to support emergency management plan development incorporating the four phases of emergency management: Prevention–Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. Grant funds enable schools to work closely with local community partners and first responders, as well as to provide training on emergency procedures, conduct practice drills, and purchase supplies to support their emergency management efforts.

We also provide additional resources to support school preparedness efforts. Our *Practical Information on Crisis Planning Guide* provides schools and their communities with a general introduction to emergency management as it applies to schools and basic guidelines for developing school emergency management plans. In addition, since 2004, we have supported an Emergency Response and Crisis Management Technical Assistance Center that is available to support schools in their development of all-hazards emergency management plans. The Center supports a Web site and offers a series of school-based emergency management publications and training sessions to the public. Also, in an effort to provide crisis planning information to an audience beyond REMS grantees, we provide training on emergency management planning for non-grantees twice a year. These training activities have included attendees from more than 40 States. Our most recent session was held in St. Louis earlier in May.

DHS/NIPP

OSDFS has been working with the Department of Homeland Security on protective efforts related to schools for several years. In the summer of 2006, the category of Education Facilities, which includes all schools and institutions of higher education, became a sub-sector within the Government Facilities Sector as part of the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) effort. As part of this change, we are responsible for providing information to DHS on school and university protective efforts. We also coordinate school protective efforts with a number of other offices within DHS, including the Office of Infrastructure Protection, which leads the coordinated national effort to reduce the risk to our critical infrastructures and key resources posed by acts of terrorism, and the Office of Risk Management and Analysis, which leads DHS' efforts to establish a common framework to address the overall management and analysis of homeland security risk.

We also participate in other homeland security-related activities, including working groups involved in the interagency review of the National Response Plan (NRP) and National Incident Management System (NIMS), and provide senior-level representation on the NIPP Federal Senior Leadership Council and the Homeland Security Council's Domestic Readiness Group.

White House Conference on School Safety

In October of 2006, the White House convened a Conference on School Safety in response to a series of tragic shootings that took place in our Nation's schools. The conference was designed to provide an opportunity for educators, law enforcement officials, mental health providers, representatives of community-based organizations, parents, and students to come together to share strategies for preventing violence and learn from one another.

Because school violence is a complex problem, requiring a comprehensive approach, panelists and participants discussed a wide range of topics, including:

- research about the nature and extent of school violence;
- ways in which law enforcement, schools, and others can work together to establish safe environments and prevent school shootings;
- emergency management planning activities that help schools prepare to respond to violent acts and other crises; and
- strategies to help school communities heal and recover if and when a violent incident occurs.

As a follow-up to the Conference, the Department disseminated materials on emergency management preparedness to all public and private elementary and secondary schools, including a message from the Secretary summarizing the conference content and the *Practical Information on Crisis Planning* brochure.

We hosted a special web cast on November 15 to review emergency planning and suggest strategies to help schools mitigate, prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a crisis. Nearly 3,900 people successfully participated in the live event in November, and, by the end of 2006, about 2,600 additional individuals downloaded the archive Web cast.

In December, the Secret Service and ED released a new interactive CD–ROM, *A Safe School and Threat Assessment Experience: Scenarios Exploring the Findings of the Safe School Initiative,* designed to complement the existing Threat Assessment Guide. As Mr. Sica mentioned, this CD–ROM, which included a copy of the Threat Assessment Guide and final report of the SSI, was distributed to chief state school officers, key education associations, Safe School Centers, and School Security Chiefs in January 2007.

We updated our crisis-planning guide and mailed the revised information to chief state school officers, key education associations, Safe School Centers, and School Security Chiefs on April 19, 2007.

Chiefs of School Police

ED staff meets regularly with the head safety and security officials from the Nation's 40 largest school districts. These face-to-face meetings provide the Department with a better understanding of the problems confronting the Nation's schools and allow the safety and security officials to share information about issues facing their particular school districts. We have also established a list serv for the group that allows the Department and the security officials to engage in dialogue on various issues related to school safety and security, school crime, and emerging concerns.

NOAA Public Alert Radios

Since 2005, the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools has collaborated with the Departments of Homeland Security and Commerce to provide NOAA Public Alert Radios to schools. Since 2005, 97,000 radios have been distributed to public schools in the country.

Information on these initiatives and the various products I've mentioned is available on the Department's web site *www.ed.gov* by clicking on "school safety".

IV. Other Related Activities

The Department of Education also implements several other programs and initiatives that, while not designed to immediately address readiness and emergency management concerns, do play an important role in efforts to create safe and supportive school climates. Details about some of these activities follow.

Safe Schools/Healthy Students

A joint project of the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative provides grants to local school districts to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to create safe school environments and support healthy youth development. Local school districts that receive grants under the initiative are required to enter into partnerships with juvenile justice and law enforcement officials, as well as the local public mental health authority as part of the initiative.

Character Education

The Partnerships in Character Education Program helps create a school climate that is safe and caring. Since 1995, the goal of this grant program has been to bring

schools, parents, students, and the community together to implement a community-wide character education program. To date, we have made 139 partnership grants to State educational agencies and local school districts totaling more than $121,500,000. Research studies posted on the U. S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse Web site show that character education is linked to improved character development, pro-social behavior and academic achievement.

School Associated Violent Death Study

Since 1992, the Department of Education has assisted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in collecting information about school-associated violent deaths in order to identify trends that can help schools develop preventive measures that protect and promote the health, safety and development of all students. Although school-associated violent deaths remain rare events, they have occurred often enough to begin to detect patterns and identify potential risk factors. The data has provided important information about the characteristics of homicides, homicide perpetrators and the context of a homicide event to help inform potential homicide prevention strategies and activities. Results from the ongoing study are available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

Gun-Free Schools Act

The Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) requires that each State or outlying area receiving Federal funds under the ESEA have a law that requires all local educational agencies to expel from school for at least one year any student who takes a firearm to school or possesses a firearm at school. State laws also must authorize the local school superintendent to modify, in writing, any such expulsion on a case-by-case basis. In addition, the GFSA states that the law must be construed so as to be consistent with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The GFSA requires States and outlying areas to report information about the implementation of the GFSA annually to the Secretary of Education. We summarize reports from the States and produce an annual report that is released to the public. The reports are not designed to provide information regarding the rate at which students carry firearms to school or possess firearms at school. Rather, the data summarized in the report relate to actions taken with regard to the number of students *found* bringing firearms to schools or possessing firearms at schools.

The most recently released report contains data from the 2002–2003 school year. That report indicates that the States (including the District of Columbia and the territories) expelled 2,143 students for bringing a firearm to school or possessing a firearm at school. More than half of the expulsions (58 percent) were in senior high schools and 11 percent were for elementary school students. Fifty-five percent of expulsions were for bringing or possessing a handgun, and 13 percent were for bringing or possessing a rifle or shotgun. The remaining 32 percent of expulsions were for other firearms or destructive devices such as bombs or grenades.

Additional details about all of these initiatives are available at the Department's website, *www.ed.gov*.

V. Reauthorization

While many local school districts have made strides toward creating safe and drug-free learning environments, it is clear, based on the results of the Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) review, as well as our experience in administering the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act provisions, that we must do better. The 2006 PART for the Safe and Drug Free Schools State Grant Program found the structure of this program is still flawed, spreading funding too broadly to support quality interventions and failing to target those schools and communities in greatest need of assistance. As part of the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, we propose restructuring the Safe and Drug-Free State Grants program in order to better serve schools and communities. Specifically, we propose making Safe and Drug-Free Schools State Grants funds available to States to support training, technical assistance, and information for schools about the most effective models and strategies to create safe, healthy, and secure schools.

A key difference between our proposed approach and the current Safe and Drug-Free Schools State Grants program is that our reauthorization proposal would focus on building State capacity to assist schools adopt and implement effective models that, to the extent possible, reflect scientifically based research. While States would be authorized to make subgrants to local school districts, these awards would not be made based on a statutory formula, but rather in response to demonstrated need for assistance.

Our reauthorization proposal would complement these changes to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools State Grants program with revisions to the SDFS National Programs authority. We propose consolidating SDFS National Programs into a single and flexible discretionary grant program that would be focused on four priority

areas—emergency management planning; preventing violence and drug use, including student drug testing; school culture and climate, including character education; and other needs related to improving the learning environment to help students meet high academic standards.

Our proposed approach would replace an array of narrowly conceived, but sometimes overlapping-authorities with a single program focused on critical areas of national concern. It would provide the flexibility that we need to respond to new and emerging needs in school safety and drug prevention, and provide potential grantees with the opportunity to develop more comprehensive proposals rather than piecing together activities from multiple grant streams, requiring multiple application notices, implementation rules, and reporting and accountability requirements.

V. Closing

In conclusion, I want to return to where I began. Schools are generally safe, but all of us—Federal, State and local government organizations, community-based organizations, and parents and students—share the responsibility to work to make them safer. I believe that by working together we can do so. Thank you for this opportunity and I look forward to working with you on these issues.

FY 2004

State	Soultion Area	SHSP	LETPP	CCP	UASI
Colorado	Equipment	$ 1,958	$ 83,279		$ 49,993
	Exercises	$ 6,265			
	Planning	$ 288,818			$ 21,759
Colorado Total		**$ 297,040**	**$ 83,279**		**$ 71,752**
District of Columbia	Planning				$ 590,219
District of Columbia Total					**$ 590,219**
Florida	Equipment	$ 38,112	$ 42,970		
Florida Total		**$ 38,112**	**$ 42,970**		
Georgia	Equipment	$ 352,971			
	Planning				$ 1,125,000
Georgia Total		**$ 352,971**			**$ 1,125,000**
Hawaii	Equipment	$ 300,000			
Hawaii Total		**$ 300,000**			
Idaho	Training	$ 309,042			
Idaho Total		**$ 309,042**			
Illinois	Equipment		$ 37,239		
Illinois Total			**$ 37,239**		
Kentucky	Planning			$ 23,339	
Kentucky Total				**$ 23,339**	
Louisiana	Equipment				$ 141,538
Louisiana Total					**$ 141,538**
Michigan	Planning			$ 123,190	
Michigan Total				**$ 123,190**	
Minnesota	Equipment		$ 271,288		$ 150,000
Minnesota Total			**$ 271,288**		**$ 150,000**
Mississippi	Equipment	$ 1,495,000		$ 11,000	
	Planning	$ 119,729		$ 23,000	
	Training	$ 75,000		$ 5,000	
Mississippi Total		**$ 1,689,729**		**$ 39,000**	
Missouri	Equipment	$ 360,000	$ 221,985		
	Planning		$ 1,000		
Missouri Total		**$ 360,000**	**$ 222,985**		
Nebraska	Equipment	$ 230,420			
	Exercises	$ 50,596			
	Planning	$ 24,000			
Nebraska Total		**$ 305,016**			
Nevada	Equipment	$ 199,095			
Nevada Total		**$ 199,095**			
New Hampshire	Equipment		$ 21,596		
New Hampshire Total			**$ 21,596**		
New Jersey	Planning				$ 154,000
New Jersey Total					**$ 154,000**
New Mexico	Planning			$ 30,000	
New Mexico Total				**$ 30,000**	
Oregon	Equipment	$ 39,735			
Oregon Total		**$ 39,735**			
Rhode Island	Equipment	$ 35,925			
	Planning	$ 20,000			
Rhode Island Total		**$ 55,925**			
South Carolina	Equipment	$ 911,248			
	Exercises	$ 84,680			
	Planning	$ 188,857			
South Carolina Total		**$ 1,184,785**			
Utah	Equipment	$ 70,831	$ 60,000		
Utah Total		**$ 70,831**	**$ 60,000**		
Virginia	Equipment	$ 1,660,000			
Virginia Total		**$ 1,660,000**			
Washington	Equipment				$ 732,815
	Planning				$ 48,500
Washington Total					**$ 781,315**
Wisconsin	Equipment	$ 1,532,851	$ 10,000		
	Planning		$ 1,050,920	$ 155,625	
Wisconsin Total		**$ 1,532,851**	**$ 1,060,920**	**$ 155,625**	
Grand Total		**$ 8,395,132**	**$ 1,800,276**	**$ 371,154**	**$ 3,013,824**

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FY 2005

State	Solution Area	SHSP	LETPP	CCP	UASI	EMPG	MMRS	BZPP
Arkansas	Equipment							$ 98,938
Arkansas Total								**$ 98,938**
California	Equipment		$ 50,000					
California Total			**$ 50,000**					
Colorado	Planning	$ 248,455	$ 86,071			$ 58,831		
Colorado Total		**$ 248,455**	**$ 86,071**			**$ 58,831**		
District of Columbia	Equipment				$ 98,237			
District of Columbia Total					**$ 98,237**			
Florida	Equipment	$ 1,307,143						$ 145,534
	Planning	$ 15,000						
Florida Total		**$ 1,322,143**						**$ 145,534**
Georgia	Equipment	$ 2,095,619						
Georgia Total		**$ 2,095,619**						
Idaho	Equipment		$ 35,000					$ 50,000
Idaho Total			**$ 35,000**					**$ 50,000**
Illinois	Equipment				$ 333,900			
Illinois Total					**$ 333,900**			
Kansas	Equipment							$ 100,000
Kansas Total								**$ 100,000**
Kentucky	Equipment	$ 60,000						$ 98,924
	Planning	$ 240,000						
Kentucky Total		**$ 300,000**						**$ 98,924**
Maryland	Equipment							$ 97,000
Maryland Total								**$ 97,000**
Minnesota	Equipment	$ 160,000	$ 7,750					$ 22,297
	Planning	$ 32,000						
Minnesota Total		**$ 192,000**	**$ 7,750**					**$ 22,297**
Nebraska	Equipment	$ 32,468	$ 109,500					
	Planning	$ 120,000						
Nebraska Total		**$ 152,468**	**$ 109,500**					
Nevada	Equipment	$ 130,500						
	Training			$ 16,400				
Nevada Total		**$ 130,500**		**$ 16,400**				
New Jersey	Planning	$ 130,900	$ 39,100					
New Jersey Total		**$ 130,900**	**$ 39,100**					
North Carolina	Exercises	$ 3,550						
North Carolina Total		**$ 3,550**						
Ohio	Equipment							$ 92,482
Ohio Total								**$ 92,482**
Rhode Island	Equipment	$ 12,830						
Rhode Island Total		**$ 12,830**						
South Carolina	Equipment	$ 660,342						$ 50,000
	Exercises	$ 30,108						
	Planning	$ 138,520						
	Training	$ 76,384						
South Carolina Total		**$ 905,362**						**$ 50,000**
Utah	Equipment	$ 29,000	$ 68,737					
Utah Total		**$ 29,000**	**$ 68,737**					
Virginia	Equipment							$ 99,837
Virginia Total								**$ 99,837**
Washington	Equipment	$ 131,515			$ 746,160			$ 47,535
Washington Total		**$ 131,515**			**$ 746,160**			**$ 47,535**
Wisconsin	Equipment	$ 102,300			$ 46,893			$ 100,000
	Planning	$ 742,455						
Wisconsin Total		**$ 844,755**			**$ 46,893**			**$ 100,000**
Grand Total		**$ 6,499,097**	**$ 396,158**	**$ 16,400**	**$ 1,225,190**	**$ 58,831**		**$ 1,002,546**

FY 2006

State	Solution Area	SHSP	LETPP	CCP	UASI	MMRS	Total
Arizona	Training	$ 159,435					$ 159,435
Arizona Total		**$ 159,435**					**$ 159,435**
California	Planning	$ 500,000					$ 500,000
California Total		**$ 500,000**					**$ 500,000**
Colorado	Planning	$ 200,000					$ 200,000
Colorado Total		**$ 200,000**					**$ 200,000**
Florida	Equipment			$ 4,988			$ 4,988
	Planning			$ 4,988			$ 4,988
	Training			$ 4,988			$ 4,988
Florida Total				**$ 14,964**			**$ 14,964**
Georgia	Equipment	$ 206,935	$ 88,500				$ 295,435
	Exercises	$ 150,000					$ 150,000
	Planning	$ 500,000					$ 500,000
	Training	$ 325,000					$ 325,000
Georgia Total		**$ 1,181,935**	**$ 88,500**				**$ 1,270,435**
Idaho	Planning		$ 25,000				$ 25,000
Idaho Total			**$ 25,000**				**$ 25,000**
Illinois	Planning	$ 309,570					$ 309,570
Illinois Total		**$ 309,570**					**$ 309,570**
Maryland	Equipment		$ 133,395				$ 133,395
	Planning				$ 100,000		$ 100,000
Maryland Total			**$ 133,395**		**$ 100,000**		**$ 233,395**
Mississippi	Exercises	$ 186,000					$ 186,000
Mississippi Total		**$ 186,000**					**$ 186,000**
Nebraska	Equipment	$ 274,960					$ 274,960
Nebraska Total		**$ 274,960**					**$ 274,960**
New Jersey	Planning				$ 80,453		$ 80,453
New Jersey Total					**$ 80,453**		**$ 80,453**
Washington	Planning		$ 327,000				$ 327,000
Washington Total			**$ 327,000**				**$ 327,000**
Grand Total		**$ 2,811,900**	**$ 573,895**	**$ 14,964**	**$ 180,453**		**$ 3,581,212**

Chairman THOMPSON. We now will hear from Special Agent Sica for 5 minutes.

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STATEMENT OF ROBERT J. SICA, SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE, U.S. SECRET SERVICE, NATIONAL THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Mr. SICA. Good morning, Chairman Thompson, Congressman King and distinguished members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Mr. Chairman, if it pleases the committee, I will offer a few brief remarks and ask that my full statement, in addition to the guides and CD–ROM before you, be made part of the record.

Chairman THOMPSON. Without objection.

Mr. SICA. On behalf of the men and women of the United States Secret Service, I would like to convey our condolences to the families of the Virginia Tech victims and all other victims of school-targeted school violence.

In 1997, the Secret Service completed the exceptional case study project, an operational study of the behavior of all persons who attacked or tried to attack prominent public officials or public figures in the United States between 1949 through 1995. This study lead the Secret Service to modify and improve its approach to threat assessment as it relates to the protection of our national and world leaders.

Also, as a result of this study, the term "targeted violence" was developed. Targeted violence refers to any incident of violence where a known or knowable attacker selects a particular target prior to their violent attack.

In 1998, the Secret Service established the National Threat Assessment Center, an entity within the Secret Service that is dedicated to continuing efforts to study and prevent targeted violence and to share this developing knowledge with other constituent agencies responsible for public safety and protection.

After a number of school shootings that occurred in 1998 and 1999, the Secret Service, at the invitation of and in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, began a similar operational study of school shootings: the Safe School Initiative. The goal of the Safe School Initiative was to gather and analyze accurate and useful information about the behavior and thinking of students who commit acts of targeted violence in our Nation's schools.

The study was comprised of a systematic analysis of investigative, judicial, educational and other pertinent case records and included interviews with those involved with school shootings. As a result of the study, the Secret Service and the Department of Education published a final report and the threat assessment guide for schools, copies of which have been provided to this committee.

The Secret Service and the Department of Education routinely share results of our study with school and law enforcement professionals responsible for the prevention of targeted school violence. We believe that the guide and final report may aid our Nation's school and law enforcement communities to work together in a systematic way and prevent further acts of targeted violence in schools.

These publications are available on our public Web site.

The report contains key study findings, two of which I would like to highlight: Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attackers' idea or plan to attack. The attackers often communicated

their plans to others, friends, schoolmates, or siblings. This finding, in particular, struck both the Secret Service and the Department of Education as being of particular importance to prevention efforts.

We are currently conducting additional research into this bystander phenomenon to shed more light on more information that may be conveyed prior to an attack. We hope the knowledge gained through this study will help improve prevention efforts.

Despite prompt law enforcement response, most incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention. Most school-based attacks were stopped through intervention by school administrators, educators and students or by the attacker stopping on his own.

In light of these findings and others, the use of a threat assessment approach may be a promising strategy for preventing a school-based attack.

Threat assessment is a fact-based investigative and analytical approach that focuses on the identification, assessment, and management of those who may pose a threat of targeted violence. Schools and law enforcement may be able to prevent some incidents of targeted school violence if they know what information to look for and what to do with such information when it is found.

Schools should consider establishing multidisciplinary threat assessment teams to better detect and evaluate information that might indicate that there is a risk of targeted school attack and ultimately develop strategies to prevent potential school attacks from occurring.

As of April 2000, the National Threat Assessment Center has provided briefing and training on school initiatives in 339 different sessions to over 77,000 people. The attendees have included educators, school administrators, school resource officers, other law enforcement and community representatives. However, to even better assist with the dissemination of this salient research, the Secret Service and the Department of Education have recently released an interactive CD–ROM, a copy of which has been provided to this committee.

Through the use of hypothetical school-based scenarios, school threat assessment team members may further develop their skills in conducting a threat assessment inquiry. The unique interactive format is designed to serve as a tabletop exercise for team members to gain familiarity with the threat assessment process as well as the role each team member will play in it.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my prepared remarks, and I would be happy to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee may have.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Sica follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT SICA

Good morning, Chairman Thompson. I would like to thank you, as well as the distinguished Ranking Member, Mr. King, and the other members of the Committee for providing an opportunity to discuss the Safe School Initiative, a collaboration between the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education.

As part of our protective responsibilities, the U.S. Secret Service has long held the view that the best protective strategy is one of prevention. The goal of Secret Serv-

ice threat assessment efforts is to identify, assess, and manage persons who have the interest and ability to mount attacks against Secret Service protectees.

National Threat Assessment Center

In 1998, the Secret Service created the National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC). The mission of NTAC is to provide guidance on threat assessment both within the Secret Service and to the criminal justice and public safety communities. Through the Presidential Protection Act of 2000, Congress formally authorized NTAC to provide assistance to federal, state, and local law enforcement as well as others with protective responsibilities in the following functional areas:

- Conducting research on threat assessment and various types of targeted violence;
- Providing training on threat assessment and targeted violence to law enforcement officials and others with protective and public safety responsibilities;
- Facilitating information-sharing among agencies with protective and/or public safety responsibilities;
- Provide case consultation on individual threat assessment investigations and for agencies building threat assessment units; and,
- Developing programs to promote the standardization of federal, state, and local threat assessment and investigations involving threats.

As a result of our research in the areas of attacks on public officials, public figures, and in schools, NTAC has provided relevant information and advice to law enforcement and other professionals who are charged with investigating and/or preventing targeted violence. NTAC has also collaborated with experts in the fields of stalking, domestic violence, and targeted workplace violence. The Secret Service provides this information nationwide through NTAC's threat assessment seminars and formal presentations, as well as several publications. In addition, NTAC offers assistance to organizations interested in developing threat assessment programs.

Background

In response to concerns about the safety of America's schools following several high-profile shootings, in June of 1999, the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education collaborated on the Safe School Initiative (SSI), an operational analysis of school-based attacks in the United States. The SSI focused on a rare but significant component of the problem of school violence—incidents of targeted violence in schools. The term "targeted violence" evolved from the Secret Service's Exceptional Case Study Project (ECSP), an operational analysis of the thinking and behavior of those who have assassinated, attacked, or tried to attack public officials or public figures in the United States since 1949. The ECSP defined targeted violence as any incident of violence where a known (or knowable) attacker selects a particular target prior to their violent attack. The purpose of the ECSP was to generate a better understanding of attacks against public officials which, in turn, would assist the Secret Service with investigations of threats against the President and other protectees, and support the development of strategies to prevent harm to these public officials.

Research and Findings

The SSI, in both focus and design, was modeled after the ECSP. Targeted school violence was defined as an incident where a current or recent former student attacked someone at his or her school with lethal means and purposefully chose the school as the location of the attack. Through the use of this modified definition, the SSI identified and studied 37 school shootings, involving 41 attackers that occurred from 1974 through 2000. The emphasis of the SSI, as with the ECSP, was on obtaining information about the pre-incident thinking and behaviors of the attackers—students who have planned and carried out instances of targeted violence in American schools. This information was gathered through a systematic analysis of investigative, judicial, educational, and other pertinent case records, and interviews with ten (10) of the young boys involved in school shootings. Ultimately, this collaboration was designed to address two central questions concerning school attacks: "Could we have known these attacks were planned?" and, "What could be done to prevent these attacks from occurring?"

The SSI resulted in the publication of two documents, *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States (May 2002), and Threat Assessment in Schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates (May 2002), copies of which have been provided to this Committee. The report and guide are available on the Secret Service web site at: www.secretservice.gov.*

The ten key findings of the SSI, as detailed in the *Report,* include:

1. Incidents of targeted violence at school rarely are sudden, impulsive acts.

2. Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack.
3. Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to advancing the attack.
4. There is no accurate or useful profile of students who engaged in targeted school violence.
5. Most attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the incident that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.
6. Most attackers had difficulties coping with significant losses or personal failures. Moreover, many had considered or attempted suicide.
7. Many attackers felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.
8. Most attackers had access to and had used weapons prior to the attack.
9. In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
10. Despite prompt law enforcement response, most incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention. Most school-based attacks were stopped through intervention by school administrators, educators, and students or by the attacker stopping on his own.

While each of these findings is important and may be useful for improving school safety, one finding in particular struck both the Secret Service and Department of Education as being of unique importance to prevention efforts: "Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack." We are currently conducting additional research into this 'Bystander' phenomenon to learn more about information that may be conveyed prior to an attack. Some of the questions we are attempting to address include: What information is conveyed prior to the attack? To whom? Why isn't the information brought forward to a responsible adult? How can we increase the likelihood that information will be shared? The goal of this effort is to provide information to school administrators and educators regarding possible barriers that may prevent children who have information about a potential incident from reporting that information to a responsible adult.

Threat Assessment Approach

Threat assessment, as developed and utilized by the Secret Service, is a fact-based investigative and analytical process that focuses on the identification, assessment, and management of those who may pose a threat of targeted violence. In light of findings of the SSI, a threat assessment approach may be a promising strategy for preventing a school-based attack. The Secret Service believes there are six fundamental principles to the threat assessment process:

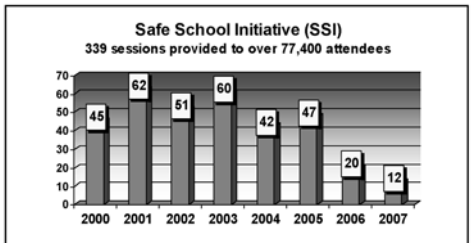
1. Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and often discernable, process of thinking and behavior.
2. Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the person, the situation, the setting, and the target.
3. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.
4. Effective threat assessment is based on facts, rather than characteristics or traits.
5. An integrated systems approach, which incorporates gathering and sharing information between entities that had involvement with the student, such as educational, community, or faith-based organizations, should guide threat assessment investigations.
6. The central question of a threat assessment is whether a student poses a threat, not whether a student made a threat.

As illustrated by these principles, targeted violence is the end result of a process that can often be detectable by accurately gathering and assessing the facts of a particular case. Schools and law enforcement may be able to prevent some incidents of targeted school violence if they know what information to look for and what to do with such information when it is found. To best gather and evaluate information from multiple sources, schools should consider establishing multidisciplinary threat assessment teams comprised of people from the school, the community, and law enforcement. By utilizing this multi-systems approach, these threat assessment teams may be able to detect and evaluate information that might indicate that there is a risk of a targeted school attack; and, ultimately develop strategies to prevent potential school attacks from occurring.

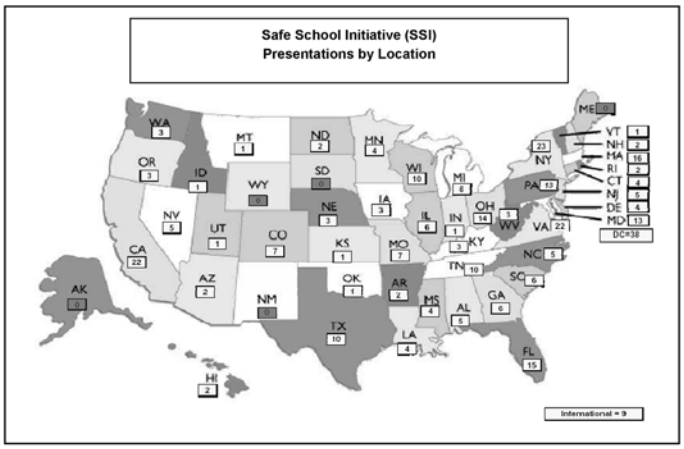
Trainings and Dissemination

The U.S. Secret Service routinely shares the results of the SSI with school and law enforcement professionals responsible for the prevention of targeted school violence.

As illustrated in the graph below, through April 2007, NTAC has provided briefings and training on the SSI at 339 different sessions to over 77,000 people. The attendees have included educators, school administrators, school resource officers, other law enforcement, and community representatives.



These information-sharing seminars have occurred throughout the United States and internationally as well. The illustration below depicts the locations of the SSI sessions.



To aid in the dissemination of this salient research, the Secret Service and Department of Education have released an interactive CD–ROM, *A Safe School and Threat Assessment Experience: Scenarios Exploring the Findings of the Safe School Initiative,* a copy of which has been provided to this Committee. Following last October's White House Conference on School Safety, this CD–ROM along with a copy of the threat assessment guide and final report of the SSI described earlier—was distributed to school superintendents and others involved in school safety in January 2007. Through the use of hypothetical school-based scenarios, school threat assessment team members may further develop their skills in conducting a threat assessment inquiry. The unique interactive format is designed to serve as a tabletop exercise for team members to gain familiarity with the threat assessment process, as well as the role each team member will play in it.

Conclusion

The research completed by the Secret Service and Department of Education through the Safe School Initiative has greatly contributed to our understanding of targeted school violence and helped to identify steps that may be implemented to prevent future occurrences. Establishing and maintaining multidisciplinary threat assessment teams that enlist school and community resources may better equip schools to handle those who pose a risk of targeted violence through prompt identification, accurate assessment, and effective management.

Chairman Thompson, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before this Committee.

Chairman THOMPSON. I would like to thank you both for your testimony.

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I remind each Member that he or she will have 5 minutes to question the witnesses.

I now recognize myself for questions.

Ms. Kuzmich, first of all, thank you for helping me in the Greenville, Mississippi, forum. As you saw, there is a good bit of interest in this whole question, but you could see the range of participation from small districts to large, and the degree of sophistication varied based on that.

Can you tell the committee, for the most part, what a school district is telling you they need from a preparedness standpoint?

Ms. KUZMICH. I think in terms of what we hear consistently as we talk to people across the country is wanting model programs to look at. We especially hear—you know, I think we see from urban districts across the country and larger school districts who have more staff and more capacity, they have obviously looked at these issues more significantly. We do hear a lot from smaller, rural districts that they need, you know, best practices and model approaches that they can take and adopt in their district because it is more of a challenge for them.

I think the thing that we have worked on significantly, too, and the thing that we see as something to continue working on in the future is, you know, there are 15,000 school districts across the country, and State education agencies obviously play a large role in education within our States and is one of our main liaisons at the Department of Education. So how can we best work not just with all 15,000 school districts, which is a big challenge for us at the Federal level, but to work with States so that they can work with their own districts, provide training, technical assistance to their own districts on emergency management planning.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, is it your testimony before the committee that you have provided training for all States on school preparedness at this point?

Ms. KUZMICH. We have about 40 States who have participated so far.

Chairman THOMPSON. So it is voluntary.

Ms. KUZMICH. It is.

Chairman THOMPSON. Can you tell the committee whether or not the Department plans to do anything else around school preparedness other than to offer voluntary participation in training?

Ms. KUZMICH. There is voluntary participation at the State level. Right now through the Safe and Drug-Free Schools formula program that we currently have, which is a formula grant to all 50 States, but essentially a formula program to all districts across the country, as part of that program within No Child Left Behind, districts have to certify that they have an emergency response plan within their districts. Now, whether that plan is updated and robust is another question, and I think that is certainly something we need to work on.

And the thing that we have proposed, since that program is authorized through No Child Left Behind, which is up for reauthorization this year, what we propose to do with the States grant program, which right now is disbursed very thinly to districts across the country, half of districts get less than $10,000, which is not really effective for them to do alcohol/drug prevention and emer-

gency crisis planning—what we have proposed to do is to change that plan program into a more robust State grant program where we give the funding, two grants at the State level, and allow them to do training and technical assistance, because disbursing funds to all 15,000 districts we don't think is the most effective way to really get more bang for our buck.

Chairman THOMPSON. You do understand this is the same program that the President has zeroed out in the last two budgets?

Ms. KUZMICH. We have put money in the budget this year for that program, and we have redesigned it to focus it at that State level so that we canµ—I think we feel like that is a more effective model to work with State leadership.

Chairman THOMPSON. How much money?

Ms. KUZMICH. We have $99 million.

Chairman THOMPSON. Ninety-nine million dollars for 15,000 school districts?

Ms. KUZMICH. For 50 States. We have redesigned how to—how we send that money out.

Chairman THOMPSON. Fifty States, 15,000 school districts. It still has to get to the school districts, right?

Ms. KUZMICH. It does.

Chairman THOMPSON. So that is about a million and a half per State?

Ms. KUZMICH. It is about $2 million per State, although that could change based on the size of the State. And I mean our real goal, we are always going to have a discussion about what is the right level of funding for programs like this where 9µpercent invest in education. So there needs to be a significant role for States and locals in funding these programs, too.

But I think the way we would redesign the program is that funding would not have to go to all 15,000 districts. Some districts have already done a very good job of emergency management planning, so States would have the authority to target funds within their State to districts to keep funding at the State level if they would choose.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you.

The last thing is when these districts submit school preparedness plans, do you approve them or reject them or you just receive them?

Ms. KUZMICH. We don't actually receive the plan itself. The current provision in law is that districts have to certify that they have a plan. They do not have to send the plan in to us at the U.S. Department of Education.

Chairman THOMPSON. So, in essence, if they certify they have it, then we give them the money.

Ms. KUZMICH. That is a piece of their State application, State and district application.

Chairman THOMPSON. But we never look at the plan.

Ms. KUZMICH. Correct.

Chairman THOMPSON. Okay.

I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. Davis.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Kuzmich, thank you for being with us today. I appreciate your testimony. If you would, could you please discuss the grants that are available through the Department of Education for school preparedness?

Ms. KUZMICH. Our most targeted grant program is those—are the Readiness Emergency Management grants that I talked about in my testimony that go out to districts to essentially create very robust emergency response plans within their districts. That is the most significant piece of that. We have our Project SERV grants, which I talked about, which are for the aftermath of an event within a district or a State, whether it be a natural disaster or school violence. We used them post-9/11. And then we have our State grant program. So there are the three main pieces that we have.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Who has the ability to apply for the grants?

Ms. KUZMICH. Local school districts generally are the applicants for those grants.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. And do you provide assistance in actually setting up a plan?

Ms. KUZMICH. We do. We have offered, as I said, to grantees. Obviously we go out and use model plans that we funded in the past to talk to districts about what we are seeing, what the most effective ways to put together a plan are. We provide training to those who are nongrantees. You don't have to be a grantee to access the model plans that we have at the Department.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. How many schools have taken advantage of these grants? How many school systems?

Ms. KUZMICH. I believe it is over 400, although I will have to get back to you and double-check that number for you, sir.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. And how much money is typically given out in a given year, grant money?

Ms. KUZMICH. It ranges between 20—and $30 million that we have given out over the past several years each year for those emergency response grants, and then the State grants program, which is not solely targeted on emergency response; it can be used by States and districts at their discretion for alcohol/drug prevention programs and emergency response. We have spent about a little over $30 million a year.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. How do you go about spreading the word to local school systems that there is grant money available?

Ms. KUZMICH. It is a challenge, and it is always something that we are always continually trying to do. It is where we try to work with States as much as possible, because while we do—while we have sent—after the White House conference last fall, we sent communication in our General Guide on Emergency Response Planning to all 15,000 districts across the country. You know, sending it to them doesn't mean that they always use it and share it within their community.

And so we work with the Safe School Centers, which are in States across the country, with the chief State school officers who are in every State and, you know, communicate with their districts on a regular basis. So these are a variety of means.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. There is only 400 out of 15,000 that have applied for the grants. What can we do as Members of Congress to help spread the word across our districts?

Ms. KUZMICH. Well, we have—you know, we have a Web site with all of or resources, with all of our model plans, with the threat assessment guides on it, all of the grants that they can apply for. So part of it is publicizing that with your own district, letting educators know it is there.

A lot of it, too, is getting educators to work within their local community with law enforcement and the mental health community. You know, we can't, at the Federal level, force those discussions, but they are very important as far as emergency response planning.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. I think I hear you saying that you feel like emergency preparedness is best done in local communities with assistance from the Federal Government, not mandated from the Federal Government; is that correct?

Ms. KUZMICH. And we think that we have a role to play in providing best practice and model plans, but the real work that happens to create these plans is at the local level.

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Thank you for being here today. And I yield back.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina Mr. Etheridge.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me thank you and the Ranking Member for calling this hearing.

Just so the witnesses know, I think I am the only former State chief school officer serving in Congress. This is not a new issue with me, and I don't think it is a new issue with members of the committee. So we have been interested in it, and I expect, as we start this conversation, all others are interested in improving emergency school planning, emergency and response.

So let me ask this question this way, and it may not be what you anticipate to hear from some of the stuff you have talked about, but let me ask the question for both of you.

Because I think the other issues that we haven't talked about, crowding in school facilities, plagues a lot of school districts across this country, both large and small, despite local government efforts to put more money in on bond issues, et cetera. Surveys have found that there are a lot of kids, millions of students in the country in makeshift classrooms in trailers, and a host of conditions that we would not want to run an office in and we wouldn't put up with, and yet we put our children there, and if this were in prisons, we would have a lawsuit against us, but yet we put children there. A number of reports have come out that says they are just not good places to learn nor good environments.

So here is my question: Does the size composition of our schools increase the risk or effects of an emergency; and secondly, how does school overcrowding affect the schools' emergency management plans; and number three, have you looked into how much or how vulnerable trailers or portable facilities are compared to brick-and-mortar school buildings? If not, why not?

Ms. KUZMICH. Congressman, you know, this isn't—school facilities is generally a local and State issue. We have done some work on—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. We used to say that about roads and a host of other things. I know the—

Ms. KUZMICH. We fund a Center on School Facilities. They have done some work on this issue, and there are some outside organizations that have done some work on this, and I do know that at our White House conference last fall, we had several participants come and talk about the design of schools, things that we have learned post-Columbine in terms of how to design schools to minimize risk at those facilities.

So I would encourage you—we would be happy to share that information with you.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. The answer is no.

Ms. KUZMICH. The answer is there has been work done on that. It is not my area of expertise, but I would be happy to get that information.

Mr. SICA. Congressman, unfortunately our research does not speak to the overcrowding issue whatsoever, and I wouldn't be able to comment on that accurately.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. That is a concern to me when we look at security, because if you do it in any other area, you would look at those issues, I would think. Seems to me that would be an issue.

Let me go back to another question, because there is probably most likely going to be legislation this time at the Federal level for school construction across the country so the government can be a partner if we are going to require certain things get done, and I think we will have an opportunity to provide that.

You may not be able to ask for it at the Department of Education, but at some point I am going to get the Secretary and ask her the question whether or not the Department will support Federal legislation for school construction on a partnership, because I think we may be a 7 percent partner, but having been a State superintendent, I can tell you many times there are more than 7 percent requirement on the things that we do. On many issues it is more like 50 or 60 percent requirement on 7 percent of the money.

Would you want to comment on that?

Ms. KUZMICH. No. But I would be happy to follow up with you on it.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. If you would, please.

Both the National Threat Assessment Center and U.S. Department of Education have done a lot of analyses of school safety and response, and you alluded to that earlier and have developed an impressive collection of information, planning, resources in our school preparedness that are useful. However, my concern is that information doesn't really get in the hands of school officials, and you alluded to that dealing with thousands of school districts, many of which, you know, there is no such thing as school districts, and no one there—it is just in name only and just in this country.

My question is as you meet with chief State school officers who do have the responsibility, depending on the State where you have a school system or system of schools, it seems to me there is a leverage at that level through the U.S. Department to implement.

So my question is this: As we deal with school safety. I think the view as every parent—I agree with you there, the safest place is where children go everyday, but the issue is the parents want 100 percent. And we look at urban and rural, and if you look at where the major incidences have happened in recent years, they weren't in the large urban areas. They were in the isolated rural areas, and there is a reason for that.

So my question is what are you doing to ensure that schools—or what are the resources available through NTAC and through the Department of Education? And given the variety of demand of school administrators and teachers, their first job is to teach, of course, do you think there is enough funding available to help schools out?

It is one thing to make them available; it is another thing to make sure they have the resources. And you alluded to that earlier that when you spread it out, it is so thin, that there is not enough money. This committee needs to know that.

Ms. KUZMICH. I think—you know, I think the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, which we are working on this year, gives us a good opportunity to look at a lot of these—

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Even that is underfunded by a huge amount of what the President proposed. So if we underfund that, we still don't have resources there or here.

Ms. KUZMICH. I think one of the things that we would like to do from the Department level is really focus our funding in on the most effective programs, and we are certainly open to talking with you about how to do that.

We feel like, you know, spreading that money thinly across all districts is not the most effective way to spend our Federal dollars. To partner with our States; to do that, and to also continue to fund these model programs so that we can share that information. We do have a lot to do to get better information out, and while in a lot of the recent discussions we have had where the Secretary has gone out after Virginia Tech, we have heard a lot of people talk about the threat assessment guide, some of the model plans out there. We don't hear as much as we should. And that is—you know, that is a continuing challenge we face.

We are doing a national conference this summer where all 50 States will be present on Safe and Drug-Free Schools, and emergency planning will be a significant piece of that. And we continue to look for new ways to communicate with them and get them to do this effectively.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you. The time of the gentleman has expired.

We now recognize the gentleman from Washington Mr. Reichert.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My—I think it is always important for the people who are testifying to know a little bit of background of the person that is asking the questions.

My background was in law enforcement. I was the sheriff in Seattle up until a couple of years ago, and now I find myself here. So 33-years in law enforcement, and we watched what Columbine did to change the way that local law enforcement responded to a school crisis.

One of the things that we have done in Washington State, and I think that maybe you will find that is one of the more progressive states in this arena, is we have a rapid response plan in place. It is a statewide system. We also have a mapping system that maps all of the schools in the State. We are moving on to mapping colleges so that as first responders arrive, they immediately have a floor plan of the school and immediately can communicate with the school officials and other first responders in the area and those coming to help.

But to really get to some of the questions, the threat assessment guide that was conducted and then provided, I am really curious about—you know, when I went to school in 1950, 1960s, boy, things have changed a lot. What is happening? I mean, the bottom line is prevention is really what we are looking for here.

So in your assessment really, and Mr. Etheridge hit on part of the problem, but drugs and alcohol and that sort of thing, how do gangs play into this? What about home-grown terrorism? What is happening in the homes? Have you looked at those sorts of things, and do you guys work together? Do you know each other, and do you——

Mr. SICA. We do now, Congressman.

Ms. KUZMICH. Our staff at the Department works very significantly with Mr. Sica.

Mr. REICHERT. So how deep does the assessment go? I mean, I think we get caught up in, you know, now we are here, these things are happening, now what are we going to do? We talk about prevention, but really what is the underlying cause of the violence happening in our society today in our schools today, in gradeschools?

Mr. SICA. Congressman, if I may, I will at least start to answer that question.

What we found—and this is consistent with the research that was conducted, and the exceptional case study project that goes back to 1997 which really transformed the way the Secret Service conducts its protective intelligence investigations. We moved away from more of a profile approach to a nonprofile. The research suggested that there is no profile of an assassin, that mental illness was a product—or assassination was a product of mental illness, and that—and direct threats. All of these myths were debunked by that research.

And one of the things that really changed the course of our practices was a behavioral-based approach. We looked at the thinking and behavior of attackers, and, quite frankly, we applied that approach to the targeted violence and school issue, and we saw that it really did have application, and that is truthfully why it is so successful.

The research doesn't really speak to gang violence. And one of the interesting things that came out of the Safe School Initiative that supports the nonprofile is that very few attackers in the—there were 41 attackers that we looked at and 37 incidents, and of those 37 incidents, rarely were attackers using drugs or alcohol. It just didn't seem to be the factors that we thought it would be.

One of the notable behaviors, I think, that is worth mentioning, and I think it is true of the exceptional case study as well,

attackers are looking to solve a problem, and they resort to violence as the only way that they can solve that problem. I think that is something that we pay a lot of attention to.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you.

So we are talking about $99 million, which is what you are budgeted for. Just recently within the last week or so, we passed a bill in the House of Representatives increasing grant monies for COPS funding by $1–1/2 billion. I know as a sheriff for 8 years in Seattle, I really accessed and used COPS funding, and it does marry up with the 99 million for school resource officers, and I think, wouldn't you both agree, that that is a program that really is a program that works and is preventative in nature?

Ms. KUZMICH. Yes. And besides the Department of Education, the Department of Homeland Security also has their general, you know, emergency planning monies that can be used for schools. So ours is just a piece of what is going on.

Mr. REICHERT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I yield.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

We now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas Mr. Cuellar.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you for hosting this meeting today on this very important issue.

In 1999, I was part of a task force in Texas because of what happened in Colorado. We also did the same thing. Basically what we are doing right now, except at a State level, we traveled the State of Texas. We got 1,048 school districts in Texas, and we are facing the same type of situation—we faced the same type of situations that we are seeing right now in many ways.

What I gathered, as you see, and I think Bob mentioned this, you got the large school districts, and I see that you meet with about 40 of the largest school districts across the Nation, but we are also looking at the small school districts, the ones that can't travel, that don't have access to you. And one of the basic issues that I remember from that 1999 tour that we did across the State of Texas was what you all mentioned, and I think we still try to figure out how do we implement this.

Number one, what they wanted was model plans and the best practices, but it was not only develop them, but how do you get it over to them so they can implement those model plans and best practices? Because you can have the best plans on one of your shelves and best practices; that doesn't help anybody.

So the question is how do we get to the 15,000 school districts, which is probably the hardest question is how do we get to them to establish that, and some of the basic things that they needed—and I think the former sheriff over here, because we had a lot of law enforcement—is do the training with them and make sure that they act in this with the local law enforcement and all of that.

But even some of the basic things that they needed was information; for example, can we buy some video cameras for our schools because I know the big school districts have them, but if you go to the school districts, and I have got a lot of small school districts in my area, and I am sure every single Member has this, some of the basic things like video cameras, they couldn't even get that.

So what I am asking is a two-part question, is, one, put yourself in the shoes of a school official that is not part of this 40 larger school districts that you have, and if you are in their shoes, they are supposed to take the first step to address this, what would they do? In other words, can you provide us a list of all of the different agencies that are involved in school safety and what each of them does?

So horizontal, vertical; which are the different agencies and what they provide under that. And the second part to that is what are the different grants are available, for example, and your answer to your question, you said you have about $99 million to address about 15,000 schools. If you look at the Emergency Response Crisis Grant program under the Homeland Security, we have got about $24 million involved there.

So I need a list of all of the agencies, what they can do, number one.

Number two, what are the grants that are available, what they cover in an easy format—not 20 different sources, but an easy format—if you can compile that, so they can go ahead, and if somebody who is calling from Atascosa County in Pleasanton, Texas, they can call up, they can do this without going to 20 different places, pretty much in line with what the Chairman said.

I think it is a great idea about having a one-stop center and a very easy way to access this, because otherwise we will be here another 8 years, like we did this back in 1999, still trying to address the same thing.

What are the model plans? What are the best practices are there on somebody's shelves right now and in somebody's, you know, drawers, and how do we get that to them as soon as possible? What are the grants available? And then you can put that—and I would ask you, too, Mr. Chairman, if I could ask that they submit this to the committee, and I would like to look at that and have some input, because I think, like all of the Members, we all have—have our own experiences. I know that Carolyn has different types of experiences. All of us bring them in, and I think you ought to allow some of us with some different type of experiences to help you put this in a format that large school districts can get it, small school districts can get it and in an easy format that we can all understand.

Ms. KUZMICH. We would be happy to do that.

Mr. CUELLAR. Then I got 20 seconds.

How fast can you all put this together? Because if you all have been coordinating, you can probably turn this in by this afternoon.

Ms. KUZMICH. We do have a lot of this on our Web site right now. We probably don't have it all in one matrix. We can probably do that fairly quickly.

Mr. CUELLAR. Five days, ten days.

Ms. KUZMICH. I will get back to you, but we can do that probably within the next week or so.

Mr. CUELLAR. Will you contact the staff and my office?

Ms. KUZMICH. We will be happy to.

Mr. CUELLAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no further questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

We now recognize the gentleman from Florida Mr. Bilirakis for 5 minutes.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Like all Americans, I was deeply disturbed when I learned of the tragedies at Virginia Tech. Our Nation's schools should be sanctuaries for safety and learning, not front lines for senseless violence. Unfortunately, when these events happen, we must reevaluate how we are ensuring our children's security, and I know that a lot of this takes place with the State and local government; however, I am interested in learning what additional roles, if any, the Federal Government should have.

With that I have a couple of questions. And the first one to Mr. Sica.

After reading the conclusions of the Safe School Initiative, it seems that it is extremely difficult to profile someone who intends to commit an act of violence at school. Would it be correct to believe that this makes it very difficult to prevent an attack?

Mr. SICA. Our research suggests, Congressman, yes. There is no profile, and again, that is consistent with the exceptional case study and validated through the Safe School Initiative report.

Despite all of our best efforts, we will never prevent every incident of targeted violence in schools. And I think we have to accept that.

What we have to embrace is looking at thinking and behavior and looking at ways to intervene before an attack occurs, and therein lies the challenge.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Could you give me a couple of examples on how we can do that?

Mr. SICA. I think we are doing it, Congressman.

I am confident that through the collaborative effort that we have with—efforts that we have with the Department of Education, the research that we have conducted and provided to the 77,000 people that we have talked with over the course of the last 5 years, I know we have prevented acts of targeted violence in schools. Unfortunately, we don't have raw data, but we do hear occasionally of schools and law enforcement calling back to the Threat Assessment Center and thanking us. Quite often if a threat assessment inquiry is occurring in a school, we will assist and provide guidance. So I do know that this works.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you.

Can you discuss the—and pardon me, I had a conflict earlier, so you may have discussed this earlier. Can you discuss the bystander phenomena you described? Can you describe it in more detail? Specifically, do you believe that other students bringing information to law enforcement is the best way to prevent school violence?

Mr. SICA. Absolutely. The research suggests that—often suggests that oftentimes attackers have communicated to others. In fact, a very sad part of this bystander phenomenon, we know that some students have actually participated in providing logistical support to the attack.

The bystander study will be released later in the year. It is going through some final editorial reviews, and I would be happy to provide this committee with that report as soon as its available.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. So you anticipate it may be later in the year, maybe in the fall?

Mr. SICA. Yes, Congressman.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much.

No further questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. We now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania Mr. Carney.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you for holding this important hearing. I want to thank the witnesses for coming as well.

I will be very brief.

The $99 million, is that an annual sum?

Ms. KUZMICH. That is.

Mr. CARNEY. We spend about $12 million in Iraq, so this is about an 8-hour day's work in Iraq of funding for safe schools. What is the prospect of getting more money available?

I agree with my colleagues, Mr. Davis. You know, I think that it is important that States have control as much as possible. I agree with the philosophy. I am just appalled by what I consider to be a very paltry amount for this problem.

You know, I am a father of five kids in a public school, and it concerns me that we are at $99 million for grants for the entire Nation for 15,000 school districts.

Ms. KUZMICH. That is a piece of our funding. We have got over $300 million in the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools that we propose at the Department of Education, and that is, once again, in partnership with other programs that we run with other agencies or that other agencies run. Homeland Security provides funding. We partner with the Department of Health and Human Services on our Safe Schools Healthy Student Program. We work with the Department of Justice in a lot of their programs, too.

So that is one piece, and, you know, when we have that right calibration, we are happy to discuss with you. We do think it is a priority, though.

Mr. CARNEY. How close do you work with the States' departments of education to promulgate the information to the various school districts and their States?

Ms. KUZMICH. We work closely. We think we could work more closely in the sense of how our funding goes out, and what I talked about earlier in terms of how, instead of funding down to districts across the country, work more significantly with State departments, many of whom are taking and have taken a more active role post-Columbine and post-9/11 in the area of school safety and in emergency planning so that we are not—so that we are dovetailing on their efforts with them as opposed to duplicating anything they are doing.

Mr. CARNEY. Thank you. No further questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. I will take a little bit of your time.

Can you explain to the committee how do you evaluate the districts who only check that they have completed their plans to see whether or not they are complete or anything? In other words, they check that we have a plan. Who actually goes out to see whether or not the plans are actually being followed, or are we just taking them at their word?

Ms. KUZMICH. Mr. Chairman, you are right. They do just have to certify that they have those plans. I think that is an area that we would be happy to look at, you know, how we can ensure that they don't create a plan that doesn't address all of the four critical pieces of emergency management planning.

I do think it is a capacity issue, and it is why I think we would like to work with States as the intermediary in some of this. But we do know that a lot of districts have a plan in place. They put it on the shelf, and they don't update it and use it, and that is an important part, and we would be happy to talk with you further.

Chairman THOMPSON. I think that is the crux of what I think the committee is trying to respond to. There is no real oversight in this whole process.

I yield the balance of the time to the gentleman from North Carolina Mr. Etheridge.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I would like to offer, as a suggestion, since you have 50 States and the territories, it would be a lot simpler to have them to be the ones responsible where they are funding anywhere, depending on the range, from 40 to 70 percent of the funding; they ought to be the ones where you have the repository to check, to reinforce and work with. It would be a lot simpler and then you don't have to check with—

Ms. KUZMICH. I think we would agree with you on that.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. That seems to me that would be a commonsense approach.

Ms. KUZMICH. We do have a good opportunity to work on that in reauthorization of that Safe and Drug-Free School program.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. That seems to be—wouldn't be a reauthorization issue. It should be an administrative issue that you should deal with because it is in the law.

Ms. KUZMICH. The law only requires that they certify. So if we are going to do something above that, we will have to change the statute on that.

Chairman THOMPSON. Can you provide the committee—and I will take back the balance of the time—can you provide the committee what the Department expects in a plan that you certify, that you—that a district certifies?

Ms. KUZMICH. I will get back to you on this. I don't have the application with me.

Chairman THOMPSON. They certify something.

Ms. KUZMICH. Yes.

Chairman THOMPSON. And we need to know what it is the Department expects.

Mr. DICKS. She said something about four elements of a plan.

Chairman THOMPSON. Please.

Ms. KUZMICH. The four elements: Prevention, planning, response, and recovery; those are the four critical areas of a good plan. Now, that is not required statutorily under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program. So I think we would like to look into how we can strengthen those requirements and make sure that plans are robust and that States have a real active role in that.

Chairman THOMPSON. I think the issue is the general public would expect us to have some standard of measurement as to whether or not a district is meeting some expectation, but if we

only require the Department to certify something that we never look at, then we have really not met the real expectations.

Mr. REICHERT. Will the gentleman yield?

Chairman THOMPSON. Yes.

Mr. REICHERT. Just through my experience through my sheriff's office in Seattle, the COPS office is a great practice in monitoring grants. They have performance measures set out. They sent out a team of people to the sheriff's office, to the school district. When you talk about safe schools and drugs, there are grants available and have been—and granted, they have been reduced, and now they are going to be increased. But if you are working in partnership with the COPS office, that performance measure program is already in existence and, in my experience, is just outstanding program.

I thank the gentleman.

Chairman THOMPSON. I think all of us are just trying to push the envelope to the point where there is some real oversight and not just a certification taking place in the process.

Thank you.

I now yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania Mr. Dent.

Mr. DENT. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. DENT. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. States are permitted—they are permitted to use funding from the Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Grant Program and UASI program, the Urban Areas Security Initiative, for school security and preparedness activities. Does DHS share information with you regarding how States are using homeland security grant funds to secure schools?

Ms. KUZMICH. They do generally. I will have to get back to you with how specifically they do that. I do think that we can do a better job of making sure that, through DHS grants, schools are included in that community-wide planning. They are not always included as a piece of that.

Mr. DENT. Well, it certainly should be better coordinated. I would like for you to follow up with the committee on that if you would. Do you believe that DHS should play a greater role with respect to school security, Ms. Kuzmich?

Ms. KUZMICH. Well, I will have to leave that to my DHS colleagues. We work with them very well in terms of our joint activities. We obviously have different constituencies. We think that partnership is important. We work most significantly with districts and State education officials. They work more with, you know, the emergency planning community. So there is a reason that we have different pieces, but we should also work jointly together.

Mr. DENT. Yeah, it seems there is a coordination issue here that has to be addressed. The Department of Education recently held an emergency management training session for schools in Philadelphia, and I think another session is planned this month or later this month. How frequently does the Department of Education hold this type of sessions?

Ms. KUZMICH. We do these every few months. We also have Web casts so people who can't come can see it online.

Mr. DENT. Who can participate in these programs?

Ms. KUZMICH. I will get back to you in terms of the actual sessions on site, but the Web casts anyone can participate in.

Mr. DENT. What do you generally discuss in these sessions? Does the Department of Education consult with DHS in creating the curriculum for these programs?

Ms. KUZMICH. We do. We talk about our grant programs and specifically, you know, how to apply what we have learned from those, what model plans look like, how to address those four areas that I talked about before in creating those model plans across the country.

Mr. DENT. Okay. Thank you. Would you like to add anything?

Mr. SICA. No, Congressman.

Mr. DENT. I will yield back the balance of my time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. I now recognize the gentleman from Washington, Mr. Dicks, for 5 minutes.

Mr. DICKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The U.S. Secret Service completed a study to which the term, as you mentioned, Agent Sica, the targeted violence was developed—which the term targeted violence was developed. Can you explain what targeted violence is and how it relates to school preparedness?

Mr. SICA. Yes, Congressman. Targeted violence was developed through the exceptional case study project, and it refers to any incident where a known or knowable attacker selects its particular target prior to their violent attack. In the case of schools, that target might be a classmate, maybe a teacher or even the school building itself.

Mr. DICKS. The U.S. Secret Service, in partnership with the Department of Education, conducted and completed an operational study of school shootings, the safe school initiative. What was the primary goal of this safe school initiative?

Mr. SICA. The primary goal of the safe school initiative was to identify information about the thinking and behavior of individual students who planned or committed acts of targeted violence, and what we were looking to do is take that information and provide it to these schools and law enforcement which we have in hopes that they would develop preventive policies and strategies.

Mr. DICKS. Yeah. It seems to me that one of the key facts here that I have heard is that we—there may not be any overall, you know, indication of who is going to do this. But there are people who do hear about it. I mean, it seems to me that one of the things we have to do is work with the school districts to talk to the kids and to tell them, if somebody brings up the idea that they are going to do something, they are expected to turn, you know, to bring that information to the authorities. Do they do that? I assume they do that, but is it happening out there?

Ms. KUZMICH. It could be happening a lot more. And they do that. That is a part of a lot of guidance we give.

Mr. DICKS. Is it on your Web site?

Ms. KUZMICH. It is. When we held our conference last fall, one of the things we heard about was the importance about talking to kids and teachers about reporting things that they hear. That can really only happen, you know, within a school at a very personal

level, this whole issue of connectedness and not fearing disclosing information to a teacher.

Mr. DICKS. In an ideal situation, what is the relationship between the law enforcement community and the school district or the school itself? I mean, what should they be doing? What are the key things in terms of their cooperation? My colleague from Washington mentioned, in Washington State, we have this prepared response program where they have maps of the schools that are available to law enforcement. So if something happens, they are able then to go into the school and have a real understanding of how the whole situation is laid out, which I think is—you know, I think all of our schools out there have this. I think it is a very valuable way for law enforcement to have a better understanding of how to proceed into the school and deal with the shooter.

Ms. KUZMICH. Congressman, when we give out our emergency response grants, one of the things we require that we know is effective is that you have to have the school, the school district. We require the school and school district to work with law enforcement and mental health. They have to all be partners in this, because those are essential elements of creating a good emergency plan and having that link between the two and open dialogue and discussion within a community.

Mr. DICKS. You know, it does bother me that—which one of the programs, Mr. Chairman, you mentioned this—was not funded in 2006 and 2007, not requested in the President's Budget?

Ms. KUZMICH. He was referring to our State grants program.

Mr. DICKS. Is that the $100 million?

Ms. KUZMICH. That is the one we proposed $100 million for.

Mr. DICKS. In 2008?

Ms. KUZMICH. Correct.

Mr. DICKS. But, in 2006 and 2007, it was not in the President's Budget?

Ms. KUZMICH. Correct.

Mr. DICKS. How do you explain that?

Ms. KUZMICH. The evaluations of the program and the way that the funding flows has been very ineffective in the past, and several studies have demonstrated that, that the amount of funding that gets out to districts is an amount that is, you know, useful to them. So we have proposed a redesign of the program, and we have put that money back in our budget to focus it more on the State level.

Mr. DICKS. I would yield to my colleague from North Carolina who I think has a comment.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Who did the evaluation? Did GAO do it?

Ms. KUZMICH. OMB.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. OMB, not GAO?

Ms. KUZMICH. Yes.

Mr. DICKS. And did Congress restore the money both in 2006 and 2007?

Ms. KUZMICH. Yep.

Mr. DICKS. Heaven forbid, earmarks, that the Congress steps in and puts the money back in. I just hope we think about that as we give away the power of the purse here to the—you know, this is why we have a Congress, to have oversight, and when there is a mistake made, to put the money back in. I don't think we should

give away that authority. And I yield—I have no further—I have no further time.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Let me just say, Mr. Chairman, on this very issue, this money is—I am reminded by my friend from Washington was talking about—which is so well coordinated with our law enforcement folks and the school folks at the local level that he just talked about. You know, it baffles me that OMB would say it was so ineffective unless they were the ones who said they didn't want it to start with because it was a congressional program. I can tell you, in North Carolina, it works. I can't speak for other States. It works; it saved lives. It makes a difference in safety at schools for children.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. We now yield to the gentleman from Colorado Mr. Perlmutter for 5 minutes.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I think that Mr. Dicks, Mr. Etheridge and Reichert are right on the numbers here. It is law enforcement. It is mental health, and it is schools. And I want to come at this a little bit differently because I have had the unfortunate circumstance of having Columbine two miles, three miles from my house and another school, Platt Valley. So a suburban school and then a rural school where we have had attacks. And I think the thing that I would just suggest to the Department of Education is to keep an eye. You know, we have got to prevent the attacks, but there is a mental health aspect to the kids after all this happens. And between 9/11 and these various Columbine and now Virginia Tech and then all of the copycat stuff that goes on, I have seen, as my kids have gone through school and particularly with one of my children, you know, boy, if anything like this happens, it brings up kind of a post-traumatic stress for them. And I don't know what is in the safe schools and drugs act or anything else we have for the mental health to kind of keep an eye on our kids. Is there anything in there about that?

Ms. KUZMICH. There is. There is. Two pieces that I will highlight most significantly: First of all, in places where there is an incident, those project moneys that we have at the Department are used most directly for mental health services for students in those schools impacted by violence.

We also fund the Safe Schools, Healthy Students Program in partnership with HHS and the Department of Justice. And that is very significantly—a piece of that is mental health and mental health services in schools and creating a healthy school environment for students.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Is anybody looking at the fact now that, I mean, at Virginia Tech, you know, it was a copycat—I mean, they refer to Klebold and Harris out of Columbine—picked that same week, you know, that we had Waco, now Columbine, Virginia Tech. I mean, we ought to take a look at that week—and I would turn this to the Homeland Security Department as being a week that is going to be one where we are going to have threats and violence. And I don't know what to do about it. You know, you can't take the week out of the calendar, but maybe have vacations there then. I don't know if anybody has thought about that. That is another kind of off-the-radar-screen kind of question, but the fact that I

have had to deal with this stuff personally has caused a lot of thought about this. So, I mean, what do the schools do when we come up to that week of April 15?

Ms. KUZMICH. You know, that wasn't something—the secretaries have been out obviously post-Virginia Tech talking about the issues of campus safety. And we didn't really hear too much about that, but that is something we will take under advisement as we move forward. But we didn't hear specifically about timing issues, but we did hear about copycat issues and how to prevent that in the future. And a lot of that is the threat assessment piece, looking for warning signs and having a culture where people feel free to share information which we often don't find on college campuses these days.

Mr. PERLMUTTER. And I would just suggest, in Colorado, we have seen you know the Platt Valley was at a whole different time. But what we have seen is kind of a spike in threats, and most of them are, you know, you leave something in the library, and it says x, y and z are going to be killed, you know, on the anniversary of Columbine. It never materializes, but we have seen those kinds of things. And we definitely saw them in a big way after Virginia Tech, which was the Monday of that week. And then the rest of the week we had schools being shut down on a pretty regular basis, which you know they were taking these things seriously, and I applaud them for that. I would just suggest to all of you that you take a good look at that week if there is some way to kind of—I don't know that there is much that can be done. But you certainly should look at that as a period of time when there is more energy, negative energy, whatever you want to call it in kids and others, you know, towards violence. And then I guess the last thing, and it is more of a statement, and if I didn't do this, one of my former campaign managers would be terribly upset. But at Virginia Tech—and I am curious how we are dealing with college campuses—she would say, you know, that kid, the mental health problem that he had coupled with guns that he had, you know, led to a lot of deaths. And one or the other of those, we wouldn't have had that kind of problem with that particular student. And so that is just more of a statement than an answer.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. We will try to get through and complete the panel. But if we could ask the indulgence of the rest of the committee to try to shorten it to less than 5 minutes for your questions so we can get through.

Ms. Norton.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I certainly will do that so that everyone has a chance here. We have seen the violence in schools only escalate. It is as if there was no Federal response. And by the way, when you said the 50 States we are dealing—I take it you mean 50 States and the District of Columbia.

Ms. KUZMICH. Correct.

Ms. NORTON. We have passed the gun culture down to kids clearly. It used to be that somebody who was half off, a little mentally deranged—and we know about those people in the 1970s and 1980s and 1990s, and now most of the people look like they are kids. Actually, my good friend's daughter questioned—that was indeed going to be my question, that is given particularly—or even before

Virginia Tech, are colleges and universities required to have any plans? We were shocked to know that they didn't—you know, some of them didn't know whether you could contact people by text messaging, whether you do it by loud speaker. They seemed to have no plan whatsoever and no guidance from the Federal Government or anyone else. And finally, I just wanted to know about an administration report that I think I read about that talked about trying to do something about the effect of gun violence in the media on violence in children. I guess that would be Ms. Kuzmich.

Ms. KUZMICH. On your first issue, especially on college campuses and whether they have plans, most college campuses do have plans. Now whether they are robust—

Ms. NORTON. I am just asking, just like you are requiring something of the schools, are you requiring anything of colleges and universities?

Ms. KUZMICH. Colleges, I believe currently there are no statutory requirements for college campuses.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Chairman, I think that is a hole, and Virginia Tech shows them. You need statutory guidance, and I think we ought to give it to you. What about the—I believe there was a report from the administration on gun violence and its effects on children, gun violence in the media and its effects on children. Are you aware of that?

Ms. KUZMICH. Not specifically, but I would be happy to follow up if we can get more details on where that came from.

Ms. NORTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

Gentleman from Rhode Island Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank our witnesses for their statements here today and questions they have answered. I know we talked a bit about coordination. I want to focus in on that specifically.

Mr. Sica, I have worked closely with Chairman Thompson to conduct assessments of emergency preparedness and response in schools located in my district about a year and a half ago. The results of that study were astonishing. I have to tell you that neither the Department of Homeland Security nor the Department of Education had been effective resources for Rhode Island schools in developing their emergency plans. In fact, none of the respondents in my district indicated that DHS assisted in developing their emergency plans, and only one responded it had relied on the Department of Education. Now in answering a question regarding the role that DHS should take in providing or funding emergency response plans, some of the respondents stated that they did not even know that DHS was a resource. And I fear that many of the results yielded by that survey still hold true today.

So my question for you, Mr. Sica, is, what is DHS doing to change this perception? And what methods do you have reaching out to schools and universities? And please also describe how the Department partners with the Department of Education to effectively alert State and local officials of Federal resources in emergency planning for schools. And my last question, I know Mr. Reichert had touched on the issue of mapping. This is for the panel. I think it would be useful for emergency responders to read-

ily have access to school floor plans and building maps in an emergency situation. We can all understand how that would be of great value. A part of the problem we saw at both Virginia Tech and Columbine shootings, law enforcement officials lacked key logistics needed to effectively quarantine the shooters. So I understand that the technology actually exists to compile information about floor plans and other relevant information and to do a consolidated database and make it easily accessible for first responders. Some cities and towns have actually moved to catalog plans of their schools, government buildings and their critical infrastructure to give first responders greater situational awareness. Many cases, these floor plans and maps already exist. They just haven't been compiled into a combined database that can be accessed onsite. So my question is, are you aware of these efforts? And do you think that this concept is something that either the Department of Homeland Security or the Department of Education would be interested in supporting on a larger scale? Perhaps providing assistance for State and local governments to develop these preparedness databases?

Mr. SICA. Congressman, I cannot speak for the Department. That would be the type of question you would pose to my colleagues at the Department directly. I think it is very, very important that we clarify the Secret Service's role in this in that the Secret Service doesn't have statutory authority here. And our contribution to this has been on the prevention side, quite frankly, and we have tried to stay in that lane because we don't have any statutory authority. We recommend—we typically don't tell the States or the school districts or even law enforcement what to do. We just strongly recommend, based on our expertise in prevention, in threat assessment, but that type of a question would probably be better answered by a member of the Department directly.

Ms. KUZMICH. I have talked a little bit about some of our information-sharing efforts. You know, we work with our colleagues at DHS. We have a variety of methods for communicating with districts across the country. It is clear that we can do a better job and our efforts after Virginia Tech are going to lead us to make some recommendations about how we can do that even more and provide better guidance for districts and States across the country. So we will continue to do that.

Mr. LANGEVIN. I think that would be important to have a better outreach and coordination with the schools. It would be nice for them to say, yes, we were contacted and assistance was offered, and this is what we did as a result.

Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much. The gentlelady from New York, Ms. Clarke.

Ms. CLARKE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. In New York City, the threats of terrorists attacks and natural disasters are very real to the community. Because of the enormity of the event, the terrorist event known as 9/11, many people were unaware that just minutes away from that event were a community college, a high school, an elementary school. These issues are compounded when we see news stories about schools taken hostage in Russia and elsewhere and when we hear about schools destroyed by hurricanes and tornadoes across America, when we find out that some-

where a deeply disturbed student or adult has run through a school building and shot at students and teachers. While we can never completely prevent tragedy from occurring, it is vital that the Federal Government work with local governments and individual schools to ensure that catastrophes are very rare and that they are able to respond appropriately when these acts do happen. In my constituency, in Brooklyn, this concern is extended to religious based educational institutions such as the Yeshivas that are embedded in densely populated urban environments. To Special Agent Sica, I would like to ask, in your testimony, you noted that the National Threat Assessment Center often disseminates information about safe school initiatives to over 77,000 people representing schools, law enforcement and others. Can you tell me what percentage of that number are school officials? And do these seminars work? Are they just briefings, or do you actually go to individual schools and work with people onsite?

Mr. SICA. Congresswoman, it is an excellent question. It is something that we are working toward, better instructing audiences in a fiscally responsible way. I think it is wonderful that we have been able to reach the 77,000 people and the fact that we have conducted over 340 or 350 presentations. What I am more interested in is ensuring that we are instructing audiences that touch the right people, people that can actually implement different preventative strategies to include policymakers. Last week I was up in the State of Connecticut at the request of the Governor, and I addressed a group of representatives from colleges and universities throughout the State of Connecticut and the State police as well, law enforcement. And it was very apparent to me that this was something that we needed to continue to do. We need to ensure that we are touching the right people. I think there isn't a person that hasn't heard our presentation.

Chairman THOMPSON. I might have to cut it off. I apologize for that. But I am trying to get to the gentlelady from New York, who has been so patient for the last round of questions. And for the second panel, we have 70 minutes of votes to take. So I would beg your indulgence for that period and would suggest that we reconvene about 1:00. So you can get lunch or something like that, because we have 70 minutes of votes.

Mrs. McCarthy.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I certainly enjoyed sitting here listening to this on the Homeland Security Committee. I wish we had done a joint hearing with the Education Committee because everything fits in. I sit on the Education Committee. Let me just give you a little background. I have introduced a bill, H.R. 354, Safe Act, which would require the use of law enforcement data to identify the safety climate in k-through-12 schools because, in my view, we do not have an accurate picture of what is happening in our schools. We are missing a piece of the puzzle, namely timely and uniform data which we could use to identify school violence and crimes. Under the Cleary Act, colleges are required to use law enforcement data in reporting to parents and the Department. But there is not a crime-tracking system in place for K-through-12.

With that being said, to make it go a little bit faster, you had mentioned the Associated Violent Death Survey Act which the CDC emphasized the word study. This is certainly something that is more interviews than anything else from 1994 to 1999 with data for further studies being primary. We are in the year 2007. But I can go to the Web site of one of the witnesses that we will be talking to later on the next panel, Mr. Trump, who will get violent death numbers as current as last week. I guess my question is, if we don't have the correct data up to date, we don't know what schools are actually violent. And if we don't know what schools are actually violent, then how are we supposed to send our very sources there to help those particular schools? So I am hoping that you really can look that this because it is something both of you said, prevention. And that is how we can do that by going to the lowest grades and more, is about talking to the children and young people. I can go into any school, and everybody will say it is a safe school. And if you talk to those students, they are not going to feel that way. Whether it is bullying or other issues that they are being faced or even to the point, especially among young women that were saying they were being sexually assaulted and some verbally which makes them feel unsafe. So there is a lot more we could go do.

We will be reauthorizing Leave No Child Behind. I know a lot of people are probably going to be disappointed that I am not talking about guns at this particular hearing. But I do believe what we can do in schools today to make them safer is reach out to our young people to prevent gun violence in the future.

Ms. KUZMICH. I would just agree with you, we can do a better job of collecting data on our k-through-12 schools on issues of safety and violence. It is something we have learned over the years. We have put money out for States to develop better systems, but we are still behind. That is something we need to work on.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. We did a lot of research on this. That is why we need to do it on the Federal level.

Mr. SICA. Congresswoman, community outreach for the Secret Service is certainly a core value of our agency. And I am very, very proud of that. When I ran the office up in Delaware, I was very—I had a very ambitious outreach with the Boys and Girls Club community, and that is a national effort that all of the field offices throughout the country are encouraged to support. And that is such a wonderful opportunity for us to touch the children that you are speaking to because I absolutely agree with you.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. And one of the other things that was mentioned here a couple times on the COPS program, our school safety officers that go in, that is probably one of the best programs I have seen in my underserved schools. Relationships are made. The kids feel safer with them around, and we need to do a better job on that, too.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your indulgence.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you, and I thank the panel of witnesses. We will recess until 1:00 p.m.[Recess 11:33 a.m.]

Chairman THOMPSON. We would like to reconvene the recessed meeting. I apologize to our second panel. We were obviously in the midst of votes, and that is one of the unfortunate situations we

have to contend with because as chairpersons, when we set committee hearings, we have no idea when votes will be called.

I appreciate your patience.

I now welcome our second panel of witnesses. First witness, Ms. Cornelia Ashby, Director of Education, Workforce, and Income Security, Government Accountability Office.

You have been there since 19——

Ms. ASHBY. 1973.

Chairman THOMPSON. 1973. Congratulations.

And in 2002 you moved to your current position as Director, and we appreciate your hard work in that respect.

Second witness is Mr. Kenneth Trump, who is President of National School Safety and Security Services, a Cleveland, Ohio-based national firm specializing in K-through-12 school security and emergency preparedness training and consulting.

Glad to have you.

Our third witness is Dr. James Renick—pleasure—Senior Vice President for Programs and Research, American Council on Education, and former Chancellor of North Carolina A&T State University.

Welcome.

And our last witness is Dr. David Rainer, Associate Vice Chancellor, Environmental Health and Public Safety, North Carolina State University.

Looks like Congressman Etheridge has significant influence on this committee.

Chairman THOMPSON. Welcome, panel. Mr. Etheridge and others are on their way back. We do have some conflict in committee hearings going on.

Ms. Ashby, if you will begin summarizing your statement for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF CORNELIA M. ASHBY, DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, WORKFORCE, AND INCOME SECURITY, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE

Ms. ASHBY. Yes, sir.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to be here today to discuss emergency management in public school districts. My testimony this afternoon will focus on what school districts have done to plan and prepare for emergencies and the challenges they have experienced.

The Federal Government supports emergency management in school districts by providing districts funding, guidance, training and equipment. However, with respect to funding school—I am sorry—with respect to funding, program guidance for three DHS grants does not clearly specify that school districts are among the entities to which State and local government grant recipients can disburse funds. As a result, not all States receiving DHS funding are aware that such funding could be disbursed to school districts, and therefore, some school districts may not have the opportunity to benefit from this funding.

Almost all school districts have taken steps to prepare for emergencies. Based on our survey of school districts, we estimate that 95 percent of all school districts have written emergency manage-

ment plans that address multiple hazards, and over half of the districts with the plans update them at least once a year.

We also estimate that 93 percent of all school districts conduct inspections of their school buildings and grounds to identify possible vulnerabilities. Of those school districts 87 percent made security enhancements to their school facilities and grounds as a result of these inspections.

Some school districts took responsibility for a number of activities to prepare for emergencies at the district level, such as negotiating the use of school buildings as community shelters and identifying security needs in schools. However, school districts' emergency management plans and preparation activities are not always consistent with federally recommended practices.

For example, while most school districts have written roles and responsibilities for school staff, only 43 percent use the incident command system to establish the roles and responsibilities of school district officials, local first responders and community partners during an emergency. In addition, about three-fourths of all school districts have not included written procedures in their plans for communicating with limited-English-proficient parents and students, and 28 percent of school districts with emergency management plans do not have specific provisions for students with special needs in their plans.

While over half of all school districts with written emergency plans include procedures to assist with recovery after an incident, few school districts' emergency plans contain procedures for continuing student education in the event of an extended school closure.

Further, less than half of the school districts with plans involve community partners in the development and updating of the plan; 27µpercent have never trained with any first responders and only 29 percent have trained with community partners.

In planning for emergencies, many school districts face challenges. For example, 70 percent of all school districts face challenges resulting from competing priorities and 62 percent cited a lack of equipment and expertise as impediments to emergency planning.

School district officials we interviewed reported challenges in incorporating special needs students in emergency management planning, with the challenge sometimes resulting from the lack of equipment or expertise to evaluate—I am sorry—to evacuate the special needs students. Also, 39 percent of districts with emergency plans experience challenges in communicating and coordinating with local first responders, sometimes because of limited time or funding to collaborate with first responders or a lack of interoperability between the equipment used by the school district and equipment used by first responders.

Further, while all of the 27 school districts we interviewed have ways of communicating emergency procedures to parents, 16 of these districts experience difficulties in implementing the recommended practice that school districts communicate clear, consistent and appropriate information to parents regarding an emergency.

In conclusion, the Federal Government plays a critical role in assisting school districts to prepare for emergencies. The school districts have taken a number of important steps to plan for a range of emergencies; however, in many school districts these emergency management plans or their implementation do not fully align with federally recommended practices.

Given the challenges many school districts face due to a lack of necessary equipment and expertise, they do not have the tools to support their plans and they are left with gaps in their ability to fully prepare for emergencies.

Additional clarity regarding access to Federal resources and improved guidance in areas such as incorporating special needs students in emergency management planning and continuing student education in the event of an extended school closure may enhance the ability of school districts to plan and prepare for emergencies. We are currently considering recommendations to address these issues.

Mr. Chairman, this completes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Ms. Ashby follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CORNELIA M. ASHBY

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to be here today to discuss emergency management in public school districts. The nation's more than 17,000 school districts are responsible for maintaining the safety and security of approximately 49 million public school students. Events such as the recent shootings by armed intruders in schools across the nation, natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and potential pandemics have heightened awareness of the need for school districts to be prepared to address a range of emergencies within and outside of school buildings.

My testimony today is drawn from ongoing work we have conducted for this Committee and other congressional requesters on emergency management in school districts. We anticipate completing the report in June 2007. "Emergency management" refers to the range of efforts involved in building the capacity to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from an incident. Planning for such incidents varies by the type and scale of the incident. The federal government's role in emergency management is principally to support state and local activities and develop the federal capabilities to respond effectively when state and local governments require federal assistance. Some federal support comes in the form of guidance and recommendations. Because the federal government serves as a partner to all states, it is uniquely positioned to observe and evaluate the range of emergency management activities across states and local governments, including school districts, and disseminate information on recommended practices and successful strategies.

My testimony today will focus on (1) the role of the federal and state governments in establishing requirements and providing resources to school districts for emergency management planning, (2) what school districts have done to plan and prepare for emergencies, and, briefly, (3) the challenges school districts have experienced in planning for emergencies and communicating and coordinating with first responders, parents, and students. When discussing the federal government, I am primarily referring to the three agencies included in our report—the Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), Education (Education), and Health and Human Services (HHS).

To determine the role of the federal and state governments, planning requirements for school districts and schools, and the types of resources provided to districts, we conducted interviews with officials representing DHS, Education, and HHS and reviewed relevant federal laws. We also administered two surveys, one to state education agencies and one to state administering agencies (the state agencies to which DHS disburses emergency management funding) in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. To better understand how school districts plan and prepare for emergencies, we administered a mail survey to a stratified random sample of school

districts in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Using a 95 percent confidence interval, all percentage estimates included in this statement have a margin of error of plus or minus 10 percent or less, unless otherwise noted. To further understand the experiences districts have had in planning for emergencies and communicating and coordinating with first responders,[1] parents, and students, we visited selected districts in the states of Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington. In total, we conducted semi-structured interviews, either in person or by telephone, with officials in 27 school districts. We are conducting the review in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

In summary, federal and state governments support emergency management in school districts with a range of resources and most school districts have developed emergency management plans despite facing challenges; however not all of these plans incorporate recommended practices. Federal and state governments provide funding, guidance, training, and equipment; and many states require school districts to develop emergency management plans or engage in other planning activities. However, funding guidance for some federal grant programs does not clearly identify school districts as entities to which state and local governments may disburse these grant funds. Therefore, some states receiving this funding may be uncertain as to whether such funding can be allocated to school districts or schools; and as a result, school districts may not have the opportunity to benefit from this funding. At the local level, school districts have taken a number of important steps to plan for a range of emergencies, most notably developing emergency management plans; however, in many districts these plans, or their implementation, do not align with federally recommended practices. For example, many school districts do not include procedures for special needs students in their plans and many districts have not employed any procedures in their plans for continuing student education in the event of an extended school closure, such as might occur during a pandemic. Additionally, school districts are generally not training with their first responders (i.e., law enforcement, fire, and Emergency Medical Services [EMS]) and community partners (such as the local head of government and local public health agency), which are both federally recommended practices. Finally, many school district officials said that they experience challenges in planning for emergencies due to a lack of equipment, training for staff, and expertise and some school districts face difficulties in communicating and coordinating with first responders and parents, but most said that they do not experience challenges in communicating emergency procedures to students. We are currently considering recommendations that federal agencies clarify and improve guidance to states and school districts to better enable school districts to incorporate recommended practices for emergency management.

Background

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 created DHS and consolidated most of the federal programs and agencies with responsibilities for emergency management into that agency.[2] DHS serves as a federal partner to state and local governments in emergency management.[3] DHS provides technical assistance and homeland security grant funding to states and local governments to enhance their emergency management efforts. States and local governments have the responsibility for spending DHS grant funds in accordance with DHS guidelines to meet local emergency management needs. In fiscal year 2006, DHS awarded $1.7 billion to states, urban areas,

[1] In both our site visits and our survey of school districts, we focused on the traditional definition of first responders—law enforcement, fire, and EMS. However, the Homeland Security Act as amended includes a broader definition of emergency response providers, including "Federal, State, and local governmental and nongovernmental emergency public safety, fire, law enforcement, emergency response, emergency medical (including hospital emergency facilities), and related personnel, agencies, and authorities." Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107–296, § 2,(codified at 6 U.S.C. § 101(6)). Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 defined the term "first responder" as "individuals who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment, including emergency response providers as defined in section 2 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101), as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works, and other skilled support personnel (such as equipment operators) that provide immediate support services during prevention, response, and recovery operations."

[2] Pub. L. No. 107–296.

[3] The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Pub. L. No. 100–707, provides the legal framework for this partnership. The Stafford Act is the principal federal statute governing federal disaster assistance and relief and primarily establishes the programs for and processes by which the federal government may provide major disaster and emergency assistance to states and local governments. The Stafford Act also provides emergency assistance to tribal nations, individuals and qualified private non-profit organizations. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the principal federal agency responsible for implementing the Stafford Act.

and territories to prepare for and respond to terrorist attacks and other disasters. States and local governments may then provide a portion of this funding to a range of entities, as specified in DHS's program guidance.

As we have noted in prior reports, emergency management requires coordinated planning and implementation by a variety of participants. Effective emergency management requires identifying the hazards for which it is necessary to be prepared (risk assessments); establishing clear roles and responsibilities that are effectively communicated and well understood; and developing, maintaining, and mobilizing needed capabilities, such as people, skills, and equipment.[4] The plans and capabilities should be tested and assessed through realistic exercises that identify strengths and areas that need improvement, with any needed changes made to both plans and capabilities.

The hazards that school districts may face will vary across the country depending upon the natural hazards to which their particular areas are prone and an assessment of other risks for which they need to be prepared, such as pandemic influenza or the discharge of hazardous substances from nearby chemical or nuclear plants. Similarly, who should be involved in emergency planning and response for schools, and the roles of the various participants will vary by type and size of the emergency incident. For large-scale emergencies, effective response is likely to involve all levels of government—federal, state, and local—nongovernment entities, such as the Red Cross, and the private sector.

Federal and State Governments Provide Resources to School Districts for Emergency Management Planning, While Only States Have Laws that Require School Emergency Management Planning

Although no federal laws exist requiring school districts to have emergency management plans, most states reported having requirements for school emergency management planning; however, the federal government, along with states, provides financial and other resources for such planning. Education, DHS, and state governments provide funding for emergency management planning in schools. However, DHS program guidance does not clearly identify school districts as entities to which states and local governments may disburse grant funds. Not all states receiving DHS funding are aware that such funding could be disbursed to school districts. In addition to providing funding, the federal government assists school districts and schools in emergency management planning by providing other resources such as guidance, training, and equipment.

Although No Federal Laws Exist Requiring School District Emergency Management Planning, the Majority of States Have Requirements

Although there are no federal laws requiring school districts to have emergency management plans, many states reported having laws or other policies that do so. Congress has not enacted any broadly applicable laws requiring all school districts to have emergency management plans. While the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 provides that local education agencies (LEAs or school districts) applying for subgrants under the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Program include in their grant applications an assurance that either they or their schools have "a plan for keeping schools safe and drug-free that includes. . .a crisis management plan for responding to violent or traumatic incidents on school grounds", Education has not issued any regulations imposing such a requirement on all school districts.[5] However, 32 of the states responding to our survey of state administering agencies and state education agencies reported having laws or other policies requiring school districts or schools to have a written emergency management plan (see fig. 1). Several state laws identify a broad range of specific emergencies that schools or districts are required to address in their plans, while many other states do not identify particular kinds of crises or use more general language to refer to the kinds of emergencies that plans must incorporate.

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[4] GAO, *Homeland Security: Preparing for and Responding to Disasters,* GAO–07–395T (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 9, 2007); and *Catastrophic Disasters: Enhanced Leadership, Capabilities, and Accountability Controls Will Improve the Effectiveness of the Nation's Preparedness, Response, and Recovery System,* GAO–06–618 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 6, 2006).

[5] 20 U.S.C. § 7114(d)(7)(D). However, these plans are not required to address multiple hazards; therefore, for purposes of this report, we do not consider this to be a requirement for an emergency management plan.

Figure 1: States That Reported Having Laws or Other Policies Requiring School Districts or Schools to Have Emergency Management Plans

Source: GAO analysis of survey data.

Federal Agencies and States Provide Funding for School Districts' Emergency Management Planning

Education and DHS provided some funding to school districts for emergency management. Education provides funding to some school districts specifically for emergency management planning through its Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) Grant Program.[6] Since fiscal year 2003, Education dispersed $130 million in such grants to over 400 of the over 17,000[7] school districts in the United States. These grant awards ranged from $68,875 to $1,365,087.

DHS provides funding to states and local jurisdictions for emergency management planning, some of which can be provided to school districts or schools for emergency management planning. DHS officials told us that such funds are available through the State Homeland Security Program, Urban Areas Security Initiative, and Citizen Corps grants.[8] Five states—Florida, Hawaii, Michigan, Mississippi, and Wyoming—reported that they provided approximately $14 million in DHS funding directly to school districts in these states during fiscal years 2003–2006. In addition, eight states and the District of Columbia reported that they provided DHS funding to

[6] The purpose of the ERCM grant program is to provide funds for local education agencies to improve and strengthen their emergency response plans. School districts receiving grant funds under this program may use them to develop improved plans that address all four phases of crisis response: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. In April 2007, Education announced that it was renaming the ERCM grant as the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools grant program (REMS) to reflect terminology used in the emergency management field. 72 Fed. Reg. 17,139 (April 6, 2007)

[7] As reported by the states to the Department of Education and contained in the Common Core Data (CCD), there were over 17,000 school districts in the United States in school year 2003-04. This number includes school districts in Puerto Rico; four outlying areas (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marianas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands); the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and the Department of Defense, which were eligible for funds but we excluded from the sample for our survey of school districts. Department of Defense schools are included in the CCD count of school districts, but according to Education officials, such schools are not eligible to receive funding under the ERCM/REMS grant program.

[8] The State Homeland Security Program provides funds to enhance the emergency preparedness of state and local governments. The Urban Areas Security Initiative grant is awarded to some states with high threat and high density urban areas that need planning, exercises, equipment, and training to respond to acts of terrorism. Citizen Corps funds are provided to states to promote volunteer efforts.

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local jurisdictions that then provided a portion of these funds to school districts or schools for emergency management planning.[9]

Although DHS officials told us that these three grant programs allow for the use of funds at the district or school level, the department's program guidance does not clearly specify that school districts are among the entities to which state and local governments may disburse funds.[10] As a result, some states may not be aware of their availability.

State governments also provide state funds to school districts. Eleven of the 49 states[11] responding to surveys we sent to state education and state administering agencies reported providing state funding to school districts for emergency management planning.

Federal Agencies and States Provide Guidance, Training, and Equipment for Emergency Management in School Districts

The federal government also provides guidance, training, and equipment to school districts to assist in emergency management planning (see table 1).

Table 1: Examples of Guidance, Training, and Equipment the Federal Government Provides to School Districts

Examples of guidance

- Education publishes a guide for schools and communities titled Practical Information on Crisis Planning, which explains, among other things, how schools can prepare for an emergency.
- DHS created a Web site, How Schools Can Become More Disaster Resistant, that provides guidance for teachers and parents regarding how to prepare emergency management plans. The site also discusses identifying and mitigating hazards, developing response and coping plans, and implementing safety drills.

Examples of training

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), within DHS, offers online courses including one on emergency management planning for schools.
- Education offers two 1–1/2; day Emergency Management for Schools training sessions that provide school personnel with critical training on emergency management issues, resources, and practices. Emphasis for these trainings is placed on emergency management plan development and enhancement within the framework of four phases of emergency management: prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Examples of equipment

- With funding from DHS and support from Education, the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) distributed 96,000 NOAA radios to almost all public schools in the United States in 2005 and 2006. These radios are intended to notify school officials of hazards in their area 24 hours a day/7 days a week, even when other means of communication are disabled.[a]

Source: Education, DHS, and HHS.

[a] Schools receiving NOAA radios included those in six states that, according to DHS, mandate that public schools have radios. These states are Washington, Tennessee, North Carolina, Maryland, Florida, and Mississippi. DHS told us that they have procedures in place to allow a school to request a radio if it did not receive one. DHS officials also told us that they plan to distribute NOAA radios to non-public schools (private, independent, and parochial and other faith-based institutions), postsecondary education facilities, and district offices in 2007.

[9] A ninth state distributed DHS funding to its state education agency, which then provided the funding to public schools in its state.

[10] DHS guidance for these grant programs provides that state administering agencies are the only agencies eligible to apply for funding and that they are responsible for disbursing grant funds to local units of government and other designated recipients. The guidance identifies a definition of "local unit of government" that was used in the Conference Report accompanying the DHS Appropriations Act of 2006, and which includes "any county, city, village, town, district, borough, parish, port authority, transit authority, intercity rail provider, commuter rail system, freight rail provider, water district, regional planning commission, council of government, Indian tribe with jurisdiction over Indian country, authorized Tribal organization, Alaska Native village, independent authority, special district, or other political subdivision of any State."

[11] We included the District of Columbia in our state education and state administering agency surveys.

Education, DHS, and HHS have collaborated and developed recommended practices to assist in preparing for emergencies that can be applied to school districts.[12] Some of these practices are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Selected Practices that Education, DHS, and HHS Recommend School Districts Take to Prepare for Emergencies

Recommended practices

• Allocate time to emergency management planning.
• Conduct an assessment of vulnerabilities.
• Conduct regular drills.
• Identify and acquire equipment to mitigate and respond to emergencies.
• Identify a storage location and replenish emergency supplies on a regular basis.
• Develop an emergency management plan and update the plan on a regular basis. In developing and updating this plan, school districts should:
  • Identify and address a range of events and hazards specific to the district or schools.
  • Develop roles and responsibilities and procedures for school community members.
  • Develop roles and responsibilities for first responders and community partners.
  • Develop procedures for communicating with key stakeholders such as parents and students, including those who are limited-English proficient.
  • Develop procedures for special needs students.
  • Develop procedures in the plan for recovering from an incident, including continuing student education during an extended school closure.
  • Determine lessons learned after an incident or training.
  • Develop multi-purpose manuals, with emergency management information, that can be tailored to meet individual school needs.
• Include community partners such as local government and public health agencies in planning.
• Coordinate the school district's emergency procedures with state and local governments.
• Practice the emergency management plan with first responders and community partners on a regular basis.

Source: GAO analysis of Education, DHS, and HHS guidance and training documents.

The type of guidance available from the federal government on topics related to these recommended practices varies significantly; in some instances, federal agencies provide detailed instructions on how to implement recommended practices while, in other instances, guidance is less detailed.

We have also recognized the importance of certain of these practices in our prior reports on emergency management.[13] We have noted the importance of realistic training exercises followed by a careful assessment of those exercises. Those with whom the school districts should coordinate and train will vary by the type and size of the emergency. For example, for a potential pandemic flu or other major infectious outbreak, planning and working with local health authorities is critical.

In addition to the federal government, states provide guidance and training to school districts. Based on our survey of state administrative agencies and state education agencies, 47 states reported providing guidance and 37 states reported providing training. Some states also reported providing online resources that include guidance and training.

Most Districts Have Taken Steps to Prepare for Emergencies, but Some Plans and Activities Do Not Address Recommended Practices

Almost all school districts have taken steps to prepare for emergencies, including developing written plans, but some plans do not address federally recommended practices such as establishing procedures for special needs students and procedures for continued student education in the event of an extended closure. Additionally, many school districts do not have procedures for training regularly with first responders and community partners.

[12] Education, for example, also obtained input from state and local school and emergency management officials and associations in developing these recommended practices.

[13] See GAO–07–395T and GAO–06–618.

Most School Districts Have Undertaken Some Emergency Management Activities

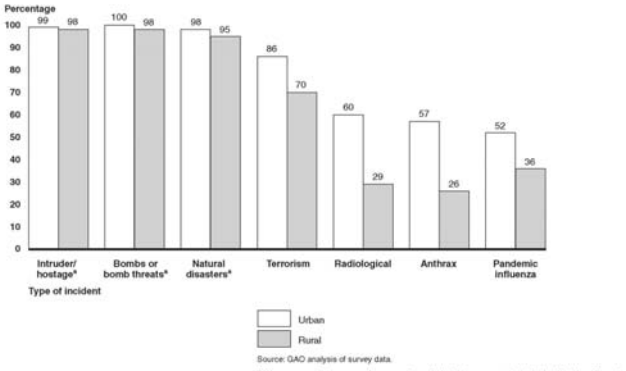
Many school districts, those with and without emergency management plans, have undertaken activities to prepare for emergencies. Based on our survey of school districts, we estimate that 93 percent of all school districts conduct inspections of their school buildings and grounds to identify possible vulnerabilities in accordance with recommended practices. Of those school districts, 87 percent made security enhancements to their school facilities and grounds as a result of these inspections. Security enhancements included adding or enhancing equipment to communicate with school employees, strengthening the perimeter security of the school, and enhancing access controls.

In addition to conducting vulnerability assessments, many school districts carry out a number of other activities to prepare for emergencies such as conducting some type of school drill or exercise and maintaining a storage location for and replenishing emergency supplies such as food, water, and first-aid supplies, as recommended. Additionally, school districts took responsibility for a number of activities to prepare for emergencies at the district level such as negotiating the use of school buildings as community shelters and identifying security needs in schools. These activities can vary by locality depending on community needs and include oversight, coordination with other entities, and training.

Most Districts Have Emergency Management Plans That Address Multiple Hazards, but the Content of Plans Varies Significantly

Most school districts have developed written emergency management plans that address multiple hazards. Based on our survey of school districts, we estimate that 95 percent of all school districts have written emergency management plans with no statistical difference between urban and rural districts.[14] Of those school districts that have written emergency plans, nearly all (99.6 percent) address multiple hazards in accordance with recommended practices to prepare for emergencies. However, the specific hazards addressed by plans vary. (See fig. 2.) In some instances, the hazards included in emergency plans are specific to local conditions, which is to be expected.

Figure 2: Estimated Percentages of Urban and Rural Districts' Multi-Hazard Emergency Management Plans that Include Specific Types of Incidents



Source: GAO analysis of survey data.

*Differences between urban and rural districts are not statistically significant.

The extent to which school districtS' emergency management plans and planning activities are consistent with other recommended practices varies:

Develop Roles and Responsibilities for School Community Members. Based on our survey of school districts, most districts have written roles and responsibilities in their plans for staff such as superintendents, building engineers or custodians, principals, teachers, and nurses.

Develop Roles and Responsibilities for First Responders and Community Partners. Based on our survey, we estimate that 43 percent of school districts use the Incident Command System (ICS)—established by DHS as part of the National

[14] Those school districts that did not have a written emergency management plan cited several reasons for the lack of such plans that included (1) no requirement to have a written plan, (2) inadequate resources for experienced personnel to develop emergency plans, and (3) schools, not the district, have individual plans.

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Incident Management System (NIMS)[15]—to establish the roles and responsibilities of school district officials, local first responders, and community partners during an emergency, in accordance with recommended practices.

Develop Procedures for Communicating with Key Stakeholders. Central to district emergency plans is the inclusion of procedures for communicating with key stakeholders such as staff, parents, and students, including those who are Limited-English Proficient. Our survey finds that roughly three-quarters of all school districts have not included written procedures in their plans for communicating with Limited-English Proficient parents and students, in accordance with federally recommended practices.

Develop Procedures for Special Needs Students. Although the number of special needs students in the schools is growing, our survey finds that an estimated 28 percent of school districts with emergency management plans do not have specific provisions for them in their emergency management plans. Education officials told us that because there is no agreement among disability groups on what the best practices are for special needs students in an emergency, districts usually devise their own procedures. According to these officials, some of these procedures such as keeping special needs students in their classrooms during some emergencies may not ensure the students' safety in an emergency.

Develop Procedures for Recovering from an Incident. Over half of all school districts with written emergency plans include procedures in their plans to assist with recovering from an incident, in accordance with recommended practices. School districts' plans include such procedures as providing on-site trauma teams, restoring district administrative functions, and conducting assessments of damage to school buildings and grounds.

Develop Procedures for the Continuation of student Education. Few school districts' emergency plans contain procedures for continuing student education in the event of an extended school closure, such as a pandemic outbreak, although it is a federally recommended practice. Based on our survey, we estimate that 56 percent of school districts do not include any of the following procedures (see table 3) in their plans for the continuation of student education during an extended school closure. Without such procedures school districts may not be able to educate students during a school closure that could last from several days to a year or longer.

Table 3: Percentages of School Districts with Written Plans that Include Certain Types of Procedures to Continue Student Educational Instruction in the Event of an Extended School Closure

Types of procedure to continue student educational instruction	Estimated percentage of school districts with written plans that include procedure
Electronic or human telephone trees to communicate academic information to students	30
based distance instruction	12
Mailed lessons and assignments	10
Academic instruction via local radio or television stations	7

[15] The Incident Command System is a standard incident management system to assist in managing all major incidents. The Incident Command System also prescribes interoperable communications systems and preparedness before an incident happens, including planning, training, and exercises. The Incident Command System was developed in the 1970s following a series of catastrophic fires. Specifically, researchers determined that response problems were more likely to result from inadequate management rather than from any other reason. The Incident Command System was designed so that responders from different jurisdictions and disciplines could work together better to respond to natural disasters and emergencies, including acts of terrorism. NIMS includes a unified approach to incident management: standard command and management structures, and emphasis on preparedness, mutual aid, and resource management. Develop Procedures for the Continuation of Student Education. Few school districts' emergency plans contain procedures for continuing student education in the event of an extended school closure, such as a pandemic outbreak, although it is a federally recommended practice. Based on our survey, we estimate that 56 percent of school districts do not include any of the following procedures (see table 3) in their plans for the continuation of student education during an extended school closure. Without such procedures school districts may not be able to educate students during a school closure that could last from several days to a year or longer.

Source: GAO analysis of survey data.

Note: Responses are not mutually exclusive.

Determine Lessons Learned. Based on our survey of school districts, we estimate that 38 percent of districts have emergency management plans that contain procedures for reviewing lessons learned to analyze how well the plans worked in responding to a drill or emergency. Of the remaining school districts, 53 percent indicated they have procedures but those procedures are not included in their plans and 7 percent have no such procedures.

Develop Multi-Purpose Manuals. Some school districts have multi-purpose manuals that contain various types of information such as roles and responsibilities for staff, descriptions of how to respond to different types of emergencies, as well as site specific information for individual schools to complete in order to tailor their plan. In contrast, other districts provide less information. For example, one district's plan consisted of a flipchart with contact information on whom to call during an emergency.

Involve Local Government and Public Heath Agencies in Developing and Updating Plans. School districts differed in the extent to which they involve community partners in the development and updating of their plans.[16] Fewer than half of school districts with emergency management plans involve community partners such as the local head of government (43 percent) or the local public health agency (42 percent) when developing and updating their emergency management plans, as recommended by HHS.[17] According to written guidance provided by Education, those school districts that do not include community partners in the development and updating of their plans may limit their opportunity to exchange information with local officials, take advantage of local resources, and identify gaps in their plan. More than half (52 percent) of all school districts with emergency management plans report regularly (i.e., at least once a year) updating their emergency management plans in accordance with recommended practices. However, 10 percent of all school districts had never updated their plans.

Train with First Responders. Based on our survey, we estimate that 27 percent of all school districts with emergency management plans have never trained with any first responders on how to implement the plans, in accordance with federally recommended practices. The reasons why school districts are not training with first responders are not readily apparent. As we have previously reported, involving first responder groups in training and exercise programs can better familiarize first responders with and prepare first responders for their roles in an emergency as well as assess the effectiveness of a school or district emergency plan.[18]

Train with Community Partners. School districts report training with community partners—such as local government and local public health entities—on activities to prepare for an emergency with similar frequency. Specifically, we estimate that 29 percent of all school districts train with community partners. As with first responders, the reasons for the lack of training with community partners are not readily apparent. In our work on Hurricane Katrina, we reported that involving local community partners in exercise programs and training could help prepare community partners and enhance their understanding of their roles in an emergency as well as help assess the effectiveness of a school district's emergency plan.[19] Without such training, school districts and their community partners may not fully understand their roles and responsibilities and could be at risk of not responding effectively during a school emergency.

School Districts Report Challenges in Planning for Emergencies and Difficulties in Communicating with First Responders and Parents

In planning for emergencies, many school districts face challenges resulting from competing priorities, a lack of equipment, and limited expertise; some school districts experience difficulties in communicating and coordinating with first responders and parents, but most do not have such challenges with students.

Competing Priorities, Lack of Equipment, and Limited Expertise Are Obstacles to Incorporating Recommended Practices in Emergency Management Planning

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[16] In our survey, community partners included representatives from public health, mental health, local head of government, transportation, hospitals, Red Cross, faith-based community, and the business community.

[17] Twelve percent of school districts do not know whether public health agencies were included in the development and update of plans. Thirteen percent of districts do not know whether the local head of government was included in the development and update of plans.

[18] See GAO–06–618.

[19] See GAO–06–618.

School district officials who responded to our survey reported difficulty in following the recommended practice of allocating time to emergency management planning, given the higher priority and competing demand on their time for educating students and carrying out other administrative responsibilities. Based on our survey of school districts, we estimate that in 70 percent of all districts, officials consider competing priorities to be a challenge to planning for emergencies.

In an estimated 62 percent of districts, officials cited a lack of equipment and expertise as impediments to emergency planning. For example, officials in one Massachusetts school district we visited reported that they do not have adequate locks on some of the doors to school buildings to implement a lockdown procedure. In a North Carolina district we visited, officials said a lack of two-way radios for staff in the elementary schools hinders their ability to communicate with one another and with first responders during an emergency.[20] As demonstrated in these school districts, the lack of equipment would prevent districts from implementing the procedures in their plans and hinder communication among district staff and with first responders during emergencies. In addition to not having sufficient equipment, school district officials we spoke with described a shortage of expertise in both planning for and managing emergencies. These officials said their districts lacked specialized personnel and training with which to develop needed expertise. For example, district officials in 5 of the 27 districts we interviewed noted that they do not have sufficient funding to hire full-time emergency management staff to provide such training or take responsibility for updating their district plans. These officials noted that the lack of expertise makes it difficult to adequately plan for responding to emergencies. School districts we interviewed also reported challenges in incorporating special needs students in emergency management planning. According to officials in about half (13 of 27) of the districts in which we conducted interviews, a lack of equipment or expertise poses challenges for districts—particularly in the area of evacuating special needs students. For example, an official in one school district, said that the district tracks the location of special needs students, but many of the district's schools do not have evacuation equipment (e.g., evacuation chairs used to transport disabled persons down a flight of stairs) to remove students from buildings and staff need more training on how to operate the existing equipment.

Some School Districts Reported Difficulty in Communicating and Coordinating with First Responders

Based on our survey of school districts, an estimated 39 percent of districts with emergency plans experience challenges in communicating and coordinating with local first responders.[21] Specifically, these school districts experience a lack of partnerships with all or specific first responders, limited time or funding to collaborate with first responders on plans for emergencies, or a lack of interoperability between the equipment used by the school district and equipment used by first responders. For example, the superintendent of a Washington school district we visited said that law enforcement has not been responsive to the district's requests to participate in emergency drills, and, in addition to never having had a districtwide drill with first responders, competition among city, county, and private first responders has made it difficult for the school district to know with which first responder entity it should coordinate. According to guidance provided by Education, the lack of partnerships, as demonstrated in these school districts, can lead to an absence of training that prevents schools and first responders from understanding their roles and responsibilities during emergencies. Additionally, in 8 of the 27 districts we interviewed, officials said that the two-way radios or other equipment used in their school districts lacked interoperability with the radios used by first responders.[22]

School Districts Have Methods to Communicate With Parents, but Face Challenges in Ensuring Parents Receive Consistent Information during Incidents

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[20] Two-way radios, commonly known as walkie-talkies, are radios that can alternate between receiving and transmitting messages. Cellular telephones and satellite telephones are also two-way radios but, unlike walkie-talkies, simultaneously receive and transmit messages.

[21] Thirteen percent of school districts reported not knowing whether the district has challenges related to first responders.

[22] GAO has reported on the range of issues associated with the lack of interoperability among first responders and the implications of these issues for emergency management. For a fuller discussion of these issues see the following GAO reports: First Responders: Much Work Remains to Improve Communications Interoperability, GAO–07–301 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 2, 2007); Catastrophic Disasters: Enhanced Leadership, Capabilities, and Accountability Controls Will Improve the Effectiveness of the Nation's Preparedness, Response, and Recovery System, GAO–06–618 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 6, 2006); and Homeland Security: Federal Leadership and Intergovernmental Cooperation Required to Achieve First Responder Interoperable Communications. GAO–04–740 (Washington, D.C.: July 20, 2004).

In keeping with recommended practices that call for school districts to have a way to contact parents of students enrolled in the district, all of the 27 school districts we interviewed had ways of communicating emergency procedures to parents prior to (e.g., newsletters), during (e.g., media, telephone), and after an incident (e.g., letters). Eleven of these districts have a system that can send instant electronic and telephone messages to parents of students in the district. Despite having these methods, 16 of the 27 districts we interviewed experience difficulties in implementing the recommended practice that school districts communicate clear, consistent, and appropriate information to parents regarding an emergency. For example, officials in a Florida school district said that with students' increased access to cellular telephones, parents often arrive on school grounds during an incident to pick up their children before the district has an opportunity to provide parents with information. Thus, according to these officials, the district experiences challenges in simultaneously maintaining control of both the emergency situation and access to school grounds by parents and others. Representatives of three education associations[23] also noted that school districts have much to do to ensure that their emergency management efforts diffuse confusion during emergencies and provide parents with consistent information.

Based on our survey of school districts, an estimated 39 percent of all school districts provide translators to communicate with Limited-English Proficient parents during emergencies, but fewer—an estimated 23 percent of all districts—provide translations of emergency management materials. Officials in eight of the 27 districts we interviewed discussed challenges in retaining bilingual staff to conduct translations of the districts' messages or in reaching parents who do not speak the languages or dialects the district translates. Our findings, are consistent with the observations of some national education groups that have indicated that districts, in part due to limited funding, struggle to effectively communicate emergency-related information to this population of parents.

Officials in all but one of the districts in which we conducted interviews said that the district did not have problems communicating emergency procedures to students. While some of these officials did not provide reasons; as we previously discussed, most districts regularly practice their emergency management plans with their students and staff.

Concluding Observations

The federal government plays a critical role in assisting school districts to prepare for emergencies by providing funding, giving states flexibility to target federal funding for emergency management to areas of greatest need, disseminating information on best practices and other guidance, and providing training and equipment. School districts have taken a number of important steps to plan for a range of emergencies, most notably developing emergency management plans; however, in many districts these plans or their implementation do not align with federally recommended practices. Given the challenges many school districts face due to a lack of necessary equipment and expertise, they do not have the tools to support the plans they have in place and, therefore, school districts are left with gaps in their ability to fully prepare for emergencies. Additional clarity regarding access to federal resources and improved guidance may enhance the ability of school districts to plan and prepare for emergencies. We are currently considering recommendations to address these issues.

Chairman THOMPSON. We will now move to Mr. Trump for his comments.

STATEMENT OF KENNETH S. TRUMP, M.P.A., PRESIDENT, NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY SERVICES

Mr. TRUMP. Chairman Thompson and distinguished committee members, thank you for the invitation to speak here today; and also thank you for your recognition that protecting our Nation's schools is not simply primarily a State and local issue but one requiring proactive, coordinated and meaningful Federal leadership.

I would also like to recognize Congressman Etheridge for his efforts on keeping K-through-12 schools in the homeland security

[23] National Education Association, American Association of School Administrators, and National Association of Secondary School Principals.

planning. I know you have been vigilant, and we thank you, sir. Police, fire, emergency medical services are our first responders, but schoolteachers, principals, secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, security staff and school police officers are our very first responders.

Unfortunately, parents do not know what they do not know and schools are much less prepared than parents, many parents, believe them to be.

Our work in evaluating emergency plans for K-through-12 schools in 45 States over 25 years has shown that most schools have emergency plans, but the contents of the plans are often questionable, not consistent with best practices put together with little or no input of public safety and emergency partners. Staff and students are often not trained on these plans, and the plans are not tested or exercised by tabletop exercises or other activities in cooperation with public safety and community partners.

The threats to school safety range from weather and natural disasters and Hazmat spills to school shootings, acts of violence and potential targets of terrorism. What is the extent of school violence? Nobody honestly knows.

One of the dirty little secrets in the K-through-12 education community today is that there is no comprehensive Federal school crime reporting and tracking for K-through-12 schools, as Congresswoman McCarthy noted earlier. And the Education Department's school crime data is actually based on a very limited, hodgepodge collection of a half dozen or so academic surveys, not actual incident-based data.

So we have no actual numbers on the offenses in schools, and this leaves Congress to make best-guesstimate-approach decisions for policy and funding and creates some gaps that need to be improved.

We also are challenged by a historical culture in the education and political communities of "downplay, deny, defect and defend" in acknowledging the extent of school crime and violence, which has segued over to our discussions of schools and school buses as potential targets of terror, because many people are afraid of alarming parents; and therefore, these discussions have been placed on the back burner.

Schools fit the definition of "soft targets." We saw most recently the March 16 FBI and Homeland Security bulletin about foreign nationals with terrorist associations getting licenses to drive school buses, buying buses and some having interests in explosives. The Beslan, Russia, incident in 2004, the history of schools or school buses in the Middle East and other incidents outlined in my written testimony certainly would lead us to be very concerned and we need to have more discussions on this.

What is not needed? Educators and public safety officials on the front line do not need extensive research studies, traveling hearings, paralysis-by-analysis conference symposiums, gathering manuals, guides, templates and regurgitation of best practices. We don't need earmarked technical assistance centers and institutes.

And as you all stated earlier, Mr.µChairman, the Web site, we need to go beyond that as well.

How can Congress help? Congress can help in six meaningful ways:

Number one, help acknowledge the full range of threats, including the terror threat to schools, in a balanced, rational way and correct the limitations of the current school violence data upon which policy and funding decisions are made.

Number two, restore cut funding for school emergency preparedness planning and expand future funding. One thing that did not come up in this morning's first panel was that the Education Department's emergency response and crisis management program, now known as the REMS program, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools has actually been cut 40 percent since 2003.

Exhibit 3 to my testimony is the chart from an Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Education from Safe and Drug-Free Schools showing that $39 million in fiscal year 2003 that served 134 school sites has been cut down to $24 million last year, almost a 40 percent cut. Over 550 applications for that program existed in fiscal year 2003 and, subsequently, would have been greater had the Education Department not put out the RFP for these proposals in May and June when the schools are actually involved in end-of-year graduations and other activities and don't have time to apply.

Cutting almost 40 percent in school emergency planning funding at a time when our Nation's homeland security model has appropriately been focused on beefing up security and preparedness for airports, monuments and the very hallways of the buildings in which we sit today is counterintuitive counterproductive and counter to the best interest of protecting children and teachers.

Number three, open up Homeland Security Department grants for K-through-12 schools as primary applicants. I would recommend working through the education associations, the school board, superintendents, principals, organizations to make sure they know of their availability and to allow those to focus on training tabletop exercises, school bus security and limited equipment needs.

Number four, require local police and emergency management agencies receiving Homeland Security grant funding to include K-through-12 public and private schools in their planning.

Number four, require States receiving Homeland Security Department funding to include State education departments and school safety experts in their planning.

And finally, number five, taking a look at the current Federal structure for oversight of school safety and readiness. The Education Department has long been in the lead for prevention—violence prevention intervention programs, bullying and suicide; and many believe the expertise rests there. But our challenge and knowledge base of safety and emergency preparedness has changed in a post-Columbine and a post-9/11 world.

The Department of Homeland Security and Justice have richer experience that should be brought in in the short term with a recommended permanent interagency working group of those three agencies; and perhaps in the long term even looking at Homeland Security and Justice as having a broader role in leading those efforts in cooperation with, but not led by Education.

I look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Trump follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENNETH S. TRUMP

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King, and distinguished Committee members, thank you for inviting me to appear before you today to provide testimony on strengthening the preparedness and response readiness of our nation's K–12 schools. Our educators and school safety professionals across the nation appreciate your recognition of the importance of including our K–12 schools in the federal government's plans for protecting our nation's critical infrastructure.

I would like to also specifically recognize and thank Congressman Bob Etheridge of North Carolina for his leadership and persistence in advocating for the inclusion of K–12 schools in Homeland Security policies and programs, protection of schools and school buses from terrorism, and funding of K–12 school preparedness from the Department of Homeland Security.

My name is Kenneth Trump and I am the President and CEO of National School Safety and Security Services, Incorporated, a Cleveland (Ohio)-based national consulting firm specializing in school security and school emergency preparedness consulting and training. I have worked with K–12 school officials and their public safety partners in urban, suburban, and rural communities in 45 states during my career of over 20 years in the school safety profession.

In addition to working with educators and public safety officials nationwide, my background includes having served over seven years with the Cleveland City School District's Safety and Security Division as a high school and junior high school safety officer, a district-wide field investigator, and as founding supervisor of its nationally-recognized Youth Gang Unit that contributed to a 39% reduction in school gang crimes and violence. I later served three years as director of security for the ninth-largest Ohio school district with 13,000 students, where I also served as assistant director of a federal-funded model anti-gang project for three southwest Cleveland suburbs.

I have authored two books and over 45 articles on school security and emergency preparedness issues. My education background includes having earnedμa Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Services (Criminal Justice concentration) and a Master of Public Administration degree from Cleveland State University; special certification for completing the Advanced Physical Security Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center; and extensive specialized training onμschool safety and emergency planning, terrorism and homeland security, gang prevention and intervention, and related youth safety topics.

Presently I volunteer as Chair of the Prevention Committee and Executive Committee member for Cleveland's Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative, one of six Department of Justice-funded federal and local collaborative model projects to address gangs through enforcement, prevention, and reentry strategies. I was an invited attendee at the White House Conference on School Safety in October of 2006. In 1999, I testified to the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee as a school safety and crisis expert, and on April 23, 2007, I testified to the House Education and Labor Committee on school safety and emergency preparedness issues, needs, and actions Congress can take to make our schools safer (see testimony at http://edlabor.house.gov/testimony/042307KennethTrumptestimony.pdf or http://www.schoolsecurity.org/news/House_Education07.html). School districts and other organizations engage our services to evaluate school emergency preparedness plans, provide training on proactive school security strategies, develop and facilitate school tabletop exercises, conduct school security assessment evaluations, and consult with school administrators and board members on management plans for improving school safety. We have increasingly found ourselves also called to assist educators and their school communities with security and preparedness issues following high-profile incidents of school violence. In the past several years alone, we have worked in a school district where a student brought an AK-47 to school, fired shots in the halls, and then committed suicide; in a private school where death threats raised student and parental anxiety; and in a school district where a student brought a tree saw and machete to school, attacked students in his first period class, and sent multiple children to the hospital with serious injuries.

My perspective on school safety is vastly different from the many other types of other witnesses you may have heard from in the past, or will hear from in the future. I am not an academician, researcher, psychologist, social worker, law enforcement official, non-profit agency head, or government agency representative. Instead, I bring to a perspective of front-line experience in working with public and private

school staff, their public safety and community partners, and parents of our nation's children on school violence prevention, security risk reduction strategies, and emergency preparedness measures.

SCHOOL READINESS: PARENT EXPECTATIONS, THREATS, AND GAPS

Parents will forgive educators, legislators, and others they have entrusted their children's educational direction to if their children's test scores go down for a year. They are much less forgiving if something happens to their children that could have been prevented or better managed when it could not be avoided. Children cannot learn and teachers cannot teach to their maximum capability if they are worried about their personal safety. Education will cease as school-communities struggle to manage and recover from a critical incident, and the impact can be both severe and long-term.

Police, fire, emergency medical services, and other public safety officials are the first responders to critical incidents at schools. However, teachers, principals, custodians, secretaries, school resource officers (police officers assigned to schools), school security personnel, and other **school officials are our VERY FIRST RESPONDERS** when an incident of crime, violence, mass casualty, or natural disaster strike at their schools.

Preparing our public safety officials for emergencies without also adequately preparing our school officials is a serious mistake. Incidents of crime and violence occur very quickly, oftentimes with only minutes passing from beginning to end, and even the quickest response by public safety officials may place them on-scene after the incident itself is over. The actions taken by school officials as the incident unfolds, and in the first half hour or so immediately thereafter, can determine the severity of the impact on the lives of children and teachers for months and years to come. And once public safety officials complete their heroic jobs and leave the school emergency site, it will be the school officials who will carry the bulk of the responsibility for the short and long-term recovery of their schools.

When parents drop off their children at school each day, they have an inherent and typically unspoken expectation that school, public safety, and elected officials have taken every possible step to place every measure of prevention and preparedness in place to protect their children. The harsh reality is that while there have been many improvements in school security and school emergency preparedness following the 1999 Columbine High School tragedy, that progress has stopped and has actually slipped backwards since recent years due in many cases to cuts in school safety and emergency preparedness funding for K–12 schools. Sadly, most parents do not know what they do not know, i.e., that their schools are much less prepared than parents believe them to be.

We must do a better job at preparing our school officials to prevent and manage threats. The threats include weather and natural disasters, such as we saw with Hurricane Katrina or the destruction of a school in Enterprise, Alabama. They include hazardous materials spills that may occur on roadways or railroad tracks adjacent to schools. They include school shooting rampages. And they also include the potential for schools and school buses to be targets of terrorism.

What is the extent of the threat? In terms of school violence, no one honestly knows in real numbers. One of the "dirty little secrets" in our nation's education community is that there is no comprehensive, mandatory federal school crime reporting and tracking of actual school crime incidents for K–12 schools. While Congress enacted the Cleary Act in 1990 to improve crime reporting and collecting on college campuses, K–12 schools have no such requirements or incident-driven data in place. Federal school crime and violence data by-and-large consists of a hodgepodge collection of just over a half-dozen academic ***surveys*** and research studies. See Exhibit 1 for these limited survey sources and Exhibit 2 for my tally of school-associated violent deaths since 1999.

Unfortunately, this means that Congress is forced to make school safety policy and funding decisions based on a "best-guestimate" approach, and the American public is being inadvertently mislead when these surveys are being used to claim that school violence in America is actually decreasing over the past decade. It also means claims by the Department of Education and others that understate the threat of school crime and violence can lead to the underestimation of policy and resources for prevention and preparedness. See my aforementioned testimony to the House Education and Labor Committee on April 23, 2007, for a lengthy discussion of these issues.

There has been a historical culture in the education community of "downplay, deny, deflect, and defend" in acknowledging the extent of school crime and violence. This mindset and practice has extended to the discussion, or better stated "lack of discussion," of the issue of schools and school buses as potential targets for ter-

rorism. Elected and administrative officials do not want to openly address this issue with the American public out of fear of creating panic among parents.

Schools clearly fit the definition of a "soft target" and an attack upon our schools would have not only a devastating impact on Americans emotionally, but a severe impact on the American economy if the "business" of education shut downs and/or is disrupted due to a catastrophic terror attack upon our educational infrastructure.

We need only look at the following quote from the National Commission on Children and Terrorism's report of June 12, 2003: "Every day 53 million young people attend more than 119,000 public and private schools where 6 million adults work as teachers or staff. Counting students and staff, on any given weekday more than one-fifth of the U.S. population can be found in schools." Schools and school buses have basically the same number of children at the same locations every day of the week in facilities and buses that are unquestionably soft targets.

There are a number of "red flags" that appear to be going unnoticed in recent years. News reports in June of 2004 indicating a suspected sleeper-cell member of al-Qaeda who obtained a license to drive a school bus and haul hazardous materials; the reported (appropriate) reclassification of schools to a higher risk category in its national risk assessment program by the Department of Homeland Security in 2006; March of 2007 alert by the FBI and Homeland Security Departments about foreign national with extremist ties obtaining licenses to drive school buses and buying school buses; and even a top school administrators employed in the Detroit and DC schools who was federally charged in 2005 with a conspiracy with terrorists according to news reports. Add to that a number of other suspicious activities around schools across the country, the Beslan, Russia, school hostage siege and murders in 2004, and the history of schools and school buses being terror targets in the Middle East. While I have no firsthand knowledge, I strongly suspect our federal intelligence, justice, and homeland security agencies have even more information on the potential terror threat to schools that American parents and local safety officials may never know.

In short, the tactics have been used elsewhere in the Middle East and in Beslan, Russia. An attack our educational system would have a devastating emotional and economic on America. And it is not unforeseeable except to those who do not wish to acknowledge and deal with it for political and image reasons. Congress must sure that K–12 schools are an integral part of our nation's homeland security preparedness policy and funding.

Yet to date, from inside the Beltway to our local communities, public officials have largely been afraid of talking about, and acting proactively upon, the idea of schools as potential terror targets out of fear of alarming parents. I pray we do not face the day where we have a "911 Commission" type hearing asking how a terrorist attack that occurred upon a school in the United States could have been avoided. We know that denial, downplay, and "Ostrich Syndrome" make us more vulnerable. We cannot continue the current course of ignoring the threat of terrorism to our nation's K–12 schools.

Our work with K–12 school officials in 45 states over close to 25 years has found that most schools now have crisis/emergency plans. Many of those were created after the 1999 Columbine tragedy. Expert evaluations of those plans have found that the plans have frequently been put together by school officials with limited to no input from their public safety and emergency management partners; contents of the plans are often very questionable in terms of best and appropriate practices; school teachers and staff have not been trained on the plans; and the plans have not been tested or exercised by tabletop or other exercises with their public safety partners. It has been widely acknowledged, even in the U.S. Department of Education's programs, that many plans are sitting up on shelves in school offices collecting dust.

WHAT IS NOT NEEDED

There are many things Congress can do to help improve K–12 school emergency prevention and preparedness. But first, there are clearly some things that our educators and public safety officials on the front-lines do **NOT** need.

School and public safety officials do NOT need more federal research, studies, and paralysis-by-analysis reports. They do NOT need more conferences, symposiums, and gatherings. They do NOT need more advisory groups, panels, commissions, and hearings. They do NOT need more manuals, guides, templates, and regurgitation of best practices. They definitely do NOT need more earmarked "technical assistance" centers, institutes, or Beltway contracted technical assistance providers. And they certainly do NOT simply need more federal web sites.

HOW CONGRESS CAN PROVIDE MEANINGFUL HELP TO SCHOOLS

Congress and the federal administrative agencies can take action to have a meaningful impact on K–12 school readiness and preparedness by:

1. Acknowledging the full range of threats to schools and the limitations of current data on school violence. In particular, be forthcoming with the American public and education and safety officials charged with protecting our children about the potential threat of terrorism to our nation's schools and school buses.
2. Restore cut funding for school emergency preparedness planning and expand funding over time to reflect our nation's commitment to school preparedness in the way we are beefing up protection for other national critical infrastructures.
3. Require Department of Homeland Security grants and other funding to local law enforcement, emergency management agencies, and other public safety officials to include mandatory requirements that these public safety officials actively engage K–12 public and private schools in local emergency planning.
4. Open select Department of Homeland Security grants specifically for K–12 schools for emergency preparedness training, tabletop exercises, school bus security, limited equipment (especially communications equipment), and related needs.
5. Require states with Department of Homeland Security funding to include their state education departments on statewide homeland security committee policy and funding decision bodies, and actively include K–12 school safety experts in their advisory activities.
6. Examine and modify the current federal organization and structure for the oversight and management of federal school safety, readiness, and preparedness policy, programming, and funding to allow the expertise of the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice to have broader input and leadership, rather than the Department of Education having primary responsibility for these initiatives.

Acknowledging the Threat

As noted above and in my April 23, 2007, testimony to the House Education and Labor Committee, there are serious flaws and gaps in federal Department of Education data on school violence. H.R. 354, The SAVE Act by Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy, addresses a number of these issues. Congress should recognize and acknowledge the flaws in school violence and crime data, and work to improve the data, if it truly wishes to more accurately identify the potential threat to schools.

We must also acknowledge the terrorism threat to schools and school buses. It does not have to be done in an alarmist manner, nor should it be done that way. But fear is best managed by education, communication, and preparation, not "Ostrich Syndrome," denial, or downplay. American parents, educators, and the public in general, deserve a more candid recognition of this threat so we can move to better preparedness.

Restore School Emergency Preparedness Funding Cuts and Expand Future Funding

Federal funding for the Education Department's Emergency Response and Crisis Management (ERCM) program, now known as the Readiness and Emergency Management (REM) for Schools program, has been cut almost 40% since 2003. According to PowerPoint slide data from a presentation by a Department of Education official, the program has been cut from over $39 million awarded to 134 school sites in FY 03, to only $24 million awarded to 77 sites in FY06. See Exhibit 3 for this document detailing these facts.

The numbers of applications for this ERCM/REMS grant program have ranged from over 550 in its first year of FY03 to 301, 406, and 379 the following years. Given the Department of Education has issued the RFP for this grant toward the end of each school year (April-May) and required submissions around May-June, it is logical to believe there would be greater interest and more applications had the Department not chosen to put out calls for proposals at the end of the school year when educators are focused on testing, graduations, and school-year closure and therefore have more difficulty in putting together complex grant applications with multi-agency partners from their communities. Many of us in the school safety field believe the number of applications would be even greater if the call for proposals was put out earlier in the school year and not when school administrators are so overwhelmed with year-end school matters.

At a time when Congress is funding more resources to protect our national infrastructure such as airports, monuments, and the hallways of our government offices themselves, how can we justify cutting almost 40% from an already pithy amount of funding for helping to protect the children and teachers in the hallways of our nation's schools?

Following my testimony to the House Education and Labor Committee hearing on April 23, 2007, as I walked back to my Capitol Hill hotel I counted eight, yes eight (8), Capitol Hill police officers at ONE street intersection, several with high-power weaponry. Capitol Hill Police cars seemed to be on every roadway, one after another. Barricades and bollards surround the Capitol and its Congressional office buildings and other facilities. Officers, metal detectors and x-ray machines are at federal building doors.

It dawned upon me what a mixed message it sends to our American children, their parents, and their educators that while security and emergency preparedness have been understandably well-funded and beefed up to protect those of us here in these Capitol Hill offices today, funding for protecting and preparedness for children and educators in the hallways of their schools has actually been cut nearly 40% since 2003, along with cuts to the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools and COPS in Schools program, in a post-9/11 world. It not only sends a mixed message, but a wrong message and is a wrong action.

Unlike many other narrowly focused federal grant programs, the ERCM (now REMS) grant provides for a comprehensive and balanced program consisting of prevention, mitigation, preparedness, and response components in order to be successfully funded. This means that school programs can be designed as they should, not skewed towards prevention programming-only or security/policing/emergency response-only, but designed instead with a balanced and comprehensive approach of prevention, preparedness, and response. The threats facing our schools today require nothing less.

While the authority for this particular program rests with the House Education and Labor Committee, the Committee on Homeland Security and Congress overall should work together in a bipartisan manner to immediately restore funding cut for the ERCM (now REMS) program and significantly increase future funding multiple times the original already-under-funded $39 million funding allocation for this program. The need is significant. Reducing school emergency prevention and preparedness funding in a post-911 and post-Columbine world is illogical, counterintuitive, counterproductive, and inconsistent with our national homeland security philosophy of preparedness.

Require Homeland Security Grant Recipients to Engage K–12 Schools in Planning

Local police, emergency management agencies, and other funding recipients of Department of Homeland Security grant funding should be required to include K–12 public and private schools in local emergency planning. This means more than simply inviting schools to sit at a table in a countywide tabletop exercise. Schools should be integral parts of local emergency planning and public safety grant recipients should be required to establish relationships, memoranda of understanding documents, cross-training, school-specific exercises, and other joint planning.

Open Select Homeland Security Grants to K–12 Schools

Schools should be made eligible as primary applicants to seek funding for emergency preparedness for teachers, administrators, and school support staff such as bus drivers, secretaries, custodians, and others on the front lines protecting kids. Funds should designated for training of these school officials; tabletop exercises with public safety and community partners to get school emergency plans off the shelves and people talking to see if they would work in a real emergency; to improve school bus security and emergency preparedness; for limited equipment needs, particularly to improve communications capabilities (mass parent notifications capabilities, interoperability with public safety officials, two-way radio and other communications on campuses; etc.); and other related preparedness activities.

Require States to Include Education and School Safety Experts in State Planning

Congress should require states receiving federal Homeland Security dollars to include state department of education and K–12 school safety experts in their statewide homeland security policy and funding governing bodies. Schools and school safety experts are still too often absent from state homeland security planning.

Modify the Current Federal Structure for Overseeing School Safety and Readiness

Congress needs to look at how federal school safety and policy is managed in the federal government administrative structure. The Department of Education has long been the lead source for violence prevention curriculum, intervention programming, and dealing with strategies school as bullying prevention, youth suicide, and related prevention policy and funding, and many believe they the expertise for addressing these issues is best housed in the Education Department. It is worth noting that

the Department of Education's current Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools actually originated as the drug-free schools program, with safety being added as an afterthought as incidents of violence in our schools increased over time. In fact, it was not until a couple years ago that this "program" was reshaped under an "office" of safe and drug free schools.

Yet the challenges, knowledge-base, and expertise of public safety and emergency preparedness have expanded greatly in the past decade and, in particular, in our post-Columbine and post-9/11 world. Congress should explore whether the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice's richer history, experience, knowledge, and expertise with security, policing, and emergency preparedness programming would provide a more focused leadership on managing K–12 school security, policing, and emergency preparedness components of our nation's school safety policy and funding. While these two departments do work, and should continue to work, with the Department of Education, the emphasis of responsibility for specific programmatic areas of public safety and security, and emergency preparedness, would be worthy of restructuring and/or realigning.

In the short term, Congress should establish a permanent interagency working group of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Education to create a formal structure for communication, planning, policy and funding decisions combining their respective expertise areas and disciplines. A periodic conversation or meeting, or a joint manual publication, between the Department of Education and the Department of Homeland Security is simply not enough. An interagency working group, supported by state, local, and front-line experts in K–12 school safety and security, would help build more meaningful and expert-designed federal policy and funding decisions on K–12 school safety, security, and emergency preparedness.

In the long term, the leadership for school security and emergency preparedness should be positioned outside the Department of Education in Homeland Security and Justice Departments working with, but not led by, the Department of Education

CONCLUSION

Chairman Thompson and distinguished Committee members, thank you again for your leadership in protecting me, my family, and our nation. I appreciate the opportunity to have testified before you today and look forward to answering any of your questions.

Figure A.1. Descriptions of data sources and samples used in the report

Data source	Target population	Year of survey	Response rate (%)	Sample size
School-Associated Violent Deaths Surveillance Study (CDC)	Population of school-associated violent deaths in the United States between July 1, 1992, and June 30, 2005. Data collected from two sources: a school official and a police official.	1992–ongoing	78 (Schools)[1]	N/A
Supplementary Homicide Reports (FBI)	Population of criminal homicides in the United States from January 1976–December 2004.	1992–2004	91	N/A
Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System™ Fatal (CDC)	Death certificate data reported to the National Center for Health Statistics.	1992–2003	100	N/A
National Crime Victimization Survey (BJS)	A nationally representative sample of individuals 12 years of age and older living in households and group quarters.	1992–2004 (Annual)		About
		2004	78	74,300
School Crime Supplement (BJS/NCES)	A nationally representative sample of students ages 12–18 enrolled in public and private schools during the 6 months prior to the interview.	1995	74[2]	9,700
		1999	73[2]	8,400
		2001	72[2]	8,400
		2003	64[2]	7,200
		2005	56[2]	6,300
National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC)	A nationally representative sample of students enrolled in grades 9–12 in public and private schools at the time of the survey.	1993	70[2]	16,300
		1995	60[2]	10,900
		1997	69[2]	16,300
		1999	66[2]	15,300
		2001	63[2]	13,600
		2003	67[2]	15,200
		2005	67[2]	13,900
State Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC)	Representative samples of students in grades 9–12 in each state. All except a few state samples include only public schools.	2003	60–90[2]	1,000–9,300
		2005	61–93[2]	900–9,700

NOTE: See notes at end of figure.

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Figure A.1. Descriptions of data sources and samples used in the report—Continued

Data source	Target population	Year of survey	Response rate (%)	Sample size
Schools and Staffing Survey (Teacher Survey) (NCES)	A nationally representative sample of public and private school teachers from grades K–12.	1993–1994	88 (Public)[1]	57,000
			80 (Private)[1]	11,500
		1999–2000	77 (Public)[1]	56,300
			67 (Private)[1]	10,800
			86 (BIA)[2]	500
			72 (Public Charter)[1]	4,400
		2003–2004	76 (Public)[1]	52,500
			70 (Private)[1]	10,000
			86 (BIA)[2]	700
School Survey on Crime and Safety (NCES)	A nationally representative sample of regular public elementary, middle, and secondary schools.	1999–2000	70[3]	2,300
		2003–2004	77[3]	2,800

[1] The interviews conducted on cases between July 1, 1994, and June 30, 1999 achieved a response rate of 97 percent for police officials and 78 percent for school officials. Data for subsequent study years are preliminary and subject to change.

[2] Unweighed response rate.

[3] Overall weighed response rate.

NOTE: Sample sizes are rounded to the nearest 100.

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SCHOOL DEATHS, SCHOOL SHOOTINGS, and HIGH-PROFILE INCIDENTS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE

*School-related deaths, school shootings, and school crisis incidents have been identified through print and electronic news sources, professional contacts, and other nationwide sources, by Kenneth S. Trump, President, **National School Safety and Security Services, Inc.** (Cleveland, Ohio). This is not presented as an exhaustive list or as a scientific study. Additional incidents may be added pending review of additional items on file and new information received during the course of the school year.

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For purposes of this monitoring report, school-related violent deaths are homicides, suicides, or other violent, non-accidental deaths in the United States in which a fatal injury occurs:

1) inside a school, on school property, on or immediately around (and associated with) a school bus, or in the immediate area (and associated with) a K-12 elementary or secondary public, private, or parochial school;

2) on the way to or from a school for a school session;

3) while attending, or on the way to or from, a school-sponsored event;

4) as a clear result of school-related incidents/conflicts, functions, activities, regardless of whether on or off actual school property;

School-Related Violent Death Summary Data

School Year	*Total Deaths*
2006-2007 *(From 8/1/06 to 5/14/07)*	31
2005-2006	27
2004-2005	39
2003-2004	49
2002-2003	16
2001-2002	17
2000-2001	31
1999-2000	33
Total:	243

School-Related Violent Deaths:
Method of Death Breakdown

Method	*Total*	*06-07*	*05-06*	*04-05*	*03-04*	*02-03*	*01-02*	*00-01*	*99-00*
Shooting	106	12	15	24	23	3	5	14	10
Suicide	41	6	1	4	5	6	3	8	8
Murder-Suicide	34	8	4	2	6	2	6	2	4
Fighting	13	1	0	2	4	0	1	1	4
Stabbing	34	4	3	6	10	4	1	3	3
Other	15	0	4	1	1	1	1	3	4

Source: FY 2006 ERCM Initial Grantee Meeting — San Antonio, TX; December 6-8, 2006; PowerPoint slide #6: Welcome and Overview Orientation presentation by Bill Modzeleski, Associate Assistant Deputy

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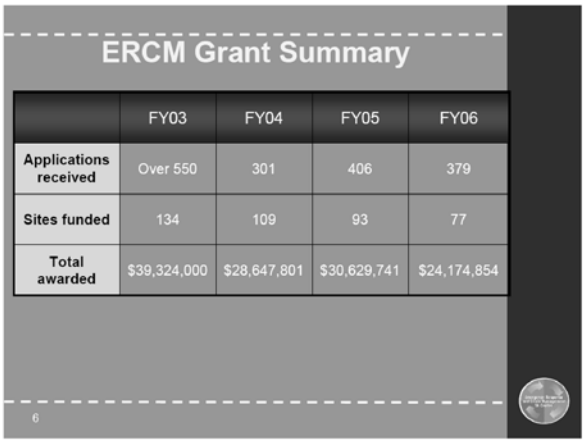
Secretary with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools ; Internet web page: http://www.ercm.org/index.cfm?event=trainings; extracted from PowerPoint at http://www.ercm.org/views/documents/WelcomeOverviewOfObjectives.ppt#447,6,ERCM Grant Summary. Date retrieved: May 14, 2007



ERCM Grant Summary

	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06
Applications received	Over 550	301	406	379
Sites funded	134	109	93	77
Total awarded	$39,324,000	$28,647,801	$30,629,741	$24,174,854

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Chairman THOMPSON. We now will hear opening statements from Mr. Rainer for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF DAVID RAINER, ASSOCIATE VICE CHANCELLOR, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY, NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

Mr. RAINER. Thank you, Chairman Thompson, Mr. Etheridge. My name is David Rainer. I bring greetings from our Chancellor James Oblinger and thank you for inviting me today to testify in front of the House Homeland Security Committee.

I serve as the Associate Vice Chancellor for Environmental Health and Public Safety at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina. While my written testimony is more detailed, I want to focus on several key components that may help frame the issue around university disaster preparedness and response and how the Federal Government might assist us further.

North Carolina State University takes a proactive approach to disaster preparedness and response. We have a fully accredited police force with 55 sworn officers, an integrated fire, public safety and environmental health and safety office and disaster response plans for a variety of emergency situations. We regularly test those plans with drills and scenarios to evaluate our planning and training.

We believe that as a large institution we must be proactive in our disaster planning and response efforts, and we regularly review and update our disaster planning processes and our protocols.

We also believe that we must integrate ourselves within the larger city and county disaster planning and response efforts, and so we have mutual aid agreements and hold joint planning and disaster response drills with the city, county and State response agencies.

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North Carolina State University is a large institution, similar in size, function and population to a medium North Carolina city. The university has more than 30,000 students—8,000 students are residents—7,000 employees and 2,100 acres on three separate campuses about 3 miles from the State capital of North Carolina.

In addition to our population, our facilities and our very active campus, we have about $150 million in Federal investments on campus.

In my role as Associate Vice Chancellor, I am responsible for coordinating campus preparedness and response efforts for disasters and emergencies and coordinating our campus efforts with those of the larger community.

Now, our accredited police force reports to me, as well as fire safety and environmental health and safety, and my division coordinates our disaster and emergency response planning and regularly conducts all types of emergency drills.

We have conducted a variety of drills and scenarios to understand what we should expect and how we would respond in an emergency. In general, what we have learned is that regular mass communication systems are fragile in a major crisis and emergency; and depending on the situation, they can easily become inoperative or overwhelmed. We cannot rely solely on cell phones, the Internet, radio or TV to communicate to our campus community in a crisis.

We have also learned that large universities, such as NC State, must be prepared to be self-sufficient for a time after a large regional or statewide disaster. We are ever conscious of the fact that because of our size and the disaster response capacity, we might not receive outside help for at least 48 hours or more after a large disaster, and we may be a triage or shelter facility for the greater community.

We have learned that if we have a campus-based chemical emergency, outside first responders might not have the detection and protective equipment they need to safely assess the situation and respond. We must assist them with our own capabilities.

We have learned that preplanning is critical in many ways, and we have learned that no amount of planning will make any campus immune to a disaster.

Finally, let me touch on what I hope the committee and the Department of Homeland Security might be able to do for us in the future to assist us:

Help coordinate and develop standardized campus security and hardening protocols. Current requirements specified by Select Agent rules, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, DHS's Interim Final Rule: Chemical Facility Antiterrorism Standards need to be coordinated so that universities implement standardized hardening and security protocols that support the requirements of a multitude of regulations.

Establish one or more National Resource Centers that support the provision of emergency planning and campus security information to universities and ensure that universities are aware and familiar with available resources.

DHS could host a national "best practice" symposium on regional—or regional symposiums on university campus safety and security.

Programs such as "Ready Kids." Materials for children could be modified and targeted to college students and campuses could be used to communicate more information to families about personal emergency planning.

Help establish well-formulated and standardized threat assessment protocols for university campuses modeled after guidelines of the Safe School Initiative that was discussed this morning.

DHS could convene a group of disaster preparedness and university experts to help evaluate how constraints regarding sharing of information, mandated by FERPA and HIPAA, impact the university's ability to share and receive information that may be relevant to identifying threatening individuals.

Thank you again for inviting me to testify today. Let me assure you that North Carolina State University is prepared to do its part to assist the national effort on campus safety and disaster preparedness.

I am happy to answer any questions that you may have. Thank you.

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

[The statement of Mr. Rainer follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID RAINER

Introduction

On behalf of North Carolina State University and Chancellor James Oblinger, I thank you for inviting me to testify about how to strengthen federal efforts to enhance community preparedness and response as it relates to schools, and in particular, to universities. I hope our experiences at NC State can help to shed light on what is at risk, what we do to prepare for a disaster and how we respond to a crisis that affects our campus and our community.

As associate vice chancellor for Environmental Health and Public Safety at North Carolina State University, I am responsible for coordinating the campus preparedness and response efforts for disasters and emergencies within our campus and coordinating with emergency response agencies throughout the wider community in which we live and work. I also work with other units on our campus to develop crisis response and communications plans as well as plan and carry out simulations of possible disaster scenarios that could occur on our campus and in our community.

We are fortunate that our university is one of the few that has under one division the Campus Police, Environmental Health and Fire Safety. This enhances our ability to train as one team, develop efficient emergency response protocols, develop a trust and understanding of how each discipline responds and assure that all response protocols recognize and support each of our primary campus emergency response groups.

Our Campus and Community

NC State is a large campus, with more than 30,000 students and about 7,000 employees, including approximately 1,800 full and part-time faculty and extension field faculty. Including visitors, there could be 40,000 people or more on campus at any given time. Not only do we have large numbers of people on campus, but our campus population is spread over 2,110 acres on three separate tracts of land that make up the main campus in Raleigh. In addition, we have more than 101,000 acres in research and extension farms, forests and facilities throughout the state. As a land-grant university, we have staff and facilities or field offices in all 100 counties in the state of North Carolina and the Cherokee Reservation. NC State was awarded more than $146 million in federally funded research and $207 million in total research awards in Fiscal Year 2006.

More than 8,000 students live on campus; our approximately 16 million square footage of building space includes student residence halls, research labs, classrooms, private company and government administrative offices, dining halls, recreation commons, athletic facilities, steam and cooling water generation facilities and pilot-

scale manufacturing facilities. We operate our own Wolfline bus system and transport over 13,000 passengers a day.

NC State's Raleigh campus is located within the city of Raleigh, the capital of North Carolina. Raleigh is a vibrant and growing city with more than 350,000 residents. NC State University's campus is less than 3 miles from downtown Raleigh and the population density on campus is far higher than the city in general.

NC State Response to Emergency Preparedness

We take our job of protecting campus people and assets very seriously. We believe the State of North Carolina and the Federal Government have placed a certain trust in us as a flagship public university as well as investing significant tax dollars in our campus. We are good stewards of both.

NC State takes several approaches to campus safety and emergency preparedness, starting with a well-trained police department, one of the few accredited university police departments in the country. Accreditation means our police have met or exceeded nationally recognized standards for law enforcement agencies. The university's police department—which includes 55 sworn law enforcement officers—provides a full range of services, including 24-hour patrol (by vehicle, on bikes, on foot and on horseback), investigations, a 911 center and a crime prevention unit. The department offers a wide range of educational services.

We have written mutual aid agreements with other police agencies including the City of Raleigh and Wake County Sheriff Department. We have mutual aid agreements with other governmental agencies to use campus facilities as shelters or mass medical surge facilities in case of weather or other declared emergencies.

We have university-wide crisis response and communication plans on which departmental plans are based.µ By creating a plan before a crisis erupts, we believe we have accelerated our decision-making process, an important advantage in an emergency.

- The Environmental Health and Public Safety division, as part of our ongoing commitment to emergency preparedness, regularly conducts all types of emergency drills. These drills keep our emergency responders ready for different situations and help us evaluate our ability to handle problems beyond the scope of daily happenings in our university community.
- By simulating a crisis and engaging the leadership in a decision-making discussion, we improve our ability to respond to a real emergency. To make drills realistic, senior leadership participate. Participation prepares them to take a leadership role in an actual emergency and furthers their understanding of how assets are deployed and an incident command system works.
- We understand that because of the size of our campus, we may not expect to see community resources in case of natural disaster until up to 48 hours or longer after a major emergency. Campus drills allow us to test our ability to support the 8,000-plus students who reside on campus and who would remain our responsibility in a major event if students could not travel home.
- Campus Police are the first responders to any campus police emergency and we test their preparedness to all types of police emergencies.
- Environmental Health staff are first responders to campus radiation safety and chemical emergencies. They serve as technical specialists should regional HAZMAT teams respond to campus. We test our technical ability to respond as well as ability to advise and communicate with outside partners and regulatory agencies.
- Campus Fire Protection staff are all Emergency Medical Technician certified and are first to respond to emergency medical events. We have tested our ability to respond to unique campus medical emergencies that may involve radioactive material and chemical agents.

Our drills often include municipal response groups. We are proud of our working relationship with Raleigh Fire, Hazmat, EMS and Police; and Wake County Emergency and the State Office of Emergency Management. In turn, community emergency drills often include NC State responders and sometimes use NC State facilities (football stadium, high-rise residence halls, underground utility tunnels) to realistically test the ability to respond to complicated emergency situations.

Over the past four years, we conducted or participated in the following drills:

- Infectious disease outbreak (smallpox, pandemic flu with the Wake County Health Department)
- Radioactive material release ("dirty bomb") with Raleigh Hazmat, Raleigh Police Bomb Squad
- Terrorist chemical attack with Raleigh Hazmat, Wake and State Emergency Management, federal agencies, police agencies

- Terrorist attack with hostages at an athletics facility with local, state and federal police agencies
- Active shooter on campus with multiple police agencies
- Urban search and rescue, with Raleigh Hazmat and Fire Department
- Train derailment with state, local and federal agencies

What We Have Learned

All drills are designed to test our ability to respond promptly to a crisis, communicate effectively with drill participants and our community at large, and to take appropriate action to stabilize, mitigate and resolve the problem. Each type of drill presents different and unique challenges that require temporary work-around actions and implementation of corrective action plans during and after the drill. Among other things, we have learned that:

- Universities must prepare for catastrophe through planning and funding. Universities that are self sufficient, provide support to the larger community in a disaster through personnel, expertise and shelter. Of course, universities not prepared become another entity of potentially thousands of people in need of rescue.
- Pre-planning is critical. Universities must clarify in advance with surrounding city and county agencies their expectations of use of university facilities for shelter, such as coliseums and convention facilities. These expectations may conflict with university plans or require extensive university support.
- Universities must work in partnership with local and state agencies and must consider entering into its own contracts and agreements with vendors for continuity and support.
- We must continue revision and improvement of existing plans in accordance with changes in internal capabilities and roles and responsibilities. We must also account for changes in capabilities of supporting groups and agencies.
- Departments require cross training in functional roles and need to understand the capabilities and limits of responding groups.
- Internal and external communication protocols and capabilities must be tested and retested. Emergency mass communication is a challenge and communication systems fail when stressed (cell phones, web servers, text message systems). When our communication systems have failed we have had to improvise.
- During our radiological drills, we have learned that emergency responders need better personal monitoring equipment and training and need to understand some of the technical aspects of our radiological license.
- During chemical emergency response, the university has had to provide specific monitoring instrumentation to outside responders.
- Recovery and reconstitution plans must be in place, continuously updated and tested.
- Understanding the limits of our ability to respond to various scenarios and the shortcomings of key systems such as communication pathways is critical. By practicing various emergency scenarios, we begin to gain an understanding of the way the campus population may respond to instructions and what systems may fail.
- We have developed mechanisms to regularly share equipment and information with outside responders, recognizing that a university campus response is often not the same as a general community emergency response because of the density of the population and sometimes-unique hazards.
- We have learned that no crisis proceeds according to plan.

What More Can the Department Homeland Security (DHS) Do to Help Improve Campus Safety

I am aware that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has reached out to support state and local governments and universities through various initiatives, including the Disaster Resistant Universities Initiative. In our own experiences—and in our conversations with our colleagues from around the country—we believe that university campuses are so large, complex and unique that special support is required.

My recommendations include:

- Establish one National Resource Center that supports the provision of emergency planning and campus security information to universities and ensures that universities are aware and familiar with available resources. This Center could help introduce a greater focus on the unique security needs of college campuses.
- DHS could create a "best practice" symposium on campus safety and security. The last national symposium was called by Oak Ridge Associated Universities

in 2003. Universities are struggling to identify "best practices" for a wide range of security and communications issues.

• Pulling the first two points together, the Center could research, develop and train best practices in interdisciplinary and all hazard disasters and guide universities in implementing effective programs.

• DHS has made great strides in encouraging the public to develop family and personal emergency plans. We believe university campuses also have an obligation to support emergency plan development. DHS could create materials targeted to college students such as "Ready Kids" for children and utilize campuses to communicate more information to families about personal emergency planning.

• Help establish well-formulated and tested standardized threat assessment protocols for university campuses modeled after guidelines of the *Safe School Initiative* for public schools developed by the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Secret Service.

• In support of the above point, evaluate how constraints regarding sharing of information mandated by the Federal Family Educations Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Probability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) impact on a university's ability to share and receive information that may be relevant to identifying threatening individuals.

• Help coordinate and develop standardized campus security and hardening protocols. Current requirements specified by Select Agent rules, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, DHS's *Interim Final Rule: Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards* need to be coordinated so universities implement standardized hardening and security protocols that support the requirements of a multitude of regulations.

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to discuss this important issue of campus safety. Your willingness to engage in an open dialogue and seek input from colleges and universities will help and continue to improve our ability to respond to campus emergencies. It is also hoped that this hearing and future initiatives will better prepare our campuses to prevent future tragedies.

Chairman THOMPSON. We will now hear from Mr. Renick.

STATEMENT OF DR. JAMES C. RENICK, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH, AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

Mr. RENICK. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee. And thank you for your invitation to be here before you this afternoon. In the interest of time, my oral presentation will highlight key points in my written testimony submitted for the record.

Let me start by saying, college campus presidents and chancellors take emergency preparedness very seriously. Without security our institutions' educational missions cannot flourish. Campus leadership must develop and continue continually update emergency preparedness plans that will be effective against a range of potential hazards, including terrorism like 9/11, natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina, possible public health emergencies like avian flu, and gun violence like the recent tragedy at Virginia Tech. Much as we might plan and wish the truth is that our campuses are very much a part of the communities they inhabit and so will never be totally isolated from the perils of the outside world.

Nevertheless, the available evidence suggests campuses are among the safest places for young people in America to be. All of the planning college presidents and chancellors do is necessary, but it is not easy. Many colleges and universities are large, diverse and complex places that are open by design.

For example, North Carolina A&T enrolls 11,000 students. It employs over 1,700 faculty and staff across a sprawling 800-acre cam-

pus, located in downtown Greensboro, whose physical plant includes over 80 buildings, including dormitories, classrooms, research labs, cafeterias, libraries, electrical towers, hazardous waste storage facilities.

On any given day, many hundreds of additional visitors make their way across A&T's largely urban campus via multiple entry points to attend meetings and other events. This type of free-flowing mobility occurs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round, involving a population of predominantly young adults whose habits, behaviors and attitudes often differ significantly from both elementary and secondary school students and workplace employees.

In short, college campuses can be thought of and accurately compared to small—to medium-sized cities with all the activities, vibrancies and, sadly, the vulnerabilities that entails.

With respect to recommendations that the committee might consider in this area, let me offer the following:

First, the fact that this hearing is occurs appropriately underscores the importance of this topic and its worthiness for increased Federal investments, particularly in the rapidly developing area of technology with all of its promise and cost.

Second, we believe that the Federal Government should recognize the unique and vital role that campus security personnel must play in any comprehensive homeland security plan, and amend current law to allow campus police to receive DHS or DOJ funds directly.

Third, we support the creation of a National Center for Campus Public Safety as recommended, by the 2004 Department of Justice Summit. And finally, AC encourages the committee to carefully reexamine the way in which higher education is currently being integrated into both the national infrastructure protection plan as well as the Department of Homeland Security's recently announced interim rule on chemical facilities, antiterrorism standards. In both cases we are concerned that a lack of meaningful input and substantive consultation with the higher education community is producing policy goals that, though well intended, are going to face significant real-world implementation problems on campuses across the country.

Again, thank you for your invitation to be here with you this afternoon.

[The statement of Mr. Renick follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES C. RENICK

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member King and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the timely and critical matter of how best to protect our schools in this post-9/11 world. My name is Dr. James C. Renick. I am the Senior Vice President for Programs and Research at the American Council on Education (ACE), which represents more than 1,800 two- and four-year, public and private institutions of higher education throughout the United States. Formerly, I served as Chancellor at both North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and the University of Michigan–Dearborn.

As a former chancellor who has spent the bulk of his professional career in campus administration and teaching, I can tell you that the safety of students, faculty and staff is a fundamental, ongoing concern of every college and university president. Without security, our institutions? educational missions cannot flourish. For that reason, whether the risk emanates from an act of terrorism like 9/11, a natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina, a potential public health emergency like avian flu, or gun violence like the recent tragedy at Virginia Tech, campus presidents go to

great lengths to develop, maintain and continuously assess emergency preparedness plans that will be effective at both preventing and responding to an exceptionally wide range of potential hazards.

This planning is necessary, but it is not easy. Colleges and universities are large, diverse and complex places that are open by design. To take an example I am intimately familiar with, North Carolina A&T enrolls over 11,000 students and employs over 1,700 faculty and staff across a sprawling 800 acre campus located in downtown Greensboro, N.C. whose physical plant encompasses over 80 buildings—including dormitories, classrooms, laboratories, cafeterias, libraries, gymnasiums, parking decks, electrical towers, hazardous waste storage facilities and livestock barns. On any given day, many hundreds of additional visitors make their way across A&T's largely urban campus via multiple points of entry to attend meetings, events or other functions. This kind of free-flowing mobility occurs at every hour of the day and night, all week long, throughout the entire year. Moreover, it involves a population of predominantly young adults whose habits, attitudes and behaviors differ significantly from both elementary and secondary students and workplace employees.

In short, many college campuses can be thought of—and accurately compared to—self-contained, small—to medium-sized cities—with all the activity, vibrancy and, sadly, vulnerability associated with cities. Unfortunately, inasmuch as campuses are very much a part of the communities they inhabit, they can never be totally insulated from the full panoply of risks found in society as a whole. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that colleges and universities are among the safest places to be for young adults in America.

In its most recent 2001 Report to Congress, "The Incidence of Crime on the Campuses of U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions," the Department of Education found that the overall rate of criminal homicide at postsecondary institutions was .07 per 100,000 students enrolled, compared to a criminal homicide rate of 14.1 per 100,000 17–29 year olds in society at large—making college students 200 times safer than their off-campus peers with respect to this kind of violence. Based on these findings, the Department of Education concluded that "students on the campuses of postsecondary institutions [are] significantly safer than the nation as a whole."

Since this is the House Committee on Homeland Security, I have been asked to reflect on how well the Department of Homeland Security specifically—as well as the federal government generally—has been addressing emergency preparedness on college campuses.

In response, I would tell you that, without question, all stakeholders involved in these efforts—including our campuses, state and local authorities, as well as the federal government—have been noticeably more focused regarding matters of emergency preparedness since the events of September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina. To offer one of many possible examples, the University of Florida drew on its own experience—as well as the experience of other institutions—to develop hurricane evacuation models that have become widely adopted by institutions along the Gulf plain. In one of the largely unheralded success stories of the Hurricane Katrina disaster, our 30 New Orleans and Gulf Coast institutions were subsequently able to use those models to evacuate more than 100,000 students and staff during Hurricane Katrina without a single loss of life.

At the federal level, I would commend the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) for its recent partnership with the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA). Through a grant from DHS, IACLEA has been able to develop a state of the art suite of emergency preparedness tools designed to help campus administrators evaluate threats on their campuses and implement best practices to address them. Shortly after the tragedy at Virginia Tech, the American Council on Education (ACE) worked with IACLEA to broadly disseminate these DHS-funded planning and training materials to our presidents and chancellors, along with a list of jointly developed security and emergency preparedness questions all campus leaders should ask (see attachment).

Of course, more can and should be done.

First, the value, and corresponding cost, of deploying ever more sophisticated technology to effectively deter and mitigate the full range of threats facing college campuses today clearly makes this an area worthy of increased federal investment.

Second, it is worth noting that, unlike other specialized security professionals like transit or tribal security, campus security personnel are currently not eligible to receive grant funds directly from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) or the Department of Justice (DoJ). Instead, campus officials must rely on state or local law enforcement to include campus security departments in their own emergency planning, which in many cases does not happen. While the American Council on Education (ACE) honors the efforts of law enforcement and first responders at all

levels of government, we believe the federal government should recognize the unique and vital role that campus security must play in any comprehensive homeland security plan by enabling campus police to receive emergency preparedness funds directly from DHS and DoJ.

Third, ACE fully supports the creation of a National Center for Campus Public Safety, as recommended by the 2004 Department of Justice Summit. We believe such a center would promote needed collaboration between national and local law enforcement while strengthening the administrative and operational components of campus security systems across the country.

Fourth, and finally, we respectfully request that the committee re-examine the way in which higher education is currently being incorporated into the Department of Homeland Security's National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP). Specifically, we are concerned that the NIPP's Educational Facilities Sub–Sector Plan shoehorns institutions of higher education alongside elementary and secondary schools under the Department of Education-s Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools without regard to the vast differences between these entities with respect to funding, governance, size and physical infrastructure. Additionally, the Educational Facilities Sub-Sector Plan to which our institutions have been assigned falls under the broader Government Facilities sector, despite the fact that a majority of American colleges and universities are private institutions and that our public institutions historically have closer ties to state and local governments. Perhaps most troubling, the current NIPP subdivides many elements of our campuses between multiple sectors (e.g. stadiums and arenas, transportation, chemicals, cybersecurity, public safety, educational facilities, etc.), thereby complicating emergency preparedness and response considerably by requiring an institution governed by a single president or chancellor to interface with multiple departments of government both during the emergency planning process and in the event of an emergency.

Although higher education is listed as a "security partner" with respect to the NIPP, key higher education associations have to date not been meaningfully consulted regarding the NIPP's development, resulting in the wide-ranging deficiencies described above. At the end of the day, I am afraid that any security plan for higher education developed without the substantive input and expertise of higher education itself will not optimally secure the human, physical and cyber assets we are all committed to protecting.

Thank you for your consideration of these views. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

ATTACHMENT:

David Ward and the
American Council on Education's
President to President
Vol. 8, No. 20
May 2, 2007

SPECIAL EDITION
• Questions Campus Leaders Should Ask About Security and Emergency Preparedness

Recent events have focused significant attention on the need to plan for campus emergencies. While incidents of violence on campus remain isolated, recent events have shown that institutions are often subject to profound natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, flood; attacks on technology systems; releases of biological and chemical agents; and even terrorism. Because of this, campus leaders throughout the country are addressing preparedness for crisis with renewed urgency.

Although no single template will adequately meet the emergency planning needs of all institutions, among the key questions presidents should consider are these:

- Has our institution conducted a comprehensive assessment of the potentially catastrophic risks it faces? Has our institution made plans that address those risks?
- Does our institution have an appropriate emergency team in place? Is the team headed by a senior administrator? Do key team members regularly participate in emergency preparedness exercises?
- Does our institution have a plan for continuous operation in the event of an emergency (i.e., continuity plan)? Is that plan applicable to all types of emergencies?
- Does our institution have multiple means to communicate with students, faculty, staff and visitors in the event of an immediate, ongoing emergency situation?

• What role does our campus information technology leadership play in our emergency planning? How are technology experts brought into the day-to-day planning process for campus communications, emergency response, and the ability to maintain campus services during a short- or long-term disruption?

• What communication and coordination networks exist among our campus security leadership, local law enforcement, political officials, first responders and health officials, both on an ongoing basis and in case of emergency? For example, does our institution's campus safety department have mutual aid agreements or memoranda of understanding with local emergency response agencies?

• What kinds of processes or programs does our institution utilize to inventory campus security resources, including the ability to retain experienced, trained staff?

• Is the training of campus security personnel appropriately responsive to catastrophic risks?

• Are the policies and procedures used at our institution appropriate with respect to persons who are believed to pose significant danger to themselves or others?

Even the best-managed institutions cannot completely eliminate the risk of catastrophe. But by addressing such risks thoughtfully, institutions can increase their preparedness. Resources are available to assist in this work. For example, the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) has developed what it believes to be best practices, as well as all-hazards campus preparedness planning and training materials and guidance that your institution may find useful. The IACLEA Campus Preparedness Resource Center, developed with support from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, is accessible at *http://www.iaclea.org/visitors/WMDCPT/cprc/login.cfm*. The login is XXXXX and the password is XXXXX.

In the world in which we live, emergency planning has taken on heightened priority. Questions and resources such as those identified above can be valuable in this effort.

David Ward,
President of ACE

Chairman THOMPSON. Thank you very much.

I appreciate the testimony of all of our witnesses, and I will start with my questions.

Ms. Ashby, I heard in your testimony a story that I can pretty much identify with. I have some 50-odd school districts in my congressional district. And to be honest with you, I would probably have 50 different plans, 50 levels of whether or not they have been implemented.

Can you just tell me, based on your study, did you find much participation by districts in school preparedness? Or is this just one of many things that they would do in the normal course of a school year? And I guess what I am saying is, did you see any real emphasis on preparedness or was this one of 400 other things they did in the running of a year?

Ms. ASHBY. It varies. In terms of looking at the plans themselves, the emergency management plans, some were very elaborate in terms of spelling out roles for the district officials and for school officials, and even in some cases, what the teacher should do in a classroom in an emergency setting.

Others were much simpler with just a basic outline of things to consider, that sort of thing.

Some school districts actually provide money to schools in their districts to help them with their emergency management planning. It really varies.

We didn't visit districts in your State, so I can't talk about that.

Chairman THOMPSON. Yeah. Well, thank you. You probably would have found the same thing.

Mr. Trump, in your testimony you kind of gave a broader brush to this issue of preparedness. What has your experience taught you in terms of the district level participation in this?

Mr. TRUMP. Mr. Chairman, it is very consistent with Ms. Ashby's findings. One of the unintended consequences of No Child Left Behind in the focus on academics today has actually pushed school safety and emergency planning to the back burner in many school districts. It is not the fact they don't care. It is not the fact educators aren't concerned. It has just been an issue, as you well stated, that it is one of the 400 things to do.

With the pressure of school leaders today to get their test scores up because many of their jobs, quite frankly, are on the line to do so, school safety and emergency planning has not been as high of a priority that many wish that it should be.

One of the side benefits of some of the funding, the Emergency Response and Crisis Management Grants, the REMS grants, the midlevel managers have been trying to push it onto the front burners of the boards; and their superintendents have actually said that the presence of those grants has forced them to do things and get it back upon the radar screens at a time when it otherwise might still be simmering on the back burner.

The interest varies not only district to district, but principal to principal. We stress that it is a leadership issue, but all in all we found that the progress that was made after Columbine in 1999 has actually stalled and slipped backwards in the recent years, along with the funding that goes with it.

Chairman THOMPSON. Well, I think the funding has been documented. One thing that concerned me—you heard the testimony of the other panel—is that while we require a school preparedness plan, nobody checks it for completeness or anything. And, in fact, Mr. Etheridge and I talked to the chairman of the Education Committee between votes, and I assure you that we will tighten that part of the requirement up so that there is some review of whatever is submitted.

Mr. TRUMP. If I may, Mr. Chairman, just say that you are absolutely right. And what I will say is that in the 32 States that were mentioned as having requirements, we found exactly what you are saying in one State that requires the superintendent to sign off each year and certify to the State superintendent that plans have been reviewed annually.

We reviewed four or five in the year 2006 that were still dated 1999. There are few carrots for actually following through, and there are absolutely no sticks, no auditing, no consequences that go with it for those who don't.

Chairman THOMPSON. And that is K-through-12.

At the college level, one of the concerns is, we don't have a Federal oversight entity, to my knowledge, that has any real focus on colleges and universities.

Would you care to address how you would see that coming to play in Federal responsibility, Mr. Rainer?

Mr. RAINER. I think you are correct. I think there is no Federal oversight. Because we are so big and we have such an important place in the city of Raleigh, we have taken it upon ourselves to work through the city the county and the State.

So I can only tell you that we recognize that since there is no oversight authority, we work with our—and partner with other State agencies and local agencies to make sure that we can do the right thing. And if we didn't partner with them, I can honestly say that we would not have effective plans and we would not be able to implement them.

Mr. RENICK. I would agree totally.

I would only add, one size in higher education won't fit all because of the range and diversity of type. I think Federal incentives to support certain behaviors would be useful but I would just add that there is an incredible array of diversity in American higher education. And so federalizing that, you know, would have to be a variable included in an approach of that magnitude.

Chairman THOMPSON. Yeah. I will yield my time to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again let me thank you for this hearing, and let me thank and welcome my colleagues from North Carolina.

Mr. Rainer and Dr. Renick, thank you for being here.

And I acknowledge, there is a huge difference at the university level, as there is at the public school level; they are totally different, as you can appreciate, and yet, at the same time, there are a lot of similarities.

Let me—Ms. Ashby—excuse me. Ms.µAshby, let me get a question to you. Let me thank you for the work you and your colleagues are doing with the GAO survey; I look forward to getting it when you are finished. We had asked earlier to get that done, and I appreciate the work that you have done.

The reason—and the chairman knows this. The reason we have asked for that is because I have always believed that schools are soft targets. They are just out there, and I was concerned even when I was a State superintendent, and North Carolina took the lead in the country putting school resource officers in, even before we did it at the Federal level.

Yet when things get stable, we tend to relax. And when you relax, that is a dangerous time because that is when you get in trouble. So my question to you is, as you look across this, have you gotten far enough along in the report to indicate, number one, what the funding level is, what kind of funding level we need?

Obviously, everyone would say we need more money. But the point is, if we do it, it seems to me it has to be at a sustained level, so you cannot only get a plan, but a plan has to be executed and worked, similar to what you do with fire drills and tornado drills, because here we would be even more sophisticated.

And the second part of it is, in your survey, what is the most pressing need for funding? And if there is one, what kind of funding are we talking about, talking about direct; or are they talking about grants, are they talking about the Department of Education? Are they talking about Homeland Security or what kind of combination? Or does it matter?

Ms. ASHBY. Okay. In terms of the total amount of funding needed, that is not a question I can answer beyond what we did in our survey. But in the terms of the most pressing needs—and we refer to those as challenges in our report and in our testimony state-

ment—States told us that what they need is expertise. And along with that training, but beyond training their current personnel, they need, in some cases, individuals that have expertise in emergency planning.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Would that mean coordination between—within the local communities as well?

Ms. ASHBY. It is certainly reasonable if they could get it through that, yes. But as I said in my brief opening statement and in the fuller testimony statement, there isn't a whole lot of that going on.

School districts or school also need equipment. In one case, for example, something as simple as they didn't have locks for all of their doors, so they couldn't do a lockdown if they needed to. From there to more elaborate needs.

But all of it does translate into money, and in terms of exactly how much, I don't know. Certainly, in terms of how it should be funded, I don't think it matters whether it is from the Department of Education or DHS or, you know, from them through the States. But certainly grants would seem to be their reasonable mechanism.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Let me interrupt, if I may, at this point, because it seems to me that what you have just suggested is something that may be workable.

Number one—more importantly, coordinate with the State and the local level with a mechanism so that—some of these things are very similar to be done and could be done very recently if we had a plan. You have to find out what the problem is first, before you decide what kind of resources you are going to need. Once you do that survey, then it needs to be jointly done so we get it done.

I think Mr. Trump touched on that earlier. Those are the kinds of things, if you don't know what you don't know, it is kind of hard to fix what you don't know needs to be fixed. And it seems to me it varies in size from A to B to C to D, and calling attention to it first is what we are trying to do; and number two, devising the plan to fix it, and number three, fix it, and number four, have a plan that fixes it so it doesn't happen again.

Ms. ASHBY. Correct. That makes absolute sense. One of the things we did find out in our survey is that most of the schools, school districts, are assessing their own vulnerabilities and reacting to the extent they can to those vulnerabilities. But therein lie the needs.

In some cases, they can't control their perimeter, for example, so they would need fencing. They might need security cameras; they might need some type of alarm system. But—most seem to know, based on their planning, what was needed, but they didn't always have the means to get it.

Chairman THOMPSON. If I might cut in, one of the things that we have seen is not enough of the stakeholders are involved in that process—you know, the fire department, law enforcement, emergency management. We found very few instances of all the stakeholders being involved in putting together a school preparedness plan.

The example, on most campuses, people did not know how to get on that in the most efficient manner. They would just go to the school and they could not identify buildings or anything like that because there is no lettering on a lot of buildings. Now—just some

basic things that could go toward improving response time, the knowledge of who is there.

Law enforcement could not talk to the school system on a radio system; they are on two different frequencies. Parents could not be notified of what was going on in an incident because they did not have a system to notify parents.

So there were a lot of things lacking, and especially—in both situations. You know, we are the custodians of the children. And to some degree, parents or guardians ask the school districts or the colleges and universities, take care of my children while you have them. And we should do the best job possible.

And I think our emphasis with this hearing is to work with the various committees of jurisdiction on identifying through hearings what the problems are, but also coming up with some resources. We recognize the shortages, but we need, to some degree, standardized preparedness.

As to say, a basic school preparedness plan should have one, two, three, four. So while there is no cookie-cutter approach to it, it has to include certain things. And I think that is where we are headed, respecting size and all of that.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Chairman, I know we have a vote pending. But the final point I want to make is that some have done it. North Carolina has done it, working with the attorney general's office, working with the local superintendents and local schools.

As you have indicated, it is a coordinated effort. We can't put all this load on the backs of teachers and principals and custodians and people in the schools. It really is a community effort, and we will try to do our part to make it happen.

I want to thank the chairman for taking the time to pull this together because this is the way we will draw attention to it; and we will work to make it happen.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman THOMPSON. Absolutely.

And let me thank the witnesses for being so patient. I know all of us are very busy, and I again thank you for your input.

We might have some more questions that we will submit to you in writing, based on what we have heard today, and we will allow ample time for a response.

Again, thank you very much. Committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:52 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

Appendix: Questions and Responses

Responses to Questions for the Record by Ms. Holly Kuzmich
Deputy Chief of Staff
Policy and Programs
Department of Education

QUESTION FROM REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON

SCHOOL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANS

Question. Does the Department of Education certify that schools have emergency management plans? Can you describe what they certify? What does the department expect?

Answer. Under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) State Grants Program, the U.S. Department of Education awards funds to States based on a formula contained in the SDFSCA. State educational agencies (SEAs) use program funds to award subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to support a variety of activities designed to prevent youth drug use and violence. The statute requires that LEAs applying for funding under the program include an assurance that they have a plan for keeping schools safe and drug-free that includes a crisis management plan for responding to violent or traumatic incidents on school grounds. (Section 4114(d)(7)(D))

LEA applications for funding are reviewed and funded at the SEA, and SEAs monitor the compliance of LEAs with this and other statutory requirements. We have not promulgated regulations that specify the content of individual LEA crisis management plans in order provide needed flexibility for local sites to construct plans in concert with their first responders that are consistent with broader State and local emergency management planning activities and local hazards. Nor do we review and certify individual plans. Instead, we have developed and widely disseminated a guide to crisis planning that provides a framework for LEAs to use in constructing emergency management plans that address the four phases of such planning – prevention-mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

A recent study from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that most States and school districts reported having requirements for emergency management plans. Based on the results of a survey, GAO estimates that 95 percent of school districts have written emergency management plans, though those plans may not be as comprehensive as desirable, or updated or practiced frequently.

QUESTION FROM REPRESENTATIVE ETHERIDGE

AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

Question. What are you doing to assure "resources" are available through the technical assistance center and the Department of Education?

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Answer. We have funded, and will continue to fund, a training and technical assistance center to support the efforts of LEAs to develop or enhance their efforts to plan for and respond to emergency and crisis situations. This center supports current Emergency Response and Crisis Management grantees, but center resources are also available to non-grantee school districts and their partners, non-public school staff, and the general public.

Information and resources about emergency management issues are available from agencies around the Federal government. We intend our technical assistance center to focus specifically on strategies, resources, and information that are particularly appropriate for and applicable to emergency management issues in schools. We believe that this approach supplies "one stop shopping" for school officials who are seeking help and support with a broad range of issues related to emergency management in schools.

The technical assistance center (TA Center) also includes links to other Federal agencies that provide emergency management materials and resources. We have also established a listserv with grantees that affords them the opportunity to pose specific questions to center staff via an online TA request form, a TA hotline, and a TA email address. TA Center staff work with ED staff and outside expert consultants, as needed, to provide responses to questions posed by the public. The website address for the TA center is www.ercm.org.

ED has also awarded competitive grants for the Emergency Response and Crisis Management program in each fiscal year between 2003 and 2006. The fiscal year 2007 competition for new awards is currently underway, and we plan to announce a new slate of awardees in September 2007. ED staff also provide technical assistance, particularly to Emergency Response and Crisis Management Grant recipients, and also work with experts in the field to develop training and technical assistance resources and publications for use by grantees, LEA personnel, and the technical assistance center.

QUESTION FROM REPRESENTATIVE LANGEVIN

TRAINING SESSIONS

Question. Pertaining to the dissemination sessions/presentations, what percentage are school officials? Are these presentations just briefings or do you go to the school on site?

Answer. Each Emergency Response and Crisis Management grantee is required to attend two training sessions designed to address both important content about emergency management strategies and grant administration issues. Based on information collected about participants at these trainings of grantees, about 95 percent of participants are school-based personnel.

Beginning in 2006, we also developed and have implemented training sessions designed to introduce non-grantees to the "four phases" emergency management

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framework, and assist them in developing or improving their school emergency management plans. The sessions target local school district and nonpublic school officials charged with developing emergency management strategies for their schools and feature school personnel and first responders who are involved in planning for and responding to emergency or crisis situations. The sessions are designed to provide core information to help attendees return to their communities and begin assessing hazards, developing plans, and practicing the plans and procedures they put in place, and are held at centrally located conference or meeting sites. Approximately 125 participants attend each session. About 94 percent of participants at these events for non-grantees are school-based personnel.

Two trainings were held in 2006, and two more have been completed this year. We also supplement these training sessions by providing grantees with information about other trainings being offered on emergency management by other agencies, such as FEMA. In addition, the training conducted in February 2007 was videotaped and is now available online via webcast so that it may be accessed for training by local school officials at any time.

QUESTION FROM REPRESENTATIVE CUELLAR

LIST OF AGENCIES AND GRANTS

Question. Will you provide a list of all agencies involved in school safety and what they provide in an easy format for constituents to have easy access? Also, please provide a list of all grants, compiled in an easy format. When will you able to provide this? This afternoon? Within five weeks?

Answer. The information you request is included on our Emergency Management and Crisis Response Technical Assistance Center website, located at www.ercm.org. The website includes a "Resources" section that assembles information about programs, resources, and activities across the Federal government, as well as organizations from the private sector, that could assist schools in planning for and responding to emergency or crisis situations. For example, the website includes information from the U.S. Department of Education; the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Office of Justice Programs at the U.S. Department of Justice, the United States Secret Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency at the Department of Homeland Security, the Environmental Protection Agency, the American Psychological Association, the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University, the Red Cross, and the National Organization on Disabilities. Topics addressed include providing mental health services after a crisis, the incident command system, threat assessment, school chemical cleanup, pandemic influenza, effective prevention programs, addressing the special needs of

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disabled individuals in a crisis situation, and general crisis planning information. Resources include publications, checklists, and on-line training opportunities, and are designed to meet the needs of students and their families, and education personnel including counselors and other mental health professionals. We update the website frequently with new information and material as it becomes available.

The website also includes a list of Emergency Response and Crisis Management Grantees from Fiscal Years 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006. Visitors to the website can search an interactive map for grant sites sorted by State.

QUESTIONS FROM REPRESENTATIVE CARNEY

SCHOOL PLANS

Question. How do you validate that the schools have a plan?

Answer. The SDFSCA requires that LEAs applying for funding under the State Grants Program include an assurance that they have a plan for keeping schools safe and drug-free that includes a crisis management plan for responding to violent or traumatic incidents on school grounds. (Section 4114(d)(7)(D)) This provision is part of a broader group of application requirements for LEAs. SEAs solicit applications for subgrants under the program, review and approve the information provided in applications, and monitor LEAs for compliance with this and other application and program requirements. The Department of Education does not review plans or verify that schools have plans in place. SEAs monitor LEA compliance with program requirements, including the assurance for a crisis management plan.

We have not promulgated regulations that specify the content of individual LEA emergency management plans in order to provide needed flexibility for local sites to construct plans in concert with their first responders that are consistent with broader State and local emergency management planning activities and local needs. In publications and trainings we do cite our *Guide for Schools and Communities: Practical Information on Crisis Planning* as a model that schools should emulate.

DHS INFORMATION SHARING AND TRAINING SESSIONS

Question. How specific does DHS share information and who can come to these sessions?

Answer. Each Emergency Response and Crisis Management grantee is required to attend two training sessions designed to address both important content about emergency management strategies and grant administration issues.

Beginning in 2006, we also developed and have implemented training sessions designed to introduce non-grantees to the "four phases" emergency management framework, and assist them in developing or improving their school emergency

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management plans. The sessions target local school district and nonpublic school officials charged with developing emergency management strategies for their schools and feature school personnel and first responders that are involved in planning for and responding to emergency or crisis situations. The sessions are designed to provide core information to help attendees return to their communities and begin assessing hazards, developing plans, and practicing the plans and procedures they put in place. Approximately 125 participants attend each session. Two trainings were held in 2006, and two more have been completed this year.

ED works with the TA Center to share information on upcoming training opportunities and to coordinate registration for events.

QUESTIONS FROM REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON ON BEHALF OF REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTHY

DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

Question. I have introduced a bill, H.R. 354, the SAVE Act which would require the use of law enforcement data to identify the safety climate in K-12 schools, because in my view, we do not have an accurate picture of what is happening in schools. We are missing a piece of the puzzle, namely timely and uniform data we could to identify school violence and crimes. Under the Clery Act, colleges are required to use law enforcement data in their reporting to parents and the Department, but there is not a crime tracking system in place for K-12.

For our K-12 schools, we are using ONLY surveys and studies. Without reliable accurate data, we cannot identify problems and target assistance. The lack of good data recognized by the Administration's own Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) program evaluation which you discuss in your testimony, the Secretary's own Safe and Drug-Free Schools Advisory Committee, and the Department's Office of Inspector General. They have been highly critical of the inadequacy and inconsistency of data.

For example, you talk today about a data source, the School-Associated Violent Deaths Surveillance Study from the CDC – emphasis on the word STUDY. My understanding is that this survey looks at school associated violence deaths, and data is based on "interviews" conducted from 1994-1999, with data for subsequent study years being "preliminary" and subject to change. I can go onto the website of one of the witnesses in the next panel, Mr. Trump, and get violent death numbers as current as last week.

Given the concerns about poor, inconsistent data, do you think we ought to continue to focus on survey-based data rather than move to what they do in colleges and use uniform incident-based data reflecting actual numbers of incidents occurring in our schools? Colleges are required to use law enforcement data, why should K-12 use inferior data? Have you accepted any of the preliminary recommendations made by the Secretary's Safe and Drug-Free Advisory Committee in December? If yes, which ones,

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if not, why not? We are reauthorizing NCLB this year, have you prepared any recommendations for Congress on safety as the Inspector General suggested to the Department last year? If yes, what are they? If not, why not?

Answer. We believe that incident data and survey data are both important components of a complete picture about the nature of violence in elementary and secondary schools. These kinds of information, along with studies like the CDC/U.S. Department of Education School Associated Violent Deaths Surveillance Study, are all important parts of efforts to not only count violent incidents but to increase our understanding of the context surrounding such incidents.

The School Associated Violent Death Surveillance Study begins with identifying possible incidents by searching a variety of databases, but then takes the next step by conducting interviews to verify that incidents identified in preliminary searches in fact meet the criteria for inclusion as a school associated violent death. This method seeks to ensure that data included in the study are comparable from year-to-year, does not undercount or overcount these incidents, and accurately reflects trends.

As your question reflects, there are currently no Federal requirements that elementary or secondary schools or school districts collect incident-based data, such as the data required by the Clery Act. Instituting such a requirement would impose a very significant new burden on schools – a concern for the Administration, the Congress, the States and local school districts.

Information from surveys and studies is not inherently inferior to incident data. Many instances of harassing and violent behavior, such as bullying, that adversely affect the school environment and student perceptions of safety, do not constitute criminal offenses reportable to law enforcement and would not be reflected in incident data, but are captured in survey data collected from students.

This problem is also not unique to schools. More than 30 years ago, Department of Justice officials realized that FBI Arrest Reports did not present a comprehensive view of crime in communities and that many crimes went unreported to police, and instituted the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) – an annual survey administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) that is designed to provide information about criminal victimization that complements data collected and reported by law enforcement officials. As part of the NCVS, BJS, in collaboration with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), conducts a school crime and safety survey every two years. Administered to household members age 12 or older who attend school, the survey obtains information on availability of drugs at school, existence of street gangs, prevalence of gang fights, presence of guns at school, victimizations, and fear of being attacked or harmed. The results of the NCVS, along with data from other sources, are included in the joint BJS-NCES annual publication, *Indicators of School Crime and Safety.* The report presents statistical information on the nature of crime in schools, school environments, and responses to violence and crime at school from the perspectives of students, teachers, principals, and the general population.

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Additionally, many schools do not have law enforcement officials assigned to them, and reliance on data reported by such officials would represent only a fraction of all schools. Educators are also concerned about the potential impact of requiring reports of all offenses to law enforcement officials. Fights in schools could be classified as assaults and the students involved arrested. Threatening comments could be classified as criminal in nature and the students involved arrested. While this outcome would result in an increased number of "criminal offenses," it would also negatively affect many students and limit the flexibility of school officials to use their judgment to determine when a situation merits law enforcement involvement and potential arrests.

Our proposal for reauthorization of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) includes significant changes to the SDFSCA State Grants Program, including placing an increased emphasis on the role of States in helping their school districts implement effective strategies and programs to create safe, healthy and secure schools that reflect scientifically based research. The proposal would specifically authorize the provision of a variety of services to support school districts in their efforts to prepare for, prevent, mitigate, respond to, and recover from crises arising from violent or traumatic events, including allowing States to continue to use funds to collect data on the extent of crime and violence in schools.

We also propose replacing the existing SDFSCA National Program authority with a single, flexible discretionary program focused on four priority areas focused on critical areas of national concern – emergency management planning, preventing violence and drug use, improving school culture and climate, and other needs related to improving the learning environment to enable students to meet high academic standards.

We believe that improving the nature and quality of data concerning youth violence and drug use is an important priority, and that developing new legislative requirements that appropriately balance the need that educators, parents, and others in the community have for such data with concerns about burden and reliability presents a very difficult challenge. We look forward to working with the Congress to meet that challenge.

GUN-FREE SCHOOLS ACT

Question. The Gun Free Schools Act requires States to report firearm incidents, including school names to the Secretary annually. From what I understand, the Department is not collecting the names of schools, even though States do gather that data. I wrote a letter to the Secretary on March 23, asking her to explain what appears to be non-compliance with NCLB.

Why doesn't the Department collect the names of schools as the law requires? Are you concerned that parents would be interested in information about firearms in their child's

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school? Is there other information the Department is not collecting even though the law requires it?

Answer. As we indicated in our interim response to your inquiry, we are preparing a detailed response to your earlier letter on this topic and look forward to sharing information regarding our efforts to implement the Gun-Free Schools Act and collect and report information about the implementation of the provisions in the near future.

REDUCTION IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT FUNDING

Question. Ms. Kuzmich, figures from your own Department document a nearly 40 percent cut in funding for a program now known as the Readiness and Emergency Management program from 2003 to 2007. According to information provided by the Department the project funding was cut from $39 million to 134 school sites in 2003 down to $24 million to 77 school sites in 2006.

Ms. Kuzmich, what is the rationale of your office, the Secretary, and the Administration in cutting school emergency prepared funding nearly 40 percent since 2003 to the present?

Answer. The Department of Education awarded $39,323,649 in new Emergency Response and Crisis Management (now known as Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) grants) in FY 2003. Grants obligated in FY 2003 were supported with funding appropriated in FY 2002 and available for two years ($9,674,804), as well as with funding appropriated for FY 2003 ($29,648,845). These grants are part of a larger school emergency preparedness initiative that includes direct grants and a variety of technical assistance activities. Funding available for the initiative in FY 2003 was $30,505,151; FY 2004 initiative funding was $30,167,161; FY 2005 funding was $33,241,995; and FY 2006 funding totaled $27,212,985.

Based on this information, the FY 2003 funding for the initiative increased more than three-fold between FY 2002 and FY 2003. Funding remained fairly consistent between FY 2003 and FY 2004, and increased more than 10 percent between FY 2004 and 2005. FY 2006 funding was more than 90 percent of the FY 2003 level, and FY 2007 funding, while not final, is expected to be close to the FY 2003 and 2006 levels.

SCHOOL NURSES

Question. The National Association of School Nurses tells us that more than 50 percent of schools in the United States do not have a full-time registered nurse in the building. I want to know who will be responsible for the medical needs that will surely arise for students and staff when a disaster or emergency situation occurs in a school. School nurses today are serving an average of 2.2 schools – often traveling between schools A, B, and C.

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Does it concern you that only 50 percent of schools have a trained medical professional, such as a school nurse, on site to deal with such emergencies? To what extent does the Secretary of Education coordinate with school nurse experts in the preparation of emergency response plans, and do you feel that this coordination is adequate to address the needs of children and school staff in an emergency?

Answer. We believe that school nurses play an important role in helping schools create safe and healthy environments for students, particularly as they assist students in dealing effectively with chronic illnesses such as asthma. Along with qualified first responders, school nurses could provide valuable medical assistance for students and staff when an emergency or disaster occurs in a school. We strongly encourage school districts that do or employ school nurses or other important service providers such as school psychologists to identify individuals in their community that can provide services in the face of an emergency.

We work with the National Association of School Nurses on a variety of initiatives, such as the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP). We also seek the expertise of school nurses on issues related to a range of issues, including providing information about the medical management of chronic diseases in schools. This information is particularly useful as schools consider all-hazards planning by providing insight on managing medications during lockdown or evacuation procedures or considering plans for responding to emergencies caused by health problems like asthma, diabetes, or potentially serious food allergies.

As you know, State and local governments provide the vast majority of the funding that supports the salaries of educational personnel, including school nurses. We encourage State and local education officials to carefully consider the health and security needs of students and staff as they allocate their resources.

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