

Safe Schools Committee Meeting
Friday, November 20, 2015 – 10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Criminal Justice Institute
26 Corporate Hill Drive
Little Rock, Arkansas 72205

Minutes

Chair Dr. Cheryl May called the meeting to order 10:36. A quorum was established with the presence of the following voting members: Dr. May, Ms. Deborah Coffman, Mr. Jeff Collum, Mr. Randy Goodnight, Sgt. Chester Jones, and Mr. Scott Spainhour. The following ex officio members were present: Mr. John Gray and Ms. Otistene Smith. The following staff members were present: Ms. Vicki French, Ms. Michelle Griffin, and Mr. John Kaminar. Ms. Jerri Clark (Arkansas Department of Education School Health Services) was present as a guest. Dr. Elizabeth Kindall (Arkansas Department of Education School Based Mental Health) attended as a guest via speaker phone.

Mr. Collum moved that the minutes of the July 28, 2015 meeting be approved. Ms. Coffman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

The Committee discussed possible legislation to exclude school emergency plans from the Freedom of Information Act. The consensus was that the legislation should include school safety assessments, safety audits, crisis plans, and continuity of operation plans. Mr. Collum moved that the Safe Schools Committee request such legislation be submitted to the General Assembly during the 2017 legislative session. Mr. Spainhour seconded. The motion passed unanimously. It was suggested that Dr. May appoint a subcommittee to draft the proposed legislation. Senators Irvin and Chesterfield as well as Representative Gossage and Baltz were suggested as possible sponsors for the bill.

Mr. Collum reported on the School Safety Center Subcommittee's progress on the concept for establishing an Arkansas School Safety Center (ASSC). Mr. Collum presented a list of resources that should be provided by the ASSC, such as a toolkit and several legal resources. Dr. May suggested several prevention programs (Rachel's Challenge, Expect Respect, Smart Choices Better Chances, Drug Abuse Resistance Education, Gang Resistance Education and Training, and Be a Winner) be added as resources. Ms. Griffin suggested that the ASSC web page include sections for parents and students. Mr. Goodnight moved that the Committee develop proposed legislation for the 2017 legislative session to establish an Arkansas School Safety Center. Sgt. Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. May suggested that the Committee make plans for a school safety month or week, which should include a day that focuses on drug abuse prevention. The event could possibly coincide with school bus safety week during October.

Dr. May reported that CJI has continued to advocate for active shooter training for school employees. The CJI staff is developing a flier so that schools can request active shooter training during spring or summer breaks. It was suggested that the Arkansas School Boards Association and the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators might help publicize availability of the training.

Dr. May distributed a handout showing the statewide status of SRO training. CJI is focusing on the 39 SROs that have not received training. The consensus among police chiefs and sheriffs is that SRO training should not be mandatory, but should be a local law enforcement agency decision. Sgt. Jones said that smaller law enforcement agencies have a more difficult time manning SRO programs. He suggested that the ASSC and CJI could promote SRO training whether or not it is required by law.

Dr. May reported that she and CJI staff would soon meet with representatives of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management to begin the development of active shooter drills and training programs for schools.

Dr. May reported that CJI had provided some input to the Arkansas State Police (ASP) in their development of the regulations and requirements for Commissioned School Security Officer s(CSSO). The ASP requires 60 hours of training, including active shooter training and an extensive written examination for CSSOs. Twenty-four hours of annual refresher training is also required and must include 12 hours of firearms training.

Dr. May asked the Committee to discuss what information to present to the State Board of Education (SBE). Ms. Coffman said that the Committee could ask the SBE for feedback on proposed legislation, but could not ask the SBE to approve proposed legislation.

Ms. Coffman asked Mr. Kaminar to reorganize the Safe Schools Committee web page.

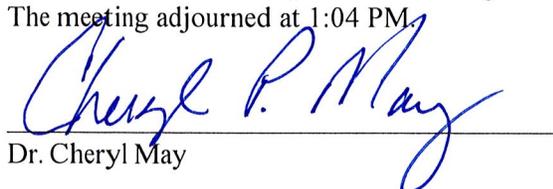
New Business:

Dr. Elizabeth Kindall joined the meeting via speaker phone at 11:30 AM to describe the Mental Health First Aid program. The program targets different populations (school employees, law enforcement), not just students, and involves imparting skills to laymen on how to recognize students with mental health issues and take initial steps to get help for students to move forward. Arkansas might implement the program by a train-the-trainer model, moving around the state to conduct training for others. At a projected cost of \$250,000, it would be possible to train 28,000 laypersons in an 18-month period. Dr. Kindall is working with the Arkansas Attorney General's office on possible funding for the project.

Dr. May reported on the Drug-Endangered Children Program, which focuses on children who are at risk because of parents' illicit drug activities. CJI has four pilot communities (Benton, Blytheville, Hot Springs, and White) which are beginning the program with law enforcement and social services personnel. School personnel and probation officers will join the program later. CJI is also working to implement the "Handle With Care" program, which focuses on helping educators to work more effectively with children whose parents have been arrested or have had negative interactions with law enforcement.

Dr. May wished the Committee members and guests a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday.

Mr. Collum moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Goodnight seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:04 PM.


Dr. Cheryl May