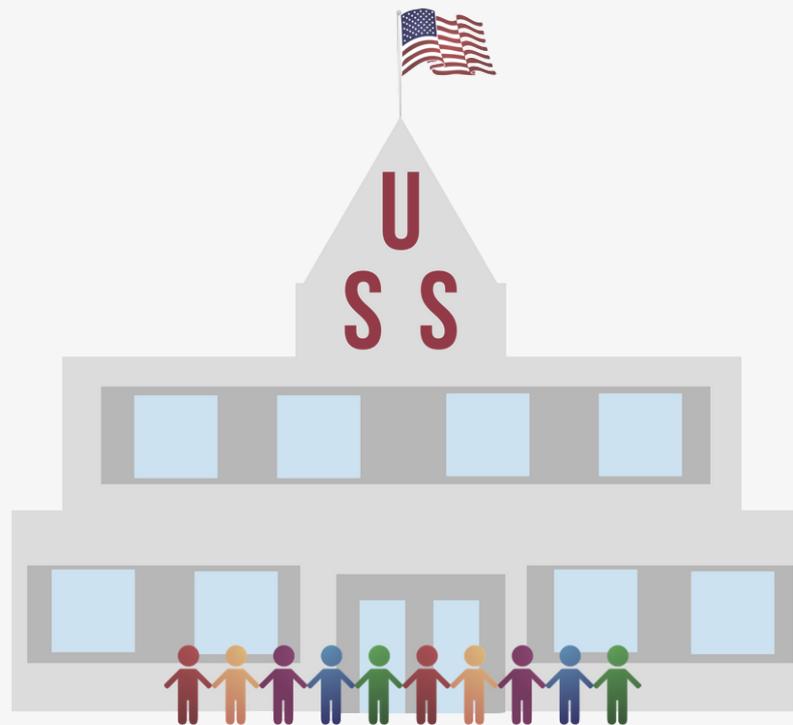


JUNE 2018

REPORT



"ALL OF USS...TOGETHER"

MEMBERS OF UTAH SAFE SCHOOLS COMMISSION:

- Clark Aposhian, chairman of the board of the Utah Shooting Sports Council
- Dallas Earnshaw, superintendent at Utah State Hospital
- John Hoffmann, professor of sociology at Brigham Young University
- Terryl Warner, member of the Utah State Board of Education
- Keith Squires, commissioner for the Utah Department of Public Safety
- Bryan Turner, director of Architectural Services at Davis School District
- Heidi Matthews, president of Utah Education Association
- Elizabeth Love, student representative - West High School
- Isaac Reese, student representative - Brighton High School
- Brian Nelson, director at Utah Division of Risk Management
- Captain Justin Chapman, Sandy City Police Department

REPORT OVERVIEW



THE PROCESS

The Utah Safe Schools Commission met several times from March through June of 2018. All members of the commission were invited to bring their ideas and findings on how to improve school safety. Each idea presented was discussed among the commission. Recommendations were ranked as follows.

RECOMMENDATIONS WERE RANKED AS FOLLOWS

Tier 1 recommendations are those in which there was a strong consensus among the commission as well as a sentiment that there would be strong community support. Ideas in this category are actionable and would be effective in improving school safety. The commission hopes these suggestions could be implemented as quickly and that there would be consideration of enactment at a special session.



Tier 2 recommendations are those that had a majority of support from the commission but not complete consensus. The commission believes these are ideas worthy of support but may need additional research or work to create specific legislative language. Some of these ideas are already in the process of being implemented and do not necessarily require further action. The commission split tier 2 ideas into two groups. The first group had majority support with some members neutral. The second group had majority support but with some members actively opposing the idea. The commission presumes a similar dynamic would exist in trying to implement these ideas in the community.

Tier 3 recommendations are those that had some support for action but not a majority. The reasons for not having majority support varied. In some cases, it was the simple perception that the idea is already being implemented on a widespread level. In other cases, a majority thought it might be helpful but not convinced that there was evidence for its effectiveness. In other incidents, a majority simply opposed the idea.

TIER 1 RECOMMENDATIONS

IDEAS WITH STRONG CONSENSUS AMONG THE GROUP THAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN.

1. QUICK AVAILABILITY OF WELL TRAINED MENTAL HEALTH TEAMS FOR STUDENTS AT HIGH RISK (VIRGINIA THREAT ASSESSMENT)

A BILL FILE WILL NEED TO BE OPENED AND FUNDING ASSIGNED IF THIS IS TO BE IMPLEMENTED.

Threat assessment teams are available to each school. The teams are led by the principal or an assistant principal and typically include a school counselor, a school psychologist and a school resource officer. The idea is to have teams of this nature available to all students. Larger districts may already have a similar program that could benefit from increased staff. Smaller districts and charters may need help from regionally implemented programs to have these services available.

The FBI and Secret Service have pointed out that almost all of these students communicated their intentions to attack through threats and warnings to their peers, such as through social media. Had these threats been reported to authorities and investigated, the shootings might have been prevented.

Threat assessment was developed by the U.S. Secret Service to deal with persons who threaten to attack public officials and has evolved into a standard approach to analyze a variety of dangerous situations. Threat assessment is a process of evaluating the threat, and the circumstances surrounding the threat, to uncover any facts or evidence that indicate the threat is likely to be carried out.

TIER 1 RECOMMENDATIONS CONT.

2. MANDATED MENTAL HEALTH REPORTING

A bill file will need to be opened and passed to implement this.

- For a period of several months last year, the Utah courts did not submit records that would prevent the mentally unfit from buying guns. For 13 months, the Utah Bureau of Criminal Identification (BCI) did not forward records to the federal level to be included in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).
- Recommend passing Legislation that would require the (BCI) to report the relevant records to NICS.
- Identify remaining barriers to the timely and consistent uploading of records to NICS.
- Provide any recommendations for fixing the system, whether it be through new legislation, procedures or policies.

3. GUN VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDERS

A bill file to this effect is already opened by Representative Steve Handy, but final language needs to be reached.

- Would allow families and household members, as well as law enforcement officers, to petition a court to remove a person's access to guns if he or she poses an imminent danger to self or others.
- An order should only be granted when a judge makes the determination, by clear and convincing evidence, that the person poses a significant risk of danger to self or others.
- If a risk protection order is granted, the person should receive community-based mental health treatment as a condition of the risk protection order.
- There should be a mechanism in place for the return of firearms upon termination of a risk protection order when a person is ordered to relinquish their firearms as a condition of the order.

TIER 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

GROUP 1

IDEAS WHICH HAD MAJORITY SUPPORT AND SOME MEMBERS NEUTRAL. SOME OF THESE WILL NEED ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND CLARIFICATION BEFORE ACTION COULD BE TAKEN.

1. EMERGENCY ALERT APP

- Teachers can send out an emergency alert to administration with a map showing the exact location.
- Some schools in Utah already have a similar program. It may be worth considering appropriating money so smaller school districts or charter schools would be able to implement or better fund such a program.

2. TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

- Fund the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health to the level that it could coordinate an increase in School Based Behavioral Health funding so that all schools in Utah have this program.
- Community council funds for social work – School Trust Lands.
- The State School Board and school districts have already taken steps to allow this to be implemented. The state could consider appropriating additional money to help better fund these programs.

3. SAFE GUN STORAGE

- In July 2004, the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education published a study examining 37 school shootings from 1974-2000, which found that in more than 65 percent of cases, the attacker got the gun from his/her own home or that of a relative.
- Utah's current code states that any parent or guardian who knows a child is in possession of a dangerous weapon and does not make reasonable efforts to remove it is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.
- Proposed strengthening Utah's code to state any parent or guardian who stores their firearm in a way that leads to a child gaining access is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.
- It was also proposed that instead of any change in statute that money be appropriated to provide for more gun safes or a campaign to increase public awareness of the importance of properly storing guns.

TIER 2 RECOMMENDATIONS GROUP 2

IDEAS WHICH HAD MAJORITY SUPPORT BUT WITH SOME MEMBERS ACTIVELY OPPOSED.

THESE IDEAS MAY BE WORTH PURSUING BUT WOULD NEED TO BE PASSED BY THE UTAH LEGISLATURE WITH CLEAR RULES AND AUTHORITY FOR ACTION.

1. WAITING PERIODS TO OBTAIN FIREARMS

- Introduce waiting periods to obtain a firearm to reduce suicides and allow time for background checks.
- The effectiveness of this was contested and if it was relevant to school shootings.

2. UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

- Gun offenders overwhelmingly obtain their guns through private sales. A survey of state prison inmates in 13 states who were convicted of gun offenses found that only 13 percent obtained the gun from a gun store or a pawnshop where background checks are required. According to the Giffords Law Center, 96 percent of inmates who were already prohibited from possessing a gun at the time of their crime obtained the firearm through an unlicensed private seller.
- It is possible that there are already laws in place to prevent this from occurring that are not being enforced. The effectiveness of universal background checks was also disputed.

TIER 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

THESE ARE IDEAS THAT THE COMMISSION DISCUSSED BUT DID NOT REACH MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR NEW STATE ACTION. IN SOME CASES, THESE MAY BE GOOD IDEAS THAT ARE ALREADY IN THE PROCESS OF BEING IMPLEMENTED.

1. AWARENESS LOCKDOWN TRAINING

- Coordinate additional school shooting awareness response and lockdown training.
- There are already several training videos and programs around the state. Local entities should be encouraged to find and apply the one that works best for them.

2. CONTROLLED CAMPUS ACCESS

- Zero tolerance for anyone on school property without a badge.
- Gradual progress has been made in this direction with more schools only allowing one access point.
- There were multiple concerns about the costs or other undesired consequences for schools.

3. HOPE SQUADS

- Take a more active role in supporting the Hope4Utah organization, which promote “Hope Squads” in all Utah Schools.
- These programs already exist and focus more on suicide prevention. Though currently there is not a good process to measure its effectiveness