

## School Security Sub-workgroup

June 12, 2019

### Attending:

Kenney Payne	AIA
Florin Moldovan	Spotsylvania County - VBCOA
Rick Witt	Chesterfield County – VBCOA Fire Code Committee Chairman
Steve Sites	Department of Fire Programs
Ron Clements	VBCOA
Vijay Ramnarain	Virginia Department of Education
Donna Michaelis	VDCJS
David Decatur	Stafford County Sherriff Department
Doug Shifflett	Augusta County Schools
Eric Bond	Augusta County Schools
Gerry Maiatico	Warren County Fire - VFPA
Gregg Fields	City of Alexandria – VBCOA (By phone)
Jimmy Moss	Grayson County – VBCOA
Laura Frye	Door Hardware Institute
Linda Hale	Loudoun County Fire – VFPA
Mark Dreyer	VDGS
Sgt. Patrick Green	Virginia State Police
Zach Adams	Virginia Tech (By phone)
John Catlett	DHCD (Catlett Code Consulting)
Jeff Brown	DHCD
Richard Potts	DHCD
Thomas King	DHCD

### Observers:

Greg Cade	NFPA
Glenn Dean	Self
Kevin McKenney	Window and Door Manufacture Association

While the current focus of this group is on schools, they discussed that five active shooter events have occurred since their last meeting in April, including the event in Va. Beach. Steven Sites added that there were access issues for law enforcement in the Virginia Beach incident due to electronic locking arrangements. In addition, Sgt. Green added that the shooter used a firearm suppressor (silencer) which changed the sound of the gunfire. Use of a suppressor delayed response due to building occupants attributing the sound to a nail gun or some sort of construction noise. He also added that door breaching methods are now being taught and special tools are being issued to all academy

graduates. However, different varieties of glass in doors and windows can hamper breaching methods. VSP has shifted their training from “Run Hide Fight” to “Avoid Deny Defend”.

Rick Witt stated that government office buildings tend to be different due to prevalence of glass doors/walls and the use of ID badges for access as well as more open customer-service areas, multiple access points, etc.

Donna Michaelis stated that she interpreted the legislative directive to include development of general proposals for school safety and not just regulatory code changes regarding devices like door locks and architectural requirements. She proposed a wider safety survey of all school buildings, conducted by school administrators, to review of the physical security of buildings for review by the Center for School Campus Safety to consolidate and inform this group.

Steven Sites suggested that, despite the legislation asking for code change proposals, maybe the best option is to recommend no changes.

The question was asked if there is any existing state funding available for school security measures. Vijay Raminarin stated that there is an annual grant available for security for schools. The grant is limited to \$250,000 per school district. It was noted that this amount of money spread across a school district does not go very far. Vijay added that each year a report is developed detailing which schools received money and what they used it for. In years past, those funds have typically been used to purchase cameras and radios. The DOE is starting to see more purchases for reinforcing window films, locks, etc. The question was asked if school systems have the necessary information to make the best decisions in securing their buildings. Vijay stated that some of the schools in smaller localities face local pressure to seek these security grants even if they feel like they have adequate hardware or funds at their disposal to address school safety, which causes unnecessary draws on the grant money.

Sgt. Green stated that door locks such as deadbolts are the best proven deterrent at this point and that cameras are also useful tools. Schools are different from government offices in terms of security procedures and access criteria.

Laura Frye spoke to the difference between a barricade device in general and code-compliant security door hardware, highlighting some of her concerns regarding barricade devices and ADA compliance.

It was pointed out that the 2018 IBC requires school classroom security locks to comply with the accessibility provisions of the IBC.

A suggestion was made by Steven Sites that the 2018 code already adequately addresses school classroom locks. This led to the first motion, by Sgt. Green, that at a minimum requirement should be to outfit all classroom doors with a code compliant lock as no locked door has been breached in previous school shootings. Discussion ensued and a vote was not taken.

Donna Michaelis suggested developing best practices guidance for schools based on the intelligence the committee has to offer. The group felt that a recommendation to the General Assembly for a best practice guide was in order, but it was outside the scope of the group. The directive of the was to propose changes to the building and fire code regulations to assist in providing school safety and security.

It was stated that a minimum recommendation that locks be installed on all existing school doors would have a significant cost that many localities couldn't afford. It was also noted that the 2018 IBC language isn't a mandate, but says security locks on classroom doors "shall be permitted" if they meet certain criteria. A mandate would require security locks on classroom doors.

Ron Clements gave an update on an ICC Ad Hoc committee that has been tasked with addressing school safety. The ICC committee has several sub-groups that are discussing possible code considerations that address items like door hardware, building hardening, communications, etc., but it's going to be a multi-year effort to get to actual recommendations.

The group then considered and discussed the proposal submitted prior to the meeting by Kenney Payne. He explained the proposal and summarized the premises behind it.

The group was then split into two smaller discussion groups, with representatives from the various stakeholder groups on each. After approximately an hour of discussion, each group reported out on what they had discussed:

#### **Group 1**

The first group with Kenney Payne as spokesperson discussed requiring code compliant door locks on classroom doors for all new construction, encouraging code compliant security locks when adding locks to existing school classrooms (where possible), and considering other types of supplemental/barricade devices for existing schools where code compliant security locks would be impractical or cost prohibitive.

#### **Group 2**

Gerry Maiatico was spokesperson for the second group. There is a general feeling amongst all stakeholders, including schools and parents, that something needs to be done. It is impossible to prioritize safety threats or identify a particular device or plan that will work for every school as that will vary from community to community and even from one school to another. They decided that there is a need for a clear process in place for a locality to make their own decisions based on what will work best for them, and agreed that the group should avoid legislation or code requirements that would take away the ability of individual localities to make those decisions.

Additional discussions included:

- Asking law enforcement to discourage the use of barricading with furniture and other items if a barricade device was available.
- Agreement that any lock/device installed on a classroom doors should be able to be released or unlocked from outside and be installed within normal reach of classroom occupants. The consolidated group felt that there could be a path forward for barricade devices to be allowed in certain scenarios.
- Regardless of what the group recommends regarding primary door locks on classrooms, a building official can still approve secondary barricade devices through the code modification process.

- Ultimately it should be up to the locality to decide what will work best for them and any changes should ensure that there are options.
- Any proposal should ensure that the fire official, fire chief and law enforcement (all first responders) will be notified any time a secondary device is approved by the building official. There are other USBC provisions that require notification of the fire official, such as approval of “temporary uses”.
- Any proposal should ensure that first responders are able to train on any installed devices.
- Any proposal should address devices that may not require installation and do not attach to the structure and may not require a building permit.
- The group might consider adding supplemental/barricade devices as an exception or appendix that can be utilized by a locality if they decide they want them.
- It was suggested that the group review Kenny Payne’s proposal and make any needed amendments based on the discussions as a starting point for discussion at the next meeting.
- Gerry Maiatico requested that the committee draft legislation allowing the misuse of any supplementary lockdown device to result in a criminal charge.

### **Conclusions:**

There was general consensus on the following items:

- For new construction, where egress doors are provided from classrooms, code compliant locking hardware should be installed. This should be included in the building design and accounted for in the construction budget.
- For existing schools, or in instances where a locality decides they want to install supplemental /barricade devices, they need to be able to make their own security decisions.
- For any device installed on a classroom door, there needs to be a way to disengage or unlock the device from outside of the classroom.
- The proposal should include language to ensure that first responders are notified if a supplemental/barricade device is approved to be installed and the first responders should be provided an opportunity to train on the device.
- The committee should draft legislation allowing the misuse of any supplementary lockdown device to result in a criminal charge.
- Kenney Payne’s proposal will be sent to the group for review/comment and will be discussed at the next meeting.

The group is going to review the draft change proposed submitted by Kenney which he will submit to the committee before the next meeting. Gerry will work on new draft legislation regarding the misuse of supplementary security devices and will send it to the group prior to the next meeting..

The meeting concluded at 4:35 PM