

Staffing for Student and Staff Safety

Proposal Summary

Provide funding for safety staffing, equipment and incidental costs, as well as a regional support system in the nine ESDs to provide technical assistance and coordination of state and federal mandates. The staffing component is embedded in the Classified Staff Ratios funding formula; a recommendation for equipment and incidental costs is embedded in the Non-Employee Related Costs (NERC) formula; and a recommendation for regional support is embedded in the Regional Support formula. This paper describes the combined safety recommendations.

Resource Proposal

School-based Security Personnel: The Classified Staffing Ratio should include an allocation for staff to support student and staff safety in secondary schools. There is little research on an optimal level of support, and we do not have adequate data at the state level to evaluate district practice. Based on Conley's recommendation and the fact that districts actually expend resources on security staff, the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) recommends an allocation of 0.5 FTE for each prototypical middle school (750 students) and 1.0 FTE for each high school (1,000 students).

Salaries would be allocated based on current security officers (districts pay \$41,000 annualized per 1.0 FTE). Districts would have the option to augment this resource with local funds or community partnerships in order to utilize Student Resource Officers (commissioned law enforcement) in schools, instead of employing security personnel (such expenditures will be contracts rather than salaries/benefits).

Security Equipment: Conley recommends \$10 per student for security-based equipment. Two districts expended triple this amount; the 71 districts participating in the NERC survey expended only \$5 per student. However, we know that districts would spend more on safety and security if they weren't having such a difficult time prioritizing safety expenditures among curriculum adoption, technology, and facilities maintenance. Therefore, the SPI recommendation is for \$10 per student to be included in the NERC allocation.

Central Office Safety Planning: Based on recently added state requirements, districts must have resources to plan, train, drill, and implement safety programs. They must also have staff to supervise programs associated with improved student climate (anti-bullying programs) and monitor the crime activity and trends at all schools. The SPI recommendation includes 0.25 FTE per 3,500 student district to implement state and federal requirements and 0.5 FTE per 3,500 students in compensation resources for safety drills and training (districts would use this approximate \$23,000 for supplemental contracts associated with training days to cover all emergency preparedness, about \$100 per district employee).

Regional Support: Provide funding for a corps of regional school safety consultants in the Educational Service Districts (ESDs), 0.5 FTE per ESD. These consultants will assist schools with safety planning, school mapping (updating), coordinating with regional emergency response efforts, and with regional

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and statewide disaster preparedness and Homeland Security efforts. They will also coordinate school safety training for school administrators and harassment, intimidation, and bullying prevention and intervention trainings for staff and students in their service region, as well as coordinate with existing trainings on sexual harassment prevention, the educator Code of Conduct, and other efforts.

Background and Historical Funding in Washington

The mandates for the K-12 public school system to upgrade school safety and security programs have been generated by increased concerns and incidents in schools, including gang and drug-related violence, increased incidence of students with mental and emotional problems resorting to violence, and the community-based hazards that impact schools. Those hazards include the threat of terrorism, technological emergencies (power or technological failures impacting daily operations of a facility), and natural disasters.

Juvenile crime is increasing slightly. The Washington State juvenile arrest rate for most violent crime categories increased from 2004 to 2005 (the latest year for which data is available), including between 4 to 6 percent increases in rape, murder/manslaughter, and robbery. The proportion of drug arrests of the total juvenile arrests for drugs/alcohol increased each year between 2003 and 2005, with drug arrests amounting to 36 percent of drug/alcohol arrests in 2003, 38 percent in 2004, and 40 percent in 2005. Yakima County was singled out as having twice the juvenile violent offense rate compared with the state average. There is no reliable database on such arrests on school grounds for Washington.

Gang activity in many communities is on the rise, with law enforcement agencies reporting anecdotally that gang-related violence is resulting in fatalities in some communities, particularly Yakima, Skagit, Lewis and Pierce Counties. Information from the Washington Healthy Youth Survey mirrors anecdotal information from law enforcement: between 2002 and 2006 the percentage of 10th grade student self-identifying as members of a gang more than doubled. Economic downturn is a strong predictor of increased gang activity.

Possession of weapons on school grounds is a reliable indicator of the likelihood of violent crime in or near a school. The rate of knife possessions and other (mostly martial arts) weapons have gradually risen over the past decade. School districts are concerned because many of the students possessing weapons show signs of mental and emotional problems and are relatively unpredictable in their behavior patterns.

In response to a myriad of safety concerns, both Congress and the Washington State Legislature have passed laws that require schools to invest a large amount of time and resources to adopt and maintain new approaches to school safety. The funding provided to schools to support these efforts has been in the form of non-sustainable grants, where the funds appropriated have not been adequate to evenly distribute throughout the school system. The lack of funding puts schools in the position of having to

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manage new programs without any fiscal support, forcing many districts to use funds intended for direct educational services to students.

Many of the safety requirements stem from three relatively recent safety events: an increase in the number of campus shootings following the Columbine shootings in 1999, the terrorist attacks on 9/11, and the 2001 Nisqually earthquake. In the past six years, the Legislature has enacted new requirements for safe schools planning, managing threats of violence at school, bullying policies and procedures, communication and planning with law enforcement regarding juvenile sex and kidnapping offenders attending school (including transfer of records and academic history from the juvenile justice system), development of suicide prevention programs in schools, and most recently, enactment of SSB 5097 in 2007 with specific planning and training requirements.

SSB 5097 requires the K-12 system to develop and maintain an array of complex safety planning programs. These requirements were added as a result of violent, high-profile school incidents and the general perception that schools do not have viable plans to coordinate with local emergency preparedness and response agencies. SSB 5097 requires schools to develop and have in place safety plans by September 1, 2008. The plans must address the full spectrum of safety measures, including prevention, intervention, preparedness, mitigation, emergency response and post-incident recovery.

These requirements result in district expenditures to (a) hire personnel to manage these efforts and work directly with community emergency-response agencies, (b) purchase emergency equipment and supplies for school campuses, (c) hire substitute teachers to provide for release time for school personnel to participate in training and drills (or provide supplemental contracts to extend the school day or year for permanent staff), and (d) contract with safety specialists to provide assessment and planning services.

School Safety Funding

At the same time as expenditures are increasing, available funding to cover new requirements has been small, one-time grants whose numbers and availability are dwindling. The gang and drug problems impacting schools in the late 1980's and 1990's prompted a series of state grants and saw a short-term increase after the series of shootings by students on school campuses in the late 1990's. In 2001, the Legislature established a regular funding mechanism for school safety, an allocation of \$6.36 per student. The 2002 Legislature, however, eliminated all of these funds. These funds were never replaced, forcing districts to dismantle existing programs and use general educational operating budgets to support the limited programs they could afford. Although the Legislature has provided funds to support the school mapping system, none of these funds support the training and response planning associated with a school map. In 2007, the Legislature appropriated \$800,000 per year for small grants to help districts establish programs compliant with the 2007 passage of SSB 5097; whether or not these funds will carry forward is unknown.

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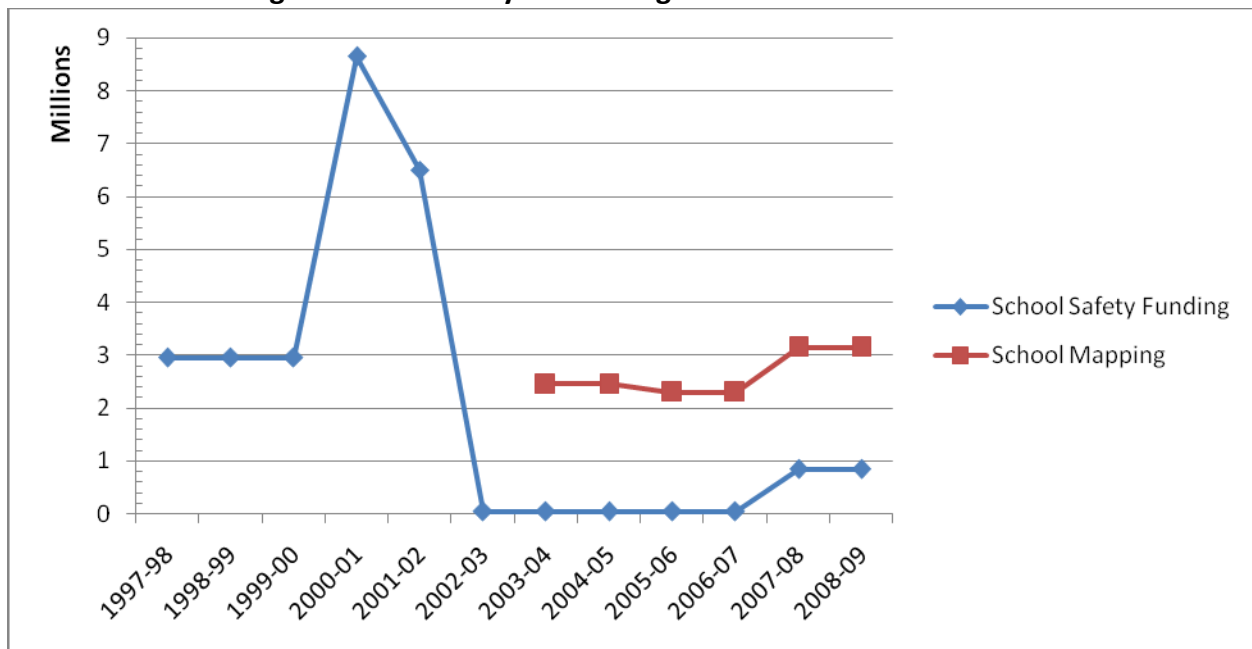
Schools are also challenged by the increasing demands to work collaboratively with community agencies that have access to federal grants through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The Washington K-12 system has been unable to access these funds despite the fact that Congress determined that school districts are included in the definition of “local government” in the 2002 Homeland Security Act. While counties and

cities have been able to purchase supplies, personnel, training, and support for drills and exercises, schools have not been systematically included in these efforts, despite the fact that schools are obviously an important partner in violence prevention.

The only sustained school funding for these programs has been the federal Safe and Drug Free Schools (Title IV) funds, which was cut by 21 percent in 2005 and an additional 15 percent for the 2008-09 school year. This means that 164 districts will receive less than a \$5,000 grant in the 2008-09 school year. Only 15 districts receive a grant of more than \$50,000.

The graph below displays total state funding for school safety for the past 12 years.

State Funding for School Safety in Washington State – 1997-98 to 2008-09



Resources Can Improve Staff and Pupil Safety

No expenditure of resources will ever make a school campus completely safe from violence or natural disasters. However, there are steps that a system can take to mitigate the impact of and recover speed after an incident. Building-based safety and security equipment measures include:

1. Alarm systems (tone-based alerts and voice-over).
2. Notification systems (to parents and staff at home).
3. Closed circuit TV systems in high risk areas of campus.

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4. Maintenance of school mapping.
5. Access control (key control system, interior door lock upgrades, Knox boxes (vandal-proof boxes at each building with master keys so that law enforcement and fire fighters can enter with no delay, \$800 each).
6. Lighting systems (secluded areas prone to vandalism or crime).
7. Communication systems (intercoms, two-way radios district staff, transportation communication systems, two-way radios that with interoperability to local law enforcement).
8. Upgrades to fire code systems and HVAC systems, including training.

Staffing and programmatic investments include:

1. Staff to coordinate and/or provide: requirements of SSB 5097; conflict resolution and de-escalation training; student threat assessment management; on-going assessment and re-tooling regarding school climate, new threats, and community trends.
2. Staff to interact with students in hall-ways, off-campus after school, at school events; monitoring for student distress; prevent crime and intervene where appropriate. Special attention is needed to prevent gang activity.
3. Programmatic support to: prevent bullying, contribute to a culturally supportive school climate, and prevent suicide.
4. Recovery support after an incident: counseling for students and staff, stepped up security and climate monitoring.

There is little direct state and federal funding to support the activities and expenditures listed above. Accordingly, districts spend some local resources to meet mandates and keep schools safe. If the state allocation for NERC is disaggregated (see the issue paper/recommendation on NERC), the state allocates about \$2 per pupil for safety equipment and supplies. Based on a survey of district expenditures, with 71 respondents, districts spent \$5 per pupil in 2006-07 (including contracts for law enforcement officers to serve as student resource officers). (These figures do not include school mapping, which is a direct appropriation via the Capital Budget to the mapping company.)

We do not have good data on how many staff districts employ for safety purposes. Based on the accounting categories created decades ago, we know that 100 staff were employed statewide for “Building and Property Security”. This is generally considered by district business officials to include night-time building security and not the planning, prevention and intervention staff the system employs (or contracts for). Safety staff and contracts for personnel are coded in summary categories in such a way that we cannot identify the investments that districts currently make.

Estimates of Necessary Resource Levels

What we know from common sense is that society has changed in the last 30 years, our current funding levels do not address safety issues, and we need to draw from other researchers and district practice to

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identify an appropriate resource level for a new funding system. The table below summarizes resource level recommendations and experience:

	Summary
School Finance Researchers	
Picus/Odden for WA Learns	No recommendation. The researchers identified smaller schools (432, 450 and 600 for elementary, middle, and high school respectively), and expenditures for pupil support, as the best investment to address school climate.
Conley, 2007	0.5 FTE additional campus security personnel at the middle school level and 1.0 FTE at the high school level. \$10 per student for equipment (primarily cameras to prevent crime).

Experience of Two School Districts

Some school districts have been successful in writing grant proposals, while others have found local methods for funding enhancements. Due to the lack of uniformity and data collected at the state level, one small and one mid-sized school district were surveyed to assess their safety and security needs and the attendant costs. These districts are relatively small, but represent the 88 percent of school districts in this state with fewer than 8,000 students. The data in these reports are estimates based on recent expenditures made by these districts.

PORT ANGELES SCHOOL DISTRICT, Port Angeles, WA: The Port Angeles School District (PASD) is a small school district (4,176 students) in a rural county (Clallam), with one high school, two middle schools, five elementary schools, and three alternate schools sites. PASD has a long history of collaboration with local law enforcement, fire and emergency services agencies in their efforts to develop safety plans. In 2004, they successfully applied for a federal grant that supported the implementation of major enhancements to the safety and security of their campuses, and supplemented this grant with local funds to address the listed projects. The figures represent an approximate total by grade-band.

Security / Safety Activity	High School (1)	Middle (2)	Elementary (5)	Total	\$ per Student
SRO				\$22,995	
Security Personnel	\$29,500			\$29,500	
TOTAL SECURITY PERSONNEL				\$52,495	\$12.60
Cameras and Install	\$59,000	\$29,000		\$88,000	
FAST Alert System (software based system)	\$3,500	\$4,500	\$2,500	\$10,500	
Intercom Install and Maintenance	\$2,500	\$500	\$750	\$3,750	
Two-way Radios	\$950	\$1,915	\$4,750	\$7,615	
TOTAL EQUIPMENT				\$109,865	\$26.30
Plan Prep	\$2,150	\$2,150	\$2,150	\$6,450	
Drill Planning	\$180	\$360	\$900	\$1,440	
Drills	\$300	\$600	\$1,500	\$2,400	
Mapping Updates	\$2,500	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$5,000	
TOTAL EMERGENCY PLANS/DRILLS				\$15,290	\$3.70

The data above is for one school year, and does not address the district-funded system maintenance costs for the equipment and capital enhancements. Equipment investments are largely a one-time investment; two-way radios have a life-cycle of 5-6 years.

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FRANKLIN PIERCE SCHOOL DISTRICT, Tacoma, WA: Franklin Pierce School District (FPSD) is a somewhat larger school district (7,325 students) in an urban/suburban environment (Pierce County), with two high schools, two alternative school sites, two middle schools, and eight elementary schools. It has been an active proponent of school safety planning with local emergency service agencies, and has worked with their local community to provide resources for school safety. The data for this past year include:

Security / Safety Activity	Total	\$ per Student
School Resource Officer (SRO) (commissioned law enforcement)	\$75,000	
School Security Officer (SSO)	\$35,000	
TOTAL SECURITY PERSONNEL	\$110,000	\$15.00
Upgraded E911 communication for 19 buildings	\$200,000	
Nextel telephones w/ 2-way radio (annual)	\$50,000	
Communication system for buses	\$17,000	
TOTAL EQUIPMENT	\$267,000	\$36.45
Drill Planning	\$5,000	
Drills (Staff Time)	\$15,000	
TOTAL EMERGENCY PLANS/DRILLS	\$20,000	\$2.73