



STATE OF DELAWARE
STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MARGARET M. O'NEILL BUILDING
410 FEDERAL STREET, SUITE 1
DOVER, DE 19901

VOICE: (302) 739-3620
TTY/TDD: (302) 739-3699
FAX: (302) 739-6704

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 5, 2014

TO: All Members of the Delaware State Senate
and House of Representatives

FROM: Ms. Daniese McMullin-Powell, Chairperson
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

RE: H.B. 33 (Public School Alarm Systems)

The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has reviewed H.B. 33 which is designed to improve school safety by requiring the installation and maintenance of an alarm system in each public school capable of notifying law enforcement of an emergency that can be activated from at least one location in each school. According to the attached June 13, 2013 News Journal article, the legislation is supported by the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. The Secretary noted that "many (schools) have a security system in place, which would make installation and maintenance relatively inexpensive." The article also describes the prime sponsor's observations that the alarm system could be activated based on a range of events, including shootings, fights, and confrontations. The amendments suggest some vacillation on whether the alarms must be silent and whether they must be directly linked to law enforcement. H.A. 1 would allow schools to decide if alarms would be silent and directly linked to law enforcement. H.A. 2 would require alarms to be silent but not necessarily directly linked to law enforcement.

The fiscal note (attached) is, relatively speaking, modest. Installation would cost \$110,500 to \$331,500 in State funds and monitoring is projected to annually cost public schools \$79,560, i.e., \$30/month per building times 221 buildings. This cost compares favorably with other pending legislation (H.B. 221) which would result in retrofitting classroom doors so they are lockable from both inside and outside the classroom. The fiscal note (attached) on that initiative is \$3,994,500, more than 10 times the cost of installation of the alarm systems.

SCPD endorses the concept of H.B. 33. The alarm system would enhance timely law enforcement response to school emergencies.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions regarding our position or observations on the proposed legislation.

cc: Mr. Darren Lester, DSHS
Mr. Brian Hartman, Esq.
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Developmental Disabilities Council

HB 33 school alarms 3-5-14

School: Bill adds alarm systems

6-13-13
15

Continued from Page A1

Connecticut, which left 20 students and six adults dead. It also would help in other situations, like fights between



Rep. Joseph Miro

students or confrontational parents. "Obviously, the concern that's foremost in our mind is an intruder, but there are lots of different scenarios this could work in," Miro said.

Secretary of Safety and Homeland Security Lewis Schilliro supports the idea.

"This is a good idea. It's another tool in the security toolbox, and we want all the tools we can get," Schilliro said.

Schilliro said silent alarms are useful in some situations where more conventional communication fails.

"There are certainly tactical situations where you can't get to a landline or use a cellphone," he said.

The bill has the support of many teacher and parent groups who say they welcome any reasonable effort to boost school security.

"We support any measure, no matter how big or how small, that improves the safety of the students who learn and educators who work in our public school buildings," said Fredrika Jenner, president of the Delaware State Education Association.



Fredrika Jenner

"We trust that those who are safety experts will make reasonable, well thought out decisions and consider the impact on the learning environment."

Only six of the state's 228 public school buildings are equipped with such a system, according to a report the state Department of Education submitted to the Legislature.



Lewis Schilliro

The bill would require the state to pick up the cost of installing the system, but districts would pay for upkeep.

The cost of the program will vary from school to school depending on what security is already in place and what company provides it, Miro said.

Though few schools have a panic button, many have a security system in place, which would make installation and maintenance relatively inexpensive, Schilliro said.

Miro said the state estimates it could pay anywhere from \$110,500 to \$331,000 to install the systems.

Monthly maintenance fees would be in the neighborhood of \$10 to \$30 a month. That means all the state's schools combined would face a total cost of about \$79,560 a year.

"We're not looking at huge costs to the districts," Schilliro said. Most parents say they're glad to see the proposal.

"You can't do enough to make schools safe," said Pam Sayers, who has a child at Heritage Elementary, a child headed to Delcastle Technical High School and a child who just graduated from Cab Calloway School of Arts in Wilmington. "I think this bill is a good idea."

Sayers said she generally believes her children are safe, but thinks any steps to make them safer are welcome.

"Nowadays, with everything you hear about people doing, you can't get complacent," she said. "When this is done, I think Delaware is going to have some of the best-prepared, best-informed schools in the country for security issues," he said.

Miro said the bill aims to prevent school shootings like the December one at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.

Miro said the bill aims to prevent school shootings like the December one at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.

YOUR OPINION



Tell us what you think at delawareonline.com

What security measure would be most effective at a school?

YESTERDAY'S POLL RESULTS, 81

said. "You have to keep upgrading, doing everything you can."

The proposal also received an overwhelmingly positive response on delawareonline.com's Facebook page and in emailed comments.

Gov. Jack Markell signed a bill last year that charged Safety and Homeland Security staff with helping every school in the state develop a comprehensive safety plan.

In the wake of the Sandy Hook shootings, Markell accelerated that timeline to two years and doled out \$300,000 to speed things up.

As schools develop those plans, they are adding them to a comprehensive secure online portal that will allow law enforcement agencies to learn the layout of every building and plans for evacuations and lockdowns.

Miro said that means the panic buttons will be especially effective, because police will know exactly where and how to respond to each school.

"This is just one piece of a larger strategy," Miro said. "This bill fits nicely with what we're already doing."

Schilliro said efforts to implement the plans are on schedule.

Matthew Albright can be reached at 324-2428 or at malbright@delawareonline.com. Follow him on Twitter @TMJ_malbright.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Lawmaker banking on panic buttons

By Matthew Albright

The News-Journal

Schools across Delaware could get panic buttons like those in banks if legislation aimed at improving school safety becomes law.

House Bill 33, sponsored by Rep. Joseph Miro (R-Pike Creek), would require every school in Delaware to have an alarm system school staff could trigger to alert law enforcement of a potential threat.

Miro said the bill aims to prevent school shootings like the December one at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.

See SCHOOL Page A2

CORRECTIONS

LOTTERY: The Powerball numbers for Saturday's drawing were 02-11-22-26-32 with a Powerball of 19. Incorrect numbers appeared in Sunday's editions.

To comment about the accuracy, fairness or adequacy of news coverage, contact Lois Mayhorn at 324-2870 or Phil Freedman at 324-2858. From southern Delaware and other states, call (800) 235-9100. Send email to public_editor@delawareonline.com. For questions about newspaper delivery, call (800) 801-3322.

147TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FISCAL NOTE

BILL: HOUSE BILL NO. 33
SPONSOR: Representative Miro
DESCRIPTION: AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO SILENT ALARM SYSTEMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

ASSUMPTIONS:

1. This Act requires every public school building to be equipped with an alarm system capable of notifying local law enforcement of an emergency that may be manually activated from at least one location within the public school.
2. Based on the Department of Education, there are 228 public school buildings through the State (207 regular and vocational district buildings and 21 charter schools). This does not include Pencader Charter School, which is scheduled to close at the end of the school year. Based on a survey performed by the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, there are a total of 6 school buildings that will meet the requirements of this Act. As such, there are a total of 221 public school buildings impacted by this Act.
3. Depending on the infrastructure needs of the school buildings, the estimated one-time cost per building to satisfy the provisions of this Act is expected to range between \$500 to \$1,500, which includes labor installation as well as the necessary hardware to install a panic button. Statewide, the projected one-time installation costs range between \$110,500 (\$500 X 221 buildings) to \$331,500 (\$1,500 X 221 buildings). The Fiscal Year 2014 Budget, as written by the Joint Finance Committee, includes \$700,000 for School Safety Plans that could potentially be used as a source of funding.
4. The ongoing monitoring cost of the system for the link to local law enforcement, through a third party vendor and using a standard telephone line, is assumed to be a local school district/charter school expense at \$360 annually per school building (\$30 per month/per building). Statewide, monthly monitoring costs are projected to impact all districts/charter schools by \$79,560 in total (\$360 annually/per building X 221 buildings).

Cost: Fiscal Year 2014: \$110,500 to \$331,500 for installation (State)
\$79,560 statewide monitoring costs (Local only)
Fiscal Year 2015: \$79,560 statewide monitoring costs (Local only)
Fiscal Year 2016: \$79,560 statewide monitoring costs (Local only)

147TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FISCAL NOTE

BILL: HOUSE BILL NO. 221
SPONSOR: Representative Jaques
DESCRIPTION: AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO SCHOOL PROPERTY AND HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS.

ASSUMPTIONS:

1. This Act will require that every door into a classroom in every public school shall be lockable from both inside and outside of the classroom.
2. Based upon an assessment by the Department of Education, there are a maximum of 12,650 doors in the school districts and 665 doors in the charter schools that may be affected by this Act.
3. The anticipated cost to purchase and install commercial grade, two-way locks is assumed at \$300 per door given the variability in the type and age of school facilities, the cost of installation, and the general price to purchase a lock. However, based on an assessment by the Department of Education, the cost may vary up to \$600 per door.

Cost:

Fiscal Year 2014	\$3,994,500 (\$300 per door)
Fiscal Year 2015	\$0
Fiscal Year 2016	\$0

Office of Controller General
January 21, 2014
MJ:MJ
0271470014

(Amounts are shown in whole dollars)

"I don't think anybody's against the idea. But there are a lot of questions about how we can afford it," said Merv Daugherty, Red Clay School District Superintendent and head of the state's school chiefs. "You're going to be talking about thousands and thousands of dollars. Is that going to come from minor capital funding, which we've seen reduced recently? You can't use local money for a project like this."

Daugherty said the locks, while possibly helpful, are not essential. He points out that schools have worked over recent years to overhaul their school security plans, including a statewide planning hub monitored by state safety officials.

Page Previous 1 2

Matthew Albright
contributed to this article.



Seahawks win Super Bowl XLVIII



Fine day to cut through the grime at...

SPONSORED LINKS

Sponsored Content by Taboola



Retire 5 Years Early With These 38 Stoc...
Newsmax



Forget tattooing your brows and try this...
Darnstore

View Comments (12) | Share your thoughts »

TOP VIDEO PICKS
selected by Taboola



Crippling storms of the past | USA NOW
Jan 20, 2014



RAW VIDEO: Salem Village complex fire inju...
Jan 31, 2014



Mass celebrates Ursuline Sisters leaving school
Jan 20, 2014

SPONSORED LINKS



14 Social Security Benefits You Haven't ...
Newsmax



Economist: We're Heading For A Crisis ...
Money Morning



The Richest Celebrities According to Net Worth
SheBudgets

Sponsored Content by Taboola

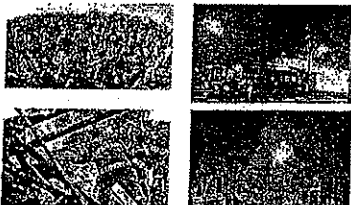
ARCHIVES

View the last seven days

- Yesterday, Feb. 02
- Saturday, Feb. 01
- Friday, Jan. 31
- Thursday, Jan. 30
- Wednesday, Jan. 29
- Tuesday, Jan. 28
- Monday, Jan. 27

See our paid archives for news older than 30 days.

PHOTO SPOTLIGHT



MORE PHOTOS

SUBSCRIBE



- Subscribe
- Manage Your Account
- Make a Payment
- Sign up for EZ Pay
- Report Delivery Problems

Dealer Payment

DEAL CHICKEN

Matching deals daily

Save up to **90% OFF** shopping, dining and more every day.

Sign up at **DealChicken.com**

Travel! Click to view

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT