

## **Legislative Finance Committee Meeting**

### **Preventative and Responsive Active Shooter Interventions**

#### **Poms & Associates Response Presented by Larry Vigil and James Vautier**

- NMPSIA is a public entity risk sharing pool that provides insurance coverage for all the K-12's with the exception of APS, charter schools and 2 and 4-year colleges. Not only are our coverages very broad, but the most critical part of NMPSIA is to deliver training and education to our members.
- For many years, Poms & Associates, has focused efforts on how to better protect students from armed intruders.
- James Vautier was hired in 2013 as a Risk Manager specializing in Corporate and Individual Security as well as Crime Prevention. James provides Risk Services through the development and instruction of security-related training programs for all public and charter school employees affiliated with the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA). As schools continue to experience criminality and violence in increasing, innovative and inventive ways, the focus of our training programs is to create safe learning environments for staff and students through critical incident preparation and planning – before bad events happen; while also reducing risk and liability. Consultation and popular training topics include assisting school districts with state-required Safe School/Emergency Operation Plans, FEMA National Response Framework (including NIMS and ICS), Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Violent Threat Response, Behavior Threat Assessment, Bomb Threat Response, HazMat Response, Street Gang Update, Illegal Drug Physiology and Update, Bullying, Suicidal Behavior Recognition, Mental Illness, De-escalation, Identifying a Child Predator, Internet Safety, Emergency Response Training/Scenarios and other Crime Prevention areas.
- Additionally, James provides site and intruder assessments to evaluate the physical security of schools, as well as the awareness of school staff. Areas of evaluation and recommendation include the exterior grounds and perimeter, exterior building design and orientation, current security measures and intruder detection, mass communications, policies/procedures and staff development/training.
- These assessments and trainings, among others, are part of the NMPSIA program and are offered to NMPSIA members at no additional costs. We are aware of other firms who are active in the State who are trying to get districts to pay for this training, but we are trying to get the word out, so they do not have to purchase this training outside of the program.

- In addition to our active trainings, we have initiated a pilot program called Stop!t, that was designed for students and faculty to report anonymously sexual misconduct incidents but will also be used to report possible intruders who are intending to harm students and employees. The program started a month ago and we have already had a few potential suicides averted.
- The debate of arming employees is not new to NMPSIA, so we have been working on guidelines and potential policies for over 6 months prior to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting. Certainly, this latest school shooting has prompted the discussion on arming teachers and other staff and has raised the topic front and center. A few districts have armed staff and many others are discussing this with their boards. The guidelines were approved at the March NMPSIA Board Meeting and is attached (or distributed).
- As the guidelines suggest Option 1: Districts seeking an armed security presence should contract with a local certified law enforcement for a School Resource Officer or other sworn law enforcement officer whenever possible. Option 2: District contract with an outside security company. Option 3: and we emphasize this as a last resort and that Options 1 and 2 have been thoroughly explored and found them to be impossible to implement, then a contract will be required between a school employee or volunteer and the District to be named as a “School Security Personnel (SSP)”. We require them to adhere to requirements outlined in standards provided in the guidelines.
- At this time NMPSIA will not be charging for this exposure. We have researched other public entity pools and there is no empirical data available that shows loss information incurred by school employees. We are working with actuaries to see if they can assist us with data that can support charging districts for this exposure, but so far, no one has been able to provide the data.
- We would like to discuss some possible legislation that would be helpful to clarify who should be permitted to be “School Security”. We would like to reference our recent conversations with the NM Private Security Association. We went to a meeting Friday afternoon with the NM Private Security Association. We were invited to discuss NMPSIA Guidelines document. The leaders of this organization support our efforts and we are all trying to get RLD to help get new definitions implemented for School Security Officers.
- As you can see NMPSIA is heavily involved with this topic and again, our goals are to protect students not only from armed intruders, but also with sexual abuse, which has been a focus of ours for years.