



KANSAS ADJUTANT GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT
2800 SOUTHWEST TOPEKA BOULEVARD
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66611

JOINT COMMITTEE ON KANSAS SECURITY
REMARKS OF MAJOR GENERAL LEE TAFANELLI
NOVEMBER 7, 2014

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

This morning, you will hear from key staff members responsible for several facets of emergency management and homeland security in Kansas:

Colonel Chris Stratmann, Chief Information and Technology Officer for the Adjutant General's Department, will present testimony regarding the state of Interoperable and Emergency Communications in Kansas;

Mrs. Angee Morgan, Deputy Director of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management, will provide an overview of emergency management; and,

Later this morning, Captain Eric Pippin, Commander of Homeland Security and Emergency Operations for the Kansas Highway Patrol, will provide an update on homeland security funding.

I am very proud of the daily effort these individuals and the teams they represent put forth in a combined effort to keep the citizens of Kansas safe. With the collaboration of other state, local and private sector partners this team works tirelessly to keep all Kansans and our critical infrastructure safe.

Kansas Center for Safe and Prepared Schools

A key component of Kansas security begins in Kansas schools. The Kansas Center for Safe and Prepared Schools assists districts, schools and their staff to become more prepared for all hazards. Over the past year, the center has emphasized training, raised awareness regarding the importance schools developing collaborative partnerships within their localities, and encouraged leadership within the districts and schools to integrate all school staff and community stakeholders in their efforts.

The pursuit of school safety in Kansas has a combined history that spans multiple agencies, individual programs and more than a decade and a half of effort. In 1998, Attorney General Carla Stovall launched the *Kids in Safe Schools Task Force* which examined overall Kansas school safety and provided an approach to developing school safety plans.

Other programs and efforts followed; the most recent being the Kansas Highway Patrol's *Active Shooter School Violence Awareness Initiative* which began in 2013. Today, the most widely-known Kansas K-12 school safety program is the *Kansas Center for Safe & Prepared Schools*, which was launched five years ago after a significant gap in uniform school safety preparedness was identified.

Efforts to enhance school safety and emergency preparedness have involved leadership from the Attorney General's Office, the Kansas Fire Marshal's Office, the Kansas Adjutant General's Department, the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Kansas Department of Health & Environment, the Kansas Department of Education, the Kansas Association of School Boards, the Governor's Office, the Legislature and many other agencies and groups.

Over the years, the resulting reports, programs and initiatives have produced tangible outcomes including valuable increases in preparedness awareness, planning and training. As we begin this next legislative session, Kansas is well positioned to unify its existing school safety efforts, determine specific joint goals and assist Kansas schools in a way that is proactive, sustainable and effective. Kansas should formalize and unify what it's currently doing and provide targeted assistance to Kansas schools in building locally-effective and sustainable school safety approaches.

Recommendation

The Center for Safe and Prepared Schools has spurred a positive change and initiated school safety actions that may have never occurred without the training and support provided. While there are currently no requirements for schools to be trained or prepared, individual districts and schools have demonstrated a strong interest in making their schools safe.

Some districts have made significant progress in better preparing their teams, all hazards plans, vulnerability assessments, emergency drills, training programs and most importantly they have built collaborative partnerships with local responders.

Out of the 286 school districts in Kansas, approximately 112 have completed formal Emergency Operation Plan training. Continued support will allow these dedicated professionals to further develop strategies to move forward on a path toward increased numbers of plans in Kansas schools.

We know the future success of this effort is dependent upon continuing to develop this initiative through unified action at the state level. Developing a flexible, outcome-based framework at a state level is crucial to the future safety of Kansas children.

Designating the Kansas Department of Education as the lead state agency responsible for coordinating Kansas school safety and preparedness activities is the next best step toward this goal. Our proposal is that the Kansas Department of Education incorporates the existing *Kansas Center for Safe & Prepared Schools* into their agency, receiving assistance from the Kansas Highway Patrol, the Kansas Adjutant General's Department, and other state entities as appropriate. This will allow for tighter integration of school safety within Kansas, as well as better coordination efforts with other parties.

A future comprehensive approach to enhancing the safety in our schools is fundamental to fostering the highest levels of preparedness for Kansas' most valuable and vulnerable population, our children.

Thank you, and I stand ready for your questions.

Respectfully submitted by:

Maj Gen Lee E. Tafanelli
Kansas Adjutant General
7 November 2014