

3-13-2019

Mr Chairman and committee members, my name is Quinn Perry and I'm the Policy and Government Affairs Director for the Idaho School Boards Association. I'm here today on behalf of the over 900 school board members from across the state who volunteer their time to serve their local school districts and charter schools. We stand in support of House Bill 209 and ask you that you send this to the floor with a do-pass recommendation.

Since ISBA is not in this committee very often, I thought I'd briefly explain the process of how our legislative platform is set. School districts and charter school boards pass resolutions and submit them to our association in July. We tour across the state explaining the impact of each one, and our members vote on them at our annual convention in November. This resolution came from the Moscow School District after experiencing every school's nightmare – where they had to deal with the aftermath when an individual made a threat on YouTube to shoot up two Moscow schools on a date 21 days in the future.

Panic ensued in the community, especially upon hearing that Moscow Police were only able to issue a misdemeanor citation. I've asked the page to pass out a letter from Superintendent Greg Bailey from Moscow School District explaining how those 21 days played out.

When the resolution passed our membership, ISBA worked closely with both Education and Law Enforcement stakeholders to draft this legislation. After a few rounds of discussion, it was decided that we reference the Threats Upon School Grounds statute that this body updated last legislative session and include it in the section of code before you.

Again, this legislation would make it possible for law enforcement to treat a threat upon a school as seriously as it would domestic violence, assault, or stalking by placing the individual under arrest and have them evaluated in police custody.

Thank you for allowing us to testify, and we ask for your support on House Bill 209. Thank you Mr Chairman and I'm happy to stand for questions.



Moscow School District #281

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Support Services Facility
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Facilities
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Transportation
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February 19, 2019

Impact Statement: Threat to Schools in Moscow

On March 29th of last year, a post was made on YouTube by a 26-year-old man from Moscow stating he was going to shoot up two schools in Moscow on April 18th. Luckily a police officer in Texas saw this posting and reported it to the Moscow Police Department. Unfortunately, due to the current laws of Idaho the police were unable to place him in custody because there were no weapons within the home. The impact that occurred to our community due to this threat and inability to place the person under arrest was in the form of loss of academic time for students, increased work load for staff, and emotional distress for the students, staff, and community.

I was notified by the Moscow Police Department (MPD) of the threat at 9:00 am on Thursday, March 29th. I later found out that the local newspaper published online information about the threat 20 minutes later. Knowing that the MPD was aware of the threat and was working on communicating with the person who made the threat, and the fact that the threat was to shoot up two Moscow Schools on April 18th, which was 21 days later, I thought I had time on my side. However, as a precaution I immediately notified all my building administrators of the threat and told them to be on high alert of strangers in the area.

Shortly after notifying my administrators, I was notified that the threat was being discussed on FaceBook, and our district, and especially myself, was being criticized for not immediately contacting all the parents and closing all the schools. It became obvious that due to the actions taken by this person making the threat, many parents had gone into a state of panic. From that moment, until a couple of days after the shooting was supposed to occur, I and many of my staff, were taken away from concentrating on our educational responsibilities.

I dealt with twenty-three days of being inundated with phone calls, emails, and meetings with parents and concerned patrons that were frightened and angry that someone would threaten their schools.

Many of these people were scared enough that their thinking and actions were questionable and could of made things much worse. Here were just some of their comments and requests:

- parents wanting to patrol around the schools and sit in their car with gun.
- A large group of parents requesting to be allowed to walk the halls throughout the day.
- demanding fencing of the parameters of all of the schools with 6' fencing with razor wire on top.
- Wanting armed guards at each entrance of the schools
- putting steel covers over all the classroom doors
- arming teachers with guns
- closing school (21 days)

As you can imagine, most of these options cause an environment that is not nurturing and inhibits us from having a positive learning environment for our students. It places our students in a learning environment that is more appropriate for prisoners and contributes to fear within our students.

The threat, as well as the fear following the threat, also impacted our attendance, which equates to loss of learning. Here are the number of absences during the week that the threat was supposed to occur. You will also notice that the Friday absences were also very large. This is due to the day students marched to express their frustration with the number of threats and shootings occurring at schools.

District-Wide Absences (Enrollment 2,400)

| <i>School</i> | <i>4/16/2018</i> | <i>4/17/2018</i> | <i>4/18/2018</i> | <i>4/19/2018</i> | <i>4/20/2018</i> |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <i>Lena</i> | 3 | 2 | 44 | 0 | 4 |
| <i>McD</i> | 3 | 2 | 51 | 3 | 10 |
| <i>WP</i> | 3 | 3 | 33 | 6 | 6 |
| <i>Russell</i> | 4 | 6 | 42 | 4 | 6 |
| <i>MMS</i> | 34 | 51 | 90 | 24 | 140 |
| <i>MHS</i> | 30 | 27 | 119 | 32 | 267 |
| <i>Total/Day</i> | 77 | 91 | 379 | 69 | 433 |

In Summary: The reckless decision to threaten our community's schools caused our students, staff, and community to be in a state of fear; a community that prides itself in being a safe community. Our parents and community members were upset that we did not have this person arrested and locked up, something I do not have the power to do. Unfortunately, the Moscow Police Department also were unable to arrest the man immediately due to current laws that are inadequate. This is why I am here today, The Moscow School District asks that you support House Bill 115 sponsored by Representative Goesling so our community does not have to live in fear as they did beginning on March 29th.

Thank You, and chairman I will be happy to stand for questions.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Bailey

Gregory J. Bailey, Ph.D.
Superintendent