



# National Association Of Attorneys General School Safety Report Garner's Support And General Recommendations From The Learn Safe Initiative

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Our nation's public schools must uniformly and quickly implement new safety measures designed to protect students from school violence, but must consider proactive measures, such as addressing processes that allow educators to deal with students that demonstrate disturbing classroom behavior, a San Antonio-based school security initiative said today.

Jack Walser, executive director of LearnSafe, a national provider of total school safety and security programs, said he and his staff agree with the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) findings that Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott and his colleagues released last week.

"We also agree with the recommendation that all schools should have a system whereby a student with concerning behavior is reported to professionals that can help everyone in need," Walser said. "When schools continue to implement and expand proactive efforts such as preventing bullying and increasing effective conflict resolution, they make schools most conducive to their primary mission—teaching our children."

"We at LearnSafe also believe that the overall findings of this report could help teachers create an environment where students do not have to resort to violence to express their emotions. Because security is everyone's job, it will be a school's staff in conjunction with its technology and processes that foster and maintains a safe school climate," he said.

"Furthermore, our schools need comprehensive security programs - and not just an amalgam of point products - that will allow decision makers to understand their risks, build their security infrastructure around the risks, and establish continuity across all of the schools in their districts," Walser said. "We strive for continuity and interoperability. As security programs are deployed and managed across our school districts, our students will have consistent procedures and best practices that will follow them as they progress through the grades," he added.

"Our goal is to establish this continuity, and make it interoperable with the systems that schools and their local first responders currently have in place. Our program, when successfully implemented and maintained at the district level, will also establish uniformity across regions, counties, and states, thereby assisting states to achieve the type of reform called for in the NAAG Report," Walser said.

LearnSafe team members are working with school districts in Texas and across the nation to address issues of prevention, detection, response, training, and coordination as they pertain to the following long-term strategic objectives contained in the NAAG report school safety:

Crisis planning: Walser said his staff is creating customized plans that assist LearnSafe Certified™ schools in deploying, maintaining, and updating emergency management procedures that address the possibility of troubled students or outsiders bringing weapons to schools. "Colleges, universities, and K-12 institutions should frequently involve their students, faculty, staff and especially first responders in realistic exercises," he noted. "Fire fighters, police and emergency medical responders should review these plans and give input on ways to coordinate their response with school staff. Under the guidance of Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, first responders must identify



steps to improve their interagency coordination in response to the possibility of an attack. Walser said LearnSafe is working with Texas schools in particular to narrow the gaps between local law enforcement and school law enforcement. "In many cases we are finding a fundamental disconnect between the crisis planning measures put in place by the schools, and those put in place by local first responders. We should all work together to ensure that incidents on our campuses are appropriately prioritized, effectively adjudicated, and ultimately prevented."

Texas Senate Bill 11 compliance: By 2008, every school district must conduct an audit of their school security and safety plan. "The state has released a self-inspection checklist that allows districts to review how they are meeting these requirements," said Walser. "However, as we continue to help Texas schools conduct their risk assessments we're finding that many schools are not properly staffed with the industry knowledge to do these assessments themselves," Walser said. "Educators are trained to educate, not serve as security professionals. The last thing we need right now are schools conducting assessments without the right qualifications. We believe that you should have at least an average of 5 years of operational physical security experience before you conduct a school safety audit." LearnSafe security professionals are ready to assist districts in evaluating their responsiveness to this law, Walser added.

Anonymous reporting: When a student reports disruptive behavior or a threat, law enforcement, educators and mental health professionals must allow those students to feel that these reports will be handled professionally and confidentially, Walser said. "Every time a student reports an incident, each one should believe that these professionals will not release their names to their classmates," he said. "We want to create an atmosphere in schools where all involved can feel comfortable enough among their peers to watch for and report on suspicious behavior. Students are a very important part of the security equation, but are often overlooked," Walser said. "Educate and empower them to foster a safe school climate and they will respond positively. Right now there are many pamphlets on how to prevent teenage pregnancy, but almost zero on how students can prevent violence in schools. There should be security and safety handbooks in schools on how our students can help."

Walser said that the LearnSafe Initiative applauds the National Association of Attorneys General on making school security an issue with a higher priority on the national agenda. He also mentioned that the Texas Attorney General, in conjunction with the Texas School Safety Center, is taking very positive steps towards making the state of Texas a blueprint for success. However, he said that "LearnSafe understands that many of these recommendations and mandates do not include the proper levels of funding in order to make them successful. LearnSafe's Internal Funding Model™ helps schools to find the funds necessary to develop and implement a program – in some cases up to 100% - so that every school can afford a comprehensive security program and no district will be left behind."

Link to NAAG report: <http://www.naag.org/assets/files/pdf/2007.TaskForceOnSchoolAndCampusSafety.pdf>  
(Nation Association of Attorneys General)

Link to website: [www.LearnSafe.org](http://www.LearnSafe.org)