



March 6, 2018

TO: Members
House Education Finance Committee

FROM: Brad Lundell
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RE: School Safety Perspectives

I want to thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to share SEE's organizational perspectives on the school safety issue. The safety of students and staff in our member districts is of paramount importance and the organization is more than willing to help in any way to bring about safe and healthy school environments where tragedy can be avoided.

SEE supports ways to make facilities safer and will support efforts like HF 3320 to expand the allowable uses of Long Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue to include school safety improvements. School safety improvements should have been part of this revenue stream when it was created and HF 3320 would correct that flaw in the original legislation. There are a number of improvements that can be made to promote better facility security and giving districts the flexibility to include security in their long-term facility plans will be very helpful.

However, facility security is only part of the equation. There needs to be a commitment to put in place greater numbers of student support staff—school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors, and school nurses—to help identify and remedy problems that might exist in the student population and work with all students to create a healthy school environment.

Without sounding like the proverbial squeaky wheel, it needs to be pointed out that there needs to be additional resources to accomplish the purposes outlined above. In my reading of HF 3320, the bill provides more flexibility for school districts, but that flexibility is contained within the current level of revenue available to school districts. The additional revenue appropriated is directed toward charter schools, which is certainly warranted as those schools face the same challenges in terms of security as traditional public school settings. A number of districts have likely developed their long-term facility plans that have absorbed almost all, if not all, of the long-term revenue allowance. That means the ability of school districts across the state to address school security issues may vary, sometimes dramatically.

The same goes for the addition of student support staff. Most SEE districts sit well below the state average in funding per student. In many cases, this funding disparity has left SEE districts at a distinct disadvantage in trying to assemble student support services and that disadvantage is not solely limited to SEE districts. As the Legislature moves to create stronger, healthier school environments, it is SEE's hope that additional resources will be available to help in this quest.

In closing, I would like to say that I appreciate this opportunity to share SEE's perspectives on this crucial issue. Do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions as the issue of school security and student safety are discussed throughout the 2018 Legislative Session.