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Summary and chronology of outreach on Keep Idaho Students Safe

Superintendent of Public Instruction Sherri Ybarra has been gathering feedback and ideas toward this initiative for a long time, both in the genesis of the initiative's basic shape and in a concerted, ongoing effort to refine the ideas into a finished proposal that will address the needs and concerns of organizations, schools, families and students going forward. As the superintendent has said from the moment she announced the initiative's framework March 12, gathering and incorporating feedback has been a prime focus.

Here are the broad strokes, followed by a detailed chronology.

Much of the feedback and idea-gathering took place before the KISS idea had a name and a form. It developed from the superintendent's anti-bullying initiative and discussions surrounding the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, safety education for teachers and other topics.

A rash of school violence across the nation earlier this year brought the topic of school safety top of mind for parents and others throughout the state, and synthesized the SDE's various school-safety efforts into the need for a statewide initiative. Superintendent Ybarra asked staff to develop an initiative framework and cost estimate to spread throughout the state, with the specific intent of gathering feedback that will make it deeper, more effective, and more responsive to the needs of teachers, families, law enforcement, students and others.

In addition to a heavily promoted online survey that has yielded more than 1,000 responses so far, the superintendent has engaged audiences about Keep Idaho Students Safe during the Post-Legislative Roadshow, other public appearances and at every opportunity to engage with educators, families and students, formally and informally.

About 190 people so far have volunteered to help shape and finalize the initiative. Here's a summary of the feedback we've sought, and received.

Stakeholder groups: Experts and organizations for each of the initiative's three prongs have been actively engaged. Student Engagement Director Matt McCarter formed a Safety Course Design Committee including representatives of local police, the Office of School Safety and Security, the Idaho

AG's Office and Public Defenders' Association, the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, the Idaho Children's Trust Fund, Idaho Suicide Prevention Coalition, the Department of Health and Welfare and other organizations. The group met in May and July.

In early July, McCarter sent a draft of safety course standards and learning objectives, along with information on the committee, to representatives of the Idaho Education Association, Idaho Association of School Administrators and the Idaho School Boards Association to keep those stakeholders up to date. No responses have been received.

The ISBA featured KISS and the call for feedback in a two-page article by Superintendent Ybarra, "I Want to Hear From You About How to Better Support School Safety Efforts," in the Summer 2018 issue of Slate.

In March, shortly after the KISS proposal was announced, McCarter addressed the Idaho Criminal Justice Commission – including judges, lawmakers, prosecutors and representatives of law enforcement and corrections offices, to give an overview of the initiative, including security presence in schools.

The crisis communications counselor piece of KISS was included based in part on the strong recommendations of state education leaders in Florida and Tennessee whose systems were blindsided and overwhelmed by mass shootings. They told Superintendent Ybarra a statewide position to respond to such incidents, and help districts prepare for emergency response, would be an invaluable part of the effort.

McCarter is the superintendent's designee on the board of the Office of School Safety and Security, and he has fully briefed the OSSS on KISS, as well as supporting the OSSS effort to gain a STOP grant.

Parents: In addition to conversations about school safety virtually every time she encounters parents across the state, Superintendent Ybarra discussed the need for an initiative with her Parent Advisory Council in December and May. In the latter meeting, McCarter went over the details of KISS (an acronym chosen after parents suggested a softer, friendlier approach than 'war on bullying). Parent feedback included "Keep all the pieces of the initiative ... add elementary counselors ... make funding ongoing, based on a plan."

Students: In addition to more casual conversations with students, Superintendent Ybarra held school-safety listening sessions with groups of high school students on two occasions – April 11 at Twin Falls High School and April 25 at Lake City High School – and was inspired by their thoughtful comments and desire to be part of the process. Conversations with students, including the Caldwell Youth Advisory Council, also contributed to her anti-bullying initiative, unveiled in 2016 and now incorporated into KISS.

Survey: The SDE launched a KISS web page and online survey, drawing more than 1,000 responses. Stakeholders weighed in on each of the three prongs of the initiative, and responses are still coming in. Nearly 190 survey respondents have volunteered to be part of the process.

An internal SDE team including the superintendent, chief deputy, student engagement director and me met July 23 to review the voluminous response – more than 1,000 respondents so far -- to our online survey on each of the three prongs of the proposed Keep Idaho Students Safe. More meetings to review

the feedback and finalize the proposal are being planned but have not yet been scheduled. In the meantime, the superintendent and her staff will continue to gather input, including a planned – but not yet scheduled – listening session with teachers.

Educators: Teachers and administrators are an essential part of the initiative and school safety efforts in general, and the SDE has been sharing information and seeking input throughout this process. Around half of the responses to the online KISS survey so far have been from teachers – 459 respondents identified themselves as teachers, and many other respondents did not report their profession. And shortly after we announced the framework of the initiative, Idaho Education Association President Kari Overall urged teachers to weigh in on the survey in her April 6 podcast.

Ybarra has discussed the KISS proposals at numerous gatherings of educators, including an April 13 speech at the department’s Idaho Prevention Conference and a June 18 Threat Assessment presentation at the Statehouse attended by about 150 SROS, administrators and counselors.

Media: SDE news releases and interviews with the superintendent results in statewide publicity, ranging from radio talk shows to KTVB’s Viewpoint interview with Superintendent Ybarra. All interviews, and virtually all of the stories, stressed the need for feedback and featured links to the KISS web page and survey. Numerous organizations, including IEA , the Idaho Suicide Prevention Coalition and the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, also posted on social media about the initiative. I’m attaching a list of Facebook posts and media stories for your reference.

CHRONOLOGY

Note: This is intended to be a thorough accounting, but some outreach items may not be represented.

The KISS initiative grew out of the superintendent’s focus on bullying, which dates back to the early days of her administration. Here’s the time line of some of the activities that shaped components of the proposal, as well as actions taken since the proposal was announced.

2015 legislative session: In her first JFAC budget ask, Superintendent Ybarra asked for the Safe and drug free and lottery funds to be restored to their original uses.

Also that session, ant-bullying legislation was passed, requiring data collection, education efforts for students and parents, clear consequences for bullies, and required training for school staff.

The legislation was a good start, but it was an unfunded mandate for training and did not address a need for staff or a communications outreach. Superintendent Ybarra wanted to do more; she asked Matt McCarter’s team to align resources to support the effort.

December 2, 2015: Superintendent Ybarra spoke with the Caldwell Youth Advisory Council. Her conversations here and with other students, inspired her to work with the teens to create an anti-bullying message aimed at teens.

Spring 2016: the Dietrich teen assault case, concerns about youth suicide rate , bullying and harassment spurred dialogue among advocacy groups and others about the next steps toward creating safe schools and fighting bullying and harassment.

September 27, 2016: The superintendent announced an Anti-Bullying Initiative and public service announcement. PSA here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvXMhSC7ya8>

April 2017: Matt McCarter, Superintendent Ybarra, Attorney General Wasden and his staff discussed strategies with representatives of the t by the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence, American Civil Liberties Union of Idaho, Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities, Superintendent Ybarra's office and the Idaho Attorney General. The news release, issued April 24, bore the headline: "Advocacy Organizations Come Together to Create Communities and Schools Where Everyone is Valued and Safe."

August 22, 2017: McCarter and Chief Policy Advisor Duncan Robb met with high school students, lawmakers and members of an alliance of anti-violence, disability advocacy and human rights organizations to identify meaningful solutions for schools and communities, producing and producing a report, "Creating Meaningful Solutions to Discrimination, Hate and Violence in Idaho."

September 2017: Superintendent Ybarra recorded a second anti-bullying PSA, a cartoon aimed at younger students.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4tI9naP9YA&list=PL5RzzHzPHv_TzAMNgII74K_EhiFg88iAk&index=23

And a radio PSA was recorded: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmnZ3kORMkM&feature=youtu.be>

A series of conversations at the state level produced strategies for training for teachers, staffing at schools, and state support.

Fall 2017: Superintendent Ybarra tasked Matt McCarter who serves on the boards of the Office of School Safety and Security, Idaho Criminal Justice Commission, and Governor's Council on Suicide Prevention, with crafting a proposal to establish a comprehensive school safety approach. In addition to work with various groups, McCarter used data from:

- Youth Risk Behavior Survey, which identifies areas for attention in bullying, suicide ideation, and more.
- Information from district requests for state Safe and Drug free schools and federal Title IVA that expressed a desire to ramp up safety efforts in light of insufficient funds.
- Information from school applications for Sources of Strength (suicide prevention efforts).
- Information shared with Superintendent Ybarra from state chiefs in Tennessee and Florida

October 2017: The preliminary Youth Risk Behavior Report was provided to Matt McCarter's team at the State Department of Education and reviewed internally.

October 16, 2017: Superintendent Ybarra met with Sen. Cherie Buckner-Webb, and Rep. Melissa Wintrow to discuss teacher training around safety.

October 24, 2017: The 2017 Idaho Youth Risk Behavior Survey was released. The [news release](#) included this quote from the superintendent: "My vision is to grow this public service announcement into a larger, multi-year statewide effort similar to the successful campaign to reduce teen tobacco use. It was effective. Let's replicate what works and declare a 'war on bullying in Idaho'."

November 8, 2017: In a presentation to Idaho School Boards Association Superintendent Ybarra included a need for a “war on bullying”

December 11, 2017: Sen. Cherie Buckner-Webb and Rep. Melissa Wintrow joined the Superintendent’s Parent Advisory Council to talk about an initiative that would have pre-service professional development and additional staff, involving students.

December 12 2017: McCarter provided the superintendent with a draft Bullying Initiative Proposal.

January 2018: JFAC speech by Superintendent Ybarra, again featuring the need for a war on bullying.

February 14, 2018 – Parkland, Florida school shooting and the conversations around safety in the state and the nation helped spark a broadening of the department’s effort from bullying to school safety in general. The statewide dialogue across the nation intensified, as did the concerns of students, teachers, parents and community members. The Legislature addressed some related issues -- for example, suicide and internet safety -- but not a broad view.

February and March 2018: Superintendent Ybarra asked McCarter to broaden the bullying initiative to reflect the greater concerns about safety that had emerged. Prior to the events of the spring, a desire had been expressed to increase staffing for counselors and safety. Data on elementary counselors was reviewed.

March 1, 2018: Superintendent Ybarra discussed three components of a safety initiative with members of her Superintendent’s Cabinet.

March 4, 2018: Idaho school districts were asked to complete a survey on SROs and safety staff.

March 5, 2018: Superintendent Ybarra attended the Council of Chief State School Officers Legislative Conference and heard the experience and advice from one state about what happens in a crisis: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?442005-4/council-chief-state-school-officers-legislative-conference-opening-remarks>

March 2018: The completed initiative proposal is dubbed Keep Idaho Students Safe. The proposal brought together stakeholder dialogue from the past three years with new concerns and a statewide focus on school safety.

March 2018: Superintendent Ybarra and her chief deputy talked with Gov. Otter and legislative leaders to reveal the KISS proposal before the public announcement.

March 12, 2018: [News release](#) and media interviews announcing the three-pronged KISS initiative. From the beginning, the superintendent and her staff emphasized the importance of getting stakeholder involvement and feedback. “Superintendent Ybarra plans to present the key areas of KISS during her statewide post-legislative tour in April, gathering stakeholder ideas for what should be added or adapted.”

April 2, 2018: Superintendent Ybarra announced the [online feedback tool](#) was ready. The news release noted that “Stakeholder feedback will help finalize Keep Idaho Students Safe (KISS) plans before

Superintendent Ybarra asks lawmakers in January for immediate funding via a supplemental budget request.” The survey includes a place for individuals to sign up to be part of a group to review feedback.

April 6, 2018 – Idaho Education Association Kari Overall encourages IEA members to take the survey in her podcast. <https://idahoea.org/reporter/iea-reporter-podcast-legislative-recap-with-kari-overall/>

April 2018: Post legislative tour of five regions of the state. At each stop, the superintendent talked about the safety initiative, and also highlighted it in media interviews and other discussions. A quote from her speech, which was live-streamed: “It’s time for a greater state investment to support local school safety. I’m asking for feedback online-- so please participate-- or send me an email.”

April 11, 2018: Face to face session between Superintendent Ybarra and students at Twin Falls High School.

April 13, 2018: Superintendent Ybarra’s Idaho Prevention Conference speech in Sun Valley. Quote from her speech about the initiative: – “I want to refine this during the next few months to shape the final ask, and I can use your help. If you are using the conference app ... you will get a notification about how you can read more about KISS and provide feedback. You also can go the State Department of Education’s website and provide feedback.”

April 19, 2018: Presentation to the Idaho State Board of Education on the initiative by Matt McCarter.

April 25, 2018: Face to face session between Superintendent Ybarra and students at Lake City High School.

May 2018: McCarter discussed the KISS initiative with about 450 counselors, advisors, teachers and administrators throughout the state as part of the SDE’s Advanced Opportunities Technical Roadshow.

May 30, 2018: Superintendent Ybarra met with her Parent Advisory Council and Matt McCarter reviewed the details of KISS. The feedback included “Keep all the pieces of the initiative ... add elementary counselors ... making funding on going based on a plan ...”

May 31, 2018: First meeting of the committee McCarter convened to design a new safety course for teachers as part of the KISS initiative. Members represent local police, the Office of School Safety and Security, the Idaho AG’s Office and Public Defenders’ Association, the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, the Idaho Children’s Trust Fund, Idaho Suicide Prevention Coalition, the Department of Health and Welfare and other organizations.

May through July, 2018: The superintendent’s chief policy advisor, Duncan Robb, has discussed the initiative with multiple members of JFAC and the House and Senate education committees. Robb also has discussed the initiative informally with stakeholders and at regular stakeholder meetings with the Office of the SBOE.

June 14, 2018: Follow-up survey to district superintendents and charter school directors for more information on master teacher premiums and school safety grants.

June 18, 2018: Superintendent Ybarra talked about the KISS initiative to kick off a Threat Assessment workshop in the Statehouse for SROs and administrators reprising a very popular presentation from the April Prevention Conference.

July 5, 2018: McCarter sent a draft of the proposed safety course standards and learning objectives, along with information on the committee, to representatives of the Idaho Education Association, Idaho Association of School Administrators and the Idaho School Boards Association to keep those stakeholders up to date.

June/July, 2018: Summer Idaho School Board Association's Slate Magazine mailed to every school district trustee and others, featuring a two-page story about KISS by Superintendent Ybarra, headlined: "I want to Hear From You About How to Better Support Local School Safety Efforts"

July 24, 2018: Second meeting of School Safety Course Design Committee

July 26, 2018 – McCarter presentation to the State Board of Education's Instruction, Research and Student Affairs committee.

June to August, 2018: Social media PSAs. Superintendent Ybarra recorded a video PSA that has been circulating on Facebook and YouTube to reach Idahoans. This campaign wraps up in August.

Finalizing the proposal: SDE staff began reviewing the online feedback in preparation for sharing with a group of stakeholders that would be called in to help shape the final ask.

July 11, 2018: A list of 189 volunteers to help with KISS was compiled from survey responses and shared with Superintendent Ybarra.

July 19, 2018: An internal SDE team including McCarter and Chief Deputy Pete McPherson met to discuss next steps and review some feedback from the survey.

July 23, 2018: Superintendent Ybarra, McPherson, McCarter and I met with Troy McClain and Matt Schneider to review feedback and discuss next steps, including involvement of law enforcement organizations.

More meetings to finalize the proposal are planned before it is finalized.