



**Testimony  
Before the  
Senate Education Committee**

**On  
Law Enforcement Access To Live Video Stream In Public School Buildings  
S-742 (Beach)  
May 23, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to share the thoughts of the NJ Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) and its statewide membership on S-742 (Beach) which would require board of education to enter into agreement with law enforcement authorities regarding access to live video streams of public school buildings.

The safety and security of New Jersey students is a top priority of the membership of the NJ Principals and Supervisors Association. Our members – the building level leaders of our schools - are specifically charged with the responsibility for student safety as well as the development of a school climate conducive to learning. NJPSA is pleased to support S-742 (Beach) and we commend Senator Beach, the bill's sponsor, and Chairwoman Ruiz for your leadership in moving this important recommendation of the NJ School Security Task Force Report (July 2015).

**Background**

Thankfully, New Jersey schools have a comprehensive school security framework in place, developed in concert with local law enforcement as articulated in each district/town's School Safety and Security Plan (SSSP). The SSPP, as articulated with *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1(a)* must provide for:

- The protection of the health, safety, security and welfare of the school population;
- The prevention of, intervention in, response to and recovery from emergency and crisis situations;
- The establishment and maintenance of a climate of civility; and
- Supportive services for staff, students and their families.

This framework is supported and informed by regular security drills, which became a monthly requirement in 2010. See P.L.2009, c.178. Drills are coordinated with local emergency services personnel and include a myriad of different scenarios (e.g. lock downs, active shooter and non- fire evacuation situations). They also now include, unannounced security visits to schools by the Department of Education, in coordination with the Office of Homeland Security (OHS).

In addition, staff members are required, by law and regulation, to be trained annually based upon materials developed by the New Jersey Department of Education, in consultation with the OHS, the Department of Community Affairs, and the Office of the Attorney General. In practice, school districts provide such training to all employees and some contracted staff such as bus drivers.

**Law Enforcement Access to School Video Surveillance**

Efforts to enhance school security necessitate a productive partnership between school officials and law enforcement. For many years, New Jersey has required the annual signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between law enforcement and school officials detailing state laws, procedures, the legal boundaries of information sharing and a discussion of the appropriate roles and responsibilities of each party. S-742 (Beach) extends this approach to the issue of sharing a school's video surveillance information via live streaming where a school has the capacity to do so.

The sharing of video surveillance information may be helpful to law enforcement efforts to protect our students, staff and communities. Our members have, however raised some questions about the boundaries of the legislation – namely, whether it requires law enforcement access on a regular basis or only in an emergency or specific event. High schools with video surveillance systems may have over 100 cameras in place, so we need to ensure a common understanding of the requirements of the bill and the need for balance with school goals. Since the bill allows for local discussion, negotiation and ultimately requires a signed local agreement on these issues, we support the legislation.

In closing, NJPSA thanks the bill sponsors and this Committee for your commitment to the safety and welfare of our students and the school community.