

Senate Joint Resolution 14-031

Concerning the Establishment of Colorado Safe Schools Month

October 1-31, Yearly

Presented by the Office of Senator Ellen Roberts
August 1, 2014

What is the specific proposal?

This is a proposal to launch and establish an official Colorado Safe Schools Month that is observed annually by all segments of Colorado society, and that can lead to national and global observance and interaction as well.

Why October?

For years, we have observed Safe Schools Week during the month of October. Plus, it's a good choice because it gives schools the entire month of September to promote the upcoming month.

What is the purpose behind this resolution?

A Safe Schools Month can be the single most effective way on a statewide and national scale to promote a culture of school safety and positive school climate. A commemorative month is one of the most powerful mechanisms for raising general awareness in the United States for a particular issue. For example, the institution by Congress of American Heart Month, Cancer Control Month, Mental Health Awareness Month, Preparedness Month, and Cyber Security Awareness Month prompted major advances in recognizing the importance of each of these issues. The results have been dramatic and far-reaching. With each passing year the American public has been exposed to more national campaigns, local initiatives, educational materials, lesson plans, television programs, news articles, books, book reviews, bookstore displays, motion pictures, magazine feature stories, special editions of magazines, web sites, blogs, social media interactions, conferences, technology expositions, scholarly papers, exhibitions, trainings, pilot programs, gatherings, and special events centered around each of these issues and their communities of interest during their respective months.

How does it meet the specific needs of the end users?

The idea meets the specific needs of educators who carry out school safety plans in coordination with community partners, of state leaders and community leaders who wish to promote a culture of school safety and positive school climate, of school districts that want to communicate their vision to the community, of corporations that wish to use cause marketing to build stronger relations in the marketplace and in the workplace, of enterprises that wish to aggregate markets for products and services related to school safety and security, of enterprises that wish to reach out specifically to parents and the education market, and of media outlets interested in creating more varied in-depth content and offering sponsorship opportunities deeply tied to local audiences.

This idea offers both immediate and long-term benefits for the end users. First, they will have a common platform for promoting their role in safe schools, and thus be able to draw from resources in other communities and other disciplines during Safe Schools Month. Second, it positions school safety and school climate alongside other major pressing issues in an inclusive, unifying setting and large-scale conversation. Third, it provides an opportunity for better planning for resources to be distributed and for special events to measure outcomes. Fourth, it forms the basis for measuring results from year to year in increased awareness and general appreciation of school safety and school climate. Fifth, it provides a driving force for the rest of the year for those who offer products or services related to school safety and school climate. Activities in the following months can ride on the momentum built up during the month, and activities in the previous months can build on the anticipation of the month itself. (This kind of dual momentum cannot be achieved with just a Safe Schools Day or Safe Schools Week.)

Improved productivity of the end users will be apparent as patterns of self-organization emerge for the participants, the events, and the resources. The Safe Schools Month creates a common deadline structure for planning and executing distribution and event activities. It also provides an environment where solutions can be shared, and results compared.

Who would be the service providers and how would they benefit?

Numerous entities could be considered service providers for the idea: government agencies, community service organizations, libraries, providers of educational resources, media producers, distributors, institutions, any organization that can provide an environment in which the end users identified above can lead in the observance of the month.

The chief benefit for these service providers is that the idea provides a framework for recurring interaction with end users that is more involved than other typical interaction because of the high public purpose of the Month. Promotional materials sent out by the service providers become public displays put up by the end users for a larger audience. Best-selling items act as centerpieces for other marketable resources. Events during the month serve to aggregate buyers and sellers. Intense activity during the month brings on continued interest in school safety in subsequent months, and thus stimulates appropriate follow-through from the service providers. There is good reason for the service providers to obtain feedback from the end users, both to measure results within the community and to prepare for the following year's celebration. This level of interaction can only strengthen the value chain.

Does it offer benefits over existing alternatives?

The idea for a Safe Schools Month offers significant benefits over existing alternatives to the service provider. Current alternatives include promotions timed according to the release of a particular publication or other event, or centered on major news developments, or presented at expositions for a particular industry or discipline, such as a technology expo or textbook convention. These alternatives lack either reliability of timing, or proper focus, or sufficient context. The Safe Schools Month gives the service provider both a reliable timeframe and a market focus for promoting not only specific new titles or offerings, but also all school safety

materials at the same time. The cost of higher quality promotional materials and activities can be amortized over a wider range of products and services.

What are its chances in the marketplace?

Based on past successes in America with commemorative months such as Black History Month, American Heart Month, Cancer Control Month, Mental Health Awareness Month, Preparedness Month, and Cyber Security Awareness Month, this idea would be readily adopted in the marketplace. State agencies will be encouraged to schedule events to observe the Month. School systems and universities will introduce study units and special projects based on deeper appreciation of school safety. Bookstores will devote full cases of books to school safety and school climate, along with attractive displays. The same level of special displays will be seen in other venues that have an interest in what parents want. In the media, we will see a continual rise in the number of newspaper articles dealing with school safety and school climate as topics of human interest rather than only as part of a breaking news story. More parents, educators, students, and experts will appear on talk shows and other programs on television and radio. Motion pictures with school safety and school climate themes will be timed for release during the designated Month. There will be a proliferation of personal and organizational web sites that explore all aspects of school safety. New awards will be created to recognize school safety and school climate excellence.

What technology is required and can the technology be delivered?

The technology required to implement a Safe Schools Month exists today. We have today a combination of easily available communications, media and instructional technologies. These would include large-scale web-administered calendaring programs, a cataloging system linking together a large number of resources and experts, a map-based interface to quickly pinpoint events of interest, and web-delivered and web-administered applications that promote prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. These should not only help accelerate the implementation of the Safe Schools Month, but from the outset should guarantee the removal of any barrier to its implementation.

Contact:

John Simmons
Colorado School Safety Task Force
Office of Senator Ellen Roberts
Colorado State Capitol
200 E Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80203
303-345-7926
johnsimmons@safeschoolsmonth.org
<http://www.SafeSchoolsMonth.org>