

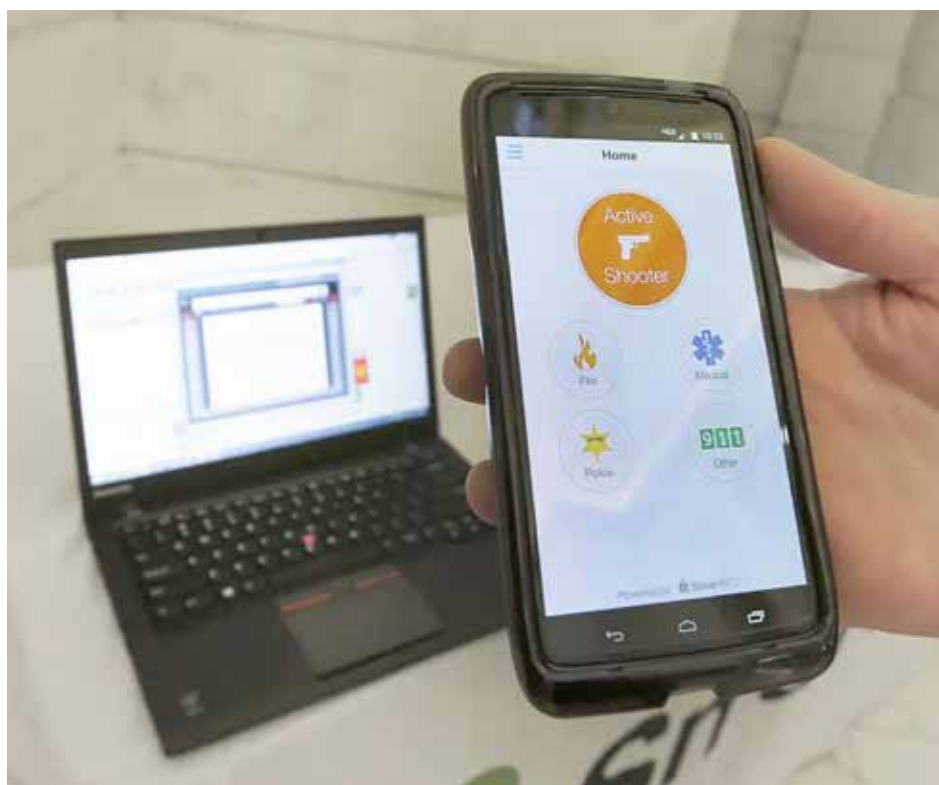
# Considering Technology Over Trainings

## States aim to boost school safety

AP - In the wake of an elementary school shooting in Tennessee earlier last week that left three 9-year-olds and three adults dead, state legislatures across the country are moving forward with bills aiming to improve school safety.

The bills have been introduced in blue and red states alike and would require schools to install technology ranging from panic buttons, video surveillance and emergency communications systems. Most have bipartisan support, with lawmakers seeing them as a way to boost school security while avoiding political gridlock on the hot-button issue of gun control. But some experts say teacher safety training is more effective and less expensive than the new technologies, which also can require upgrades or ongoing maintenance that may not be funded. That hasn't stopped states from Oregon to Missouri to Tennessee from pursuing the systems.

"I was asked by a colleague if our schools will have to become fortresses to keep our kids safe. And I told



A smartphone is held during a demonstration of the Rave Panic Button application at the Arkansas state Capitol in Little Rock, Ark., Aug. 11, 2015. The system is designed to enable authorities to respond to crises faster across more than 1,000 public schools in Arkansas. In the wake of a deadly elementary school shooting in Tennessee earlier this week, state lawmakers across the country are moving forward with school safety measures. (AP Photo/Danny Johnston, File)

them yes, if that's what it takes. I don't care if we have to park a tank outside a school," Tennessee's Republican House Majority Leader William Lamberth said. While Democratic state lawmakers have

called for tighter gun laws as a way to stem school shootings, many are now also supporting the school emergency measures that have largely been touted by Republicans. In Oregon, where Dem-

ocrats control the Legislature, a bill that would require schools to send electronic notifications to parents as soon as possible after a safety threat occurs passed the state House unanimously this week. Two Democratic lawmakers are the chief sponsors of another bill that would require all public school classrooms to have panic alert devices that would contact law enforcement or emergency services when activated.

If passed, the panic alert bill would make Oregon the fourth state. "If there's anything we know, it's that during an emergency, time equals life," said one of the Oregon bill's chief sponsors, Democratic state Rep. Emerson Levy.

Some school districts aren't waiting for legislation to implement new security measures such as panic devices. Las Vegas's Clark County School District, among the 10 largest districts nationwide, is now using a system involving badges called CrisisAlert. The badges can be worn around the neck and pressed to call for help or trigger a schoolwide lockdown. While one-time grants can allow schools to purchase new technology, they don't always fund upkeep over longer periods of time. Ken Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services, a consulting firm based in Cleveland, Ohio, said he's found items like security cameras gathering dust in boxes in some of the schools that he's worked with.

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