

Schools mull medical marijuana policies over student use

By PATRICK WHITTLE
Associated Press

AUBURN, Maine — After years of trying to keep marijuana out of schools, educators across the country are grappling with how to administer cannabis to students with prescriptions for it.

Medical marijuana has been legal in some states for two decades but school districts and lawmakers are only now starting to grapple with thorny issues about student use of a drug still illegal under federal law.

“School districts are trying to find their way and navigate this landscape as laws develop and social norms change,” said Francisco Negrón, general counsel of the National School Boards Association. “This is a situation in which the changing social norms are ahead of the existing operational structure.”

The possibility of medical marijuana in schools raises

a number of questions for school officials, such as who will administer it, how to prevent it from being redistributed by students, and even the legality of having it on campus. Only three of the 23 states where medical marijuana is legal have seen schools or state officials set up rules, according to the pro-reform Marijuana Policy Project.

This week, a school committee in Auburn, a Maine city of about 23,000, approved a policy to allow students to have medical marijuana under certain conditions. It would have to be approved by a physician and administered in school by a parent or guardian, Auburn Assistant Superintendent Michelle McClellan said. Nurses wouldn't be able to administer the drug and students would not be permitted to smoke it.

The decision in Auburn came about two months after a New Jersey school became the first in the country to



In this June 10, 2015 photo, medical marijuana patient Genny Barbour, who is autistic and suffers from seizures, interacts with her mother Lora at their home in Maple Shade, N.J.

allow medical marijuana. The Larc School instituted the policy after 16-year-old Genny Barbour, who suffers from potentially life-threatening epileptic seizures, fought for the right to take edible marijuana. A nurse at the special education school in Bellmawr provides Genny with her midday dosage of cannabis oil.

In Colorado, the law permits parents or professional caregivers to come on school grounds to administer medical marijuana if the district has adopted a policy allowing it, according to Megan McDermott, spokeswoman for the state Department of Education. School nurses or staff cannot administer it.

While medical marijuana

has been legal in some states for years, fresh claims about pediatric use have helped prompt schools to look at the issue, said Morgan Fox, a spokesman for the Marijuana Policy Project. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics generally opposes medical marijuana but issued a statement a year ago saying “exceptions should be made for compassionate use in children with debilitating or life-limiting diseases.”

Proponents of marijuana's use as a treatment for everything from seizures to chronic pain trumpet the recent policy changes as victories for student health. Others who doubt the wisdom of allowing marijuana in schools raise concerns whether the changes will result in schools violating federal laws that still outlaw marijuana.

In Maine, Auburn Superintendent Katy Grondin said it's important for school districts to make sure medical marijuana doesn't interfere with education.

“It's what the doctor and the family decides is in the best interest of the child,” she said, adding that students won't be able to carry marijuana in school. “We're not getting involved in it medically.”

Scott Gagnon, director of Smart Approaches to Marijuana Maine, which opposes legalization of marijuana and fought the state's law to allow marijuana in schools, said districts are right to be cautious and work to prevent recreational use of the substance.

“We already know kids report that drugs are sold and exchanged on school property. We don't want to see this add to that,” he said.

But Fox, the Marijuana Policy Project spokesman, said laws that allow access to marijuana in school are about providing children with medicine they need to be able to attend at all.

“These kids, just because they're sick, shouldn't have their education interrupted,” he said.

VAULT: All roads leading to the property were blocked off

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6 a.m. by armed men when they showed up for work. Most of the employees left the property, but scale attendant Debi Furukawa locked herself in the scale house and called the state police at Hermiston just before the group cut the building's phone lines. She also communicated by CB radio with her husband Harvey, who had locked himself in the accounting office, until someone disabled the system. The Furukawas later escaped the building unharmed.

The posse included Ervin R. Haring, 54, and Donald A. Goodwill, 46, both of Portland; Robert D. Cummings, 31, of Glendale, Calif.; Donald R. Cooper, 36, and George Hill, 47, both of Stockton, Calif.; and Vernon E. Essig, 48, and Farrell A. Griggs, 18, both of Herald, Calif. They were armed with three handguns, a rifle, a hunting knife and numerous clubs, and Goodwill's two dogs.

At the center of the dispute was property owned by Sach and Dan Mikami, Ralph Zimmerly and Jack Zabransky that was formerly part of the estate of J.T. “John” Hoskins. The posse, claiming to be Hoskins' heirs, asserted that the property occupied by the sheds belonged to them because the disposition of the land had not been done properly when Hoskins passed away. In 1974 former Umatilla County surveyor Ralph Thompson and Everett Thoren, an Elgin

resident, were arrested for trespassing after they drove onto Zimmerly's land. In July of 1976 Thoren and Goodwill filed a \$6.8 million suit against Zimmerly, the Zabransky brothers and McPherson in U.S. District Court in Portland in an attempt to have the land in dispute returned to Hoskins' heirs.

Umatilla County Sheriff Bill McPherson said in an interview that his department had heard rumors the night before that the posse might be involved in some kind of takeover, but did not know where the incident would take place. He arrived at 7:15 a.m., and Umatilla County, Oregon State Police and officers from as far away as Milton-Freewater and Baker City joined him throughout the day. FBI agent Dan Jacobson and Umatilla County District Attorney Jack Olsen and his deputies were also at the scene for the 11-hour standoff.

All roads leading to the property were blocked off, and potato trucks waiting to unload were turned away. Police made two flyovers of the property with the help of Ron Linn, whose home and airstrip a half-mile from the sheds were commandeered as a command post for law enforcement. Umatilla County sheriff's deputy Keith Garoute was posted on a vantage point about 350 yards from the sheds with a scope-sighted .308 sniper rifle.

Police officers conferred with Goodwill, the group's

leader, several times during the day in an attempt to convince the group to surrender. In mid-afternoon Goodwill rode into Hermiston with state police in an attempt to contact Thoren, who Goodwill said had hired him to take over the shed. Thoren wasn't home.

Goodwill returned to the shed at 4 p.m., and OSP Lt. Duane Pankratz reported to the command post that the group had agreed to surrender “if met by a show of force.” At 4:30 p.m., 10 police cars loaded with flak-jacketed and helmeted police officers descended on the potato sheds, where the surrender took place. No shots were fired and no injuries were reported.

Deputy Glenn Youngman said, “I think they were hoping we would wait them out.” He said the men had sleeping bags but no food, and that Thoren was supposed to have brought them a camp trailer and provisions.

Following his arrest, Goodwill said he and his group had succeeded in their purpose, since “possession is nine-tenths of the law.” He and his six co-conspirators faced charges of conspiracy to commit burglary and riot, both felonies, while Essig and Griggs also were charged with criminal mischief and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, and Cummings was also charged with criminal trespass.

The men also would be sued for all police costs for the incident. District Attorney

Jack Olsen said charges against Thoren were also possible, as two members of the posse mentioned he had hired them to take over the sheds and Essig claimed to have a signed agreement.

The trials were moved to Hood River Circuit Court. In December 1976, Vernon Essig was convicted of second-degree burglary and possession of a dangerous weapon with intent to use, both felonies, and misdemeanor disorderly conduct and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle. He was found innocent of the riot and first-degree burglary charges.

Mastermind Everett Thoren's trial dragged on through July of 1977. He was sentenced to 150 days in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton: 30 days each for second-degree criminal mischief, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and first-degree criminal mischief, and 60 days for carrying a dangerous weapon with intent to use. Though Thoren continued to insist he has a claim to the property, he told the court at sentencing that he was through with the matter.

Trial and sentencing information for the remaining five defendants was not found; the *East Oregonian* archives from that period are not searchable.

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U.S. recruits tech leaders to help disrupt IS group

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — With extremists finding fertile ground for recruitment online, the White House is dispatching top national security officials to Silicon Valley to seek the tech industry's help in disrupting the Islamic State group and other terrorists.

At a high-level session on Friday, leaders from major technology and Internet companies will discuss ways to use technology to stop terrorists from radicalizing people online and spurring them to violence, according to a meeting agenda obtained by The Associated Press. Attorney General Loretta Lynch, FBI Director James Comey and Director of National Intelligence James Clapper are slated to attend the meeting, along with President Barack Obama's chief of staff and his top counterterrorism adviser.

The meeting in San Jose, California, comes as the Obama administration tries to beef up cooperation with social media groups and online companies whose platforms are often used by extremists to attract followers, disseminate

their message and organize attacks. Obama said in a recent speech that he planned to “urge high-tech and law enforcement leaders to make it harder for terrorists to use technology to escape from justice.”

At Friday's session, government officials plan to offer tell technology experts how terrorists use technology, including encryption. They'll also discuss ways the government and tech companies can “help others to create, publish, and amplify alternative content that would undercut ISIL,” the agenda says, using an alternative acronym for the Islamic State. Another goal is to identify ways for law enforcement to better identify terrorists online and stop them from carrying out attacks.

Increasingly, digital platforms have become tools of radicalization used by the Islamic State, a group Obama recently denounced as “bunch of killers with good social media.” Slick online magazines, highly produced videos and social networks like Facebook and Twitter have all played roles in the group's propaganda machine.

BURNS: Locals sympathized with the group's complaints but disagreed with their tactics

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here,” Ward said.

Bundy replied that his complaints about federal land management policies are not being addressed.

“We're getting ignored again, sir,” said Bundy.

“I didn't come to argue,” Ward said, and Bundy replied neither had he.

Ward said he would call Bundy on Friday to talk more.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown on Thursday called the occupation “unlawful” and said it had to end.

“It was instigated by outsiders whose tactics we Oregonians don't agree with. Those individuals illegally occupying the Malheur Wildlife Refuge need to decamp immediately and be held accountable,” she said.

On Wednesday night,

residents attended a community meeting to air their views about the two dozen or so armed men holed up at the headquarters of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge south of Burns.

Locals said they sympathized with the armed group's complaints about federal land management policies but disagreed with their tactics.

At that meeting, Ward said he hoped residents would put up a united front to peacefully resolve the conflict with the group.

“I'm here today to ask those folks to go home and let us get back to our lives,” Ward said.

Schools were closed following the seizure of the refuge because of safety concerns in the small town in eastern Oregon's high desert.

OBAMA: NRA saw ‘no reason to participate in a public relations spectacle’

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mass shootings. He said the NRA refused to acknowledge the government's responsibility to make legal products safer, citing seatbelts and child-proof medicine bottles as examples.

Taking the stage at George Mason University, Obama accused the NRA of refusing to participate in the town hall despite having its headquarters nearby.

“Since this is a main reason they exist, you'd think that they'd be prepared to have a debate with the president,” Obama said.

NRA spokesman Andrew Arulananand said beforehand that the group saw “no reason to participate in a public relations spectacle orchestrated by the White House.” Several NRA members were in the audience for the event, which was organized and hosted by CNN. And the NRA pushed back on Twitter in real time, noting at one point “none of the president's orders would have stopped any of the recent mass shootings.”

The White House has sought to portray the NRA, the nation's largest gun group, as possessing a disproportionate influence over lawmakers that has prevented new gun laws despite polls that show broad U.S. support for measures like universal background checks. Last year, following a series of mass shootings, Obama

pledged to “politicize” the issue in an attempt to level the playing field for gun control supporters.

The American Firearms Retailers Association, another lobby group that represents gun dealers, did participate Thursday. Asked how business had been since Obama took office, Kris Jacob, vice president of the group, replied: “It's been busy.”

“There's a very serious concern in this country about personal security,” he added.

Obama's actions on guns have drawn major attention in the presidential campaign, with the Democratic candidates backing Obama and the Republicans unanimously voicing opposition. Donald Trump, addressing a rally in Vermont just as Obama was holding the town hall, said he would eliminate gun-free zones in schools on his first day if elected to the White House.

“You know what a gun-free zone is for a sicko? That's bait,” Trump told the crowd.

Obama's broadside against the NRA came two days after unveiling a package of executive actions aimed at keeping guns from people who shouldn't have them. The centerpiece is new federal guidance that seeks to clarify who is “in the business” of selling firearms, triggering a requirement to get a license and conduct background checks on all

“You know what a gun-free zone is for a sicko? That's bait.”

— Donald Trump, Democratic Presidential candidate

prospective buyers.

The plan has drawn intense criticism from gun rights groups that have accused the president of trampling on the Second Amendment and railroading Congress by taking action on his own without new laws. Just after his 2012 re-election, Obama pushed hard for a bipartisan gun control bill that collapsed in the Senate, ending any realistic prospects for a legislative solution in the near term.

Part of a concerted White House push to promote the effort, the town hall attracted a number of high-profile

figured in the gun debate, including former Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, who was shot in 2011. Obama took questions from Taya Kyle, whose late husband was depicted in the film “American Sniper,” and Cleo Pendleton, whose daughter was shot and killed near Obama's Chicago home.

Ahead of the town hall, Obama put political candidates on notice that he would refuse to support or campaign for anyone who “does not support common-sense gun reform” — including Democrats.

All the candidates running for the Democratic presidential nomination support stricter gun laws, so Obama's declaration in a New York Times op-ed isn't likely to have an impact on the race to replace him. Instead, it appeared aimed at Democratic congressional candidates from competitive districts who might want Obama's support on the campaign trail this year.

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