House bill to make active shooter training mandatory for Missouri schools

By: Melody Cox

COLUMBIA – Missouri lawmakers are perfecting a bill to help ensure students, teachers and other school staff are prepared if there ever was an active shooter threat.

 The bill would make active shooter or intruder training mandatory for schools to have at least once during the normal school year.

 Michelle Baumstark, the community relations director for Columbia Public Schools, says Columbia schools are already ahead of this legislation.

 “We began the ALICE form of our intruder training probably in 2006, maybe about six year ago, seven years ago,” Baumstark said. “Before a lot of districts were looking at enhancing what they were doing to deal with active intruders or active shooter, we really wanted to be proactive in that arena.”

 Even CPS has made it a requirement that Columbia schools has the drills at least twice a year, but they usually happen more often.

 “Because we want that familiarity and that comfortableness to know exactly what to do we do it more often than that,” Baumstark said.

 CPS uses a specific kind of intruder training known as ALICE. It is an acronym for alert, lockdown, investigate, counteract and evacuate, but the last one is the most important.

 "Really the number one thing with ALICE that we want people to do is get out of the building... to evacuate," Baumstark said.

 Another part of this plan calls for the students to use anything around them to “counteract” the intruder.

 Kristin Bowen, mom and local leader of Moms Demand Action, can’t imagine what it’s like to grow up in the midst of school shootings.

"I grew up with, you know, emergency drills, but not someone's coming into your school to kill you," Bowen said.

Bowen is worried about how that could affect students.

"It has done something to the way that they think about themselves in the world that is really heartbreaking… I mean... it's just... I don't know how we got to this point but it's got to stop,” Bowen said.

Currently, the new bill is still being perfected, and it is not clear when or if the new bill would be implemented.