

Jarod's Law workshop clarifies requirements

by Bill Wilcox
deputy director of management services

What do I do? What should we expect? How detailed will this visit be? What about the follow-up requirements? These are but a few of the questions currently on the minds of school administrators and staff regarding House Bill 203, commonly known as Jarod's Law. Although the law went into effect in March 2006, the rules for implementing the law and conducting the inspections were finalized in late September 2007.

On Feb. 7, OSBA hosted a half-day workshop that addressed what to do before, during and after the health department inspections. All of the workshop presenters assisted in writing the rules for Jarod's law as members of the advisory committee. They were **Duane Stansbury**, health commissioner for the Warren County Combined Health District; **Stephan Ruckman**, environmental health director for the Delaware General Health District; and **Matt Johnson**, program manager for the Cuyahoga County Board of Health. Nearly 60 board members, superintendents, business managers, directors and maintenance personnel attended this workshop to gain insights

into the requirements of this new law. Many questions were addressed, enlightening all the attendees in the various aspects of the inspections.

Among the key points presented was the request from health department representatives that school districts appoint a safety person to facilitate the inspection process. The presenters stressed the importance of documentation, as well as cooperation. For many years, school districts have had health inspections. Although there are new requirements, it is still a health inspection. The suggestion also was made that the district take the initiative and meet with the health district commissioner and sanitarian *before* the actual inspection to discuss the process and how best to work together. An important fact to remember is that the health department individuals are the good guys in this process. This is an additional responsibility for them, and the school community should meet them halfway.

The workshop also tried to dispel certain myths or misstatements being made by some vendors. The most glaring was the suggestion that school personnel can be trained, for a fee, to become Jarod's Law-certified. Unfortunately, there is no such certification. For individuals responsible for ensuring district

compliance with Jarod's Law, paying for inspections or training for such certification is not a wise investment. When in doubt, check with OSBA or your local education association.

To help districts comply with Jarod's Law, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has created the "Ohio School Environmental Health and Safety Inspection Guidance Manual." The manual can be found on ODH's Web site at www.odh.ohio.gov/odh/Programs/eh/schooleh/sehmain.aspx, and the appendices include an ODH School Environment Health and Safety Inspection form.

OSBA, the Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Ohio Association of School Business Officials recently held a series of five regional workshops on Jarod's Law, with the assistance of **Bill Balmat**, director of risk management services for Hylant Administrative Services, which administers the Ohio School Plan. Many school personnel attended, and numerous questions and issues were discussed. It is important to remember that districts must comply with this new regulation, so education and training are critical. If you have any questions about complying with the law, please contact OSBA.

Ohio School Boards Association
8050 North High Street, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43235-6481