
M E M O R A N D U M

TO: THE GOVERNORS HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORS COUNCIL (GHSAC)

DATE: OCTOBER 11, 2018

RE: SELECT HOMELAND SECURITY INITIATIVES ON SCHOOL SAFETY IN 2018

Background: The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) is committed to supporting states in enhancing the safety of their schools. For several years, the NGA Center has tracked developments in school safety and shared promising practices surrounding prevention, response and recovery/reunification efforts. The NGA Center conducted a survey with state homeland security advisors serving in the Governors Homeland Security Advisors Council (GHSAC) in 2016 to better understanding the landscape and existing school safety initiatives.

In 2018, following the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, NGA received several requests from governors to highlight promising practices and to elevate the importance of the issue. NGA led a delegation of governors to the White House in February 2018 to discuss possible approaches. In addition to providing a forum for governors to discuss key concerns, the NGA Center responded by assembling a technical assistance project for states. Modelling the approach that many states take, the NGA Center uses its professionals from the Homeland Security & Public Safety Division, Education Division and Health Division in a collaborative fashion. With support from the U.S. Department of Justice, the NGA Center announced a project to provide in-state technical assistance workshops with select states looking to implement a strategic action plan to enhance school safety this year. To date, the NGA Center has conducted workshops in Maryland and West Virginia, and will hold an upcoming session in Massachusetts shortly after the release of this memorandum.

I. Issue.

In the months following the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High school, multiple states embarked on new initiatives to enhance school safety. Many governors designated their homeland security advisors to lead the process of evaluating gaps in states' existing school safety structures and collecting applicable best practices.

This memorandum captures examples of major state homeland security efforts in 2018 to enhance planning, preparation, response and recovery in the event of an incident in a school environment. **However, it is not designed to be comprehensive in nature.** Every state

and territory in the nation is confronting the challenge of protecting schools and designing innovative approaches and a more exhaustive review would be necessary to capture such actions.

Efforts detailed below have commonly been enacted through establishing statewide task forces to evaluate best practices and passing legislation to better support schools.

Establishment of Task Forces or Working Groups. Most recently, **Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont and Virginia** established state school safety task forces or equivalents with the function of increasing school safety through the implementation of best practices. In the months since their establishment, the **Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Tennessee** and **Texas** task forces have submitted reports and recommendations to their governor while other states are expected to do so within the year. Frequent recommendations include the expansion of school resource officer (SRO) programs; the expansion of school-based mental health services for students; the development of school district-based behavioral threat assessment teams to intervene with students struggling socially or behaviorally and the creation or expansion of anonymous tip lines to report threats of violence.

Passing Legislation. Several states recently passed legislation related to school safety, including **California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee** and **Wisconsin**. State bills mandate actions such as the creation of “risk protection orders” for gun owners who may be experiencing mental health crises and pose a threat to public safety;¹ the hiring and placement of school resource officers (SROs) in every school and the appropriation of funds for measures including school threat assessments, enhancing school counseling and school facility upgrades.

Executive Plans and Proposals. Governors have also introduced statewide plans and proposals. These plans include legislative proposals or establish commissions. **Alabama, Michigan** and **Wisconsin**’s governors have each released executive plans.

II. State Summary Actions.

The following includes a summary of highlighted 2018 initiatives by state:

Alabama: Governor Ivey initiated the *Smart on Safety Initiative*, with thematic focuses on: *Secured Schools, We Know Our Kids, Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)* and the

¹ For more information on risk based gun removal laws, see the NGA memorandum available at <https://classic.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2018/HSPS/NGA%20Memorandum%20on%20Risk-Based%20Gun%20Removal%20Laws.pdf>.

*Governor's Securing Alabama Facilities of Education (SAFE) Council.*² As part of *Secured Schools*, local school officials can repurpose the Education Advancement and Technology Fund for school security. *We Know Our Kids* encourages schools to identify at-risk students through student engagement and other factors to prevent students from harming themselves or others. *Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs)* requires schools to continuously update EOPs and provide regular training to staff and students. When announcing the Smart on Safety Initiative, Governor Ivey signed Executive Order 713, convening the Governor's SAFE Council, which delivered school safety recommendations in April 2018.³

Highlights of the Council's recommendations include:

- Providing dedicated and sustainable funding for school resource officers (SROs) and district safety coordinators (DSCs);
- Creating an interlocking system of threat assessments, threat reporting and mental health prevention/intervention services to address at-risk students; and
- Mandating planning and training exercise requirements.

Governor Ivey also announced the Alabama Sentry Program which permits administrators in schools without an SRO to maintain a firearm on campus in a secured safe. The program requires the administrator to complete training created and certified by the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA).⁴

Alaska: As part of updates to Alaska's Public Safety Action Plan, Governor Bill Walker convened a working group which recommended school safety improvements through the following avenues:⁵⁶

- Creating a better system for people to surrender firearms;
- Establishing capability for residents to text tips to public safety agencies;
- Improving access to services for children requiring institutional care; and
- Increasing firearm inspections in rural Alaska.

Arkansas: Governor Asa Hutchinson established the *Arkansas School Safety Commission* via Executive Order 18-03.⁷ The Commission evaluated school designs, safety and security policies, emergency plans and policies, school counseling and mental health issues.⁸ The Commission delivered its preliminary report to the governor in July 2018 and will present

² Alabama Office of the Governor, "Governor Ivey Unveils "Smart on Safety Initiative" Press Release, March 6, 2018 <https://governor.alabama.gov/press-releases/governor-ivey-unveils-smart-on-safety-initiative/>

³ <https://governor.alabama.gov/executive-orders/executive-order-no-713/>

⁴ Alabama Office of the Governor, "Governor Ivey Announces Alabama Sentry Program to Train Administrators in School Security" Press Release, May 30, 2018 <https://governor.alabama.gov/press-releases/governor-ivey-announces-alabama-sentry-program-to-train-administrators-in-school-security/>

⁵ <http://law.alaska.gov/pdf/admin/PublicSafetyActionPlan-update2.pdf>

⁶ <http://law.alaska.gov/pdf/admin/PublicSafetyActionPlan.pdf>

⁷ https://governor.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/executiveOrders/EO_18-03.pdf

⁸ Arkansas Office of the Governor, "Governor Hutchinson Announces Creation of Arkansas School Safety Commission" Press Release, May 1, 2018 <https://governor.arkansas.gov/press-releases/detail/governor-hutchinson-announces-creation-of-arkansas-school-safety-commission>

the final report in November.⁹ Governor Hutchinson also committed \$300,000 to the Criminal Justice Institute for additional school resource officer training and school security assessments.

Initial recommendations include:

- Increased access to mental-health resources for students;
- At minimum one armed officer on every school campus;
- Specialized training for School Resource Officers;
- Increased visibility of police officers at schools;
- Threat assessment teams to monitor situations with the potential for violence; and
- Regular assessments of school safety plans and policies.

California: In 2018, California continued to promote existing efforts and resources, including a School Emergency Planning and Safety webpage,¹⁰ checklist for compliance with state safety standards¹¹ and active shooter awareness guide.¹² The California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) has leveraged the California State Threat Assessment Center and the State Threat Assessment System’s suspicious activity reporting to aggregate school threat reporting and institute statewide school active shooter training and vulnerability assessments. Cal OES also offers in-person Active Attacker Awareness Presentations to state and local governments, non-governmental organizations and others, in collaboration with local law enforcement. Additionally, in May of 2018, Cal OES officially launched the Preventing Violent Extremism Program, which supports schools in their effort to prevent or intervene in school violence throughout California.¹³

In October 2018, the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services and the California Department of Education were both awarded about \$1 million (total of about \$2 million) in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance’s FY 18 STOP School Violence Program. The two grants will assist in addressing the needs or gaps in school violence prevention and intervention and create tools and resources for districts and communities statewide to promote safer schools.

California passed Assembly Bill 3205 requiring the modernization of school buildings to include locks that allow doors to classrooms and any room with an occupancy of five or more persons to be locked from the inside of the room.¹⁴ The state also passed legislation requiring that all public schools develop a comprehensive school safety plan and train all school staff on the plan.¹⁵

⁹ Arkansas Office of the Governor, “School Safety Commission Presents Preliminary Report to Governor Hutchinson” Press Release, July 3, 2018 <https://governor.arkansas.gov/news-media/press-releases/school-safety-commission-presents-preliminary-report-to-governor-hutchinson>

¹⁰ <http://caloes.ca.gov/for-individuals-families/school-emergency-planning-safety>

¹¹ <https://www.cde.ca.gov/lr/ss/vp/safeschlplanning.asp>

¹² [http://www.caloes.ca.gov/AccessFunctionalNeedsSite/Documents/Cal%20OES%20-%20Active%20Shooter%20Awareness%20Guidance%20\(2016%20update\).pdf](http://www.caloes.ca.gov/AccessFunctionalNeedsSite/Documents/Cal%20OES%20-%20Active%20Shooter%20Awareness%20Guidance%20(2016%20update).pdf)

¹³ <http://www.caloes.ca.gov/ICESite/Pages/Homeland-Security.aspx>

¹⁴ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB3205

¹⁵ https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB1747

Colorado: Colorado passed three bills in to increase school safety. One bill, *School Access to Interoperable Communication Technology* (SB18-158), appropriates a grant program for expanding emergency communication interoperability and training on communications systems for schools and first responders.¹⁶ The *School Security Disbursement Program* (under SB18-269) provides funding for local education providers to implement security upgrades and training for school personnel on student threat assessments, emergency response training and onsite school resource officers.¹⁷ The final bill, the *Crisis and Suicide Prevention Training Grant Program* (SB18-272), creates a grant program to provide financial assistance for schools conducting crisis and suicide prevention training.¹⁸ A summary of all three grant programs and their reporting requirements is available on the Colorado School Safety Resource Center website.¹⁹

Florida: Florida passed the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act (SB 7026), which included a variety of provisions designed to improve school safety in the state of Florida.²⁰ It created “Risk Protection Orders,” allowing a court to prohibit a violent or mentally ill individual from purchasing or possessing a firearm (or other weapon) and allows law enforcement to seize firearms when a person has been detained or adjudicated mentally defective. It raises the firearm purchasing age to 21 years old or older and creates a three-day waiting period for all firearms sales with exceptions for military and corrections officers. The law also bans the sale or possession of bump stocks and enhances criminal penalties for individuals who make threats to schools. In addition, the legislation appropriates \$400 million for schools in the following areas:

- Firearm training for school personnel;
- Active shooter training at schools on a semester basis;
- Addressing school safety needs, a suspicious activity reporting tool;
- Providing counseling services in schools by dedicated mental health counselors;
- Creating a threat assessment team for every school; and
- The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission to investigate system failures during the shooting and develop recommendations for system improvements.

Illinois: The Illinois Terrorism Task Force convened a working group of stakeholders from schools, police and fire agencies to develop strategies to protect against mass shootings in

¹⁶ School Access To Interoperable Communication Technology, 71st Colorado General Assembly (16 May 2018). <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb18-158>

¹⁷ School Safety Disbursement Program, 71st Colorado General Assembly (6 June 2018). <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb18-269>

¹⁸ Crisis and Suicide Prevention Training Grant Program, 71st Colorado General Assembly (30 May 2018). <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb18-272>

¹⁹ <http://cdpsdocs.state.co.us/safeschools/CSSRC%20Documents/2018LegislativeSessionSafetyBillsOverview7.2018.pdf>

²⁰ Florida Office of the Governor, “Gov. Rick Scott Signs Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act” Press Release, March 9, 2018 <https://www.flgov.com/2018/03/09/gov-rick-scott-signs-marjory-stoneman-douglas-high-school-public-safety-act/>

schools.²¹ In April 2018, the working group submitted 13 recommendations to the governor relating to behavioral threat assessment, hardening of facilities and response protocol in schools. The group continues to meet to discuss implementation of those recommendations and other school safety related issues. Recommendations made include forming behavioral threat assessment teams at district and regional levels; creation of information sharing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between school districts and local law enforcement agencies; increased information sharing between schools about transferring students who may pose a danger in receiving schools; formation of regional site assessment teams to assist schools harden their facilities; amending state statutes to allow school district greater discretion regarding use of tax revenue sources to pay for school resource officers and mental health professionals; conducting active shooter drills during the first 90 days of a school year; and trauma management training for school personnel.²² The working group also recommended expanding a test program in Chicago that assures students have at least one trusted adult in school to speak with about personal issues and to whom to report potential threat behavior by others.²³

The Illinois General Assembly also passed Public Act 100-0984 requiring the Illinois Law Enforcement Training Standards Board to develop or approve a curriculum for a certified training program for school resource officers, including child and adolescent development and psychology, positive behavioral interventions and support, education and juvenile law, implicit bias, trauma-informed care, de-escalation and conflict resolution techniques, crisis intervention and related topics.²⁴

Indiana: Indiana has a permanent *Secured School Safety Board* which was established to approve or disapprove applications for matching grants through the state’s *Secured School Safety Grant Program*.²⁵ In 2018, Governor Holcomb also convened a working group to provide recommendations to explore additional ways to keep schools safe. The working group received feedback from first responders, public safety officials, school administrators and others. The recommendations focus on providing additional training to educators on mental health risk factor recognition; execute a statewide mental health programming initiative; invest in the “Indiana School Safety Hub” to connect schools to safety resources and create an opportunity to connect students and parents to state resources; a mandatory audit of school safety plan by the Indiana Department of Education; and ensure sustainability for grant funding.²⁶ In the future the Integrated Public Safety Commission will develop a self-evaluation tool to maximize the effectiveness of each

²¹ Illinois.gov, “Illinois Needs a Comprehensive Public Safety Strategy” Office of Governor Bruce Rauner, <https://www2.illinois.gov/gov/newsroom/PolicyPOV/Pages/Statement-Senate-Bill-1657.aspx> (accessed May 25, 2018).

²² <https://www.iasaedu.org/cms/lib/IL01923163/Centricity/Domain/4/ITTF%20School%20Safety%20Working%20Group%20Recommendations%20-%20Final%20draft%20040318.pdf>

²³ <http://www.ilschoolsafety.org/images/SchoolSafetyDocs/ITTF-School-Safety-Working-Group-Recommendations.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=100-0984>

²⁵ Indiana Secured School Safety Board, Indiana Department of Homeland Security. <https://www.in.gov/dhs/3821.htm>

²⁶ <https://www.in.gov/dhs/files/2018-Indiana-School-Safety-Recommendations.pdf>

school's communications systems and activities; the Indiana State Police will set up and develop an anonymous tip line; the state fire marshal has already developed guidance for schools on unplanned fire alarms and the Indiana Department of Education is assisting with distribution to all schools.²⁷

Iowa: After the Parkland shooting, the Iowa Legislature fast-tracked bill SF 2364, which was signed by Governor Reynolds in March 2018. The bill requires schools to have protocols for school shooters, natural disasters and other emergencies by June 2019 and also requires a drill based on an Emergency Operations Plan at least one time per year.²⁸

Louisiana: The *Blue Ribbon Commission on School Safety* was created by Governor Jon Bel Edwards to study, discuss and evaluate the safety needs of schools.²⁹ The Commission is currently partnering with public safety officials to conduct assessments of all schools for security improvements, including physical safety, emergency operations plans and training for teachers.³⁰

Additionally, the Louisiana legislature enacted H.B. 895 that requires school officials and campus security officers to educate students on online safety and the importance of reporting suspicious behavior. The bill also requires a process for students to report online content deemed potentially dangerous.³¹

Maine: Maine requires each school board to develop a comprehensive all-hazards emergency management plan which includes strategies for conveying information to parents and the public during an emergency.³² In recent years, the Maine Department of Education has undertaken a statewide school security assessment and developed additional training and annual resources for schools.³³ The state also regularly provides guidance and resources to school superintendents for local districts to be prepared in the event of an incident.

Maryland: Governor Hogan signed the *Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018* (SB1265), which requires the School Safety Subcabinet to develop a model for building assessment teams, crafting a training curriculum for school resource officers and other school security

²⁷ <https://www.in.gov/dhs/unplannedfirealarms.htm>

²⁸ <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=sf2364>

²⁹ Brproud.com, "Gov. Edwards delivering school safety remarks this morning" <http://www.brproud.com/news/local-news/gov-edwards-delivering-school-safety-remarks-this-morning/1128423758> (Accessed May 29, 2018).

³⁰ Gov.louisiana.gov, "School Safety Update" Office of Governor John Bel Edwards, <http://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/1543> (accessed August 20, 2018).

³¹ <https://legiscan.com/LA/text/HB895/2018>

Also requires process for students to report online content deemed potentially dangerous

³² <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec1001.html>

³³ <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/security/resources>

employees, and authorizing the Safe Schools Fund to provide grants to local school systems to enhance school safety.³⁴

Michigan: Governor Rick Snyder created the *School Safety Task Force* via executive order to provide effective recommendations for improvements to school safety based on high performing states' protocols nationwide.³⁵ Among other duties it is charged with reviewing and updating Michigan's All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan Guidance for Schools and developing a tiered school safety curriculum standard for SROs. Training tiers will depend on part-time, full-time or weapons-carrying status. The full set of recommendations is due November 30, 2018.

Governor Rick Snyder also advanced an executive school safety proposal, which was developed with the state legislature and Departments of State Police, Education and Health and Human Services.³⁶

The proposal calls for requiring schools to submit violence incident reports to law enforcement as well as develop interventions for those exhibiting behaviors of potential concern and hold trainings for school personnel and families to educate on potential concerning behaviors. An additional recommendation is increasing funding for *OK2Say*, a confidential tip program for students to report suspicious behavior or criminal activities. The proposal requires student-led awareness programs to ensure students know that the tip line is available. It also proposes increasing law enforcement training for active violence and conducting after-event reviews to ensure lessons are learned and built upon to prevent further incidents. However, if an incident occurs, the proposal addresses the need for emergency counseling services to all those affected by the event. Concurrently, Governor Snyder announced a pilot grant program to create behavior assessment team training for schools, which coordinates with the new \$20 million School Safety Grant program administered by the Michigan State Police to upgrade school facilities.

Mississippi: Governor Bryant signed an executive order to establish the *Mississippi School Safety Task Force*. The task force is charged with developing a report on school safety measures currently in place and making recommendations for improvement.³⁷

Nebraska: The *Governor's School Safety Task Force* is a work group whose goal is to collectively support, enhance and sustain safe, healthy and successful learning environments for all Nebraska's children and youth through a comprehensive, integrated, cross-systems approach to school safety.

³⁴ Maryland Safe to Learn Act of 2018, 2018 Regular Session (1 June 2018). <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmmain.aspx?pid=billpage&tab=subject3&id=sb1265&stab=01&ys=2018rs>

³⁵ https://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/EO_2018-5_620654_7.pdf

³⁶ https://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/School_Safety_Proposal_620639_7.pdf

³⁷ Executive Order 1422, Mississippi (19 June 2018). <http://www.sos.ms.gov/Education-Publications/ExecutiveOrders/1422.pdf>

The work group's recommendations are organized under the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery framework.³⁸ At the state level, the recommendations are as follows:

- Establish a Cross-Systems Task Force on School Safety and accompanying Cross-Systems Technical Assistance Center on School Safety;
- Create a Statewide Reporting System for anonymous tips for potential threats;
- Establish appropriate information-sharing among various state agencies;
- Increase statewide access to services and support both in the prevention and recovery phases;
- Establish threat assessment teams statewide; and
- Expand emergency response capacities in rural areas to address minimal law enforcement coverage and longer response times during an incident.

Nevada: Governor Brian Sandoval established the *Statewide School Safety Task Force* via Executive Order 2018-5.³⁹ The task force delivered an initial report to the governor focusing on draft bill language to establish school safety teams; require that district crisis plan development includes representation of a mental and behavioral health professional; and provide funding in the Executive Budget to expand access to school resource officers and enhance building safety. The initial report also recommends requiring all professionals authorized to practice medicine in Nevada to complete at least two hours of continuous medical education on gun safety and self-harm and harm-to-others risk reduction during their first two years from initially being licensed, with those who are already licensed required to complete at least two hours of the continuous medical education during the next licensing period.⁴⁰ The initial report also includes recommendations from a summit the Nevada Attorney General convened that suggested sharing school building plans with police.⁴¹ The final report will be delivered to the governor on or before November 30, 2018.

New Hampshire: Governor Christopher Sununu wrote a letter to the *Governor's School Safety Preparedness Task Force* requesting that they examine the following priorities for the governor's school safety updates: encouraging increased participation of school districts in early warning systems; evaluating increasing access for youth mental health services; funding additional investment in school security and safety infrastructure; allocating staffing to review school safety plans and providing feedback to districts (with regular review); exploring Extreme Risk Protection Orders; strengthening background checks; exploring voluntary school marshal programs; and increasing opportunities for

³⁸ <https://2x9dwr1yq1he1dw6623gg411-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Education-WGroup-Recommendations-4-26-18.pdf>

³⁹ <http://gov.nv.gov/News-and-Media/Executive-Orders/2018/2018-5-Establishing-the-Statewide-School-Safety-Taskforce/>

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http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/Boards_Commissions_Councils/StatewideSchoolSafetyTaskForce/NVSchoolSafetyTaskForceInitialReport.pdf

⁴¹ <https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/nevada-school-safety-task-force-oks-14-recommendations/>

schools to receive safety training and tools.⁴²⁴³ Additionally, New Hampshire has established a Public School Infrastructure Fund to invest nearly \$30 million in state funds for infrastructure and security upgrades to address security gaps identified in a state preformed school security assessment. The task force presented its report and recommendations to the governor in July 2018.⁴⁴

Highlighted recommendations include:

- Expanding Social and Emotional Learning Programs (SEL);
- Creating “tool kit” documents for developing a threat assessment team and school safety exercises;
- School safety training programs; and
- Establishing a 24-hour tip line for students, teachers and parents.

New Jersey: The executive branch, through the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force chaired by the Director of the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness (NJOHSP), created a *School Security Subcommittee* to coordinate across state agencies and develop solutions that fit into the missions and capabilities of federal, county and local partners. The subcommittee is chaired by NJOHSP, the New Jersey State Police (NJSP) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).

The subcommittee collaborates on statewide initiatives including school security assessments conducted by NJOHSP, the State Police and the Department of Education. Other initiatives include:

- An updated, statewide Suspicious Activity Reporting directive developed in partnership among the Office of the Attorney General, NJOHSP and NJSP enhancing the content and procedures for reporting suspicious activity relating to schools;
- A State Agency Roles and Responsibilities Resource Document reflecting the tools and programs available to schools across the state;
- The Regional Operations and Intelligence Center (ROIC) expanded its information sharing to superintendents and school safety specialists
- NJOHSP and the ROIC developed and are implementing a School Security Assessment Strategy to coordinate school physical security assessments with county and local partners and increase capability to conduct security assessments statewide;
- The Subcommittee is identifying and prioritizing training and exercise needs for schools, and has shared essential action items with the Subcommittee to ensure coordinated efforts statewide; and
- NJDOE pursued additional financial support through the Bureau of Justice Assistance’s *STOP School Violence Prevention and Mental Health Training Program*.
- The Subcommittee also expanded its membership cohort to include the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, the College and University Public Safety Association and the NJSP Field Operations School Safety Unit.

⁴² <https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/press-2018/documents/20180314-school-safety-letter.pdf>

⁴³ <https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/press-2018/20180226-school-safety.htm>

⁴⁴ <https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/press-2018/documents/20180705-school-safety-report.pdf>

Additionally, the state plans to disseminate a school threat analysis report and school infrastructure protection report to local law enforcement, superintendents and school safety specialists at the start of the upcoming school year.

North Carolina: In mid-April 2018, North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission established a special committee to identify resources and develop recommendations to strengthen school safety.⁴⁵ The special committee was created in direct response to school shootings at the request of North Carolina Department of Public Safety Secretary Hooks and has identified increasing information sharing between education and law enforcement officials as a key step towards improving school safety.

Secretary Hooks also directed the State Emergency Response Commission to establish a School Safety Subcommittee to identify resources and develop recommendations to address potential threats before an incident occurs, as well as promote best practices for incident response.

Legislation was enacted in June 2018 to establish the School Safety Grants program. This program provides grant funding for:

- Crisis Services for Students and Families [\$2 million];
- School Safety Training [\$3 million];
- School Resource Officers [\$12 million];
- Safety Equipment [\$3 million]; and
- Mental Health Support Personnel [\$10 million].

\$5 million in funding was also allocated to implement a statewide anonymous safety tip line application for all public secondary schools.⁴⁶

Additionally, the NC State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) has established the Behavioral Threat Analysis (BeTA) Unit within the State Fusion Center to be a proactive measure against acts of violence, such as school shootings, that could lead to mass casualty situations. The BeTA Unit will work to identify, investigate, evaluate and manage person(s) of concern within North Carolina that are recognized as having motive and means to develop or act on an opportunity to commit a targeted attack.

In 2015, the NC Division of Emergency Management (NCEM) began collecting building floor plans for all 2,295 public K-12 schools in North Carolina and integrating them into the State Emergency Response Application (SERA). This application is for first responder access during a school-related emergency or event to inform response actions and tactical planning.

⁴⁵ <https://advance.lexis.com/api/permalink/5c831b2e-4093-4712-839a-743e82933634/?context=1000516>

⁴⁶ <https://www.ncasa.net/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=9&ViewID=6446EE88-D30C-497E-9316-3F8874B3E108&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=3431&PageID=1>

Finally, NCEM has partnered with the NC SBI and the NC Center for Safer Schools to place full-time school safety intelligence analysts at the State Fusion Center.

Oklahoma: Lieutenant Governor Todd Lamb reconvened the *Oklahoma Commission on School Security* which was originally formed in January 2013. The original commission concluded with the creation of a report and school safety recommendations that year.⁴⁷ The recommendations included a now-implemented 24-hour reporting tip line, school security institute and required school safety drills. With the reconvening, the Commission will continue with additional meetings to discuss and facilitate the latest in school security best practices.

Pennsylvania: Governor Tom Wolf created a *School Safety Task Force* to discuss ways to improve school safety and security.⁴⁸ The task force hosted regional roundtables and created a public online survey to ascertain stakeholder concerns and suggested improvements. The task force collected such information and other public feedback to develop recommendations for the final report.

Key recommendations include:

- Improve communication and information sharing between the state, schools, law enforcement, communities and local government;
- Increase access to mental health services and increase the number of physical and mental health professionals in schools;
- Strengthen schools' security and effectively integrate law enforcement and school resource officers;
- Provide actionable guidance and information to schools to determine priorities;
- Enhance social and emotional learning for students; and
- Build schools' connections to the community.⁴⁹

South Carolina: The South Carolina legislature passed legislation requiring public schools and charter schools, which are not primarily taught online, to conduct active shooter/intruder drills during each semester. Additionally, the legislation requires public and charter schools to develop fire and safety policies and programs before the 2020-2021 school year.⁵⁰

Tennessee: The *Governor's School Safety Working Group* prepared recommendations for Tennessee to increase school safety and security in March of 2018.⁵¹ Its immediate

⁴⁷ <https://www.ok.gov/schoolsecurity/documents/2013%20Report%20-%20Oklahoma%20Commission%20on%20School%20Security.pdf>

⁴⁸ Pennsylvania Office of the Governor, "Governor Wolf Launches School Safety Task Force with Auditor General DePasquale," Press Release, March 15, 2018 <https://www.governor.pa.gov/governor-wolf-launches-school-safety-task-force-auditor-general-depasquale/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.governor.pa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/20180827-Gov-Office-School-Safety-Report-2018.pdf>

⁵⁰ https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess122_2017-2018/bills/709.htm

⁵¹ <https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/governorsoffice-documents/governorsoffice-documents/SchoolSafetyWorkingGroupRecommendations.pdf>

priorities included reviewing all school facilities to identify vulnerabilities and finding the most appropriate resources to address them, providing school resource officer funding and developing a statewide technology application for anonymous threat reporting.⁵² In the long term, the report recommends school safety drills to address current risks should occur annually and be subject to regular review for efficacy. Also, staff training should be expanded to include periodically identifying and screening.

Additionally, Tennessee passed legislation (HB 2129) permitting schools to hire off-duty police officers to work as armed school security officers. The employing law enforcement agencies must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local education agency (LEA) ascertaining the roles and responsibilities for officers and additional procedures for communication among agencies and officers.⁵³

Texas: After the Santa Fe High School shooting, Governor Abbott convened superintendents, administrators and law enforcement professionals to discuss physical safety improvements to Texas schools and develop a School and Firearm Safety Action Plan.⁵⁴ Common themes emphasized how to make schools safer places, how to identify and resolve threats and improve mental health assessments and services. Specific recommendations included prioritizing hiring retired peace officers and military veterans for school security and expanding access to Texas Tech Health Sciences Center's Telemedicine Wellness Intervention Triage and Referral (TWITR) Project to ensure additional behavioral health services are available to schools on campus. Each recommendation in the report was suggested by a participant in the stakeholder roundtables hosted by Governor Abbott.

The plan identifies over \$110 million in funding for the recommendations, as well as a provision that provided immediate assistance to Santa Fe High School in the aftermath of its May 18, 2018, shooting.

The Texas Department of Public Safety expanded the iWatchTexas program in 2018 to include school incidents reported via mobile app, Internet or phone by students, teachers, parents and others. The statewide centralized system allows law enforcement to readily detect and prevent an attack.⁵⁶ The iWatchTexas program has a dedicated school safety website which includes suggestions for information that would or would not be helpful in a report.⁵⁷

⁵² Tn.gov, "Haslam Announces Completion of Statewide School Safety Assessment and Release of \$35 Million to Improve School Security" Office of Governor Bill Haslam <https://www.tn.gov/governor/news/2018/8/14/haslam-announces-completion-of-statewide-school-safety-assessment-and-release-of--35-million-to-improve-school-security.html> (Accessed August 20, 2018).

⁵³ <https://legiscan.com/TN/text/HB2129/2017>

⁵⁴ <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-orders-immediate-action-to-address-the-safety-of-texas-schools>; <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-orders-immediate-action-to-ensure-safety-of-college-campuses-in-texas>

⁵⁵ https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/School_Safety_Action_Plan_05302018.pdf

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<https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-releases-school-safety-action-plan-summary>

⁵⁷ <https://iwatchtx.org/Welcome/Index?site=txschools>

Utah: The Utah Legislature created the *Utah Safe Schools Commission*, which utilized public feedback to develop policy recommendations.⁵⁸ The report included recommendations according to tiers. Tier One recommendations had broad consensus among the commissioners and included mental health assessment teams for students at risk and legislating gun violence risk protection orders.⁵⁹ Tier Two recommendations had majority support and some members neutral, with some recommendations requiring additional research and clarification before state implementation. Such recommendations include developing an alert app for teachers to notify administration of an emergency, introducing waiting periods to obtain firearms and strengthening state code to promote safe gun storage and prevent children from gaining access to firearms.

Vermont: Governor Phil Scott signed Executive Order 03-18 to establish the *Community Violence Prevention Task Force*.⁶⁰ The task force is charged with understanding and addressing the root causes of violent behavior against others and responding to these issues through statewide coordination. Additionally, it will identify best practices to prevent violent behavior through identifying and reporting warning signs, identifying opportunities to ensure all schools and communities have early intervention teams and reviewing opportunities for expanding school safety prevention and preparedness capacity in state agencies. In addition, Governor Scott ordered statewide safety assessments after an alleged school shooting plot was averted in February 2018; these were completed in April.⁶¹

Virginia: Virginia Governor Northam announced in mid-July 2018 the formation of the Work Group on Student Safety.⁶² The work group is co-chaired by the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security and the Secretary of Education. EO 11, signed by Governor Northam in June, reestablished the Children’s Cabinet and instructed members to form a work group to make school safety recommendations.

The Virginia House of Delegates has also convened the Select Committee on School Safety which developed a study of Virginia’s current school safety practices in the context of other states’ policies.⁶³ It recommends assessing state-level responsibilities to measure and consider proven school climate improvement strategies (e.g., mental health counselors), continued improvements to training and clarifying implementation of threat assessments

⁵⁸ <https://house.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Utah-Safe-Schools-Commission-Report-%E2%80%93.pdf>

⁵⁹ <https://house.utah.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Utah-Safe-Schools-Commission-Report-%E2%80%93.pdf>

⁶⁰ Vermont Office of the Governor, “Governor Phil Scott Signs Executive Order Creating Community Violence Prevention Task Force,” Press Release, April 19, 2018 <http://governor.vermont.gov/press-release/governor-phil-scott-signs-executive-order-creating-community-violence-prevention-task>

⁶¹ <https://vem.vermont.gov/news/vermont-school-safety-assessment-completed>

⁶² <https://advance.lexis.com/api/permalink/8ab07ff1-eff8-49c7-82c5-0bfe3204e64e/?context=1000516>

⁶³ Virginia House of Delegates Select Committee on School Safety. <https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/house/members/members.php?committee=H99>

and examining the adequacy, awareness and usage of smartphone apps to report threats among students in its future work.⁶⁴

Wisconsin: Governor Scott Walker signed AB 843⁶⁵ into law, which includes his \$100 million School Safety Plan⁶⁶ that creates a grant program for school districts to enhance school safety resources. Additionally, it allows grant funding to implement programs utilizing the Trauma-Informed Care and Adverse Childhood Experiences in Schools framework. It also creates an Office of School Safety within the Wisconsin Department of Justice to work with law enforcement and schools to establish best practices for school safety and provide training and resources to schools, while also requiring all schools to consult with local law enforcement and conduct on-site assessments of all student occupied areas. Finally, it mandates reporting for any school violence threats.

III. Conclusion.

While not exhaustive, this memorandum seeks to memorialize recent developments in school safety initiatives and highlight the overarching themes of state homeland security actions to enhance school safety. In 2018, governors frequently convened task forces (or equivalents) to drive this process and frequently selected their homeland security advisors to guide the groups in developing the reports and recommendations.

Common recommendations from governors and their key advisors include the following:

- Increase the number of school resource officers (SROs) and establish sustainable funding sources for the officers;
- Expand access to mental health resources for students;
- Train relevant school personnel to conduct behavioral risk (or threat) assessments of students experiencing social or exhibiting behavioral stress; and
- Develop or expand anonymous tip lines to report threats of violence.

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices anticipates that more states will publicly release reports, convene task forces or implement enhanced safety initiatives in the coming year.

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http://studiesviriniageneralassembly.s3.amazonaws.com/meeting_docs/documents/000/000/255/original/JLARC_School_Safety_7-11-18.pdf?1531413969

⁶⁵ <http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2017/proposals/ab843>

⁶⁶ Wisconsin Office of the Governor, “Governor Walker Signs \$100 Million School Safety Plan into Law,” Press Release, March 26, 2018 <https://walker.wi.gov/press-releases/governor-walker-signs-100-million-school-safety-plan-law>