



## STUDENT SAFETY WORKGROUP FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 15, 2018

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## Executive Summary

Since the tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida on February 14, 2018, when 17 students and staff members lost their lives, the issue of school safety has received significant public attention. In the months following, many state and local governments, and the federal government, have engaged in thorough reviews of school and student safety practices in order to identify opportunities to enhance safety practices in schools.

While Virginia has long established itself as a national leader on school safety due to strong legislative mandates and investments in education and training, Governor and First Lady Northam recognized the need to build upon our strong foundation and ensure that our schools remain safe learning environments for our children. Accordingly, Governor Northam signed Executive Order 11 on June 21, 2018, which re-established the Children's Cabinet and appointed First Lady Pamela Northam as its Chair. Executive Order 11 also directed Brian Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education, to co-chair a Work Group on Student Safety.

The Work Group on Student Safety convened a diverse, interdisciplinary group of stakeholders and subject matter experts to develop recommendations to: enhance information sharing and the effectiveness of threat assessments teams; assess the role, prevalence, and training of school resource and school security officers; evaluate existing ratios and staffing levels for school support staff; identify opportunities to expand relevant training to a variety of school-based personnel; and consider other school-based programs or supports, including mental health supports, needed to secure the safety of all students.

The Work Group met three times, heard several presentations from experts at each meeting, engaged in facilitated discussion and developed 20 recommendations. The recommendations were submitted to Governor Northam for review on October 1, 2018, and were endorsed by the full Children's Cabinet on October 2, 2018. In addition to addressing the recommendation categories identified in the Executive Order, the Work Group also spent significant time discussing and making recommendations on suicide prevention efforts and physical security measures.

*Creating and maintaining a positive school climate is paramount to enhancing student safety. Additionally, updating and implementing physical safety measures and professional trainings is necessary in order to see effective safety practices in all school settings.*

## Recommendations

### Enhance Information-Sharing and Effectiveness of Threat Assessment Teams

1. Enhance reporting of concerning behaviors to threat assessment teams by developing and promoting educational campaigns and trainings that will help school professionals, students, parents and caregivers recognize behaviors that could indicate the potential for self-harm, or harm to others.
  - a. Promote student-driven, peer-to-peer, communication campaigns focusing on suicide prevention, recognizing when a peer may be in need of additional support, and “See Something, Say Something” principles. Particular emphasis should be placed on educating students, parents or caregivers, school professionals and others on how to report information and to whom information should be reported.
  - b. Local school divisions may consider adopting an anonymous reporting mechanism.
  - c. Develop school-appropriate guidance for school, mental health, and law enforcement professionals on which questions should be asked in order to assess a student’s risk-level for harm to self or others.
2. Virginia should dedicate funding to the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (the “Center”) to develop cross-disciplinary training for schools, law enforcement, and mental health professionals, improve data collection, and enhance information-sharing within the threat assessment team, as well as between threat assessment teams and their partners, including across school divisions.

This funding should be used to:

- a. Provide technical assistance to local school divisions on the school climate survey, school safety audit, threat assessment teams, and other public safety practices.
- b. Increase the availability of cross-disciplinary threat assessment training for all involved stakeholders (including community mental health partners) that encompasses key principles from each of the disciplines involved in threat assessment.
- c. Authorize and fund the Center to conduct a single school climate survey in consultation with the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) that encompasses safety, education, and health interests. Survey students and staff in secondary schools (Grades 6-12) on an annual basis. This would reduce burden on schools, eliminate duplicative efforts, and provide statewide data to assist schools in addressing school climate issues and better direct their efforts.

3. Enable the Center to adopt and implement a case management tool for threat assessment teams to ensure that schools are able to collect important data, monitor outcomes and track information over time.
4. Enhance timely notification from law enforcement to schools, and schools to law enforcement when they are aware that a student has experienced, or may experience, a traumatic event in the community.

### **Role and Prevalence of School Resource Officers (SROs) and School Security Officers (SSOs)**

5. Provide additional funding for the School Resource Officer Incentive Grant Program to expand the availability of SROs in schools with the ultimate goal of ensuring that every student has access to an SRO.
6. Require every SRO to receive SRO training approved by the Center within 12 months of employment, and encourage school administrators to attend this training with their assigned SRO. Additional funding should be provided to the Center to implement this recommendation.
7. Require all school divisions employing SROs to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the employing law enforcement agency consistent with the Model MOU from the VCSCS. MOUs should be regularly reviewed and updated.
8. Modify the Code of Virginia to allow retired law enforcement officers to be hired as SSOs and still receive retirement benefits.

### **Suicide Prevention**

9. Local school divisions should adopt or develop a standard, school-appropriate, suicide prevention screening tool.
10. Enhance information-sharing among health care professionals about a person's previous suicide attempt and/or history.
11. Promote statewide educational campaigns on the following topics:
  - a. Suicide prevention, including recognizing signs and identifying opportunities for a person to access help if they, or a loved one are in crisis.
  - b. Campaigns such as "Lock & Talk" that help parents and caregivers understand and address lethal means safety in their homes.

12. Direct VDOE, in consultation with DBHDS and the Center, to update and disseminate the Virginia Suicide Prevention Guidelines to all school divisions in a timely manner. Once updated, direct the agencies to update their model policies, training, and guidance documents to reflect the updated guidelines.
  - a. Updated guidelines should address: suicide prevention and intervention; screening; risk factors; messaging to students, staff, and parents and caregivers about recognizing and reporting behaviors; how and where to report concerning behaviors; engaging students during key transitional periods when data indicate that suicide rates are higher; how to engage students who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts; how to support students returning to school after treatment; postvention; and how to engage with students after a member of their community has died by suicide.

### **Staffing Levels and Ratios of School Counselors and Support Staff**

13. Lower the ratio of school counseling and support staff to students in schools (social workers, psychologists, nurses, behavioral specialists, etc).
  - a. Lower the ratio of school counselors to students in all public schools grades K-12 in a phased roll-out to meet the Virginia Board of Education's and the American School Counseling Association's recommendation of 1 to 250.
  - b. The Board of Education should consider increasing the standard of quality (SOQ) regarding the percentage of time school counselors spend providing direct counseling services to students to 80% and eliminate non-counseling activities and tasks.
  - c. Provide school divisions with the flexibility to hire these support positions based on demonstrated need.
14. Increase access to trauma-informed care within schools and communities, and expand access to trauma-informed training for school, mental health, and law enforcement professionals.
  - a. Promote increased access to telehealth services that will enable students to receive access to care during school hours.
  - b. Identify funding streams that may be utilized to achieve this goal.
  - c. Support the placement of behavioral interventionist positions in schools. These positions should promote whole-child education and the social and emotional well-being of all students, but especially our most at-risk students. These roles should serve as an intermediary between classrooms and administration.

## **Community, School and University Educational Training**

15. Increase funding for school-appropriate mental health training for teachers and school professionals consistent with the updated VDOE Suicide Prevention Guidelines, and with particular emphasis on trauma-informed care.
  - a. Encourage school-based professionals to attend trainings in teams.
16. The Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety should develop online training on critical school and student safety issues that can be accessed by teachers (including provisional teachers), law enforcement, and school support staff who may not be able to attend in-person trainings. Training could include cultural competency, supporting special populations, the role of the SSOs/SROs, mental health awareness, Threat Assessment Teams, etc.
  - a. Require at least one school administrator from each to school attend a comprehensive school safety training developed or approved by the Center.
  - b. School divisions may require that teachers participate in certain trainings or modules as part of their in-service or re-certification requirements.
17. Produce state level guidance/best practices on information-sharing between law enforcement, schools, and mental health providers. (FERPA/HIPAA)

## **Physical Security**

18. Direct the Virginia Department of Education to identify opportunities to increase the \$100,000 cap on the School Security Equipment Grants, and expand the existing criteria to include school safety consultants or technical assistance, as well as technological advancements.
  - a. Review the current scoring criteria and whether the current criteria puts primary schools at a disadvantage.
19. Increase transparency and communication with students on safety measures and protocols which a school has put in place. Schools should also strive to include students in conversations about their personal safety and opportunities to enhance existing practices.
20. Encourage school divisions to partner with local law enforcement agencies on general school safety practices, as well as to ensure integration of preparation and response protocols.

## Work Group Members

**The Honorable Brian J. Moran**, *Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security*

**The Honorable Atif Qarni**, *Secretary of Education*

**Donna Michaelis**, *Manager, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, Department of Criminal Justice Services*

**Lisa Floyd, Ed.D.**, *Deputy Director of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice*

**Nicole Gore**, *Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Service*

**Ellen White**, *Retired Judge, 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts*

**Kelvin Wright**, *Chief of Police, City of Chesapeake Police Department*

**Benjamin Fernandez**, *Coordinator of Prevention Services, Loudoun County Public Schools*

**Tyrone Foster**, *President-Elect, Virginia School Board Association*

**Brian Hieatt**, *Sheriff, County of Tazewell*

**Mike Lawhorn**, *School Resource Officer, Campbell County Sheriff's Office*

**Bobby Kipper**, *School Safety and Discipline Specialist, Department of Education*

**Patrick Stanfield, Ed.D.**, *Principal, Midlothian Middle School*

**Stanley Jones, Ed.D.**, *Superintendent, Danville Public Schools*

**Carol Medawar**, *Virginia Director, National Education Association*

**Fred Orelove, Ph.D.**, *Co-Chair of Schools Committee, Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network*

**Richard Ponti**, *Director of Safety and Loss Control, Virginia Beach Public Schools*

**Dolores Robison, Ph.D.**, *Supervisor of Threat Assessment, Prince William County Public Schools*

**Cole Fairchild**, *Student, Charlottesville High School*

**Sarah Gross**, *President of the Virginia Parent Teacher Association*

**Elisabeth Harman**, *Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, Roanoke County Public Schools*

**Sarah Synder**, *Coordinator of Counseling, Arlington Public Schools*

**Jeffrey Johnson**, *Principal, Great Bridge High School*

### Staff

**Nicky Zamostny**, *Assistant Secretary, Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security*

**Chidi Uche**, *Special Assistant, Secretary of Education*

**Karen Sullivan**, *Administrative Planning Specialist, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services*

**Jack Irvin**, *Policy Assistant, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services*

**Elizabeth Parker**, *Policy Assistant, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice*

## Work Group on Student Safety Meeting One Agenda

Thursday July 19, 2018

Patrick Henry Building – West Reading Room

Richmond, Virginia

- 1:00 pm **Welcome**  
The Honorable Brian J. Moran  
*Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security*
- The Honorable Atif Qarni  
*Secretary of Education*
- 1:20 pm **Evolution of School Safety in Virginia**  
Dr. Anne Atkinson,  
*President, PolicyWorks Ltd.*
- 1:40 pm **Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Presentation**  
Donna Michaelis  
*Manager, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety*
- 2:10 pm **Virginia Department of Education Presentation**  
Bobby Kipper,  
*School Safety & Discipline Specialist, Virginia Department of Education.*
- 2:40 pm **Break**
- 2:50 pm **Panel of Local Experts**  
Sarah Gross, *President of the Virginia Parent Teacher Association*
- Sheriff Brian Hieatt, *Tazewell County*
- Dr. Fred Orelove, *Trauma Informed Communities Network,  
Schools Committee Co-Chair*
- Dr. Patrick Stanfield, *Principal of Midlothian Middle School*
- Moderator: Dr. Anne Atkinson, President, PolicyWorks Ltd.*
- 3:20 pm **Facilitated Discussion**  
Dr. Anne Atkinson
- 3:50 pm **Closing Remarks**  
Next Steps

## Work Group on Student Safety Meeting One Minutes

*Thursday, July 19, 2018*

*Patrick Henry Building, West Reading Room*

*Richmond, Virginia*

### **MEETING MINUTES**

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#### **Members Present:**

##### *Co-Chairs*

**The Honorable Brian Moran**, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

**The Honorable Atif Qarni**, Secretary of Education

##### *Members*

**Donna Michaelis**, Manager, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

**Lisa Floyd, Ed.D.**, Deputy Director of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice

**Nicole Gore**, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services

**Ellen White**, Retired Judge, 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts

**Kelvin Wright**, Chief of Police, City of Chesapeake Police Department

**Brian Hieatt**, Sheriff, County of Tazewell

**Bobby Kipper**, School Safety and Discipline Specialist, Department of Education

**Patrick Stanfield, Ed.D.**, Principal, Midlothian Middle School

**Carol Medawar**, Virginia Director, National Education Association

**Fred Orelove, Ph.D.**, Co-Chair of Schools Committee, Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network

**Richard Ponti**, Director of Safety and Loss Control, Virginia Beach Public Schools

**Dolores Robison, Ph.D.**, Supervisor of Threat Assessment, Prince William County Public Schools

**Cole Fairchild**, Student, Charlottesville High School

**Sarah Gross**, President, Virginia Parent Teacher Association

**Cardell Patillo**, Tidewater Chairman, Virginia School Board Association (substitute for Tyrone Foster)

#### **Members Absent:**

**Benjamin Fernandez**, School Psychologist and Coordinator of Prevention Services, Loudoun County Public Schools

**Tyrone Foster**, President-Elect, Virginia School Board Association

**Mike Lawhorn**, School Resource Officer, Campbell County Sheriff's Office

**Stanley Jones, Ed.D.**, Superintendent, Danville Public Schools

#### **Staff Present:**

**Shannon Dion**, Director, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

**James Lane, Ed.D.**, State Superintendent, Virginia Department of Education

**Nicky Zamostny**, Assistant Secretary, Office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

**Chidi Uche**, Special Assistant, Secretary of Education

**Jack Irvin**, Policy Assistant, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

**Elizabeth Parker**, Policy Assistant, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

**Karen Sullivan**, Administrative Planning Specialist, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

### **Opening Remarks:**

*Brian Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security*

*Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education*

At 1:04pm, Secretary Moran opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. He had the members introduce themselves. Secretary Moran provided background on the creation of the work group and emphasized the importance of public safety, law enforcement, mental health, and education coming together to discuss issues impacting school and student safety. Secretary Qarni offered opening remarks, mentioning previous tragedies in Virginia such as the Virginia Tech shooting and highlighting the significance of work group's efforts.

### **Evolution of School Safety in Virginia Presentation:**

*Dr. Anne Atkinson, President, PolicyWorks Ltd.*

At 1:12pm, Dr. Atkinson began her presentation. She provided an overview of the history of school safety in Virginia, drawing from her professional experience as a school division administrator, juvenile court administrator, and author of numerous documents for both the Department of Education and the Department of Criminal Justice Services. Her presentation covered developments, such as legislation, studies, and state agency programs, from both education and public safety perspectives.

### **Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Presentation:**

*Donna Michaelis, Manager, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety*

At 1:30pm, Shannon Dion, Director of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), introduced Donna Michaelis. Ms. Michaelis described her background in local law enforcement and state government. She then presented on the history of the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, including legislative changes, current mandates, studies, and trainings offered. Copies of the presentation were provided and a copy can be found on the Children's Cabinet website.

### **Virginia Department of Education Presentation:**

*Bobby Kipper, School Safety and Discipline Specialist, Virginia Department of Education*

At 2:02pm, Dr. Lane, Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Virginia Department of Education (DOE), introduced Mr. Kipper. Mr. Kipper described his background and presented on DOE's multi-tiered systems of support strategy. The presentation contained information on DOE's efforts to address physical and psychological safety. Secretary Moran asked several clarifying questions about school counselor ratios and how the \$6 million in grants that DOE distributes for security equipment grants can be spent and whether they are typically used for metal detectors. Copies of the presentation were provided and a copy can be found on the Children's Cabinet website.

### **Panel of Local Experts:**

*Moderator: Dr. Anne Atkinson*

*Brian Hieatt, Sheriff, County of Tazewell*

*Dr. Patrick Stanfield, Principal, Midlothian Middle School*

*Sarah Gross, President, Virginia Parent Teacher Association*

*Dr. Fred Orelove, Co-Chair of Schools Committee, Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network*

The panel convened at 2:46pm. The members of the panel introduced themselves and offered opening remarks. The panel discussed policies that panel members felt were working in their localities, the importance of trauma informed care, the effectiveness of data sharing policies, parental concerns, and the need for sharing information about current policies with parents.

### **Facilitated Discussion:**

*Facilitator: Dr. Anne Atkinson*

At 3:17pm, Dr. Atkinson opened the discussion. The work group discussed the threat assessment process and the importance of school resource officers, teachers, and staff as mentors for students. Mental health issues and helping children return to school after facing trauma were also discussed. The roles of different personnel, such as school resource officers and school counselors, were discussed. Some members expressed concern that children may be going to resource officers for mental health issues that may be better addressed by school counselors and school psychologists. Other members clarified that resource officers may be the first point of contact with a student in need and can help serve as a bridge to connect them with appropriate services. Various group members discussed the importance of recognizing that different schools have different characteristics and those differences need to be taken into account when developing policies.

### **Closing Remarks:**

*Brian Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security*

*Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education*

Secretary Moran and Secretary Qarni thanked the members for attending and urged them to provide recommendations for presenters and agenda items for the next meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:57pm.

## Work Group on Student Safety Meeting Two Agenda

Tuesday, August 21, 2018

Patrick Henry Building – West Reading Room

Richmond, Virginia

- 1:00pm**      **Welcome**  
The Honorable Brian J. Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security  
  
The Honorable Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education
- 1:05pm**      **Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting**
- 1:20pm**      **Student Panel: Youth Perspectives on School Safety**  
Colleen Trott, Class of 2019, Powhatan High School  
Emily LeSueur, Class of 2015, Fluvanna County High School  
Monica Rhudy, Class of 2020, James River High School  
Cole Fairchild, Class of 2019, Charlottesville High School  
*Moderator: Dr. Fred Orelove, Co-Chair of Schools Committee, Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network*
- 1:40pm**      **Panel: Supports and Strategies for Suicide Prevention**  
Christy Letsom, Chair, Virginia Suicide Prevention Coalition  
Ames Hart, Virginia Chapter Board Member, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention  
Alexandra Jansson, Coordinator, Virginia Violent Death Reporting System, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Virginia Department of Health  
Dr. Sterling Ransone, Jr., Physician, Riverside Health System  
*Moderator: Nicole Gore, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services*
- 2:10pm**      **Panel: Threat Assessment and Threat Assessment Teams (TAT)**  
1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Mark Depatie, Supervisor, School Resource Officer Unit, Prince William County Police  
Dr. Dolores Robison, Supervisor of Threat Assessment, Prince William County Public Schools  
Carolyn Lamm, Supervisor for Student Support Services, Fauquier County Public Schools  
Leah Shorb, Assistant Principal, Cedar Lee Middle School, Fauquier County Public Schools

Anne Smith, School Psychologist, Fauquier County Public Schools

*Moderator: Dr. Marisa Randazzo, Principal & Co-Founder, SIGMA Threat Management Associates*

**2:40pm**      **Break**

**2:50pm**      **Facilitated Discussion**  
*Facilitator: Dr. Marisa Randazzo*

**3:50pm**      **Closing Remarks**

## **Work Group on Student Safety Meeting Two Minutes**

***Tuesday, August 21, 2018***

*Patrick Henry Building, West Reading Room*

*Richmond, Virginia*

### ***MEETING MINUTES***

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#### **Members Present:**

##### ***Co-Chairs***

**The Honorable Brian Moran**, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

**The Honorable Atif Qarni**, Secretary of Education

##### ***Members***

**Donna Michaelis**, Manager, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

**Lisa Floyd, Ed.D.**, Deputy Director of Education, Department of Juvenile Justice

**Nicole Gore**, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services

**Ellen White**, Retired Judge, 24<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts

**Chief Kelvin Wright**, Chief of Police, City of Chesapeake Police Department

**Brian Hieatt**, Sheriff, County of Tazewell

**Bobby Kipper**, School Safety and Discipline Specialist, Department of Education

**Patrick Stanfield, Ed.D.**, Principal, Midlothian Middle School

**Fred Orelove, Ph.D.**, Co-Chair of Schools Committee, Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network

**Richard Ponti**, Director of Safety and Loss Control, Virginia Beach Public Schools

**Dolores Robison, Ph.D.**, Supervisor of Threat Assessment, Prince William County Public Schools

**Cole Fairchild**, Student, Charlottesville High School

**Benjamin Fernandez**, School Psychologist and Coordinator of Prevention Services, Loudoun County Public Schools

**Tyrone Foster**, President-Elect, Virginia School Board Association

**Mike Lawhorn**, School Resource Officer, Campbell County Sheriff's Office

**Stanley Jones, Ed.D.**, Superintendent, Danville Public Schools

**Myra Legg**, Executive Director, Virginia Parent Teacher Association (sent in place of Sarah Gross)

**Jeffrey Johnson**, Principal, Great Bridge High School

**Sarah Snyder**, Coordinator of Counseling, Arlington Public Schools

**Elisabeth Harman**, Director of Special Education & Pupil Personnel Services, Roanoke County Public Schools

**Members Absent:**

**Sarah Gross**, President, Virginia Parent Teacher Association

**Carol Medawar**, Virginia Director, National Education Association

**Staff Present:**

**Nicky Zamostny**, Assistant Secretary, Secretariat of Public Safety and Homeland Security

**Chidi Uche**, Special Assistant, Secretariat of Education

**Elizabeth Parker**, Policy Assistant, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

**Laureen Hyman**, Executive Assistant, Department of Criminal Justice Services

**Opening Remarks**

*Brian Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security*

*Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education*

At 1:04pm, Secretary Moran opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. He provided a summary of the first work group meeting on July 19, 2018. At this meeting, the work group heard presentations from DCJS and VDOE regarding what Virginia is currently doing at the state level to form best practices in student safety. The facilitated discussion and panel of local experts covered a host of issues, including SROs, Security Equipment Grants, school counselor ratios, and trauma-informed care. Secretary Moran then provided an overview of the second meeting. He thanked the 12 additional stakeholders from the school safety community who attended the work group meeting to offer their insight on a series of panels. After an outline of the agenda, including the one hour allotted for facilitated discussion, the members of the work group introduced themselves.

**Approval of Minutes**

Secretary Moran called for a motion to approve the draft minutes from the July 19, 2018 meeting. Judge White moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Student Panel: Youth Perspectives on School Safety**

*Colleen Trott, Class of 2019, Powhatan High School*

*Emily LeSueur, Class of 2015, Fluvanna County High School*

*Morgan Rhudy, Class of 2020, James River High School*

*Cole Fairchild, Class of 2019, Charlottesville High School*

*Moderator: Dr. Orelove*

Dr. Orelove had the members of the panel introduce themselves. He then asked what makes them feel safe at school. Colleen mentioned that trust is an important component: as a student, you have to feel as though you can trust school professionals to keep you safe. Dr. Orelove asked the students what concerns them the most about school safety today. Emily mentioned that in order to feel safe, students must feel

accepted in school and be able to be themselves without fear of what is going to happen to them. Cole mentioned allowing for more transparency in emergency preparedness, and planning. Morgan emphasized the importance of including students in conversations about their own safety going forward. In addition to each panelist stressing the importance of including students in conversations about school safety, they also stressed the importance of improving messaging to students to ensure that they are aware of the services and programs offered by the schools.

### **Panel: Supports and Strategies for Suicide Prevention**

*Christy Letsom, Chair, Virginia Suicide Prevention Coalition*

*Alexandra Jansson, Coordinator, Virginia Violent Death Reporting System, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Virginia Department of Health*

*Dr. Sterling Ransone, Jr., Physician, Riverside Health System*

*Moderator Ms. Gore*

Ms. Gore opened the panel inquiring about the number of school age suicide deaths per year. Ms. Jansson responded that between 2003 and 2015, there were 340 suicide deaths of children between the ages of 10 and 17. The top causes of suicides in Virginia are firearms and asphyxia. Ms. Gore inquired about how we can prevent such a high number of suicide deaths by firearms. Ms. Letsom mentioned the program “Virginia Lock and Talk,” which provides free gun and cable locks in partnership with gun owners and gun sellers. She also suggested encouraging parents to keep more control over their medicine cabinets. Dr. Ransone mentioned physicians are permitted to ask patients “Do you have firearms at home? Are they secured?” Furthermore, emergency rooms do not have a code on medical records to indicate that a person was treated for a potential suicide attempt. When said patient is referred to a doctor outside of the ER, the doctor may not be aware that the patient is believed to have attempted suicide. Finally, each of the panelists stressed the need for better training on how to talk with students about suicide and how to ask appropriate questions to determine whether an individual may be at-risk.

### **Panel: Threat Assessment and Threat Assessment Teams (TATs)**

*1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Mark Depatie, Supervisor, School Resource Officer Unit, Prince William County Police*

*Dr. Dolores Robison, Supervisor of Threat Assessment, Prince William County Public Schools*

*Carolyn Lamm, Supervisor for Student Support Services, Fauquier County Public Schools*

*Leah Shorb, Assistant Principal, Cedar Lee Middle School, Fauquier County Public Schools*

*Anne Smith, School Psychologies, Fauquier County Public Schools*

*Moderator: Dr. Marisa Randazzo, Principal and Co-Founder, SIGMA Threat Management Associates*

The TAT from Fauquier shared a success story from their experience. Ms. Shorb explained that a report indicating that a student had been keeping a list of names of other students in his binder. The TAT spoke with the student even though he had never had discipline issues. The TAT initially spoke to the student as a small group to ensure that he felt comfortable and asked a series of questions. The student’s

responses led the TAT to believe that he may not be a substantial threat, but the TAT continued their assessment to ensure they captured all necessary information. The TAT contacted the parent, who allowed law enforcement to visit the home. The assessment ultimately determined that the student did not pose a threat. The TAT later followed up with the student's future high school to make sure they had adequate processes in place should the situation escalate. Ms. Lamm mentioned that even if the child is low risk or no risk, the TAT follows up with every child to make sure there is a support plan in place. Dr. Robison said the biggest challenge for every school district is laying the TAT on top of existing organizational structures and resources. TATs should have a foot in both safety and security as well as student services. The panelists expressed strong support for additional training that incorporates school and law enforcement principles.

### **Facilitated Discussion**

*Moderator: Dr. Randazzo*

The work group reconvened at 3:00pm to begin facilitated discussion.

#### **Dr. Randazzo asked the work group what had jumped out at them thus far from the panels.**

Ms. Synder mentioned how school counselors wear different hats and often have to do administrative work as well as academic advising. The guidelines for the American School Counseling Association say that 80% of counselor time should be spent with students, 20% doing administrative work. In Virginia, the ratio is 60:40.

Secretary Qarni mentioned bringing in nonprofits to help fill the gap in mental health services. He asked whether a recommendation would be beneficial that would establish a state level list of nonprofits that should be used in schools.

Dr. Jones pointed out that mental health messaging should start at a classroom level from a teacher.

Mr. Foster emphasized funding as an issue that impacts all localities in determining how to develop and sustain support positions and programs in schools. Is it plausible to give teachers more responsibility? Should they be psychologists? There was discussion about implementing a new kind of training, potentially Mental Health First Aid training.

Secretary Qarni mentioned that there can oftentimes be a stigma attached to seeing a guidance counselor. He named a potential recommendation as having telehealth, so that students could communicate remotely with guidance counselors.

Dr. Robison suggested a recommendation should be using a screening tool in schools to standardize as well as demystify suicide prevention.

Ms. Michaelis suggested bridging the gap between middle and high schools and high schools and colleges so that more information sharing can be possible, particularly with respect to threat assessment. She also suggested that we should consider incorporating a position like a behavioral interventionist that can serve as an intermediary between the classroom and the administration to address behavioral challenges/changes that arise with students.

Secretary Qarni recommended having a recommendation that would promote schools utilizing a modern, student-driven messaging campaign around suicide prevention.

Cpt. Lawhorm mentioned the importance of communication between SROs, school professionals, and the court system as well as monitoring social media.

Mr. Ponti suggested a recommendation should be a state-compiled guide to what schools are allowed to share about a student without violating FERPA.

### **Closing Remarks**

Secretary Moran closed the meeting at 4:00pm. He reminded the work group that the next meeting is September 25<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00pm in the Patrick Henry Building West Reading Room again. He thanked all participants for their attendance.

**Work Group on Student Safety Meeting Three Agenda**

**Tuesday, September 25, 2018**

**1:00PM – 4:00PM**

Patrick Henry Building – West Reading Room  
Richmond, Virginia

**I. Welcome**

The Honorable Brian J. Moran  
Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

The Honorable Atif Qarni  
Secretary of Education

**II. Approval of Minutes**

**III. Promoting School Wellness**

James Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Virginia Department of Education

**IV. Research on School Resource Officers (SROs)**

Laura Welfare, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Counselor Education  
Virginia Tech

**V. The Culturally Responsive Framework – Building Global Mindsets**

Maria Burgos, Supervisor of Global Learning and Culturally Responsive Instruction  
Prince William County Public Schools

**VI. Break**

**VII. Public Comment**

**VIII. Facilitated Discussion**

Nicky Zamostny, Assistant Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security  
Chidimma Uche, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Education

**IX. Closing Remarks**

The Honorable Pamela Northam  
First Lady of Virginia

## **Work Group on Student Safety Meeting Three Minutes**

***Tuesday, September 25, 2018***

*Patrick Henry Building, West Reading Room*

*Richmond, Virginia*

### ***MEETING MINUTES***

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#### **Members Present:**

##### ***Co-Chairs***

**The Honorable Brian Moran**, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security

**The Honorable Atif Qarni**, Secretary of Education

##### ***Members***

**Donna Michaelis**, Manager, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

**Lisa Floyd, Ed.D.**, Deputy Director of Education, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

**Nicole Gore**, Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Development Services

**The Honorable A. Ellen White**, Retired Judge, Campbell County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court

**Chief Kelvin Wright**, Chesapeake Police Department

**The Honorable Brian Hieatt**, Sheriff, Tazewell County

**Bobby Kipper**, School Safety and Discipline Specialist, Virginia Department of Education

**Fred Orelove, Ph.D.**, Co-Chair of Schools Committee, Greater Richmond Trauma Informed Community Network

**Richard Ponti**, Retired Director of Safety and Loss Control, Virginia Beach Public Schools

**Dolores Robison, Ph.D.**, Supervisor of Threat Assessment, Prince William County Public Schools

**Cole Fairchild**, Student, Charlottesville High School

**Benjamin Fernandez**, School Psychologist and Coordinator of Prevention Services, Loudoun County Public Schools

**R. Tyrone Foster**, President-Elect, Virginia School Board Association

**Captain Mike Lawhorn**, School Resource Officer, Campbell County Sheriff's Office

**Stanley Jones, Ed.D.**, Superintendent, Danville Public Schools

**Jeffrey Johnson**, Principal, Great Bridge High School

**Sarah Snyder**, Coordinator of Counseling, Arlington Public Schools

**Elisabeth Harman**, Director of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, Roanoke County Public Schools

**Sarah Gross**, President, Virginia Parent Teacher Association

**Carol Medawar**, Virginia Director, National Education Association

#### **Members Absent:**

**Patrick Stanfield, Ed.D.**, Principal, Midlothian Middle School

**Staff Present:**

**Nicky Zamostny**, Assistant Secretary, Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security

**Chidi Uche**, Special Assistant, Office of the Secretary of Education

**Karen Sullivan**, Administrative Planning Specialist, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

**Opening Remarks**

*Brian Moran, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security*

*Atif Qarni, Secretary of Education*

At 1:00PM, Secretary Moran opened the meeting and welcomed all of those in attendance. He mentioned that, in preparation for today's meeting, he hoped the Work Group members had ample time to review the potential recommendations and discussion points that were e-mailed to them on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Approval of Minutes**

Secretary Qarni called for a motion to approve the draft minutes from the August 21, 2018 meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Secretary Qarni then congratulated Work Group member Cole Fairchild on his achievement on becoming a 2018 National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalist.

**Promoting School Wellness**

*James Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction*

*Virginia Department of Education*

Dr. Lane walked Work Group members through his PowerPoint presentation entitled *Student Support Staffing: School Division Positions in Support of Student Safety*.

With regard to the various student support staff positions, Dr. Lane touched on the duties, average salaries and required credential/qualifications for the following: School Counselor, School Psychologist, School Social Worker, School Nurse, Student Assistance Counselor, Behavior Intervention/PBIS Specialist, Mental Health Support Specialist and Student Wellness Integrator.

Dr. Lane explained that teachers, starting in elementary school, are getting involved in social/emotional learning programs. They will sometimes meet in the mornings, during which time they will discuss de-escalation techniques to use as students are coming in, after possibly experiencing conflict at home that

morning or the night before. This will potentially help the students have a successful school day, and deal with adversity better down the line into middle and high school.

### **Research on School Resource Officers (SROs)**

*Laura Welfare, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Counselor Education  
Virginia Tech*

Dr. Welfare explained that the SRO research conducted by the Virginia Tech team was supported by a grant awarded by the National Institute of Justice, as well as additional funding provided by the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

She explained that, in the spring of 2015, The Center for Public Integrity published findings that Virginia led the nation in referring students from schools to law enforcement or the courts (school-to-prison pipeline). When they learned about these findings, Dr. Welfare and her team conducted research of their own on what factors led to student involvement in the ‘pipeline’ and how those factors could be curbed. In their research, they learned that the data had not been properly de-conflicted, which resulted in a significant over-reporting of referrals. While Virginia Tech is not able to determine where Virginia ranks given that data from other states may have also been mis-characterized, Virginia is likely one of the better states at preventing referrals.

Dr. Welfare went on to explain the additional trends discovered by the research team:

- Students with disabilities were disproportionately more likely to be suspended or expelled.
- The data uncovered significant racial disparities, with African-American students disproportionately affected.

### **The Culturally Responsive Framework-Building Global Mindsets**

*Maria Burgos  
Supervisor of Global Learning and Culturally Responsive Instruction  
Office of Professional Learning  
Prince William County Public Schools*

Ms. Burgos explained that her research has shown that there is significant racial and ethnic diversity in public education in Virginia. Northern Virginia, especially, is a racially and culturally diverse region, in which almost half the population is Hispanic or non-white, and one-quarter is foreign born, [according to the U.S. Census Bureau](#). In Prince William County, according to 2017 Census estimates, approximately 42% of the population is white (non-Hispanic), 22% is black, 23% is Hispanic, 9% is Asian, and 4% are multiracial. With such a diverse population, it is important to build global mindsets and understand the dimensions of other cultures, including internal dimensions, community dimensions, social life dimensions and institutional dimensions.

It is also important for educators to understand culturally responsive instruction and learning plans. These allow schools to engage and connect through relationships: our individual life experiences influence our perceptions and how we engage with others; we observe behaviors objectively with a mindset of nurturing positive relationships; interactions with others must have an ongoing reflective practice.

By incorporating these learning and instruction plans, from 2016-17 – 2017-18, Ms. Burgos noted the following trends:

- The percentage of students receiving one or more exclusionary discipline consequences trending downward for all ethnicities
- The counts of students receiving one or more referrals decreased for males and females
- The number of discipline referrals decreased across all ethnic groups

### **Facilitated Discussion**

With final Work Group recommendations due to Governor Northam on October 1, Ms. Zamostny and Ms. Uche went through all of the potential recommendations the Work Group had discussed at their August meeting so that they could be modified as needed.

### **Enhance Information Sharing and Effectiveness of Threat Assessment Teams**

- 1) Utilize educational campaigns and trainings to enhance recognition and reporting of behaviors that could indicate the potential for self-harm or harm to others. (Including focus on student-driven campaigns and outreach to parents)
- 2) Enable the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (the Center) to streamline and continue the existing school climate survey, as well as provide technical assistance to localities.
- 3) Adopt a case management tool for threat assessment.
- 4) Strengthen relationships with public and private mental health providers to promote effective information-sharing.
- 5) Encourage law enforcement to report to schools when they are aware that a student has experienced a traumatic event in the community. (Handle With Care example)

Discussion by Work Group members included the following:

- Modifying language to address the availability of funding for training
- Tasking the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety with developing a case management tool for threat assessment
- Enhancing mental health providers' awareness of Threat Assessment Teams
- Obtaining further guidance on the potential legal issues of sharing information
- Training law enforcement and the community on what Threat Assessment Teams are and what they do

- Increasing communication across school divisions
- Authorizing funding for multi-agency collaboration on one school safety survey
- Localities should consider developing an anonymous reporting mechanism for students
- In addition to law enforcement reporting to schools when they are aware that a student has experienced a traumatic event in the community, schools should be reporting community incidents they are aware of to law enforcement

Secretary Qarni requested a motion that these discussion points be noted. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Role & Prevalence of School Resource Officers (SROs) and School Security Officers (SSOs)**

- 6) Expand the SRO grant program and increase access to training. (Consider mandating training for all SROs)
- 7) Require a Memorandum of Understanding between school divisions and the employing law enforcement agency.
- 8) Placement of SROs vs. SSOs in different settings (primary vs. secondary schools).

Discussion by Work Group members included the following:

- Expanding the mandate for all SROs to attend training, not just those funded by the state
- All training will be contingent on available funding
- Law enforcement officers' availability to get away from normal duties to attend training
- Granting exemptions to retired law enforcement to be hired as School Security Officers. This is currently not allowed under VRS.
- Many school staff have not had training on how to best work with special needs students. Many of these issues are covered in training offered by DCJS (i.e., trauma informed classrooms).
- School administrators should attend training with their assigned SROs/SSOs
- Current research on SSO/SRO to student ratios

Secretary Qarni requested a motion that these discussion points be noted. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Suicide Prevention**

- 9) Develop a standard screening tool for suicide that can be utilized by school, mental health, and medical professionals.
- 10) Enhance information-sharing among medical professionals about a person's previous suicide attempts and/or history.
- 11) Promote educational campaigns like "Lock & Talk" to help parents understand how to keep their children safe at home. (Safe storage of weapons, medications, etc.)

12) Ensure the Virginia Suicide Prevention Guidelines are updated and incorporated into trainings and policies. (Focus on key transitional periods)

Discussion by Work Group members included the following:

- #9 – Changing 'Develop' to 'Adopt, utilize or develop'
- Obtaining further guidance on the potential legal issues of sharing information
- #10 - Changing 'medical' to 'health care'
- #11 – Changing 'parents' to 'parents and caregivers'
- Promoting suicide prevention campaigns
- Training staff and students on recognizing warning signs and where to report
- Supporting students returning to school post-treatment
- Coping mechanisms for students after a peer has died by suicide

Secretary Qarni requested a motion that these discussion points be noted. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Staffing Levels, Ratios and School Support Staff**

- 13) Develop a plan to increase the ratio of school support staff (counselors, social workers, psychologists, nurses, etc). This plan should also address the ratio of time school counselors spend on administrative work vs. work with students.
- 14) Increase access to trauma-informed care and trainings within the schools and in communities. (Include access to telehealth, funding streams)
- 15) Expand access to behavioral interventionist or other classroom support positions.

Discussion by Work Group members included the following:

- A more diverse teacher workforce is needed

Secretary Qarni requested a motion that these discussion points be noted. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Community & School Educational Training**

- 16) Expand access to Mental Health First Aid training for teachers and school professionals.
- 17) Develop online trainings about school and student safety for hard-to-reach school personnel. (Include comprehensive training for school administrators on school and student safety)
- 18) Produce state level guidance/best practices on information sharing between law enforcement, schools, and mental health providers around threat assessment information. (FERPA/HIPAA)

Discussion by Work Group members included the following:

- Allowing ample time for staff to leave class to attend in-person training

- Ensuring training is school-appropriate
- Developing online training
- Requiring that teachers attend certain trainings as a recertification requirement
- Encouraging school staff to attend training in ‘teams’
- Including special population information in training curriculum (i.e. LGBTQ)

Secretary Qarni requested a motion that these discussion points be noted. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Physical Safety**

- 19) Review the School Security Equipment Grant Program and consider modifications, including the existing \$100,000 cap and current allowable expenses.
- 20) Increase transparency and communication with students and parents on safety measures and protocols. (Promote inclusion of student perspectives in safety planning)

Discussion by Work Group members included the following:

- Modifying the Grant Program criteria so that elementary schools are potentially not at a disadvantage
- Enforcing school/law enforcement collaboration when it comes to on-campus safety recommendations

Secretary Qarni requested a motion that these discussion points be noted. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn (41<sup>st</sup> District) addressed the Work Group and thanked them for their work. She then went on to explain the work being done by the Safe Virginia Initiative. The Initiative was created during the 2018 legislative session by the House Democratic Caucus in response to the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School tragedy in Parkland, Florida and is focused on developing policy initiatives that will reduce gun violence in Virginia.

### **Closing Remarks**

Secretary Moran closed the meeting at 4:00pm. He thanked all participants for their attendance.