

2025 VIRGINIA SCHOOL SAFETY EXECUTIVE FORUM

Leading the Way in School Safety

July 29, 2025

Hampton Roads Convention Center, Hampton, Virginia

Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS)

SCHOOL SAFETY HOT TOPICS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES
in partnership with

Office of the Attorney General, Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, Virginia Association of School Superintendents, Virginia D.A.R.E. Association, Virginia Department of Education, Virginia Risk Sharing Association, Virginia School Boards Association, and Virginia Sheriffs' Association

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TOPIC 1: VCSCS

- Addressing Gaps in School Safety: Critical Incident Response

TOPIC 4: VACP

- School-Law Enforcement Partnerships

TOPIC 7: OAG

- Virginia Rules and One Pill Can Kill

TOPIC 2: VASS

- Avoiding a Secondary Crisis with Effective Crisis Communication

TOPIC 5: VDOE

- Guidelines for Selecting Parent Materials Related to Student Safety Concerns

TOPIC 8: VSBA

- Promoting School Safety and Keeping Local Flexibility in Implementing Policy

TOPIC 3: VSA


- School Resource Officer Policy Acknowledgement

TOPIC 6: DARE


- Reinventing and Expanding DARE

TOPIC 9: VRSA

- School Safety Mini-Grants



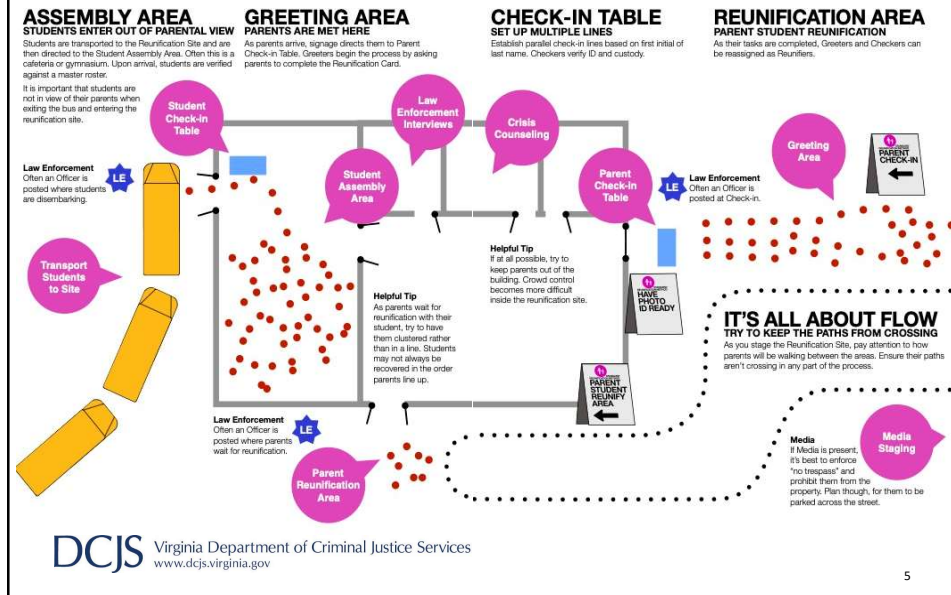
The Presenters and the Topics



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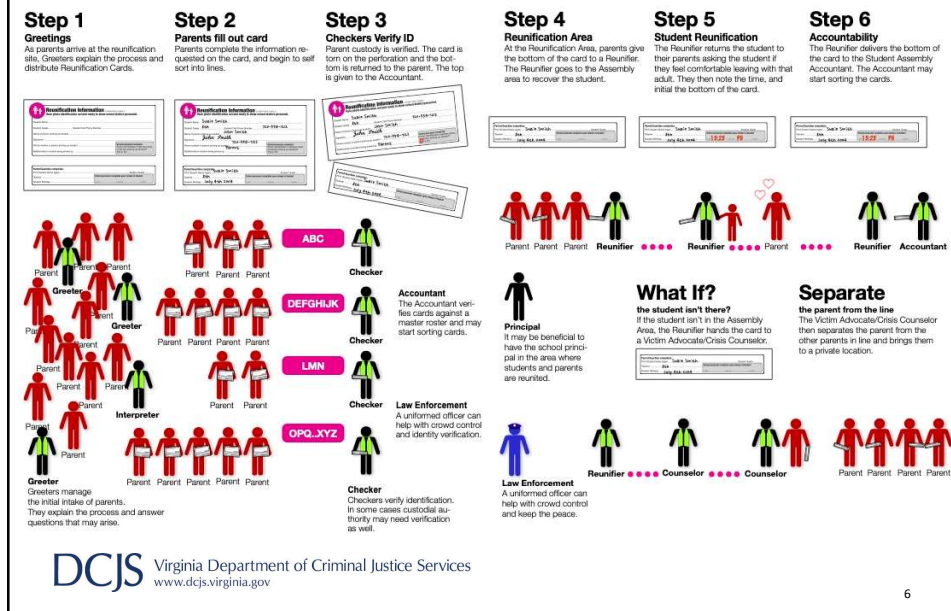
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SRM: Staging the Reunification Site



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SRM: The Process in Six Easy Steps



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Avoid. Deny. Defend.

Avoid. Deny. Defend. empowers the immediate responder to make choices early in the decision cycle when the tactical circumstances demand it.



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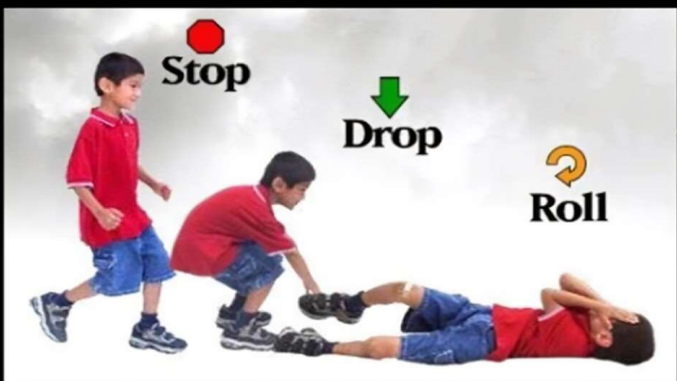
R.A.C.E

- **R**eat Avoid. Deny. Defend.
- **A**ctivate call 911!
- **C**are for injured
- **E**vacuate to rescue



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Learning this in elementary school led me to believe catching on fire would be a much more frequent problem in life.

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Age- and Audience-Specific Critical Incident Response Curriculum

Code of Virginia § 22.1-137.3. School safety procedures; emergency situations; annual training.

"In addition to complying with the requirements for drills set forth in §§ 22.1-137, 22.1-137.1, and 22.1-137.2, each school board shall develop training on safety procedures in the event of an emergency situation on school property. Such training shall be delivered to each student and employee in each school at least once each school year. 2019, cc. 61, 140."

- 9 Modules
- 5-10 minutes per day for 4 days

React	Activate	Care	Evacuate
			
			

(Rod the Racecar in the Pre-K Module)

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The Critical Incident Response Curriculum

- Curriculum as a tool for students, staff, and parents.
- Curriculum structure and age-appropriate content.
- Key Components:
 - Introductions to the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) actions.
 - Scenario-based training.
 - De-escalation techniques.
 - Medical emergency response.
 - Communication protocols.
 - Reunification processes.
 - Importance of regular drills and exercises.



SECURE



LOCKDOWN



EVACUATE



SHELTER



HOLD

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Overview of the Nine Modules

Modules 1-5 (Student Training)

- Age-appropriate training (Pre-K to 12th grade)
- RACE acronym (React, Activate, Care, Evacuate)
- Standard Response Protocol (SRP)

Can be taught in as little as 10 minutes per day for 4 days.



MODULE 1:
Pre-K/Early Education. Focus on associating hand gestures with actions.



MODULE 2:
K-2. Focus on stating and explaining the action word related to each letter in the RACE acronym.



MODULE 3:
3-5. Focus on explaining why and when RACE is used.



MODULE 4:
6-8. Focus on situational awareness.




MODULE 5:
9-12. Concept of situational awareness.

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How can we **RACE** to care for our friends?

1. REACT



think about our choices and then decide what to do

2. ACTIVATE




activate help by telling an adult

3. CARE



care for our friends by helping them fast

4. EVACUATE



evacuate or move away from danger quickly

More information is available at www.dcj.virginia.gov

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Module 6 (Parent Training)

- School emergency response procedures.
- Parent expectations during emergencies.
- Overview of the Standard Response Protocol (SRP) and review scenarios when each action is implemented.
- Self-protective strategies.
- Introduction of concepts in the RACE (React, Activate, Care, Evacuate), and BATH (Breathing, Airway, Tension Pneumothorax, Hypothermia) acronyms used with varying grade levels.
- Discussion of parent expectations when on campus, as well as during an emergency.



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Module 7 (Individual Safety Plans – ISP)

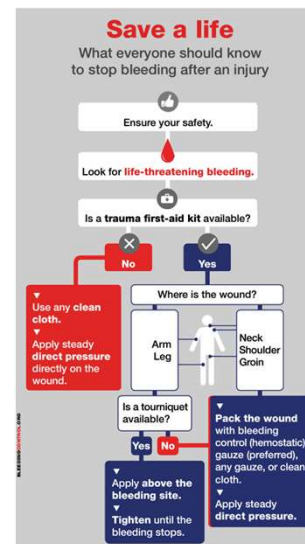
- Creating ISPs for students with additional needs.
- TEAMS planning approach (Training, Equipment, Access, Medical, Sensory).
- Identified need classifications that may warrant an individual safety plan and how to document plans as they are developed.
- Group activity to discuss areas of their school that may pose problems during an emergency situation.



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Module 8 (Support Staff Training)

- Roles and responsibilities during emergencies.
 - Transportation, Food Services, and Custodial staff.
- Staff-specific duties.
- Overview of the Standard Response Protocol and review scenarios for implementing each action.
- By the end of the course, participants will be able to:
 - Understand when each Standard Response Protocol (SRP) action is used.
 - Identify appropriate self-protection strategies.
 - Explain the concept of situational awareness.
 - State the expectations of their position during emergency drills as well as during an actual emergency.
 - Explain why we use the RACE acronym.



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Module 9 (Administrators and Teachers Training)

- School emergency response plan details, policies, and procedures.
- Learning objectives:
 - Understand when each Standard Response Protocol (SRP) action is used.
 - Identify appropriate self-protection strategies for their assigned grade level.
 - Explain the concept of situational awareness as appropriate to their assigned grade level.
 - Explain why we use the RACE acronym.
 - Complete planning tasks related to each SRP action.

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Critical Incident Response Curriculum Stats to Date

- Requests for curriculum
 - 68 divisions
 - 35 schools

- School Safety Audit Requests for additional information about the critical incident response curriculum
 - 299

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Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS)

2 - Avoiding a Secondary Crisis with Effective Crisis Communication

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Virginia Sheriff's Association (VSA)

3 - School Resource Officer Policy Acknowledgement

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Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police (VACP)

4 – School-Law Enforcement Partnerships

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Challenges Facing School Resource Officers

Dana Schrad, Executive Director

July 29, 2025



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What is an SRO?

- ▶ School resource officers (SROs) face several challenges:
- ▶ Balancing law enforcement duties and student support
- ▶ Navigating the complexities of the "school-to-prison pipeline"
- ▶ Addressing potential biases in discipline
- ▶ They may struggle with communication skills, understanding juvenile justice, and sensitivity to student development.
- ▶ Selection of the right people to be SROs is critical. Law enforcement officers with a few years of experience have seen the problems in the community and have developed better communications and de-escalation skills.
- ▶ Often LEOs who are parents have a better understanding of adolescent behavior and a parental instinct that helps them relate to kids.

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Challenges

- ▶ Discipline Disparities: Studies show that students of color are disproportionately disciplined in schools with SROs, raising concerns about potential bias in how SROs enforce rules and handle discipline.
- ▶ Lack of Training and Guidelines: Some SROs may lack adequate training in areas like crisis intervention, communication with youth, and understanding adolescent development, potentially leading to inappropriate responses to student behaviors.
- ▶ Misunderstanding of Roles: SROs can sometimes have their roles misconstrued by school staff, leading to conflicting expectations and difficulty in defining appropriate boundaries.
- ▶ Limited Resources: Some schools lack adequate resources for mental health support, social work, and other services that could help address student needs without relying on law enforcement intervention.

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Solutions



- ▶ Clear Guidelines and Training: Developing clear memoranda of understanding (MOUs) outlining SROs' roles and responsibilities, as well as providing specialized training in areas like de-escalation techniques and adolescent development.
- ▶ Focus on Prevention and Intervention: Shifting the focus from punishment to prevention and intervention strategies, such as mental health support, counseling, and conflict resolution programs.
- ▶ Community Involvement: Engaging with the community, including parents, teachers, and students, to develop school safety plans that address the unique needs of each school and student population.
- ▶ Investing in Alternative Supports: Dedicating resources to hiring school counselors, social workers, and other professionals who can provide support and guidance to students.
- ▶ Promoting Positive Relationships: Encouraging SROs to build positive relationships with students and staff, fostering trust and open communication.

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Contact Information



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Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

5 – Guidelines for Selecting Parent Materials Related to Student Safety Concerns

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VDOE Office of Behavioral Health & Student Safety

July 29, 2025

DCJS's School Safety Executive Forum

Joe Wharff, Director

Sarah Bazemore, Coordinator of Behavioral Health & Instructional Supports



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Materials for Parents When There Is Risk

[HB 2679](#) and [HB 2055](#)

Requires each school division superintendent or their designee to provide parents or legal guardians with materials on recognizing and responding to behaviors indicating that a student may pose a threat of violence or physical harm to themselves or others. This applies when a school threat assessment team makes a preliminary determination that a student poses such a threat. The materials must:

- Be provided either during the initial notification to the parent or guardian or as soon as practicable afterward.
- Be selected according to criteria and guidelines developed by the Board of Education.
- Include information about legal requirements for the safe storage of firearms in the presence of minors.

Ideally these materials would include best practices and strategies for limiting a student's access to lethal means, such as firearms and medications.

Suicide attempts are often impulsive, and a moment of crisis can escalate very quickly.



Making sure your child cannot access lethal means at the wrong time is critical.

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How VDOE is Supporting Implementation

VDOE Next Steps:

- On July 31, Guidelines and sample materials go to the Board of Education for review.
- Once approved, Guidelines and sample materials will be available on VDOE Website.
- Divisions can select their own materials using the criteria provided via the Guidelines, or the Board-approved repository of materials.
- Divisions are encouraged to post parent materials directly on their websites. A sample webpage template will also be provided.

Proposed Sample Materials:

The following materials can be edited to include division specific information such as logos, contact information, local resources, etc.

- Safety Action Steps for Parents and Caregivers: Tools and Strategies for Keeping Your Child Safe
- A Guide for Caregivers: Recognizing and Responding to Signs of Self-Harm
- A Guide for Caregivers: Recognizing and Responding to Suicide Risk
- A Guide for Caregivers: Recognizing and Responding to Signs of Violence
- A Guide for Caregivers: Limiting Access to Firearms
- A Guide for Caregivers: Limiting Access to Medications & Substances
- A Guide for Caregivers: Limiting Access to Ligatures
- A Guide for Caregivers: Limiting Access to Knives and Sharp Objects

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DRUG AND ALCOHOL RESISTENCE (DARE)

6 – Reinventing and Expanding the DARE Program

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Office of the Attorney General (OAG)

7 – Virginia Rules and One Pill Can Kill

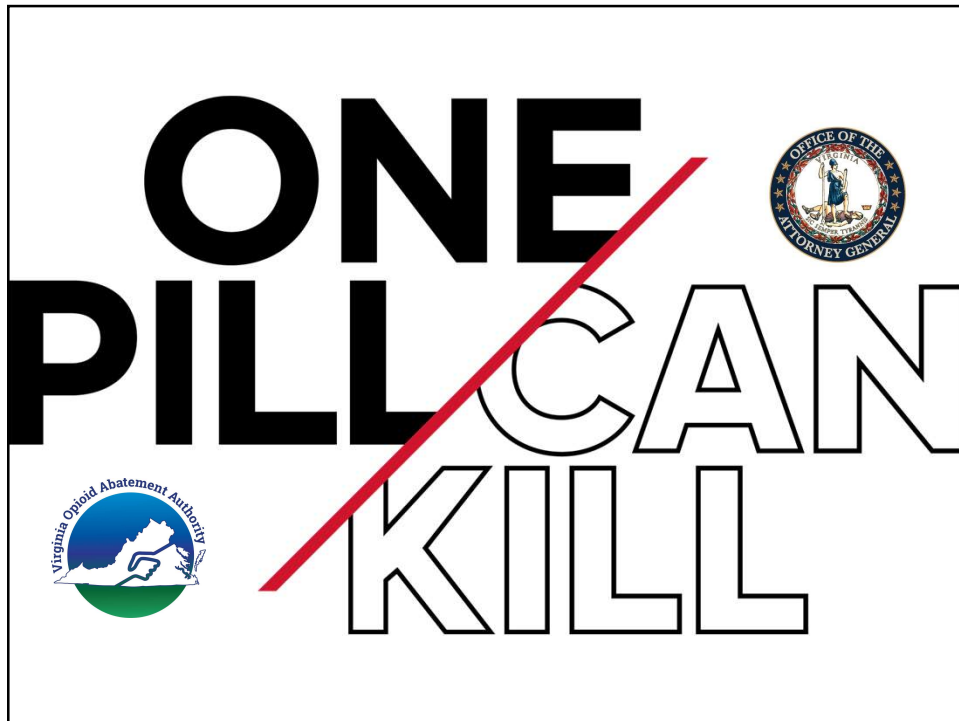
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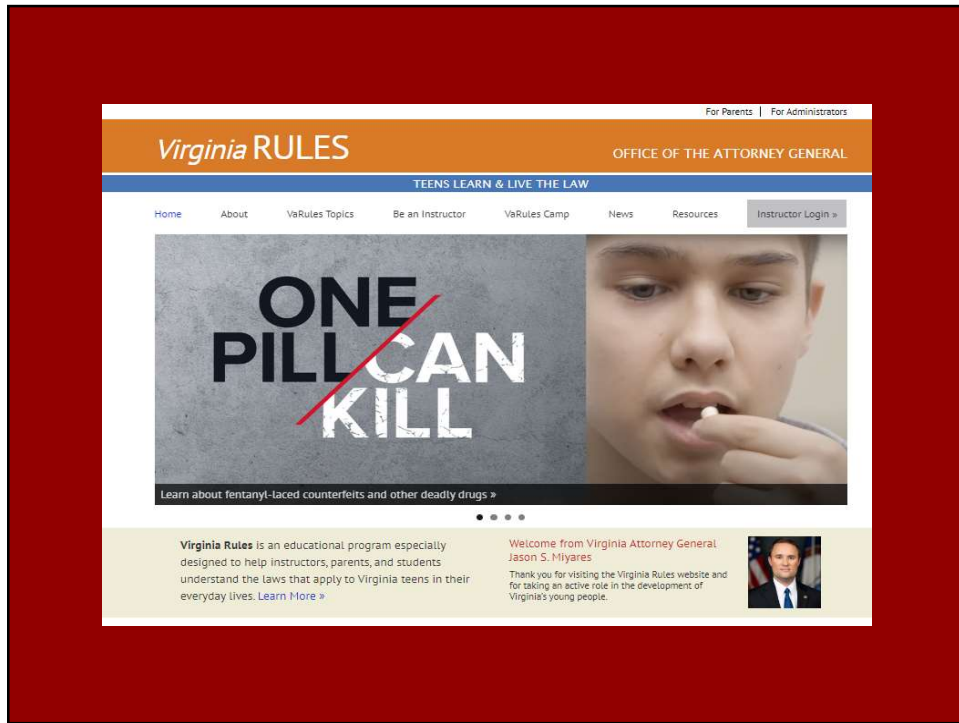
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Virginia Rules Curriculum

Virginia Rules is Virginia's state-specific law-related education program for middle and high school students. The purpose is to educate young Virginians about Virginia laws and help them develop skills needed to make sound decisions. Virginia Rules is designed to be taught by school resource officers.

Under the Attorney General, Ceasefire has worked with law enforcement to create curriculum that highlights the fentanyl crisis to engage and educate school-aged children about the dangers and consequences of opioids.

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King William County Public Schools uses VRSA Risk Management Grant for Fencing



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