

# 2023 NATIONAL THREAT ASSESSMENT CONFERENCE FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

*A Three-Pronged Approach to Threat Assessment in Schools, Communities, and Campuses*

October 23–26, 2023

Virginia Beach Convention Center



Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services  
[www.dcs.virginia.gov](http://www.dcs.virginia.gov)



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Department of Criminal Justice Services*

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October 23, 2023

Dear School, Campus, and Community Safety Leaders:

On behalf of Governor Glenn Youngkin, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Terrance C. Cole, the Department of Criminal Justice Services, and the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the **2023 National Threat Assessment Conference for Educational Institutions**. We are honored to partner with the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals to bring you this opportunity.

This conference brings together professionals from a broad range of disciplines and backgrounds to focus on prevention and a safer community. Over 400 local, state, and national attendees from the fields of school and campus safety, law enforcement, PreK-12 school leadership, mental health, higher education, and school/campus security have joined us in Virginia Beach to pursue better outcomes for the safety and well-being of all students, staff, and members of our community. The keynote presentations at this year's conference represent a tremendous amount of knowledge, lessons learned, and prevention strategies. It is through sharing ideas and making connections that we can reduce and prevent potential violence to make our schools and campuses a safe environment to learn and work.

Over the next three days, our presenters will explore themes to improve school, campus, and community safety through the preventative approaches of behavioral and community threat assessment. By recognizing warning signs, mitigating threats, and examining response and recovery efforts, we can bring together multi-disciplinary partnerships to create safer schools, campuses, and communities.

My colleagues and I are truly grateful to you for being here and for the ongoing work you do in your respective roles. I want to thank our presenters who have lent their time and expertise to ensure that the next several days are productive and fruitful. My staff stands ready to support you in your ongoing efforts to assess threatening or aberrant behavior and find support measures to stop violent behavior before it occurs. Enjoy the conference!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jackson H. Miller".

Jackson Miller  
Director

## PRE-CONFERENCE – MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2023

Pre-Conference Training Opportunities – Please use the QR code for session descriptions  
<https://www.dcs.virginia.gov/2023-national-threat-assessment-conference-pre-conference-sessions>



## DAY ONE – TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2023

7:30 AM–8:00 AM	<b>Coffee, Registration, and Participant Check-in</b>
8:00 AM– 8:30 AM	<b>Presentation of Colors</b> Virginia Beach Police Department <b>National Anthem</b>
	<b>Welcome and Introductions of Special Guests/Dignitaries</b> Donna Michaelis, <i>Division Director, Public Safety Training and the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (PST-VCSCS), Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)</i> Tracy Louise Winn Banks, <i>Chief Deputy Director, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services</i> Jackson Miller, <i>Director, Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services</i>
8:30 AM–9:30 AM	<b>What You Think the Threat Looks Like Might Not Be Accurate</b> Sheriff Michael Neal, <i>Monroe County, Arkansas Sheriff's Office</i> <p>Sheriff Michael Neal began his career in law enforcement more than 21 years ago at the very department he still serves in Monroe County, Arkansas. Throughout his career as both Reserve Deputy, Game Warden and now Sheriff, he's survived five shootings. In 2010, he was involved in an active shooter situation where the criminals shot two other officers and left the scene. A manhunt ensued – Sheriff Neal encountered them a few miles down the road. Knowing that he needed to stop them from leaving the parking lot, he proceeded to ram the car carrying the two active shooters with his truck at 55 miles per hour. After the significant impact, while still holding the steering wheel with one hand and a rifle in the other, Sheriff Neal engaged in fire with the criminals through the front windshield of his truck. After the fire ceased, Neal's truck, which is on display at the National Law Enforcement Museum in Washington, DC, was peppered with 12 rounds of AK-47 ammo. He suffered significant injuries including shrapnel damage down the length of his entire leg, a piece of glass lodged in his eye, and blown eardrums. However, his bravery and quick action in stopping these criminals did not go unnoticed. Sheriff Neal received a total of 42 awards with one of the highest honors being the Congressional Medal of Valor. During this keynote he will share details of the incident and tips for mental preparedness for the threat you don't see coming.</p>
9:30 AM–9:45 AM	<b>BREAK</b>
9:45 AM–11:00 AM	<b>What You Think the Threat Looks Like Might Not Be Accurate (Continued)</b> Sheriff Michael Neal, <i>Monroe County, Arkansas Sheriff's Office</i>
11:00 AM–1:00 PM	<b>THEME: CURRENT LANDSCAPE IN BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT</b>
11:00 AM–12:00 PM	<b>A Three-Pronged Approach to Threat Assessment in Schools, Communities, and Campuses</b> Dr. Marisa Randazzo, <i>Executive Director, Threat Management, Ontic</i> <p>Practitioners once thought that addressing potential threats was exclusively the work of those working at a national or international level. However, data from the last decade shows that not only must we also focus at a local level, but we must coordinate our local, state, and federal efforts to ensure that schools, campuses, and our communities are safe from potential threats. During this keynote, Dr. Randazzo will share her perspective as a threat management professional using case studies that illustrate why coordination at every level is critical.</p>
12:00 PM–1:00 PM	<b>LUNCH PROVIDED</b>

**DAY ONE – CONTINUED**

1:00 PM–1:15 PM

**Getting the Most From the Conference and Resources**

Shellie Evers, *School and Campus Safety Supervisor, PST-VCSCS, DCJS*

Brad Stang, *Threat Assessment Program Coordinator, PST-VCSCS, DCJS*

Michael Elliott, *President, DC Mid-Atlantic Chapter, Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP)*

1:15 PM–5:00 PM

**THEME: COMMUNITY THREAT ASSESSMENT**

1:15 PM– 2:15 PM

**The Path to Domestic Extremism – and the Road Back to Peer Support and Trauma Recovery**

Chris Buckley, *Certified Peer Specialist-Mental Health (CPS-MH), Forensic Peer Mentor (FPM), and Exit Peer Specialist, Parents for Peace*

This heartbreaking story of child abuse and trauma at a young age, a fall into addiction, and extremism after combat service in Afghanistan doesn't end in tragedy as so many do. Hear how Chris Buckley turned pain into purpose and is now supporting others in their journey back. Using his experiences in trauma, substance abuse, and mental health, he pioneered a way to help those going through extremism by using the public health approach, and creating a Trauma and Recovery Program called TRP. He will also provide an overview of "Challenges in De-Radicalization/Disengagement" and best practices to support recovery.

2:15 PM–2:30 PM

**BREAK**

2:30 PM– 3:30 PM

**Community Awareness Briefing: Understanding the Role of Threat Assessment in Violent Extremism**

Jordan Garza, *Regional Prevention Coordinator, Department of Homeland Security*

The Community Awareness Briefing (CAB) will provide a foundational understanding of the threat of targeted violence and terrorism, identify ways communities can protect themselves and their loved ones through partnerships across every level of government, and effective prevention and intervention strategies. The CAB looks closely at risk and protective factors to determine the likelihood an individual will commit an act of violence and identify ways to decrease the probability of violent outcome. Many individuals who are planning to engage in targeted violence display threatening or concerning behaviors that are observable to others. Utilizing a proactive, evidence-based method of investigation, analysis, and management that focuses on an individual's patterns of thinking and behavior, can determine whether, and to what extent, an individual may be moving towards an act of intended violence, either self-directed or towards others.

3:30 PM–3:45 PM

**BREAK**

3:45 PM–5:00 PM

**Community-Based Multi-Disciplinary Teams and Mitigating Targeted Violence: Where We've Been and Where We're Going**

Dr. Gene Deisinger, *President, Deisinger Consulting*

Dave Okada, *Principal, Safety and Threat Solutions Consulting and President, Association of Threat Assessment Professionals*

Members from a broad range of organizations (law enforcement, corrections, business, education, houses of worship, law, health care, etc.) are increasingly aware of subjects that may present an ongoing risk for concerning or violent behaviors. These may include but are not limited to incidents of targeted violence or terrorism impacting schools, campuses, workplaces, or other community settings. These individuals can be highly disruptive, not only in the school, campus, or workplace settings, but in the community at large. Incidents from around the world have underscored the ongoing need for collaborative and integrated strategies to prevent targeted violence where possible, and to mitigate risk of harm where necessary. More and more communities are developing community-wide approaches to identify, assess and manage potential threats in lawful and collaborative ways. This session will provide an overview of community-based threat management approaches and considerations for program implementation.

5:00 PM

**Day One Concludes**

## DAY TWO – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2023

7:30 AM–8:00 AM	Coffee, Registration, and Participant Check-in
8:00 AM–9:15 AM	<b>A Mother’s Journey to Understanding and Helping Prevent Future Tragedies</b> <i>Chin Rodger, Mother of Elliot Rodger</i> In this session, Ms. Rodger will share about the elements of behavior and circumstances that culminated in the horrific tragedy that occurred May 23, 2014 in Isla Vista, California. She will also share details of the painful process of discovering and exploring in depth the emerging preventive method of threat assessment and management. These details will illustrate why she believes this would have prevented her son’s tragedy and the many that followed since, in hope of preventing another.
9:15 AM–9:30 AM	<b>BREAK</b>
9:30 AM–10:30 AM	<b>THEME: RECOGNIZING THE WARNING SIGNS</b>
9:30 AM–10:30 AM	<b>Threat Assessment and Leakage: Utilizing Digital Data to Enhance Your Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management Process</b> <i>Theresa Campbell, Chief Executive Officer, Safer Schools Together</i> <i>Greg Gerber, Director of Training, Safer Schools Together</i> In each instance of a past mass attack there was leakage – warning signs that the perpetrator was on a pathway to violence. In fact, subject matter experts agree that nearly 90% of today’s threats are communicated digitally and that an overall assessment of risk cannot be determined without looking at an individual’s online activity. Digital Threat Assessment® (DTA) is an invaluable training tool for Safety/Threat Assessment teams as it supports the accuracy of our procedures/processes related to Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management. During this keynote, participants will gain a better understanding of how to identify digital leakage, assess individuals evolving along the pathway to violence, determine the validity of online threats, learn best practices for proper data collection, and how to proactively reduce the potential of violence within your community. Participants will be provided with skills and tools that are effective and can be utilized by their teams immediately.
10:30 AM–10:45 AM	<b>BREAK</b>
10:45 AM–12:00 PM	<b>Threat Assessment and Management in Young Children</b> <i>Stephanie Leite, Psy.D, Principal, Forensic Intelligence, LLC</i> Headlines scream about targeted violence, and targeted violence has become part of our national dialogue. As parent groups complain about the negative impact of active shooter drills, schools and providers for young children struggle with an increase in identification of children threatening acts of targeted violence. The biggest challenge is that there is little research or procedure for working with these younger children. This talk faces down the need for information by bringing together research and theory and tying it together with an excellent case presentation of a young child who scared a lot of people.
12:00 PM–1:00 PM	<b>LUNCH PROVIDED</b>
1:00 PM–5:00 PM	<b>THEME: INTERRUPTING THE PATHWAY &amp; MITIGATING THREATS</b>
1:00 PM–2:00 PM	<b>Training Non-Security Staff to Think with a Security Lens: Violence Prevention and Mitigation through Options-Based Decision-Making</b> <i>John Van Dreal, Principal, Van Dreal Consulting</i> This presentation provides the necessary information and instructional strategy for security professionals and administrators to teach options-based decision making – a defensive strategy tailored to the education community for use during extremely dangerous situations. Teaching others options-based thinking prepares them to identify potential violence, report their concerns, avoid or mitigate danger, and protect themselves and others during a violent event, such as one involving an active shooter. It instructs employees to gather and use important information during such an emergency, providing them with skills to avoid danger, de-escalate aggressive people, and survive.
2:00 PM–2:15 PM	<b>BREAK</b>

## DAY TWO – CONTINUED

2:15 PM–3:15 PM

### The Mission to Stop Targeted Attacks

Mark Follman, *Researcher, Journalist, and Author*

In his acclaimed book “Trigger Points,” author Mark Follman chronicles how the field of behavioral threat assessment first grew out of Secret Service investigations and FBI serial-killer hunting. Soon to be revolutionized after the tragedies at Columbine and Virginia Tech, and expanded further after Sandy Hook and Parkland, the method is used increasingly today to thwart attacks brewing within American communities. In this keynote, Mr. Follman will discuss issues of public perception, the role of mental health, and his other ongoing research into the work of preventing targeted attacks. Included will be an account of how a threat assessment team successfully guided a troubled high school student away from potentially committing violence.

3:15 PM–3:30 PM

### BREAK

3:30 PM–5:00 PM

### Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools

Jeffrey McGarry, *Social Science Research Specialist, National Threat Assessment Center, U.S. Secret Service*

In their most recent study, the U.S. Secret Service’s National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) examined 67 disrupted plots against K-12 schools from 2006–2018. The key findings of the study are clear and consistent: Individuals contemplating violence often exhibit observable behaviors, and when community members report these behaviors, the next tragedy can be averted. The Secret Service encourages its educational, medical, and public safety partners to review the information within, and use it to guide best practices for maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for all children.

5:00 PM

### Day Two Concludes

## DAY 3 – THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2023

7:30 AM–8:00 AM

Coffee, Registration, and Participant Check-in

8:00 AM–12:00 PM

### THEME: RESPONSE & RECOVERY

8:00 AM–9:15 AM

### It Happened Here: Recommendations From a Retired Police Chief Who Responded to the Parkland Massacre

Tony Pustizzi, *Chief of Police (retired), Coral Springs Florida Police Department*

On February 14, 2018, a former student entered Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, fatally shot and killed 17 innocent people and wounded 17 others. This tragedy was the ninth deadliest mass shooting event in the history of the United States and the third deadliest school massacre at that time. Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, located in Parkland, Florida, is a 45-acre campus comprised of 13 buildings. On the day of the shooting, there were 3,200 students and 200 staff members on campus. Chief Tony Pustizzi oversaw the Coral Springs, Florida Police Department at the time of the massacre. He and his officers played an extremely significant role in the response to that attack. Here, Chief Pustizzi will share his unique front-line perspective on that incident and detail valuable lessons learned.

9:15 AM–9:30 AM

### BREAK

9:30 AM–10:30 AM

### When the Worst Happens: RESPONSE Based on Avoid, Deny, Defend

Adam Keene, *Active Attack Program Manager, PST-VCSCS, DCJS*

Mark Castillo, *Active Attack Program Coordinator, PST-VCSCS, DCJS*

The DCJS Active Attack Program (AAP) exists to help achieve the goals of preparedness and protection for the entire Commonwealth. This statewide initiative promotes safety preparedness through the “Whole Community Approach.” The days of citizens “hiding and hoping” until help arrives are no longer an acceptable form of mitigation. The Civilian Response and Casualty Care (CRCC) is a course designed and built on the Avoid, Deny, Defend/Run, Hide, Fight strategy developed by ALERRT in 2004, which provides strategies, guidance, and a proven plan for surviving an active shooter event. This presentation will provide an overview of these key components, combining the civilian response with the Stop the Bleed Campaign, which empowers civilians to provide life-saving medical aid before first responders ever arrive.

## DAY THREE – CONTINUED

10:30 AM–10:45 AM	<b>BREAK</b>
10:45 AM–11:45 AM	<b>When the Worst Happens: Road to Resilience</b> <i>Natalie Hammond, Elementary School Principal and Sandy Hook Tragedy Survivor</i> Natalie Hammond taught third grade at Sandy Hook Elementary for thirteen years before becoming the Lead Teacher in the building. In a morning meeting on December 14, 2012, she heard alarming sounds outside of the main office. She, along with the Principal and School Psychologist, confronted the unknown. Although wounded multiple times during the attack, Natalie survived her injuries. She now serves as Principal in a K-4 elementary school in Connecticut. Since the tragedy, she works with groups around the country to discuss resiliency in the face of adversity, the importance of communication and collaboration when developing safety plans, and the necessity for social-emotional learning to be embedded into our daily practice as educators.
11:45 AM–12:00 PM	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <i>Donna Michaelis, Division Director, Public Safety Training and the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (PST-VCSCS), Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)</i>
12:00 PM	<b>Conference Concludes</b>

## PRE-CONFERENCE AND MAIN CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS

Please use the QR codes to access evaluations for the following:

**PRE-CONFERENCE:**  
*A Community Approach to BTAM*



[https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_2t1Y51jcaVMqYrY](https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2t1Y51jcaVMqYrY)

**PRE-CONFERENCE:**  
*Domestic Extremism*



[https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3WbZQ0jf6c81PDg](https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3WbZQ0jf6c81PDg)

**PRE-CONFERENCE:**  
*K-12 Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management*



[https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_bK1ySwqWVCzNPX8](https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bK1ySwqWVCzNPX8)

**PRE-CONFERENCE:**  
*School – Law Enforcement Partnerships*



[https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_06ZQ75bbMe8r4we](https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_06ZQ75bbMe8r4we)

**MAIN CONFERENCE: All**



[https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_9MOA0fMydaq1MVw](https://vadcs.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9MOA0fMydaq1MVw)

**We appreciate your input as it allows us to continue to grow and improve this annual conference.**

**Thank you for your time.**



The DCJS Division of Public Safety Training and the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of this event.

**CONFERENCE PARTNER**

**The Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP)**



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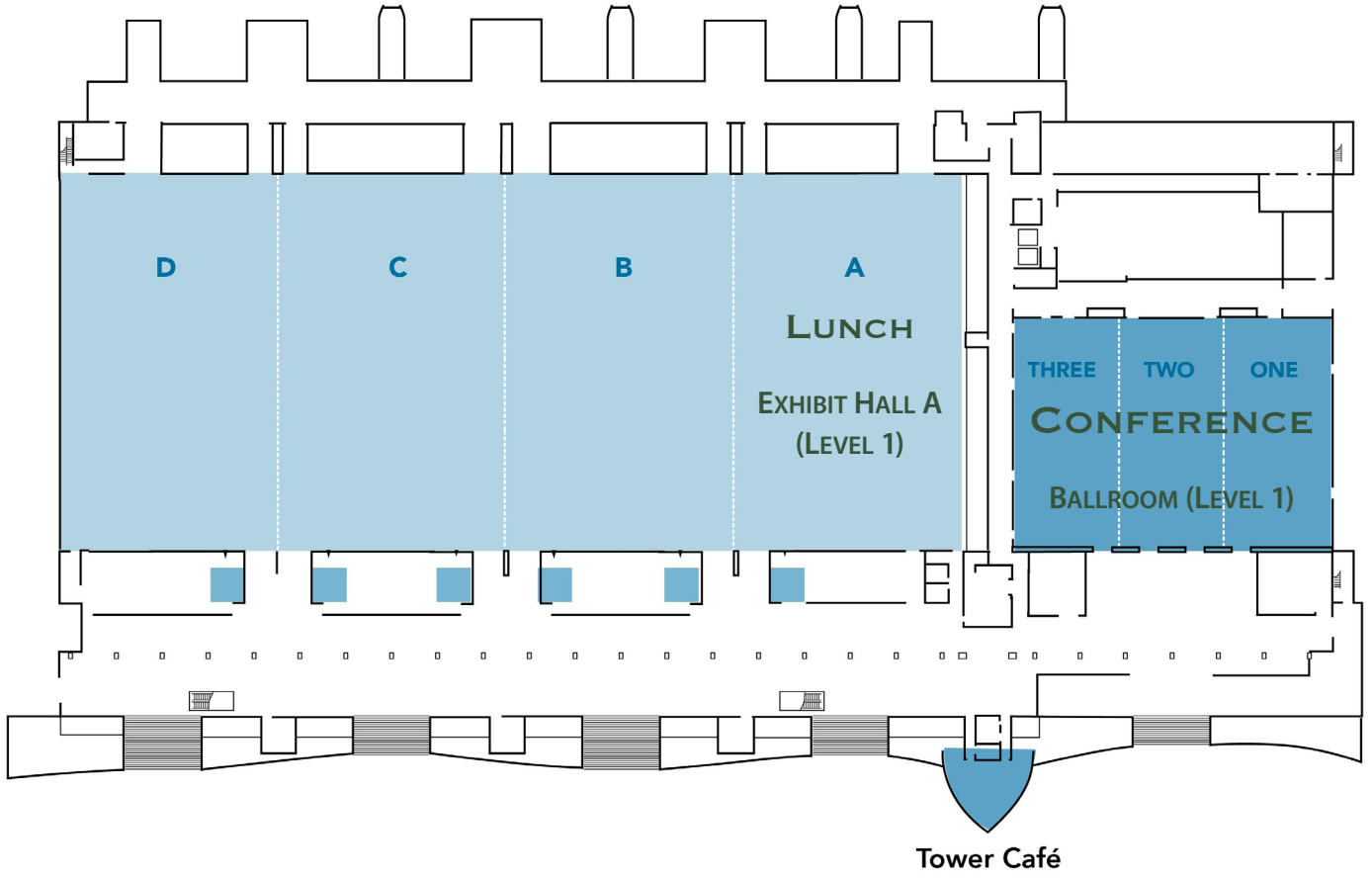
Special thanks to Kaylee Powell and Bob the Therapy Dog for providing their services to our conference attendees.



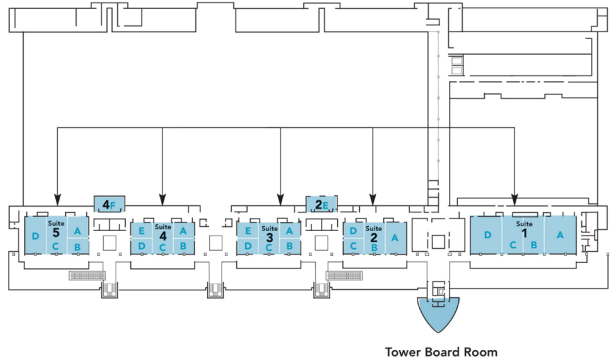


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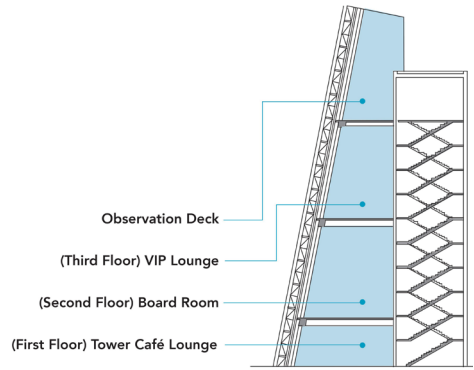
**Level 1**



**Level 2**



**TOWER**





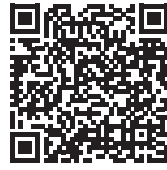
**Legislative Summary: Select Virginia Legislation with Safety Implications for K-12 Schools**  
[https://www.dcls.virginia.gov/sites/dcls.virginia.gov/files/law-enforcement/files/vcscs/legislative\\_summary\\_for\\_schools\\_-\\_table\\_-\\_draft\\_2023\\_updates\\_1.pdf](https://www.dcls.virginia.gov/sites/dcls.virginia.gov/files/law-enforcement/files/vcscs/legislative_summary_for_schools_-_table_-_draft_2023_updates_1.pdf)



**DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety and Public Safety Services –STAFF LIST**  
<https://www.dcls.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety>



**DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety Threat Assessment Resources**  
<https://www.dcls.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/threat-assessment-virginia>



**Upcoming VCSCS – Public Safety Trainings**  
<https://www.dcls.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/training>



**DCJS Active Attack Program (AAP) and Training**  
<https://www.dcls.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/active-attack-program>



**Campus and Public Safety Training**  
<https://www.dcls.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/campus-and-public-safety-training>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Additional conference materials are available by accessing this QR code:**



<https://www.dcls.virginia.gov/resources-2023-national-threat-assessment-conference-educational>



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**Link to all DCJS Trainings**  
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Please note: Photos and/or videos from this event may appear on the DCJS website, social media sites, and in other agency materials.



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