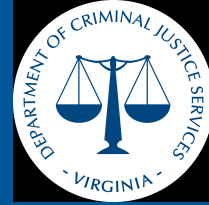


The Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety



Resolve to Improve Safety in 2024

A Message from VCSCS Director Donna Michaelis

A new calendar year is a fresh opportunity to focus on crisis preparation for yourself, your students, and your teammates. Here at the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, my staff and I stand ready to bring training and resources to your area.

In this newsletter we share with you our Active Attack training program, new training and resources on our Benchmark LMS, and announce our upcoming Strengthening Connections conference. We also take a moment to reflect on building mental health resiliency, honor a dedicated SRO, and remind you of an upcoming grant funding opportunity.

Thank you for your continued partnership in making Virginia schools, campuses, and communities safer.



Active Attack Training

Have you seen the training opportunities for civilians and law enforcement from our Active Attack Training Program? These in-person and virtual courses can be brought to your area to encourage all citizens and first responders to work together within the area of active attack threat incident management.

[Learn](#)

New Virtual Resources

In our last [edition](#), we announced our unique partnership with Safer Schools Together (SST) and the International Center for Digital Threat Assessment (ICDTA). Through this collaboration, we bring you two additional resources to share.

(Note: To access the webinars, you will first need to create your Benchmark account [here](#). Use [this guide](#) for step-by-step account creation instructions.)



The Ultimate School Administrator's Guide to Social Media will introduce the most common social media platforms and relevant current trends being used by your students on these applications.

[Download the Guide](#)

You can now take SST's Current Online Behavioral Trends monthly webinars on Benchmark. These two-hour sessions are available on-demand and complement the Digital Threat Assessment training program.

[View Webinars](#)



January is Mental Wellness Month

Mental wellness is the ability to successfully handle life's stressors and adapt to change and difficult times (NIH.gov). Your mental wellness can impact your ability to participate in everyday activities and your relationships. Take notice of those around you; colleagues, friends, students, and check in if you see they are struggling. It is also very important to take care of yourself to be able to function at your best.

Strategies for Improving Mental Wellbeing

Build resilience – People who are emotionally well tend to have greater resilience, meaning they have fewer negative emotions and are better able to recover from difficulties they face. Learning healthy ways to cope and find appropriate resources can help build resilience. A few ways to help; develop healthy physical habits, take time for yourself each day, practice gratitude, and try to surround yourself with positive, healthy people.

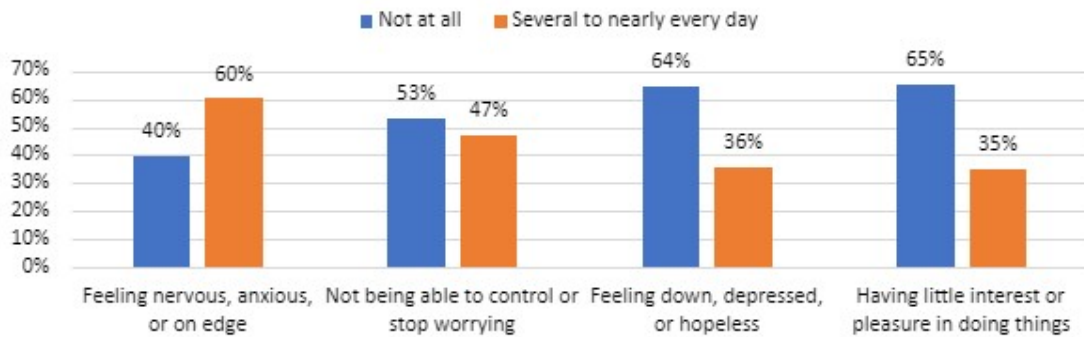
Reduce stress – If stress lasts a long time, becoming chronic stress, it can have effects both on mental and physical health. A few ways to manage stress so it does not become a problem; be sure to get enough sleep, try to exercise 30 minutes most days, set priorities and say no to tasks that may not need to be addressed and will increase stress, and schedule time to relax.

Get quality sleep – Sleep impacts our mental and physical health. Sleep helps you to focus, think more clearly, and function at your best while you are awake. Some strategies to improve your sleep; have a set bedtime, relax for at least 30 minutes before bedtime, avoid caffeine or nicotine in the afternoon, sleep in a dark, cool, quiet, and comfortable place.

Strengthen social connections – Research tells us that connections with others can have a strong impact on our mental wellbeing. You can build social connections by; joining a group with similar interests such as a hiking club, volunteer in your community, take a class, set up regular coffee or dinner with friends, or find another ways to intentionally reach out to friends or family.

Adult response to "How often over the last 2 weeks were you bothered by the following?"

As reported on the 2023 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions N=66,389



[More Information](#)

Strengthening Connections Conference



The Power of Prevention

We invite you to join a couple hundred of your colleagues from across the Commonwealth February 21-22 in Richmond to learn about strategies to improve your school climate through systematic approaches, trauma support, understanding of youth mental health issues, and ways to create positive outcomes for all students.

[Register Now](#)

SRO of the Quarter



**Joseph Bertrand "JB" Broughman - Covington Police Department
1954-2023**

Long before the sun would rise or the school doors would open, JB Broughman could be found walking the hallways of Jeter-Watson Elementary School. It wasn't until after his death that the faculty became aware of all what Officer Broughman did during his pre-dawn walks around the school. To Officer Broughman, his time at Jeter-Watson was much more than a job. It was a calling. He was the advocate, the protector and the friend of all who entered the school.

JB always ensured the school was safe, but also frequently assumed duties beyond his official job description. JB would walk with students who needed decompression time. He would deliver food to families with food insecurities. He always made time for his students and gave extra attention to those students who were struggling. JB would be greeted each day with hugs and smiles as he demonstrated unconditional love for all students. He ended each day with a smile and a thumb's up to be sure that everyone was good before he left the building for the day. He brought calm and safety to the students and staff every day.

JB was a tireless community servant. He began his career in law enforcement in 1979 with the City of Covington, filling various roles in the department, including as the first D.A.R.E. officer in the Alleghany Highlands. He was named Chief of Police in 2003 and City Manager in 2012 – serving in both roles until his retirement in 2016. In addition to his public service, he was the pastor of Highland Chapel Christian Church for over 30 years, a radio announcer for Covington High School football games for many years, and a part-time photographer for the Virginian Review. After his retirement from the City of Covington, JB returned to serve his community as a School Resource Officer at Jeter-Watson Elementary School. His love for his community was rivaled only by his love for his family, friends, and his many dogs and cats.

JB passed away before the start of this school year, but his legacy will live on at Jeter-Watson Elementary School.

**Nominate an
SRO/CSO/SSO**

School Safety Grant Funding Opportunities

Funding opportunities for new and continuation grant applications under the FY25 SRO/SSO Incentive Grant Program will be released soon. To ensure you receive the notification, please make sure you are registered for DCJS update email notifications, and that your contact information is up-to-date in OGMS. More information regarding the changes to this year's program are forthcoming.

**Sign Up
Here**

2023 BJA STOP School Violence Grant Funding for Development of Virginia's Threat Assessment Case Management Tool Update:

VCSCS was awarded a 2023 BJA STOP Grant of over \$1.9 million dollars to assist in the development of our legislatively mandated Threat Assessment Case Management Tool. The grant is a three-year program that will include the procurement and development of the tool in year one, and then years two and three will consist of piloting the tool in school divisions of varying sizes across the Commonwealth. While the pilot program initially began with five schools at the time of grant application, we now have an additional 21 school divisions interested in joining the pilot program. **Criteria for becoming a pilot school is being finalized as interest was greater than anticipated.** The current plan to start the first phase of pilot schools utilizing the case management tool during the 2024-2025 school year, and then adding additional pilot divisions during the 2025-2026 school year. If all goes as planned, the 2026-2027 school year would then begin a phased roll-out for all schools in the Commonwealth utilizing the tool.

Read the
Memo



Campus Threat Assessment Team Task Force Update

The Campus Threat Assessment Task Force was created through HB1916 and SB 910 which amended the existing legislation in the *Code of Virginia* [§ 23.1-805](#). The amendment requires “that the Secretary of Education and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security shall convene a task force (the task force) to determine best practices and develop model policies and procedures for all threat assessment teams at public institutions of higher education. The task force shall also consider and make legislative recommendations on the appropriate qualifications of members of such threat assessment teams. The task force shall include representatives from the Office of the Attorney General, campus police departments and local law enforcement, attorneys for the Commonwealth, mental health and student affairs professionals, university counsel, human resources representatives, one student representative, and one faculty representative. The task force shall submit its findings, including all applicable best practices, model policies and procedures, and legislative recommendations, to the Governor and Chairmen of the House Committee for Courts of Justice, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, the House Committee on Education, and the Senate Committee on Education and Health no later than December 1, 2023.”

There were 41 members invited to participate on the task force with representation from colleges and universities of all sizes and geographic regions of the Commonwealth. The Campus Threat Assessment Task Force convened for three in-person meetings in Richmond. The task force completed and submitted the final report to the Governor and Chairmen of the House Committee for Courts of Justice, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, the House Committee on Education, and the Senate Committee on Education and Health on December 1, 2023.

More Information

Grants

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Website

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