



Spring Into School Safety



From VCSCS Director Donna Michaelis:

Many see springtime as a fresh start or new beginning. Here at the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, we seek out innovative ways to support our nearly 3,000 public schools, institutions of higher learning, and nontraditional education programs year-round. This spring we are wrapping up the 2023 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions and preparing for the 2023 School and Division Safety Survey. This is a great time to reflect on lessons learned over the past school year and explore opportunities for improvements before the next, (while of course taking some well deserved rest over spring break!)

Hopefully we had the chance to see many of you at our Campus Safety and Violence Prevention Forum in Norfolk last month. If not, keep reading for more information on our 2023 School Safety Training Forum in Hampton this July. You will also read about some interesting school safety data, the benefits of School Security Officers and School Resource Officers, and have an opportunity to highlight an SRO success story of your own!

Remember, if you have questions, comments, or content to share, please reach out to us at vcscs@dcjs.virginia.gov. Thank you for your continued partnership in making Virginia schools, campuses, and communities safer.

Visit Our Website

2023 Campus Safety and Violence Prevention Forum



Last month the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) in partnership with the Virginia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (VACLEA), and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) brought together experts in the field of violence prevention, campus sexual assault, the Clery Act, Title IX, intimate partner violence, and mental health to discuss the latest research, policies, legal challenges, interdisciplinary cooperation, and other issues in Norfolk's picturesque Waterside District.

We hope incorporating this whole community approach to crisis management will enhance prevention, protection, mitigation and recovery efforts across institutions of higher education. Thank you to all of our vendors, presenters, and participants for another successful week. We hope to see you all again next year!

Campus Safety Resources

School Security Officers and School Resource Officers

If you're lucky enough to have one (or both) in your school, you know what a valuable resource a School Security Officer (SSO) or School Resource Officer (SRO) can be! But what is the difference between the two? Check out this graphic for a quick comparison:

Distinction between SSOs and SROs

Compare and contrast....

School Security Officer	School Resource Officer
1. A school employee	1. A law enforcement agency employee (a sworn, school-based Law Enforcement officer)
2. Complying with and guided by local school policies and regulations	2. Complying with federal, state and local statutes
3. Functions under the direction of local school principal or designee	3. Functions under the direction of law enforcement command
4. Responsible for enforcing school policy	4. Responsible for enforcing state law
5. Responsible for detaining individuals	5. Responsible for custody and arrest in conformance with law
6. Can search students and others based upon reasonable suspicion	6. Search must be in accordance with State and Federal law; search typically requires probable cause .
7. Act in absence of parents (<i>in loco parentis</i>)	7. Act under the standards of law
8. Use of force should be limited and only used in accordance with local school policy	8. Use of force is permissible as guided by department policy

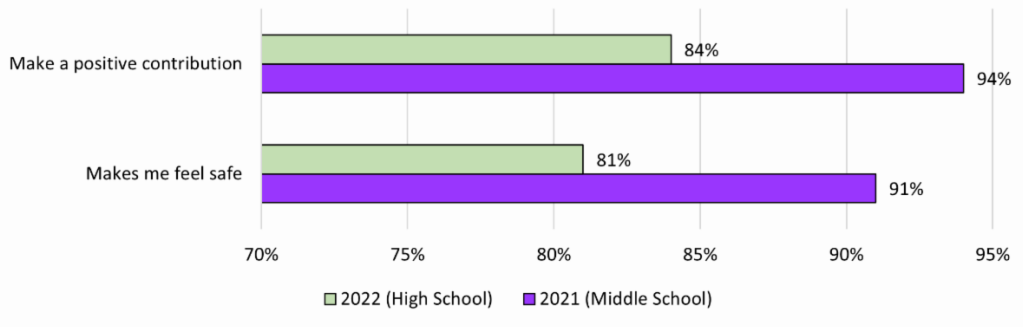
Part of the school-based safety and security team, but with different powers and reporting chains

Materials Copyright DCJS

VCSCS recently welcomed aboard Danielle Clark as our new K-12 School Safety and Security Training Coordinator. Danielle has ambitions to streamline training availability across the Commonwealth. We are excited to see this program grow as more schools are implementing SSO programs. For more information or if you have questions, [email](#)

Student agreement to: "The School Resource Officer (SRO) makes me feel safe at school." and "The School Resource Officer (SRO) makes a positive contribution to the school."

As reported on the 2021 & 2022 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Condit



VA SRO/SSO Programs

SRO of the Quarter



Kim Simon, SRO Training and Program Coordinator here at VCSCS introduces us to our SRO of the Quarter: Deputy First Class Rishawn Allen of the Stafford County Sheriff's Office assigned to North Stafford High School.

DFC Allen was nominated by his Lieutenant, Deuntay Diggs who noted that Rishawn was "setting the world on fire" as a driven, dedicated new SRO who works hard to connect with his students. In his first school year, DFC Allen has already started coaching football and will start coaching track this spring at Shirley Heim Middle School. Rishawn decided to go into law enforcement wanting to show his community that officers can be positive role models, and supportive mentors to youth.

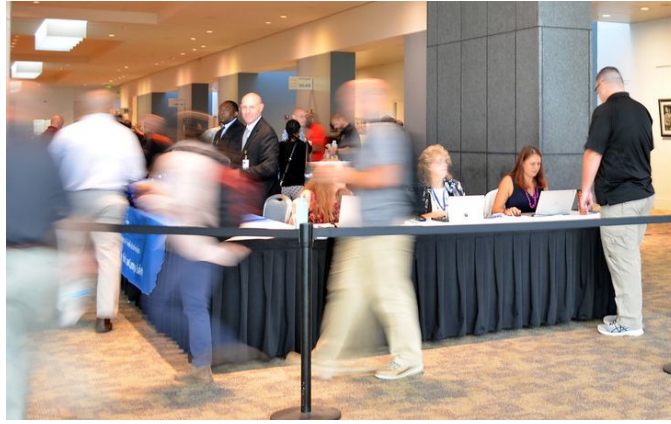
DFC Allen believes his own challenging upbringing that also lacked any male role models helped prepare him to relate and connect with many students. He wants to show young people that, "while environment shapes you, you have someone to trust. I am here for you."

Rishawn has an excellent support system at home: his wife is a teacher, and he has a one-year-old daughter keeping him on his toes. When asked what traits he believes are the most important for SROs, he listed being personable, relatable, and human as critical to success in this role. In our conversation, it was obvious that Rishawn is a passionate advocate for his students, clearly wanting to be that trusted adult. He said, "I may not (always) have advice (for the students), but I will always listen."

Congratulations Deputy First Class Allen! We look forward to hearing about all your accomplishments as you progress in this vital assignment.

If you have an SRO you would like to see highlighted in another edition, please [email Kim Simon.](#)

2023 School Safety Training Forum



Mark your calendars for the annual Virginia School Safety Training Forum to be held **July 24-27, 2023** at the Hampton Roads Convention Center in Hampton, Virginia.

VCSCS is pleased to offer this year's conference in partnership with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), the Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS), and the Virginia Risk Sharing Association (VRSA). Together we will tackle tough topics including; behavioral threat assessment, suicide prevention, social media and cybersecurity, active attack principles, adult sexual misconduct, juvenile justice, legal issues in schools, the impact of poverty on the brain, and more.

[Register Now!](#)

School Safety and Security Virtual Roundtable

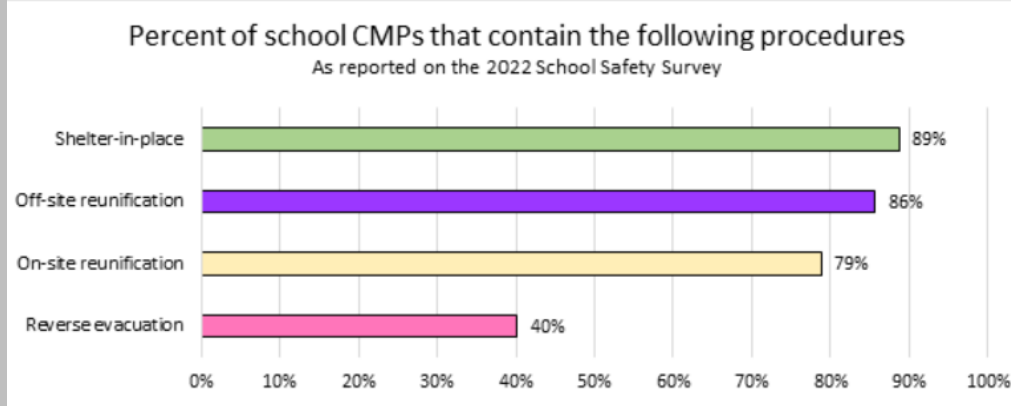
If you can't join us this July, please plan to attend one of our upcoming School Safety and Security Virtual Roundtables **September 19** or **December 19, 2023**.

These one hour long, regional virtual meetings are designed to provide a collaborative environment to discuss relevant issues in real time with other professionals around the Commonwealth. DCJS staff will be on hand to moderate and guide the agenda.

Specific topics for discussion may be submitted in advance to Danielle Clark at danielle.clark@dcjs.virginia.gov or by phone at 804-877-6638.

[Sign Up Here](#)

Did You Know?



Did you know that weather caused almost half (45%) of the 817 incidences where a School Crisis Emergency Plan was activated in the 2021-2022 school year? Are you prepared?

Ninety one percent (91%) of schools include weather-related incident response in their Crisis Management Plan (CMP). While 96% of schools have evacuation plans (usually utilized for fire drills) the number of schools including plans for other actions that may be taken during a weather-related emergency is even less.

The transition from winter to warmer days increases the risk of severe weather-related emergencies. Schools should review their CMP with faculty, staff, and students to ensure procedures are followed in the event of a weather-related emergency.

[The Virginia Severe Weather Awareness Week 2023](#) was March 6-10, 2023. You can find information about national weather safety tips on the [National Weather Service website](#). Planning and preparing for weather-related emergencies in your school's CMP provides another part of an all-hazards approach for crisis management.

Spring is a great time to review your school's CMP and identify changes or resources needed to better prepare your staff and students. Tabletop exercises, like [this one](#) from REMS, are a great way to assess the plans you have in place. Make sure to list these in your School Safety Survey this summer!

K-12 Crisis Planning Resources

Next Issue: Look for the 2023 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions Results and our new online learning system!



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