

Virginia Center for School & Campus Safety
K-12 Threat Assessment Webinar
Part 1



Introductions

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Housekeeping

- Please mute (*6) your phones to minimize outside noise.
- If you have a question, please type it into the chat box (choose "everyone").
Answers will be provided verbally for group benefit.
- The call will be recorded for future use.
- A follow up email containing a summary will be sent after the call.
- Please utilize the handouts provided in the reminder email.
- ***Thank you for being here!***



Webinar Agenda

- **PART I:**
 - Understanding the “Why” behind Threat Assessments
 - Background/Legislation
 - Data
 - Building Blocks for Successful Teams
 - Wrap-Up and Questions
- **PART II:**
 - Identifying & Reporting Threats
 - Conducting Threat Assessments
 - Threat Management
 - Wrap-Up and Questions



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What is a Threat?

- Threat – concerning communication or behavior that indicates that an individual poses a danger to the safety of school staff or students through acts of violence or other behavior that would cause harm to self or others




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What is a Behavioral Threat Assessment?

- Please use the chat box to respond




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Behavioral Threat Assessment

- Fact-based process emphasizing an appraisal of observed (or reasonably observable) behaviors to identify potentially dangerous or violent situations, to assess them, and to manage/address them




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Threat Assessment

- Threat Assessment is a **preventative system**, not punitive, meant to intervene with individuals posing a risk of harm to self or others and get them off of a pathway to violence.
- Emphasis on “posing” a threat versus “making a threat”
- Objective, behavior driven




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Bad things can happen...

- Violence is a process
- School shooters do not just snap
- They undergo a process that is observable (like water coming to a boil)
- If you are in a position to observe/know what to look for an attack is preventable



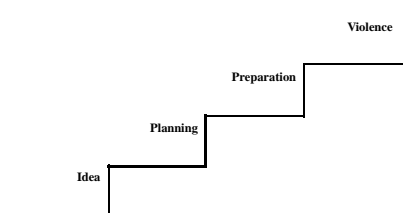
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Pathway to Violence

Violence



Idea Planning Preparation


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An Averted Case

Fair Haven shooting threat: 'By the grace of God' Vermont avoided disaster

Nicola Higgins DeBoni, Free Press Staff Writer Published 8:41 a.m. ET Feb. 16, 2018 | Updated 9:01 p.m. ET Feb. 23, 2018



Officials present a beer who they said alerted an adult to Jack Sawyer's alleged plot to enter Fair Haven Union High School with a shotgun and MP students. The revelations came Friday, Feb. 16, 2018, as Sawyer was arraigned for attempted murder. (WVBN-NEWS/STEPHEN FREEDS)

RUTLAND - An 18-year-old Prohruay man pleaded


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Virginia is for...

VIRGINIA
IS FOR
LO[♥]ERS
LEGISLATION


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Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

- 132 public school superintendents
- 2,200 school administrators
- 4,500 assistant school administrators
- 120,000 teachers and school staff
- 69 colleges and universities
- 42 campus law enforcement agencies
- 367 law enforcement agencies
- 23,000 law enforcement officers
- 780 school resource officers
- 1,200 school security officers
- 600 campus security officers

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Legislation

Center was created in 2000 and is responsible for:
K-12

- Providing **training** for all school personnel
- Serving as a **resource and referral center** and providing technical assistance for Virginia school divisions
- Facilitating the annual **school safety audit** pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-279.8
- **Maintaining and disseminating information** to local school divisions on effective school safety initiatives in Virginia and across the nation
- Encouraging **development of partnerships** to promote school safety in Virginia


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Legislation

- **2004-** School Safety Audits
- **2004, 2006** – School and Campus Security Officer Training and Certification
- **2007** – Virginia Tech
- **2008** - Higher Education Threat Assessment Teams
- **2012** – Sandy Hook

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Legislation

2013 – School and Campus Safety Task Force

- Plethora of other changes to include:
 - Renamed the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
 - **K-12 Threat Assessment Teams**
 - Critical Incident Response Curriculum
 - Emergency Managers
 - Model Policies and Procedures
 - Lockdown Drills

2015 – Center for Public Integrity - Governor’s Children’s Cabinet

- School- Law Enforcement Partnership Guide and Model MOU

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What about “Threat Assessment” in Virginia Public Schools?

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Legislation

Virginia law (§ 22.1-79.4) requires school boards to adopt policies for:

- Establishment of school Threat Assessment Teams (TAT), for the assessment of and intervention with **individuals** whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students
- consistent with the **model policies** developed by the Center
- include procedures for referrals to CSBs and health providers

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Legislation

- Each team shall include persons with expertise in:
 - Counseling
 - Instruction
 - School administration
 - Law enforcement
- Threat assessment teams may serve more than one school (as determined by the superintendent)


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Legislation

- Provide guidance on **recognizing threatening/aberrant behavior** that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self
- **Identify members** of the school community to whom threats should be reported
- **Implement policies** adopted by the school board for threat assessment
- **Report data** to the Center

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Legislation

Upon a preliminary determination that a **student** poses a threat of violence or physical harm to **self or others**, TAT shall:

- **Immediately report** its determination to the division superintendent or designee
- **attempt to notify** the student's parent or legal guardian


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Legislation

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exemptions in place:

- Information concerning **security plans** and specific assessment components of **school safety audits**, as provided in § 22.1-279.8
- Records received by the Department of Criminal Justice Services pursuant to §§ [9.1-184](#), [22.1-79.4](#), and [22.1-279.8](#) or for purposes of evaluating threat assessment teams



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Legislation


Access to health records and adult and juvenile criminal records

Central Criminal Records Exchange

- Only to members of a threat assessment team to aid in the assessment or intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to safety or in need of assistance



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Legislation


Access to health records and adult and juvenile criminal records

Exceptions to health records privacy:

- Health care entities **may**, and, when required by other provisions of state law, shall, disclose health records:

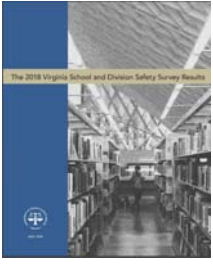




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Data Collection

Annual Safety Audit Process







Data Collection

Safety Audit

- Center is to collect, analyze, and disseminate various Virginia school safety data, including school safety audit information submitted to it pursuant to [§ 22.1-279.8](#), collected by the Department;
- **§ 22.1-79.4. Threat assessment teams and oversight committees.**
 - E. Each threat assessment team established pursuant to this section shall report quantitative data on its activities according to guidance developed by the Department of Criminal Justice Services



Data Collection

Safety Audit – Climate Survey

What is the purpose of the survey?

- Provide schools with information on school climate and **safety conditions** in order to maintain a safe and orderly school environment conducive to learning
- Measures student and teacher/staff perceptions of school rules and discipline, teacher-student relationships, **student engagement** in school

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Data Collection

- **Virginia School Safety Survey**
(completed online annually)
- **Division Level Survey**
- **Virginia School Crisis Management Plan Review and Certification**
(annually by August 31)
- **Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey**
- **School Safety Inspection Checklist**
(every 3 years)




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Threat Assessment Data



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Threat Assessment Data

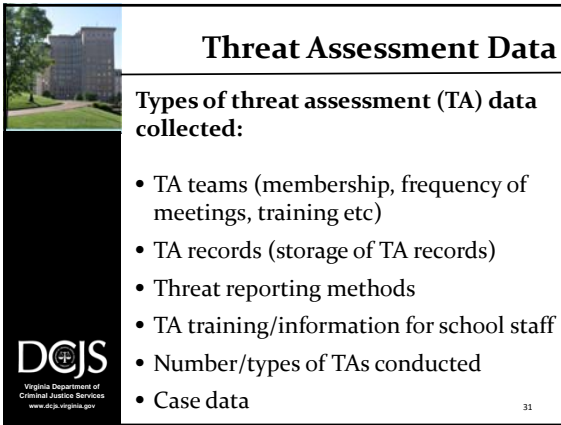
**2018 Data
School Year 2017-18**

- Collected annually via the Virginia School Safety Survey conducted by VCSCS at DCJS
- 2004-2005 through 2017-2018



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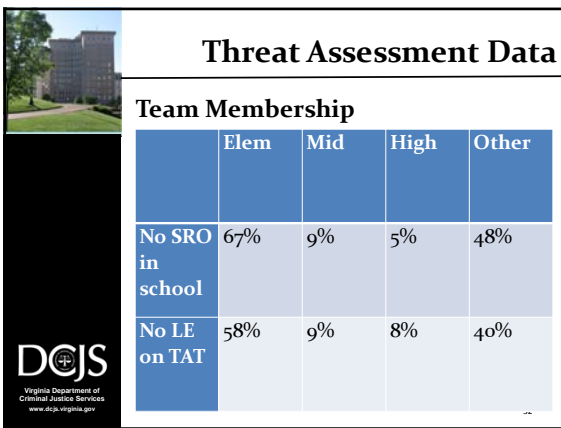
Threat Assessment Data

Types of threat assessment (TA) data collected:

- TA teams (membership, frequency of meetings, training etc)
- TA records (storage of TA records)
- Threat reporting methods
- TA training/information for school staff
- Number/types of TAs conducted
- Case data

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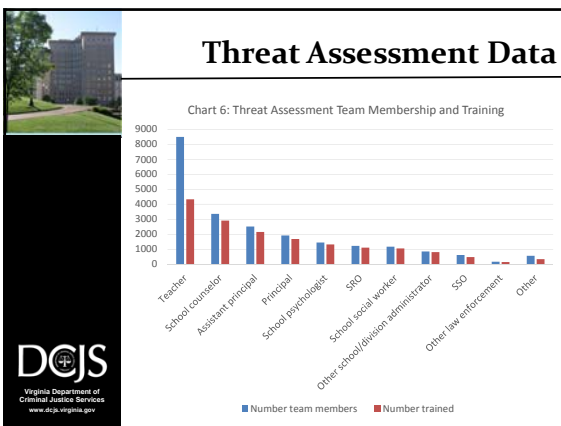


Threat Assessment Data

Team Membership

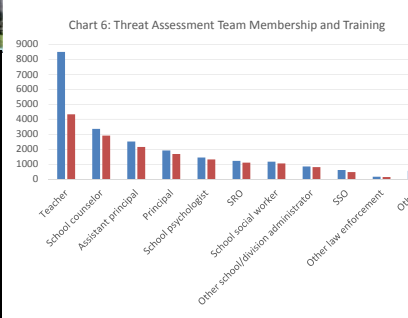
	Elem	Mid	High	Other
No SRO in school	67%	9%	5%	48%
No LE on TAT	58%	9%	8%	40%

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Threat Assessment Data

Chart 6: Threat Assessment Team Membership and Training



Role	Number team members	Number trained
Teacher	8000	4000
School counselor	3000	2500
Assistant principal	2500	2000
Principal	2000	1500
School psychologist	1500	1000
SRO	1000	500
School social worker	1000	500
Other school/division administrator	500	200
SFO	500	200
Other law enforcement	200	100
Other	100	50

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Threat Assessment Data

Storage of Threat Records

During 2017-2018, threat assessment case records were most frequently stored with:

- school administration (49%)
- school counselors (36%)

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Threat Assessment Data

Storage of Threat Data

Table 24: Storage of Threat Assessment Case Records

Where TA records were stored	Number of schools	Percentage of Schools
With the school administration	960	49%
With the school counselor	699	36%
In the student's general education file	342	17%
In the school division's central office	443	23%
In the student's discipline file	395	20%
Not applicable (no cases in 2016-2017)	296	15%
With the threat assessment team	263	13%
In the student's special education file	82	4%
With law enforcement records	73	4%
In the student's health file	53	3%
In an electronic file	22	1%

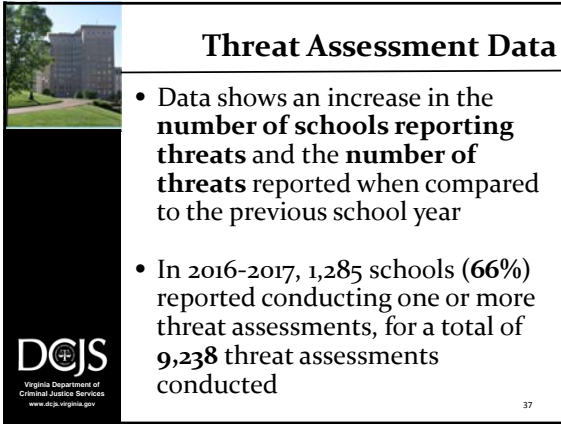


Threat Assessment Data

Number of threats (2017-2018)

- 1,563 schools (80%) reported conducting one or more threat assessments for a total of **14,869** threat assessments conducted in 2017-2018

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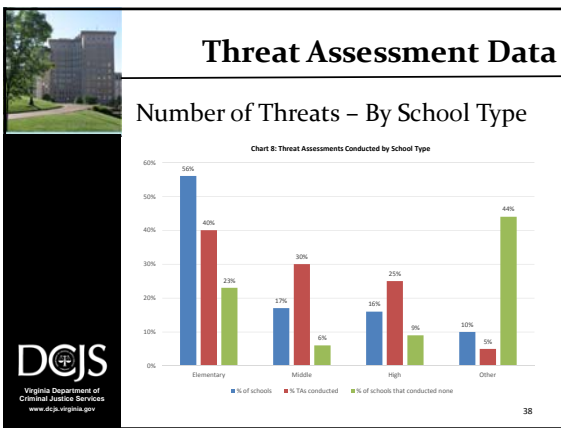


Threat Assessment Data

- Data shows an increase in the **number of schools reporting threats** and the **number of threats** reported when compared to the previous school year
- In 2016-2017, 1,285 schools (**66%**) reported conducting one or more threat assessments, for a total of **9,238** threat assessments conducted

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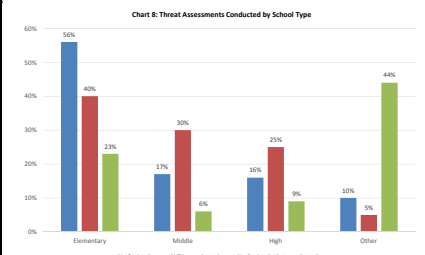
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Threat Assessment Data

Number of Threats – By School Type

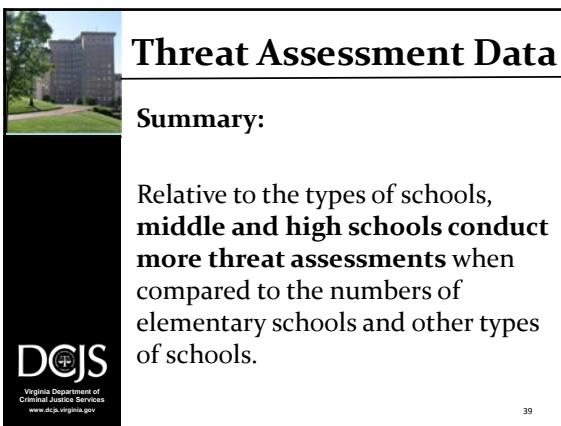
Chart 8: Threat Assessments Conducted by School Type



School Type	% of schools	% TAs conducted	% of schools that conducted none
Elementary	56%	40%	23%
Middle	17%	30%	6%
High	16%	25%	9%
Other	10%	5%	44%

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Threat Assessment Data

Summary:

Relative to the types of schools, **middle and high schools conduct more threat assessments** when compared to the numbers of elementary schools and other types of schools.

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Threat Assessment Data

Subject of threat

Number of Threat Assessment Cases, by Subject of Assessment

Subject of Assessment	Number of TAs Conducted
Student from your school	14,568
Student not from your school	49
Student formerly from your school	33
Faculty/staff currently employed by your school	98
Faculty/staff formerly employed by your school	5
Parent/guardian of a student	92
Someone else	24
Total	14,869




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Threat Assessment Data


Type of threat

1. Threat against other(s)
2. Threat against self
3. Threat against other(s) and self



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Threat Assessment Data


Type of threat

Table 26: Subject of assessment and type of threat

Type of threat	Threats by current students	Threats by others (not current students)	Total
Threatened self only	8,260	34	8,294
Threatened other(s) only	5,538	252	5,790
Threatened other(s) and self	770	15	785
Total	14,568	301	14,869




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Threat Assessment Data

- 14,568 threat assessment cases involving current students in 2017-2018
- 1,472 (10%) were classified as a highest level threat by 514 schools,
- 42 (3%) resulted in an act being carried out at 28 schools
- **Overall, 0.3% (less than 1%) of threats made by current students resulted in a highest level threat being carried out at 1.4% of the schools**




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Threat Assessment Data

Case outcomes of highest level threats

- The 28 schools that reported HLT events were asked to describe those events.
- Of the 42 case descriptions, 31% were provided by elementary schools, 33% by middle schools, 36% by high schools, and none by other schools.




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Threat Assessment Data

Division Level Challenges

- **Q. What are the biggest challenges to setting up teams or conducting threat assessments?**
- *The biggest challenges reported by divisions in setting up TA teams or conducting threat assessments were staffing the teams (53%) and coordinating schedules (45%), closely followed by training for new staff/team members (44%).*




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Threat Assessment Data

Other challenges

Understanding the function of threat assessments vs. discipline	56	42%
Loss of instruction time, competing priorities, conducting thorough TA/review/debrief in a timely manner	55	41%
Level of threat (when does an act become a threat, how to determine threat level, what constitutes a threat)	53	40%
Consistency in division-wide practices	42	32%
Threat assessment training resources	40	30%
Length of the form	28	21%
Conducting reviews and updates	25	19%
Privacy issues (FERPA, outside team members maintaining student confidentiality requirements)	18	14% <small>46</small>






Building Blocks for Successful Threat Assessment Programs

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Successful Threat Assessment Programs Include:

1

Positive School Climate



2

A multi-disciplinary team


3

Strong partnerships between schools, law enforcement, and the community


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Building Block #1




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Positive School Climate

“School climate is a broad, multifaceted concept that involves many aspects of the student’s educational experience. A *positive school climate* is the product of a school’s attention to *fostering safety*; promoting a *supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment*; and *encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships* throughout the school community no matter the setting—from Pre-K/Elementary School to higher education.”

- National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
- <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/safe-and-healthy-students/school-climate>




Positive School Climate

VIRGINIA CARES FOR SCHOOLS & CAMPUSES

C.A.R.E.S. involves communities working together to build:


- Caring & Connection
- Awareness
- Recognition
- Engagement
- Support



Why School Climate Matters

Climate Survey – Student Results

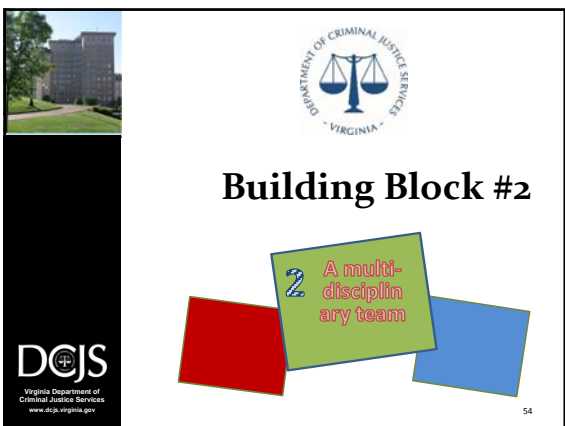
- 79% reported that they feel safe in their school.
- 43% of students reported that bullying is a problem at their school
- 41% were physically attacked, pushed, or hit them
- 34% were threatened to be hurt
- Fewer than half (41%) of students who reported being teased or bullied at school told a teacher or other adult what happened
- 14% of students reported being bullied at least once in the past year by a teacher or other adult at school



Why School Climate Matters


Climate Survey – Student Results

- 94% endorsed the view that most teachers want all students to do well
- 89% reported teachers care about all students
- 94% reported that there was at least one teacher at their school who really wants them to do well
- 75% said there was an adult at school they could talk with if they had a personal problem.




Building Block #2

2 A multi-disciplinary team




Who should be included on a Threat Assessment Team (TAT)?

- Please use the chat box to respond





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Threat Assessment Team





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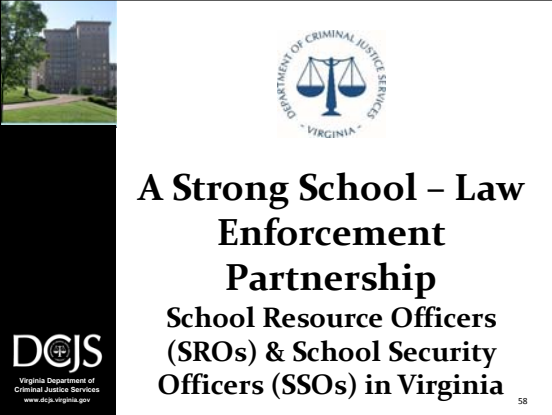


Building Block #3



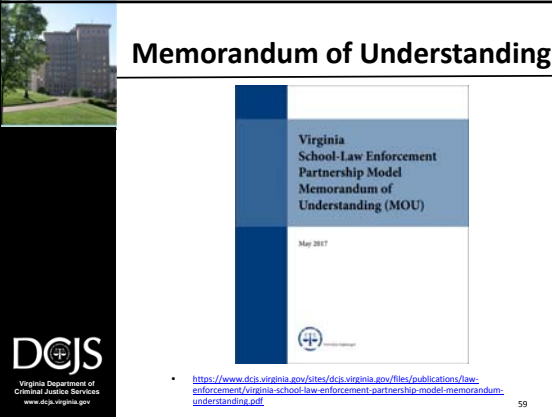
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A Strong School – Law Enforcement Partnership
School Resource Officers (SROs) & School Security Officers (SSOs) in Virginia

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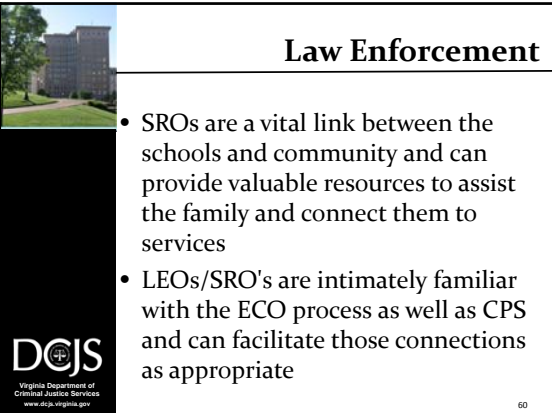


Memorandum of Understanding

Virginia School-Law Enforcement Partnership Model Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
May 2017

<https://www.dcis.virginia.gov/sites/dcis.virginia.gov/files/publications/law-enforcement/virginia-school-law-enforcement-partnership-model-memorandum-understanding.pdf>


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Law Enforcement


- SROs are a vital link between the schools and community and can provide valuable resources to assist the family and connect them to services
- LEOs/SRO's are intimately familiar with the ECO process as well as CPS and can facilitate those connections as appropriate

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Law Enforcement

- LEOs/SROs are experienced in dealing with youth in crisis and can be a stabilizing influence
- Some students may find SROs safer to open up with than MHPs in schools or school administrators




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What challenges do you foresee or have faced setting up your Threat Assessment team?

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Other Questions or Comments

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Threat Assessment


Higher Education Threat Assessment Teams

- <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title23.1/chapter8/section23.1-805/>

K12 Threat Assessment Teams

- <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter7/section22.1-79.4/>
- <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title9.1/chapter1/section9.1-184/>
- <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title19.2/chapter23/section19.2-389.1/>
- <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title16.1/chapter11/section16.1-301/>
- <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3705.2/>
- <http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3705.4/>

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Current Research

- National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Grants with the University of Virginia focusing on School Climate and Threat Assessment
- NIJ Grants with Virginia Tech focusing on the School to Prison Pipeline and SROs.
- BJA Grant to expand threat assessment training and data collection.



Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

We are here to help!
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