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GUIDANCE ON THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM FORMATION AND REPORTING

In 2013, the Governor of Virginia convened the School and Campus Safety Taskforce, which focused on improving safety in public schools, and on college and university campuses throughout the Commonwealth. As a result of this taskforce, the 2013 Virginia General Assembly passed **HB 2344** (<http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=131&typ=bil&val=HB2344>) which added section 22.1-79.4 to the *Code of Virginia*.

Code of Virginia Requirements

Effective July 1, this legislation requires local school boards to ***establish policies and procedures for the establishment of threat assessment teams***. The bill also requires the division superintendent to ***establish for each school a threat assessment team***. The threat assessment ***teams shall (i) provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community; (ii) identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported; and (iii) implement the policies adopted by the school board.*** The bill ***requires threat assessment teams to report to the division superintendent upon a preliminary determination that an individual poses a threat of violence*** to self or others.

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance pertaining to threat assessment team formation and activation reporting. Below are specifics for each of the legislative requirements as they pertain to threat assessment teams and reporting.

...establish policies and procedures for the establishment of threat assessment teams...

The Department of Criminal Justice Services has developed [model policies and procedures](#). There are no legislative mandates to use these specific protocols. They are available for use as needed.

...establish for each school a threat assessment team...

As is appropriate for each locality, threat assessment teams may serve one or more schools. It is not critical that all team members are located in a particular school, but members with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement should be available when necessary for the evaluation of a potential threat.

...threat assessment teams shall (i) provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community...

As is appropriate for each locality, threat assessment teams must implement a process for providing guidance for recognizing threatening or aberrant behavior. Questions related to the types of guidance or training provided may be included on the annual school safety audit survey.

...requires threat assessment teams to report to the division superintendent upon a preliminary determination that an individual poses a threat of violence...

As is appropriate for each locality, a process for reporting potential threats of violence should be put in place. As has been the case in previous years, during the annual school safety audit process, questions will be asked to determine the number of times threats were made by students. Specific questions pertaining to the seriousness of the threats will be included, as will questions related to the nature of

the threats. School survey questions may include total number of threats received, how many were deemed serious (“posed” versus “made”), and the nature of those threats. For the purpose of this survey, “nature of threat” categories may include those associated with the Virginia Department of Education [Discipline, Crime and Violence \(DCV\)](#) reporting process. Tri-annually, when the division survey takes place, policy questions related to threat assessment teams and processes will be included.

CONTACT

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