



***Commonwealth of Virginia***  
***Office of Governor Bob McDonnell***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Governor Announces Membership of School  
Safety Task Force**

*Group to Hold First Meeting Monday, January 14th in Richmond*

**RICHMOND** – Governor Bob McDonnell today announced the membership of his newly-created Task Force of School and Campus Safety. The membership includes educators, public safety experts, local leaders, mental health practitioners, legislators, parents, and students. The group will review school safety, including established policies and procedures, crisis and emergency management plans, threat assessment protocols, as well as share best practices and identify resource challenges. This task force will also provide legislative and budget proposals to the governor to address any critical gaps or needs associated with safety and security in our schools and on our campuses.

Speaking about the membership, Governor McDonnell said, “I am thankful that this dedicated group of leaders and experts has agreed to work on the important issue of keeping our schools safe. As a Commonwealth, we must evaluate safety in our schools and ensure that we are providing our young people with the best opportunity to learn. I am confident this group will develop thoughtful recommendations that will ensure a safe learning environment for our students.”

On Monday, December 20, Governor McDonnell issued [Executive Order 56](#) establishing a multidisciplinary task force to review school and campus safety in light of the horrific and senseless murders that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. He has also established a separate mental health workgroup chaired by Attorney General Ken

Cuccinelli and Secretary of Health and Human Resources Dr. Bill Hazel. The task force will send initial recommendations no later than January 31, 2013. It will make additional recommendations on an ongoing basis and provide a final report on all aspects of the executive order to the governor no later than June 30, 2013, so that recommended actions can be implemented before the new school year begins.

The Task Force will hold its first meeting on January 14th, at 1:00 PM, in the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond.

### **Governor's Task Force on School and Campus Safety**

#### **Co-Chairs**

**The Honorable Marla Decker**, Secretary of Public Safety

**The Honorable Laura Fornash**, Secretary of Education

**The Honorable Bill Hazel, M.D.**, Secretary of Health and Human Resources

#### **Members**

**The Honorable Ken Cuccinelli**, Attorney General of Virginia

**The Honorable Joseph Yost**, Virginia House of Delegates

**The Honorable Margaret B. Ransone**, Virginia House of Delegates

**The Honorable Patrick Hope**, Virginia House of Delegates

**The Honorable Tom Garrett**, Senate of Virginia

**The Honorable Richard Stuart**, Senate of Virginia

**The Honorable George Barker**, Senate of Virginia

**Patricia Wright, Ed.D.**, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**Donna Michaelis**, Director of the Virginia Center for School Safety

**Colonel W. Steven Flaherty**, Superintendent of the Virginia Department of State Police

**Garth Wheeler**, Director of the Department of Criminal Justice Services

**Mark Gooch**, Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice

**Michael Cline**, State Coordinator of the Department of Emergency Management

**James W. Stewart, III**, The Commissioner of the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

**Maureen Dempsey, MD, FAAP**, Acting State Health Commissioner

**Peter Blake**, Director of the State Council on Higher Education

**Sarah Gross**, PTA Legislative Liaison

**Michelle Wescott**, Nurse, Rena B. Wright Primary School; PTA Health and Safety Chair

**Vincent Darby**, Principal, G. H. Reid Elementary School, Richmond

**Keith Perrigan**, Principal, Patrick Henry High School, Washington; President, Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals

**Dr. Deborah Pettit**, Superintendent, Louisa County Schools

**Dianne Smith**, Member of Chesterfield School Board; Retired Principal

**Leonard Steward**, Lexington City School Board

**Regina Blackwell Brown**, Educational Specialist for School Counseling, Henrico County Public Schools

**Meg Gruber**, Teacher, Forest Park High School, Prince William; VEA President

**Judi M. Lynch**, Ph.D., Principal, Saint Gertrude High School

**Dr. Sandy Ward**, Director of the School Psychology program, College of William & Mary

**Dewey Cornell**, Professor of Education, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia; Director, Virginia Youth Violence Project

**Charles J Klink**, Assistant Vice Provost and Vice President for Student Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University

**Sheriff Brian Hieatt**, Tazewell County

**Sheriff Mike Chapman**, Loudoun County

**Chief Jim Williams**, Chief of Police, City of Staunton

**Chief Don Challis**, Chief of Police, College of William and Mary

**Joel Branscom**, Commonwealth's Attorney, Botetourt County

**Chief Steve Cover**, Fire Chief, City of Virginia Beach

**Edward "Bubby" Bish**, Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads

**Captain Steve Carey**, Stafford County Sheriff's Department (former School Resource Officer)

**Gene Deisinger**, Deputy Chief and Director of Threat Management, Virginia Tech

**Charles Werner**, Charlottesville Fire Chief (Member of Secure Commonwealth Panel)

**Allen Hill**, Father of Rachel Hill, Victim of Virginia Tech Shooting

**Alexa Rennie**, Student, James River High School

**Jillian McGarrity**, Student, Lynchburg College

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