

# Vermont School Safety Center Newsletter

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## Vermont School Safety Grants Awarded

**Commissioner Anderson, Vermont  
 Department of Public Safety**

In early August, 239 Vermont schools were awarded safety grants totaling \$4 million. These funds will allow 560 projects to move forward that will make schools safer with the addition of door locks, new public address systems, and other infrastructure. These awards are the culmination of an effort that began earlier this year after a threat of violence at Fair Haven Union High School. A statewide assessment after that incident identified security shortcomings for schools, and a committee worked to identify and prioritize infrastructure improvements. Those priorities served as a blueprint for scoring school safety grant applications and awarding funds. Schools will also have access to assistance in developing emergency plans, training, and safety exercises this fall through an additional \$1 million Homeland Security Technical Assistance contract in Vermont Emergency Management. The \$5 million funding package was proposed by Governor Phil Scott and approved by a bipartisan majority of the legislature this spring. The Department of Public Safety is thankful for the support of the Governor and lawmakers in creating safe school environments in Vermont, and the Department of Public Safety will continue to work with school administrators on this important effort.

[Click here](#) for a list of all schools receiving these school safety grants.

## Recommended School Safety Best and Promising Practices

During the month of June, the Vermont School Safety Center in collaboration with the Vermont School Crisis Planning Team distributed a list of "[Recommended School Safety Best and Promising Practices](#)" designed to enhance the level of emergency preparedness in schools across Vermont. Recognizing that each school has its own unique educational and school safety landscape, the Vermont School Safety Center recommends that schools evaluate these "best and promising practices" and consider their implementation into existing or future school emergency preparedness initiatives. These "best and promising practices" included but were not limited to: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Behavioral Threat Assessment, See Something/Say Something, Interior Door Locking Mechanisms and Public Address/Emergency Notification Systems. Review the complete list [here](#).

For breaking news on the Vermont school safety front, follow us on Twitter:



**@VTED\_SafeSchool**

## Suicide Prevention: It's Up to All of Us

Charlotte McCorkel, Howard Center

Earlier this year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new data indicating that suicide rates continue to increase across the country. In Vermont, the data is alarming: suicide is the second leading cause of death for people ages 15-34, the fourth leading cause of death for people ages 35-54 and the fifth leading cause of death for those ages 55-64. In our state, one person dies by suicide every four days.



This news is disheartening given the national and local efforts to prevent suicide and promote help seeking behavior. The reality is that stigma still exists. It is hard to talk about mental health and it is even harder to admit there is a problem or reach out for help.

Hope is not lost. Help is available in so many places, in person and through technology, day and night, in different languages and in different formats. There are action steps that you can take to help your students and school community.

- 1) Put these numbers in your cell phone:
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255
  - Crisis Text Line: 741741 (National)
- 2) Readily give students the 24/7 crisis number for your local designated agency.
- 3) Change your language:
  - Avoid using the terms “committed” or “successful” related to suicide as they perpetuate stigma in different ways. Instead say “died by suicide”
  - Know that it’s okay to use the word “suicide” – talking about suicide prevention or asking if someone is having suicidal thoughts does NOT give someone the idea
  - Share the resources listed above with students, colleagues and parents. Talk to students about what they would do if they were worried about a friend
- 4) Take warning signs seriously:
  - If a student is talking about death or suicide, bring this to the attention of a school counselor or administrator immediately.
  - Even if a threat seems veiled or unclear, take it seriously
  - Know your school protocols about steps to take when a student (or parent) is having a suicide crisis



Sometimes it can feel overwhelming to know how to contribute to an effort like suicide prevention. Doing any one of the above action items may save a life.





## A Few Words from Secretary Daniel M. French, Ed.D

*“Now more than ever, it is crucial that we make sure our schools are as safe as they can be. We have worked together with the Department of Public Safety to provide a comprehensive set of resources to help schools improve their security and prepare for emergencies. The Vermont School Safety Center offers help to schools on a variety of security related topics. Our liaison officer, Rob Evans, can assist you with planning and training and evaluate emergency procedures and training exercises. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation as we work together to provide a safe learning environment for all Vermont students.”*

Please contact Rob Evans, Vermont School Safety Liaison Officer for any of your school emergency preparedness needs: [revans@margolishealy.com](mailto:revans@margolishealy.com)



## Recognizing Retiring Superintendent Win Goodrich

During the July School Crisis Planning Team meeting, Rob Evans, VT School Safety Liaison Officer recognized retiring Superintendent Win Goodrich with the following citation from Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety that read in part:

*“Through your years of service to Vermont’s schools, you have been instrumental in developing and delivering timely and informative school safety training and exercise resources that are being used by school crisis planning and executive leadership teams to build their internal emergency preparedness capacity. Your leadership, can do spirit and willingness to roll up your sleeves to get the job has been an inspiration to your fellow schools crisis planning team members. Vermont schools are safer today because of the knowledge and experience you have so willingly shared during this important school safety work.”*

## School Emergency Preparedness Training

During the summer, the Vermont School Safety Center in collaboration with Vermont Emergency Management delivered Crisis Communication and Incident Command training to schools across Vermont. These training sessions delivered were designed to educate and inform school executive leadership teams how to communicate with parents, the public, and the press during a critical incident and an overview of the operational framework of the Incident Command System (ICS) that is utilized by all those that may respond to a critical incident at your school.



## School Safety for Health and Healthcare Emergencies



All schools in Vermont need to be prepared for emergencies and first aid care. [Vermont's Standards of Practice: School Health Services Manual](#) is a guide for School Nurses (SN), Associate School Nurses (ASN) and School Administrators to address emergency healthcare needs from illness, disease, or injury. The manual is based on national standards of care that requires local relationship building and preparedness activities, ideally led by a SN or ASN who can educate and train teams of school personnel. Schools will find Sections # 3 Allergy

Management, #12 Emergency Preparedness, and #15 First Aid to be most relevant.

Every school should have at least 1 primary and 2 back up personnel trained (and more for larger schools) in First Aid and CPR; [Stop the Bleed](#) type training is as essential as CPR. All School Nurses, Associate School Nurses, and School Administrators should know of the specific protocols available and found on the [Vermont School Crisis Guide](#). Practicing with [Table Top Exercises](#) means more people are helping and that fewer people are too afraid to act at the time you need them the most. Contact your Health Department School Liaison or Sharonlee Trefry MSN, RN, NCSN, State School Nurse Consultant, Vermont Department of Health, at 802-863-7348 or via email at [sharonlee.trefry@vermont.gov](mailto:sharonlee.trefry@vermont.gov).



## Get Connected, Get Answers!

Vermont 2-1-1 is a statewide Information and Referral program of the United Ways of Vermont. 2-1-1 is built on the principles of outstanding customer service. In this age of the “information highway”, access to information is made easy. Help navigating through the information and potential resources is only 3 digits away...2-1-1. Our 2-1-1 system in Vermont is at the fingertips of every resident and every phone. 2-1-1 is cost-effective, high quality, personal, flexible and community-based.

**Can't find what you need?** You can always reach one of our trained professionals by phone. Vermont 2-1-1 is here to offer help and to offer hope.

- One call gives you access to resources across your community. 2-1-1 is efficient, fast and easy to use.
- No more wrong numbers; no more wasted time trying to find the right resource(s).
- 2-1-1 maintains the integrity of the 9-1-1 system; saving that vital community resource for life and death emergencies.
- 24-hour availability every day of the year; 2-1-1 is always there for you by phone, by clicking on [www.vermont211.org](http://www.vermont211.org), and now 2-1-1 has a mobile app, so you can get help on the go. Find it in the Apple and Samsung store!
- 2-1-1 is an easy way to find or give help in your community.
- Vermonter's can also reach 2-1-1 by texting their zip code to 898211

### Be Aware, Be Prepared!

Repeatedly, Vermont 2-1-1 has demonstrated its value during times of crisis. Our staff works closely with government officials, voluntary organizations throughout the state, and 2-1-1 centers in other areas. In times of disaster, Vermont 2-1-1 plays a critical role in bringing information to the people most affected by the events and relaying the needs of callers back to the government officials and the first responders. Using Vermont 2-1-1 as a network communication system can support schools in getting vital information to the parents and public. 2-1-1 assists communities with any kind of incidents and *should be included in every Vermont school safety plan.*

Schools can contact 2-1-1 by phone, fax or email to inform them of the incident and give them information for parents and the public as to what level the incident is, if there is a lockdown (secure the building), where students are being evacuated, etc.

Further information can be obtained by contacting:

MaryEllen Mendl  
Executive Director, Vermont 211  
[maryellen@unitedwaysvt.org](mailto:maryellen@unitedwaysvt.org), 802-861-0146

Or by contacting the  
Vermont School Crisis Planning Team  
VT Emergency Management, 800-347-0488

