

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents and Principals

FROM: Daniel M. French, Ed.D., Secretary, Agency of Education 

Michael Schirling, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety 

SUBJECT: National Preparedness Month

DATE: September 23, 2019

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September is National Preparedness Month. In keeping with this year's motto of *Prepared, Not Scared*, we want to remind school leadership teams of the importance of continuing to enhance your school's emergency preparedness plans, policies and procedures. The [Vermont School Safety Center's website](#) continues to provide school crisis planning, training and exercise resources that we are confident will assist you with your current and future school safety initiatives. We would also like to remind you of some on-going school safety initiatives and additional resources you may find helpful in your future work.

1. The Vermont Department of Public Safety has reopened the Request for Proposals (RFP) for School Safety and Security Grants. The extended deadline for applications is 3 p.m. on **Friday, September 27, 2019**. Submit applications to [DPS.SchoolSafety@vermont.gov](mailto:DPS.SchoolSafety@vermont.gov).

These funds are intended to help Vermont Supervisory Unions, School Districts and Independent Schools purchase enhancements to existing security systems or school infrastructure or new school security systems or technology that will enhance school safety.

Grants of up to \$25,000 per school may be awarded. All grants require a 25% match of funds. Examples of eligible projects/improvements/equipment include interior locking mechanisms, exterior locking mechanisms, window shading, public announcement and notification systems, access control systems, and exterior lighting.

2. Please follow [Rob Evans, VT School Safety Liaison Officer on Twitter](#) for school safety tips, future planning initiatives and emerging trends in school safety and security.
3. "What if Wednesdays" – These school safety training exercises are made available through the Agency of Education's [Weekly Field Memo](#) and are designed for Superintendents, Principals and School Crisis Planning Team Members to facilitate a conversation about your schools' emergency preparedness plans, policies and procedures. An [archive of these training opportunities](#) can be found on the [school safety website](#).

4. On August 12, 2019 we sent out a document titled [“School Safety Reminders for the Coming Academic Year”](#) that provided a suggested list of school safety material that should be reviewed with all your staff. Please consider utilizing this document to guide future school safety conversations with your faculty and staff.
5. Reinforce the importance of the state’s [“If You See Something, Say Something”](#) campaign.
6. Having a ***Behavioral Threat Assessment Team*** promotes communication and identification of **risk** factors between school staff, faculty, and students, so that this team can be notified of a student/faculty/staff member who may be at **risk** of committing violence before it occurs. We strongly encourage all schools to become familiar with the threat assessment guidance provided in the [Vermont School Crisis Guide](#).
7. Since 2015, the Vermont Agency of Education and Department of Public Safety have been encouraging schools to explore different “options-based response methodologies” that move beyond the traditional “lockdown” approaches to a violent intruder. Examples of these methodologies include Run/Hide/Fight, A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate), and C.R.A.S.E. (Civilian Response to an Active Shooter Event). Though school shootings account for less than 1% of the annual homicides among school-aged youth, it is time for us to engage in the conversations about how to expand our schools’ existing emergency response plans in this area. Starting in January of 2020, we are pleased to announce that as a part of our on-going school safety planning, training and exercising initiative, options-based response training will be delivered to sixty locations across the state and we are hopeful that members of your staff will be able to attend one of these training sessions.

Should you need any additional school safety planning, training or exercise assistance, or are in need of assistance when managing an on-going school safety incident, we encourage you to contact our School Safety Liaison Officer, Rob Evans at [revans@margolishealy.com](mailto:revans@margolishealy.com) (802) 839-0448.