

Vermont School Safety Center Newsletter

January 2018

Volume 2, Issue 1

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Vermont School Safety Center

The Vermont School Safety Center, in partnership with the Vermont School Crisis Planning Team, is pleased to bring you the latest edition of the Vermont School Safety Center's Newsletter.

Check out our website for all your school safety planning, training and exercise needs at <http://schoolsafety.vermont.gov>

2017 Governor's School Safety Conference

We were extremely pleased with the success of this year's conference. Governor Scott, Secretary Holcombe (AOE) and Commissioner Anderson (DPS) kicked off the conference with some opening comments about their continued commitment to Vermont's important school safety initiatives.

In our desire to take a holistic approach to school emergency preparedness, this year's keynote speaker, Dr. Joelle Van Lent, focused on how to maintain personal and organizational resiliency after a critical incident. Knowing that after a critical incident or tragedy we are often scrambling to restore normalcy to our school environments, Dr. Van Lent discussed the skills and resources needed to promote resilience for students, families, staff and other community members after a small or large scale incident or tragedy.

During the afternoon, five different breakout sessions were offered for conference attendees

that included: New and Emerging Trends in Security Technology, How to Conduct an Effective School Safety Exercise, Lessons Learned from South Burlington and Essex High Schools critical incidents, Tactical Emergency Medicine and Crisis Communication. All conference handouts and resource materials are located at the [Vermont School Safety Center website here.](#)



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



@VTED_SafeSchool



Vermont Agency of
Education
in Partnership with
the Vermont
Department of Public
Safety

Governor Scott Signs School Safety Proclamation

On September 1st, 2017, in the Ceremonial Office at the State House, Governor Phil Scott signed a proclamation announcing September as School Safety Month. The Governor was joined by Secretary Holcombe (AOE), Deputy Commissioner Herrick (DPS) and other school safety partners. The collective message was that the start of the school year is an ideal time for school crisis planning teams, local emergency management directors and emergency first responders to review and revise school crisis plans, and collaborate on future training or exercise opportunities that focus on testing and evaluating existing evacuation routes, evacuation sites, family reunification locations and other emergency response actions. [See the full Proclamation here.](#)

School Safety Planning & Training

Rob Evans (Vermont's School Safety Liaison Officer) and Emily Harris (Vermont Emergency Management) are happy to report that they have visited with every Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) in Vermont to brief them on the status of the state's school crisis planning initiatives and to inform them of the resources available through the Vermont School Safety Center. In addition, Emily and Rob are now offering school crisis planning assistance to Supervisory Unions and Districts to assist them with the development and implementation of regionally-based school emergency operations plans.

We continue to hear positive feedback from individuals across the state about how helpful they have found the "What-if Wednesdays" and "Facilitated Dialogues". Both of these training resources are easy to use, take only a few minutes to complete and can be utilized by school leadership teams to enhance their planning efforts. See the [Vermont School Safety Center Website](#) for more details.

In the summer of 2018, we will continue to offer the following courses:

- *Incident Command System Overview for Executive Leaders / Senior Officials* – This training familiarizes school officials with the language and organizational framework used by first responders when responding to a critical incident.
- *Crisis Communication* – This training provides school officials with the knowledge, skills and abilities to effectively manage the public information process when responding to a school based critical incident.

If you're in crisis, the Vermont Crisis Text Line provides FREE crisis support 24/7 by text. Text "VT" to 741741 to be connected to a trained crisis counselor.



VERMONT AGENCY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

**In Crisis?
Text VT to 741741**

CRISIS TEXT LINE |

Free, 24/7, Confidential

Members of the Vermont School Crisis Planning team have been busy presenting at the state’s Emergency Medical Services, Emergency Preparedness, Facility Director’s, Information Technology Manager’s and School Counselor’s conferences. These have been great venues to reinforce our collaborative and all-hazards approach to school emergency preparedness.

Immediately following last year’s school threat incidents at South Burlington and Essex High Schools, members from the Vermont School Crisis Planning Team, school leaders from both schools and members from the Vermont Intelligence Center hosted a series of conference calls with Principals and Superintendents across the state to share lessons learned from the responses to each of these incidents. The Vermont School Safety Center will continue to take advantage of these after action opportunities in an effort to adapt our crisis response protocols to meet the ever changing threat environment.



New Resource Available

The document “School Recovery After a Critical Incident or Tragedy” was developed in collaboration with mental health professionals and is designed to provide best practices and resources to be used after a small or large-scale incident or tragedy impacting your school community. Knowing the effects of trauma associated with being exposed to a critical incident can have long term impacts, these documents can be used as a guide to inform and direct your mental health response to these types of incidents. See the [Vermont School Safety Center Website](#) for more details.

A Word from Commissioner Tom Anderson

Governor Phil Scott kicked off the 2017/2018 academic year by proclaiming September as Vermont’s School Safety Month. The hazards and vulnerabilities that our schools face each and every day requires that we continually test and evaluate our emergency operations plans, policies and procedures. I am very excited about Vermont’s collaborative approach to school emergency preparedness and I encourage all of our school safety partners to utilize the planning, training and exercise resources found on Vermont’s School Safety Center website. Please continue to utilize the resources being provided by Rob Evans (Vermont’s School Safety Liaison Officer) as you continue to enhance your school’s emergency preparedness.

