



TESTIMONY

Testimony To: Senate Committee on Education

Submitted By: Dee Barbic, Director of Violence Prevention

Subject: School Safety Update

Date: January 24, 2023

Thank you, Senators, for the opportunity to meet with you and provide testimony on school safety in Vermont. As you are aware from the testimony provided by Secretary French previously, there are several school safety initiatives that are part of a larger policy package that was developed by the Violence Prevention Task Force. Those include that Supervisory Unions / School District have a policy addressing access control and visitor management, adopt an all-hazards approach Emergency Operations Plan, have a policy addressing Options-Based Response Drills and that School Districts and Supervisory Unions maintain a Behavioral Threat Assessment Team.

School Safety

- In 2018 the legislature passed Act 190 which established the School Safety Advisory Group (SSAG). Act 190 directed the SSAG “to develop statewide guidelines and best practices concerning school safety and the prevention of school shootings”. In the 2018 report from the SSAG, a number of recommendations were made for policy changes. The initiatives that are being proposed were adapted from that report.
- **Changes:**
 - Require Options-Based Response Drills to be conducted and a report of those drills to be provided to the Agency of Education (Effective August 1, 2023)
 - Require Supervisory Union/School District to adopt an All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan at least as comprehensive as Vermont School Safety Center template. (Effective July 1, 2024)
 - Require schools to employ access control and visitor management (Effective August 1, 2023)
 - Require each Supervisory Union/School District to maintain a Behavioral Threat Assessment Team and report data on Behavioral Threat Assessments to the Agency of Education (Effective July 1, 2024)

Additionally, Sunni Eriksen and I can provide an update on school safety and the integral role of the Vermont School Safety Center.

Thank you again for this opportunity and we look forward to meeting with you.

