

A perspective view of a school hallway. On the left and right sides are rows of orange lockers. The floor is made of light-colored, reflective tiles. The ceiling has a grid pattern with recessed lighting. In the background, there is a whiteboard with the word 'INFORMATION' written above it. There are several doors along the walls, some with blue signs above them that say 'CLASSROOM'. A clock is mounted on the wall on the left side.

Vermont School Safety

Senate Committee on Education

January 24th, 2023

Current Safety Programs

- School Safety Center
- Legislative Work
- REMS Emergency Operations Plan Development Training
- Options Based Response
- Behavioral Threat Assessment Training



Vermont School Safety Center

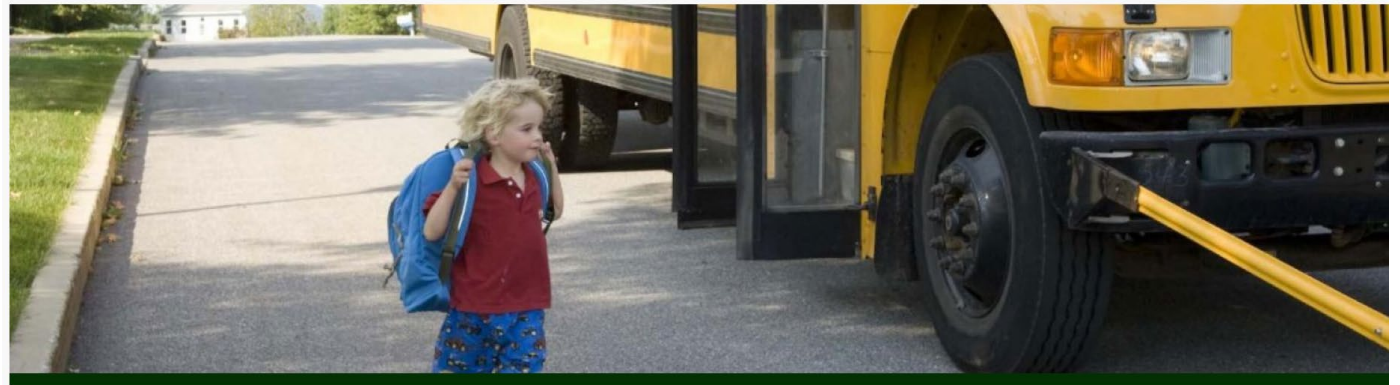
- Focuses on the provision of assistance in the areas of planning, training, exercise, and direct technical support (onsite safety assessments, plan reviews, and audits).
- Designed to enhance the level of emergency preparedness in Vermont's K-12 schools, utilizing state, regional, and federal school safety partners to identify and share best practices and emerging trends. Support is also available to higher education institutions.
- Provides best practices and recommendations to schools on strategies and techniques to keep schools safe and acts as a central point of contact for school safety resources, trainings, exercises, safety templates, practices, and procedures.

An Official Vermont Government Website



Department of Public Safety

Vermont School Safety Center



Vermont School Safety Center Services

- Planning, Training, and Exercise Assistance
- Guidance and Resources:
 - School Crisis Planning Guide
 - School Safety Drill Guidance
 - School Safety Emergency Planning Guide for Parents & Guardians
 - Emergency Response Planning Guide with Response Protocols
 - Crisis Communication
- Technical Assistance provided to schools and supervisory unions:
 - EOP Development
 - Training and Exercise delivery
 - Crisis communication
 - Critical incident response
 - Critical incident review

Vermont School Crisis Planning Team

- Vermont School Crisis Planning Team works with its designated membership to provide policy, best practice and operational guidance and recommendations to the Vermont School Safety Center to enhance the level of emergency preparedness in Vermont's K-12 Schools.
- Members: Vermont Dept. of Mental Health, Vermont Superintendents Association , Vermont Principals Association, School Nurses Association, School Counselors Association, VSP, Homeland Security Unit, VSBIT, National Educators Association, DAIL, DMV, DCF, and others.

Legislative Work with AOE

- Drafting language on Quality Standards and Continuum of Improvement metrics for school facilities
- Focus on four areas:
 - Access Control
 - Emergency Operations Plans
 - Drills
 - Behavioral Threat Assessment



Readiness in Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Training Opportunity



- Vermont requested and was awarded the opportunity for the Federal REMS program to be delivered in April 2023
- Provide Emergency Operations Plan development for education stakeholders
- Currently working to develop venue
- Furthers preparedness measures for schools

Options Based Response Training

- Historically, schools have used "lockdowns" as the primary means of securing a building. While lockdowns are useful in some situations, it should not be the only option available for response. By limiting access into, out of and within the school, students and staff are stationary with limited opportunity to escape, should there be a violent intruder.
- Run, Hide, Fight is a federally supported intruder response plan where staff and students assess the situation and respond on which option is best. As the name implies, if a violent intruder comes into a school, the response could be to run to a safe place, or hide in a locked area, or attempt to stop the intruder as a last resort with items found in the school.
- VSSC helped to deliver ten of these trauma-informed trainings statewide throughout August 2022, and additional trainings at the Vermont Emergency Preparedness Conference and for several school districts.

Behavioral Threat Assessment Program

- Grant award of \$357,480, provided through the Department of Justice's STOP School Violence Threat Assessment and Technology Program
- Partnered with national thought leader group to provide trainings to over 600 education stakeholders
- Goal: Expansion of statewide capacity to conduct Behavioral Threat Assessments in Vermont schools and build an internal subject matter expert capacity
- Train the Trainer Session will be on January 25, 2023
- Additional trainings will be announced with funding from Vermont Department of Homeland Security Grant

Current challenges facing Vermont Schools



- Student behaviors
- Lack of mental health resources
- Planning challenges
- Funding
- Collaborations with local first responders
- Options based response initiatives