



# North Carolina Department of Public Safety

*Prevent. Protect. Prepare.*

Roy Cooper, Governor

Erik A. Hooks, Secretary

May 15, 2019

Dear Sheriffs, Chiefs of Police, School Superintendents, Charter & Independent School Officials:

Just over one year ago, I reached out to you in the aftermath of the Parkland, Florida school shooting to identify steps we could collectively take to help prevent a similar tragedy from occurring here in North Carolina. I now find myself reaching out to you again; however, this time tragedy has hit home.

The tragic April 30, 2019 shooting at UNC-Charlotte reminds us that we must remain vigilant against these senseless acts of mass violence which have become all too common in schools throughout our country. Over the past twenty-five years--since the establishment of the Governor's Task Force on School Violence in the early 1990s--local, state, and federal partners have made great strides in better preparing for, preventing, and responding to school shootings. At UNC-Charlotte, local and state first responders implemented their training and quickly responded to the reports of shots fired.

It is critical we continue to work together to identify potential threats, prevent acts of mass violence, and provide a coordinated response should a school shooting occur. Below are some of the recent initiatives the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, in collaboration with partner agencies and community stakeholders, has taken to enhance the safety of North Carolina's schools:

**Governor's Crime Commission Special Committee on School Shooting Report** – The Special Committee on School Shootings (SCSS) was established, at my direction, to identify resources and develop recommendations to strengthen school safety. Announced on April 19, 2018, the committee included law enforcement officials, juvenile justice experts, court officials, educators and other experts. The [SCSS Report](#) identified thirty-three recommendations in the areas of training, physical security, threat intelligence and assessment, school-law enforcement partnerships, and possible statutory changes.

**State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) Behavioral Threat Analysis (BeTA) Unit** – The SBI's BeTA Unit was established to assist North Carolina law enforcement in the evaluation of persons of concern through an evidence-based threat assessment process. This process is intended to determine if a person of concern is exhibiting behaviors consistent with a pathway to violence and identify appropriate management and mitigation strategies for the individual. The BeTA Unit provides trained personnel to work in conjunction with a requesting law enforcement

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agency throughout the assessment process. For more information, please contact State Bureau of Investigation Assistant Special Agent in Charge Elliot Smith at [edsmith@ncsbi.gov](mailto:edsmith@ncsbi.gov).

**School Risk and Response Management System** – Our Emergency Management team continues to work on development and implementation of the School Risk and Response Management System (SRRMS), which provides resources for law enforcement, emergency responders, and educators. Components of SRRMS include integration of digital floor plans, generation of school risk management plans, access to facility schematics and real-time event information for law enforcement and emergency responders, and plans for future integration of digital panic alarm software. For assistance, please contact North Carolina Emergency Management Assistant Director for Risk Management Chris Koltyk at [chris.koltyk@ncdps.gov](mailto:chris.koltyk@ncdps.gov).

**Collaboration Between State and Local Law Enforcement** – Our state law enforcement agencies endeavor to support local law enforcement in their actions as first responders. This collaboration includes participation in emergency drills, increased frequency of school safety checks, and rapid deployment and active shooter training. In collaboration with the North Carolina Justice Academy, the DPS Samarcand Training Academy will begin hosting Justice Academy training courses, to include School Resource Officer training, in June 2019. With recent enhancement of the Samarcand Training Academy’s use of force training simulator capabilities, School Resource Officers and law enforcement can use localized facility footage to create customized training scenarios to better prepare for an active shooter scenario. This preparation and training is critical to ensuring a rapid, coordinated, and effective response when an incident occurs.

**Collaboration Between Education and Public Safety** – Our Juvenile Justice section is actively engaged with education agency partners, working with school staff and local law enforcement to properly place juveniles who make threats against schools and get them the right services at the right time. Juvenile Justice is also working in collaboration with the North Carolina Center for Safer Schools to develop school threat assessment team policies, and is finalizing a juvenile services resource guide that will allow schools and law enforcement to directly refer youth who are in need of services to the appropriate programs.

I commend the swift action of the first responders in Charlotte whose response saved many lives. I am grateful for the work you do to keep our communities and our schools safe. As leaders in public safety and education, it is imperative we join with community partners to find solutions for preventing school violence. Only through our continued and collective efforts, will we keep our schools and our students safe.

Sincerely,



Erik A. Hooks  
Secretary