



RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT
Chief Kevin Lynch
Bristol Police Dept.

January 4, 2024

VICE PRESIDENT
Colonel Bradford
Connor
Warwick Police Dept.

Representative Jennifer Boylan, Chair Special Legislative Study
Commission to Evaluate and provide Recommendations on Mandated
Safety Protocols for Rhode Island Schools

SERGEANT AT ARMS
Colonel Thomas
Oates
Woonsocket Police
Dept.

RE: Recommendations

SECRETARY
Colonel Michael
Winquist
Cranston Police Dept.

Everyone agrees we need to keep our states' children and staff as safe as possible at school. We advocate that established fire drills (see RIGL §16-21-4) and updated crisis response drills are essential to address our country's escalation of violence in our schools.

TREASURER
Chief Matthew
Moynihan
South Kingstown
Police Dept.

“Public safety, and especially the safety of our children, must be our highest priority,” said Governor McKee. “The best way for us to ensure that what happened in Uvalde cannot happen here is to make serious investments in repairs and security upgrades. Rhode Island families deserve that peace of mind.”

IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT
Chief Sean Corrigan
Narragansett Police
Dept.

Governor McKee, RIDE, and Law Enforcement Partner with Local Education Agencies for Immediate Review of School Safety – Published on Tuesday, May 31, 2022

EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR
Chief Sidney Wordell,
Ret.

The Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association makes the following proposals to the Special Legislative Study Commission to Evaluate and provide Recommendations on Mandated Safety Protocols for Rhode Island Schools to evaluate:

Notably, teachers and all staff must learn the procedures and expectations of crisis response drills/active threat drills (“crisis response drills”) to achieve desired school safety outcomes. There must be a myriad of training and a strong sense of urgency to achieve and limit student trauma.

- Training for all Staff should encompass all school personnel to include administration and support staff not just teachers.

- There needs to be focus on hardening school facilities to include security technology advancements. These security plans must be evaluated for each individual school **annually** and updated every three (3) years. Every leader of a local education agency in the state should conduct walkthroughs of the school facilities in their district and complete [a comprehensive survey of potential emergency hazards](#), including reviews of doors and windows, car access, landscape features, lighting, alarm and camera systems, communications systems and active shooter detection systems with a security consultant or their local police department/state police or both. These walkthroughs and corresponding reports must be shared with RIDE and local officials/boards to determine available monies and become a legislative requirement to ensure compliance.
- *In 2022, Governor McKee made each school district eligible for up to \$500,000 in emergency approval for school safety repairs and upgrades via Rhode Island Department of Education (“RIDE”) with approval through the School Building Authority. Additionally, funding should be provided to local law enforcement agencies to **receive** and **administer annual** training with school staff through this funding source.*
- Each local and regional board of education shall provide for fire drills and compliance reporting as enumerated in current law to be held in the schools of such district during the school year, provided at least one of the fire drills is held not later than thirty days after the first day of each school year and **at least once each month** thereafter, except as provided in subsection (b) of this bullet.
 - (b) Each local and regional board shall substitute a crisis response/active threat drill (“crisis response drill”) for a fire drill once every three months and RIDE shall develop an **age-appropriate format** with the ability of an **opt-out program** of such crisis with input from the Rhode Island State Police (“RISP”) and Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association (“RIPCA”). Additionally, each board shall provide for two crisis response drills to be held in the schools of such district during the school year, provided at least one of the crisis response drills is a **staff-only drill** that is held not later than thirty days after (or before the first day of school) the first day of each school year. Each such crisis response drill shall be conducted in accordance with the crisis response protocols developed for the school pursuant to RIDE protocols in consultation with the appropriate local law enforcement agency/state police agency. The Superintendent and Principal or his/her designee of each district shall supervise and may participate in any such crisis response drill. *After each drill the Superintendent or Principal or their designee shall complete an evaluation form designed by RIDE with consultation with the RISP and RIPCA to include and after-action brief with all staff by the local law enforcement agency or state police conducting the drill.*
 - Such protocols established by RIDE shall be trauma-informed, created with input from the administrators of each such school, and, include, but not be limited to, a requirement that the staff-only crisis response drill shall be designed and conducted in a manner that prepares administrators, educators and other staff on their roles and responsibilities during an actual emergency, including a walk-through of such drill, and how to conduct a whole-school crisis response drill that includes students in accordance with such protocols, and a representative of the local law enforcement agency or state police may supervise and participate in the

staff-only crisis response drill, and notice may be provided to the parents and guardians of students, educators, local law enforcement and other first responders of when the whole-school crisis response drill will be held, at any point during the three days prior to such drill, parents and guardians be given the option to opt their student out of participating in the whole-school crisis response drill, accommodations are provided to students who have past-trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety or other relevant disabilities, an age-appropriate explanation be delivered to the students of the school and that such explanation includes a description of what the whole-school crisis response drill is and how the school security and safety plan will be implemented during an actual emergency, information be provided to students relating to the availability of mental health counseling for students, a prohibition against the simulation of an active shooter in the school and crouching and huddling by students during the whole-school crisis response drill, and a representative of the local law enforcement or state police agency may supervise and participate in the whole-school crisis response drill.

- RIDE shall develop an opt-out program curriculum that provides an ancillary learning method for students to learn the valuable data of safety drills both fire and crisis response that accommodates all needs of our student populace.

Lastly, I would suggest that RIDE develop a program similar to Florida (*Future Educators Response to Active Shooters – FERTAS*) that requires future educators (teachers) as part of their certification to be trained in school crisis response. The program educates college students that are on a career path to be educators on what to expect and what is expected of them in a crisis or an emergency.

Yours in Safety,

Kevin M. Lynch

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