

May 31, 2019

Dear Superintendents:

On February 13, 2019, Governor DeSantis signed [Executive Order 19-45](#), entitled “Ensuring the Safety of Our Children in Our Schools,” which, in part, requires the Florida Department of Education to develop best practices for school hardening and harm mitigation by July 1, 2019. This letter serves to provide information on recommendations in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission [Initial Report](#) that can be implemented immediately.

Active Assailant Response Procedure – Recommendation 3.1(d)

It is imperative that schools immediately implement harm mitigation strategies. Harm mitigation strategies allow school personnel to identify a threat on campus, communicate the threat to others, and for others to appropriately react to the threat. To accomplish this each district and each school should have a written active assailant response procedure. The district procedure should contain broad, universal protocols and the school-specific procedure should contain school-specific protocols. The procedure must provide guidance to staff on the circumstances under which they may initiate an on-campus active assailant response. The written procedure should be physically distributed to every employee, not only electronically distributed. The written procedure should also clearly establish that any and all school personnel may directly activate the school’s active assailant response procedures without consultation with anyone else.

Ingress/Egress – Recommendation 3.1(b)

For fenced campuses, all gates should remain closed and locked unless opened for active ingress or egress. All doors to buildings should remain closed and locked unless opened for active ingress and egress. When opened for ingress and egress, every gate and building door should be staffed and never left open and unattended.

Communication Systems – Recommendation 3.1(e)

Each school should have an adequate communication system through which any staff member may activate the school’s active assailant response procedures. Upon activation, the system should immediately notify all persons present on campus to react to the threat causing the notification. Schools that do not have the current infrastructure to support a campus-wide communication system should consider a temporary system, such as two-way radios (walkie-talkies).

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Classroom Protocols – Recommendation 3.1(f)

All schools should have procedures in place that will provide the safest environment for students and staff upon activation of the school's active assailant response protocols. Each classroom door should remain closed and locked, there should be some type of opaque covering of classroom door windows, and every classroom should have a clearly identified and accessible "hard corner" or safe area. Teachers should be required to keep the hard corner free of immovable objects and set up their classrooms so as to not impede access to the hard corner or safest areas in the classroom.

We look forward to supporting your ongoing efforts to improve the safety and security of Florida's students and educators.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rich Corcoran", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Richard Corcoran
Commissioner

RC/ak

cc: School District School Safety Specialists
Charter Schools