

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Principals and School Crisis Planning Team Members  
FROM: Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary of Education  
Keith Flynn, Commissioner of Public Safety  
COPY: Rob Evans, School Security Liaison  
SUBJECT: School Safety Update - Moving Beyond the Traditional School Lockdown  
DATE: December 14, 2015

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As we continue to witness the tragic school shootings that grip our national news headlines, Vermont has been exploring different methodologies that schools across the country are adopting to enhance their crisis response capabilities. Though school shootings account for less than 1% of the annual homicides among school age youth, it is time for us to engage in the conversation about how to expand our schools' existing emergency response plans.

The Vermont School Crisis Planning Team and Rob Evans, our School Security Liaison Officer, have been researching a variety of active shooter response models that are currently being used in schools across the country. The most widely used models include:

- A.L.I.C.E. (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate)
- The Department of Homeland Security's (Run, Hide, Fight)
- CRASE (Civilian Response to an Active Shooter Event) built on the Avoid, Deny and Defend strategy developed by ALERRT (Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training).

In reviewing the different response methods and researching the data related to past active shooter incidents, we have learned that no one size response plan fits each active shooter incident and that teachers, administrators and students need to have an "options based response approach" that is available to them, based on the specific set of circumstances they are dealing with at the time of the incident. While the traditional school "lockdown" may work in certain situations, those dealing with these events may need to consider immediate evacuation or related life-saving actions.

We highly recommend that prior to your local school district adopting any new active shooter response protocol that local school leaders meet with first response

organizations, local emergency planners and all those who play a part in your school crisis planning to discuss this new initiative.

In an effort to help you facilitate these discussions, we will soon be conducting a *free webinar* hosted by school safety experts, law enforcement officials and school administrators that will provide you with essential information to help guide you as you consider these potential changes to your response procedures. Additional resources, including video tutorials for a variety of school hazards, are available through our website: <http://education.vermont.gov/safe-schools> .

If you have any immediate concerns or questions, please free to contact our school security liaison officer, Mr. Rob Evans at [revans@margolishealy.com](mailto:revans@margolishealy.com)