



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

June 3, 2022

Dear School Leaders, Emergency Management Directors, Police Chiefs, and Fire Chiefs:

As we attempt to process the unspeakable tragedy that unfolded in Uvalde, Texas, our hearts go out to the families and staff of Robb Elementary School, the First Responders, the community of Uvalde, and the people of Texas.

The tragic deaths of 19 students and two teachers are a stark reminder of the importance of protecting our children and school staff – if we cannot keep them safe at school, nothing else matters.

In 2018, New Hampshire created the School Safety Preparedness Task Force after the heartbreaking shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

This Task Force, composed of stakeholders from across our state, worked more than 1,000 hours before publishing a 76-page [report](#) with 59 recommendations to assist in prioritizing safety preparedness initiatives. Since issuing the report, Task Force members and others from local and state government have worked tirelessly to provide resources and implement the recommendations.

In addition to the Task Force, the Public School Infrastructure Fund (PSIF) was established in 2017 under RSA 198:15-y. As a result, roughly \$30 million has been delivered to over 426 public schools for safety improvements across the state – and a check was sent to every public school that applied to improve security at their schools.

The PSIF has been incredibly successful at getting grants out quickly and we will be adding millions more to an additional round of funding this month.

Just a few months ago, I reached out to school leaders highlighting some of the Task Force's recommendations meant to assist with your school safety preparedness efforts. In the wake of last week's tragic events, I am again recommending the following steps be reviewed and if not in place, implemented immediately to enhance overall school safety and security.

- **Policies and procedures:** Review systems put in place to make the school safer based on a three-pronged approach that includes: surveillance, access control, and emergency alerting. Lock all doors, including classroom doors, when instruction is occurring and only utilize one main entrance to all school buildings. If a school has multiple entrances, they should all meet the same security capabilities, which includes a locked and secure vestibule. Review and update your School Emergency Operations Plan. Schedule a school security assessment through the New Hampshire Department of Safety's Division of Homeland Security and

Emergency Management (HSEM) School Readiness Program by emailing schoolreadiness@dos.nh.gov.

- **Form relationships with your community's first responders:** School safety is a community effort. Review your surveillance, access control, and emergency alerting procedures with local first responders. Invite them to participate in trainings and drills. Schedule quarterly meetings with them to tour your building and address concerns.
- **Internal communications:** Ensure that everyone in your school, including substitute teachers, knows how to dial 911 from an internal phone and understands cellphone coverage throughout the school. Instruct everyone that they also can [text to 911](#) if calling is not an option. Include ways to alert those who may speak English as a second language and the deaf and hard of hearing community.
- **External communications:** Make sure parents understand how and when information will be released during an emergency. Review reunification plans with first responders, staff, students, and family members. More information on how to create a reunification plan can be found on the [New Hampshire Homeland Security and Emergency Management Resource Center](#).
- **Social and emotional wellness:** Become a partner with programs such as the Choose Love Movement. Review services provided by the New Hampshire Department of Education's Office of Social and Emotional Wellness, including its [Wellness Toolkit for Educators](#) or [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) training.
- **Trainings, drills, and exercises:** Engage in online trainings and webinars; a list can be found on the [New Hampshire School Safety Resource Center](#). Schedule a tabletop exercise through the NH HSEM School Readiness Program by completing the [form](#) on the HSEM Resource Center.
- **School Safety Resource Center:** The [New Hampshire School Safety Resource Center](#) was created as one of the 59 Task Force recommendations. Information on the site includes resources for mental health, planning, training and exercise, communications, facility upgrades, and links to other agencies.

Thank you for everything you do on a daily basis to keep our children safe. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the HSEM School Readiness Program via schoolreadiness@dos.nh.gov or 603-271-2231 as you work through your school's emergency operations plan and communication protocols.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu
Governor



Robert Quinn
Commissioner, Department of Safety



Frank Edelblut
Commissioner, Department of Education