

Governor's Taskforce on School and Campus Safety

Public Safety Workgroup

~ 3/29/13 ~

CONSTITUENT FEEDBACK

(Paraphrased or excerpts only; full text available upon request)

1. *(Abrams, John, Vendor, Alisinc)* **ADVOCATING HARDWARE LLC IN PROMOTING SOFT AND LIGHTWEIGHT BALLISTIC SHIELDING TO INCLUDE BALLISTIC WHITEBOARDS.**
2. *(Angel Fund via Chad Cole)* **RISK and THREAT ASSESSMENT, FUNDING, THREAT;**
Suggestions are below:
 - a. *Review a Mental Health study from Dr. Richard Bonnie of UVa (located at http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/news/2011_fall/bonnie_study.htm) which recommends providing risk assessment, screening, and referrals to students at Community Colleges;*
 - b. *Increased funding and research for mental health;*
 - c. *DOE and HHR should work together to create brochures, programs, and grants necessary to educate families about social anxiety, alienation, drug/alcohol addition, depression, etc;*
 - d. *Implement the Caring 4 People Program (www.ac4p.org), which creates an atmosphere of "actively caring" to reduce bullying;*
 - e. *explore the impact of loss on siblings, grandparents, and first responders; require private colleges and high schools to have threat assessment teams.*
3. *(Angel Fund, McNabb, Luann, VIA WEB).* I am President of the Board of Directors of Angel Fund (www.angelfundva.org), a non-profit organization created by the Samaha family in memory of their daughter, Reema, who was killed in the French classroom at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007. Reflecting Reema's compassion and tolerance towards others...Angel is attempting to tackle these issues through advocacy, education and implementation of programs. Legislation: Dr. Richard Bonnie of the University of Virginia and his colleagues conducted an extensive study of the mental health of Virginia college students in the wake of the Virginia Tech tragedy. Their findings and recommendations can and should be implemented. Angel is working with legislators in order to do this during the 2013 session. Dr. Bonnie's survey, report and recommendations can be found here: http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/news/2011_fall/bonnie_study.htm Specifically, the number #1 recommendation was to **PROVIDE RISK ASSESSMENT, SCREENING AND REFERRALS TO STUDENTS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES** because most community colleges do not have the resources to provide mental health services. Community colleges are not immune to mental health issues and should be part of any comprehensive plan. Other recommendations are for colleges to collaborate with community service boards and psychiatric hospitals to monitor students who are hospitalized and/or committed so colleges are aware and keep an eye on their students. However, the recommendations should not be limited to just college students....
4. *(Baileys' Elem School PTA, Via Letter to Secretary Decker)* **OPPOSE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD ALLOW ARMING OF TEACHERS.**

5. (Boyd, Stephanie **VIA WEB**). **CONCERNED WITH SAFETY OF LOCAL SCHOOL**. *Always concerned, but given its unique location, and after the Sandy Hook incident, we grew even more concerned with the access random people have to this elementary school. Concerns include location, pick up procedures, schools not being locked during the day, park and ride. News article provided <http://www.roanoke.com/news/roanoke/wb/320276>*
6. (Chirch, Shirley **VIA WEB**). Gloucester Public Schools. **BAN THE SALE OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND MAGAZINES HOLDING MORE THAN 6 ROUNDS**. *These are weapons of mass destruction aimed at killing large numbers of people. These weapons have no place in our society. I have no intention of removing the right to bear arms, a right guaranteed by the Constitution. However, these are not "arms" intended to protect people rather they are intend to take out large numbers of them. Background checks and a mandatory wait period before purchasing a gun anywhere, anytime, no exceptions. These are ways we can start to make our society safer.*
7. (Constituent comments Via Chad Cole, through Governor's Office). **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVED SCHOOL SAFETY**. See below:
 - a. Allow teachers to use defensive pepper spray
 - b. Ban the sale of assault weapons and magazines holding more than 6 rounds
 - c. School divisions should employ their own law enforcement agencies
 - d. Individuals with legal weapons should be allowed to volunteer to guard schools
8. (Copenhaver, Larry **VIA WEB**). I would like to urge you to **CONSIDER ALLOWING PROPERLY TRAINED TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS TO BE ARMED IN OUR SCHOOLS**. ... *As a Virginia educator, I soon found myself and my classes participating in lockdown drills to help prepare for a horrific attack that hopefully would never happen. During these drills as I sat with my students, I could not help but wonder how best I could protect them. It became apparent to me that if a murderer burst into my classroom, the best that I could do would be to try to rush the perpetrator in an attempt to slow him down or serve as a human shield for my students. I hope that you will consider giving me and other educators the opportunity to effectively protect our children....I have a concealed carry permit as do a number of educators in my school. I am sure that you are looking at many possible solutions such as adding more resource officers for our schools and I certainly applaud your efforts....*
9. (CW Richmond and Bounce TV **VIA WEB**). **SCHOOL SAFETY PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**. *As a way to create public awareness the CW Richmond will be launching a campaign where students in public schools in the Greater Richmond Area will be writing letters to their local school safety officer thanking them for keeping their school safe. All letters will be hung in the main hallway of the schools where lots of students and parents pass - showcasing their awareness of how important and grateful they are for the local police authorities. Currently they are looking for sponsors to endorse this campaign and would be honored to have the Governor as the spokes person for this project.*
10. (Dalton, Steven **VIA WEB**). Currently, many school systems in the Commonwealth rely on the local law enforcement agency to provide sworn officers in the public schools. While this may prove satisfactory in many situations, I firmly believe Virginia should **EXAMINE THE PRACTICE OF SCHOOL DIVISIONS EMPLOYING THEIR OWN LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS**. *In the*

states of Florida, Texas, and California, the local school divisions maintain their own law enforcement agencies. Under Virginia law, private businesses and government agencies are permitted to maintain Special Conservators of the Peace. The Commonwealth should examine funding options and potential changes in the law that would permit, if not require, school divisions to maintain their own Special Conservators of the Peace.

11. **(Durig, Michael VIA WEB) SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVED SECURITY IN OUR SCHOOLS.** ... Our teacher ranks here in the Old Dominion are full of military veterans with experience, training, and the mindset to repel anything from a lone wolf to a small, well trained force that would consider a school "invasion". Properly equipped, these individuals would effectively defend our schools in these situations and deter any notion of invasions to all except the most foolhardy of people. An adjustment to the requirements for being an auxiliary sheriff or police officer could open the door for this service. Most sheriff or police departments require volunteer hours to keep this certification every month. If this requirement could be adjusted to reflect their service during the school year and allow those individuals to re-certify during the summer months during the summer break from school, the benefit could be cost effective use of manpower already in the schools and minimal expense in operational cost for a security force in every school. Their presence would also provide expert witness in any judicial proceedings. With 6-10 such officers in each school, this would be an effective use of resources to implement an effective security unit to be under the command of the School Resource Officer already in place at most of our schools.
12. **(Fici, Shaw, via DOE Luchau) HEARTFELT OPPOSITION TO THE IDEA OF TEACHERS CARRYING WEAPONS.** ... The theory that more weapons in our society will reduce the threat is preposterous. There are no facts to support that idea and it defies common sense. I urge you to consider sensible options for protecting our children. There are many viable options out there and during the coming months I believe more will emerge. Don't rush to judgment on this issue. Our schools should be about educating the leaders of tomorrow, not teaching them to rely on violence and weapons. I hope you consider all the viewpoints of your constituents and make recommendations or legislation that will reflect those views. It's time to change our behavior and teach our children about violence by doing the right thing. Confront the problem, don't contribute to more guns in Va. **NO GUNS IN SCHOOLS!**
13. **(Fiel, Patrick, Vendor Security Watch) SIX STEPS FOR SECURING SCHOOLS.** Writer is "an independent security consultant currently working with Security Identification Systems Corp. (SISCO), maker of the FAST-PASS visitor management system. Fiel has served as public safety advisor for a large security integrator; executive director of security for the Washington, D.C. Public School System; and is retired from the U.S. Army Military Police Corps". Feels that our schools can and need to do a better job in securing their campuses especially at elementary school level. Six steps are listed below:
 - a. Make security a top priority.
 - b. Look for ways to finance school security improvements.
 - c. Build strong relationships with local law enforcement.
 - d. Encourage parents to get involved.
 - e. Teach students and teachers to be proactive regarding their own safety.
 - f. Know who is on the campus at all times.
14. **(Friederich, Vendor, Outland Security) SCHOOL LAYOUT VULNERABILITY AND IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS.** Suggests model school design that includes security features in basic design.

15. (Green, NNPS) **ALLOW FLEXIBILITY:** *Allow local school divisions to adopt the safety practices that best suit those divisions. What might work in one locality may not be suitable for another. An example is armed staff. In some divisions, it might be appropriate to arm uniformed security officers. In others, it might be appropriate to allow a principal to carry a concealed weapon. Other divisions might only want SROs.*
16. (Hansen, Department of Fire Programs) **Recommending DHS ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS RESOURCE.** *DHS offers free courses, materials, and workshops to better prepare you to deal with an active shooter situation and to raise awareness of behaviors that represent pre-incident indicators and characteristics of active shooters.*
<http://www.dhs.gov/activeshooter>
17. (Heipp, Bill via DOE Luchau) **PLEASE CONSIDER BEFORE GUN LEGISLATION.** *Writer is in support of arming teachers. Article submitted is written by highly respected author and expert Larry Correia. It provides details every legislator and school board member should read before considering any gun legislation. It covers detail you have never seen in one place, and it debunks myths so charged by emotion following the Newtown disaster.*
[\(http://larrycorreia.wordpress.com/2012/12/20/an-opinion-on-gun-control/\)](http://larrycorreia.wordpress.com/2012/12/20/an-opinion-on-gun-control/)
18. (Howell, Roger **VIA WEB**). **The Task Force should CONSIDER ALLOWING TEACHERS TO USE DEFENSIVE PEPPER SPRAY.** *Many pepper spray options are available: small or large containers, long range, with lights, laser beams, stun guns, etc. Teachers should be certified and periodically trained to use pepper spray.*
19. (Jacobson, Claire **VIA WEB**). **REPLENISH SRO INCENTIVE GRANT FUND.**
20. (Jones, Hutson, Madison, Cook **VIA Delegate Marshall**). **STUDENT SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1557.**
21. (Mack, Michael **VIA WEB**). **I suggest THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH LEGAL WEAPONS BE ALLOWED TO VOLUNTEER TO GUARD SCHOOLS.** *Typically this would be retirees or individuals who are available and interested in volunteering. Certain protocols would have to be put in place to ensure the "volunteer guards" can safely handle a weapon and are mentally suitable for the task. Most veterans would be well qualified for this. This would allow our students to be protected and at the same time save the taxpayers money by not having to hire security guards. Could Deputize as well.*
22. (Mast, Liberty Counsel) **LETTER/DOCUMENT TO KEN CUCCINELLI re: Protection models** (previously provided to PS Workgroup)
23. (Millar, Fred, **VIA WEB**). **The Task Force SHOULD ENSURE THAT ALL SRO PROGRAMS IN VA PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE OPERATED UNDER A SET OF POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES THAT ARE CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT, AND BASED ON BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS AS SET OUT IN THE TWO EXCELLENT NATIONAL REPORTS ON SROS:**

- *First Do No Harm - Charles Hamilton Houston Institute policy brief*
<http://www.modelsforchange.net/publications/261>
- *Hard Lessons National and CT ACLU study 2008 racial justice Arrests*
http://www.aclu.org/pdfs/racialjustice/hardlessons_november2008.pdf

24. (Miller, Susan and Gary) **SUGGESTIONS FROM EDUCATOR'S PERSPECTIVES.** *Suggestions are below:*

A. Improving Support for Troubled Students

Expand the current identification, reporting, and intervention programs which are designed to help students who exhibit behaviors that may result in violence against others and help the families of these at-risk students.

B. Improving Campus and Building Security

1. *Implement staff and student electronic swipe identification card systems for access, attendance, and security tracking.*
2. *Install and monitor campus-wide security cameras in all schools.*
3. *Based on campus and building complexity, provide a sufficient number of trained, armed law enforcement personnel in every school.*
4. *Install metal detectors and a electronic swipe ID scanner at all student and public ingress points, security fencing, and exterior door and window locking systems that can be activated from a central location (e.g., administrators' offices or the security camera observation room).*
5. *Reinforce all windows and doors so they cannot be breached by gunshots or brute force.*
6. *Provide quality, building level training in which building staff participate in workshops that are designed to help assess the strengths and weaknesses in a school's overall preparation to protect its students and builds a foundation for long term programmatic oversight.*

C. Improving Firearm Safety and Registration Programs

1. *Institute a federal safety/security educational program that includes a mandatory firearm safety test certification and mandate that all firearms must be stored in an Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) Residential Security Container (RSC) certification in their place of residence.*
2. *Establish a federal program that creates a mandatory waiting period, mental health and criminal background checks, limits the number of firearms that can be purchased in given amount of time, and subject all firearm transactions, including private, antique, gun show sales, trades, gifts, and inheritance to these laws.*
3. *Develop a nationwide program in which all firearm owners must register, unregistered firearms. Literally, every person who possesses an unregistered firearm must submit identifiable data (e.g., serial number, make/model, who sold or gave them the firearm, etc.).*

25. (Orr, Christine) **MINIMIZE ACCESS TO GUNS.** *Make them a smaller, not larger presence in our communities.*

26. (Plecker, Bath County Sheriff) **SHERIFF'S OFFICE NEEDS AND CONCERNS FOR SAFETY.** *In response to school survey, Sheriff of Bath County writes to share additional information. Survey of law enforcement to determine what safety measures they currently have in place.*
27. (Schultz, Roger **VIA WEB**). **ENHANCE SCHOOL SAFETY.** *Allow retired law enforcement officers and our retired veterans to protect our schools and use bullet proof glass in all windows and doors.*
28. (Smith, Carl **VIA WEB**). *As hard as it may be for them to admit, the student is only partially at fault for the firearm violence that we are seeing in our schools. The larger portion of the blame should be placed on the parents. If they kept their weapons secured as they should if they are truly responsible parents. Trigger locks, gun boxes and secured cabinets are the beginning. Sure they can still access an illegal firearm on the street if they have the money but the easiest access is at home. When mom and dad leave for work before a child leaves for school there are more things that take place then the parents realize. This is when their friends come over and they party before going to school so they have a buzz until lunch when they slip off and hit it again. Plus during the same time frame while they are alone it gives them time to search their parents room and desks or computer. Why not **OFFER A FREE IN-HOME INSPECTION AND ALLOW THE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TO DETERMINE FOR THEM IF THEIR WEAPONS REALLY ARE SECURE.** Get local merchants to assist by offering discounts on the items needed to secure them if they are not up to standards. This should include black powder weapons as well.*
29. (Sprenkle, Vendor, Lighthouse Mobile Solutions) **PROUD OF INITIATIVE GOVERNOR IS TAKING TOWARD IMPROVED SAFETY.** *Offer to assist in effort; product are emergency alert related.*
30. (Tuttle, via DOE Luchau) **TELL GOVERNOR TO STOP PROMOTING GUNS IN SCHOOL.**
31. (Utterbink, Kevin) **WOULD LIKE TO ASSIST WITH SCHOOL PROTECTION DECISIONS.**
32. (Widmayer, Sharon, **VIA WEB**) **AGAINST PASSING A LAW THAT ALLOWS OR REQUIRES TEACHERS TO CARRY GUNS.** *What we need are better laws about when and how often to have lock down drills, state inspections or school safety plans, controlled entry to school buildings, and money for school construction and renovation so we don't have children learning in trailers and going in and out of buildings. We also need sensible gun control laws to outlaw sales of assault rifles and closing the gun show loophole.*