#  Superintendent’s Memo #315-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: December 4, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

## SUBJECT: Announcing Virginia’s 2020 Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP School Violence Grant Funding

The Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS), was recently awarded a grant from the Federal Department of Justice, under the Bureau of Justice Assistance’s (BJA) ***Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Grant*** in the amount of $1.83 million. This grant program is designed to improve school safety and security by providing students, teachers, and law enforcement partners with the tools they need to recognize, respond quickly to, and prevent potential acts of violence.

Through this funding, the VCSCS will implement an innovative, 36-month project around VA CARES in an effort to build Caring, Awareness, Recognition, Engagement, and Support in Virginia schools.VA CARES will increase recognition of students at risk of self-harm or harm to others, and allow for increased interventions and supports provided through threat assessment teams. This project will include the following major initiatives:

* Implementation of a statewide youth suicide prevention public service announcement (PSA) campaign in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health;
* Delivery of “Pathways of Prevention for School Violence” trainings for school personnel and local law enforcement;
* Delivery of “[Handle with Care](http://jac18.org/what-we-do/handle-with-care)” trainings for local law enforcement and school staff; and
* Development and production of virtual violence-prevention training modules for school personnel and local law enforcement.

An advisory committee is currently being formed to guide the PSA campaign and VCSCS will utilize a number of data sources to collect, analyze, and report on the progress of this program. These sources will include the School Safety Audit Surveys, Secondary School Climate Surveys, training registration/evaluation logs, and Virginia Department of Health data.

In the coming months, the VCSCS will welcome input as they work to identify and prioritize sites for in-person training, adjust to the nuances associated with online, in-person, and hybrid learning, and develop the suicide prevention campaign in a way that best supports Virginia’s 1.5 million students, staff, parents, and law enforcement partners.

If you would like to provide input, host a training, or be considered for service on the PSA Advisory Committee, please contact one of the VCSCS staff members below:

* Betsy Bell

K-12 Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Betsy.Bell@dcjs.virginia.gov

* James Christian

K-12 School Safety and Threat Assessment Supervisor

James.Christian@dcjs.virginia.gov

* Shellie Evers

School Safety Training and Conference Coordinator

[Shellie.Evers@dcjs.virginia.gov](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cnmk13107%5CDownloads%5CShellie.Evers%40dcjs.virginia.gov)

* Donna Michaelis

Division Director

Donna.Michaelis@dcjs.virginia.gov

JFL/RCK/rge