



Christie Administration Announces Final Report of School Security Task Force

For Immediate Release

Contact: Michael Yapple
David Saenz
609-292-1126

Date: July 9, 2015

Trenton, NJ – A multi-agency task force charged with studying how to improve school security for students and employees of New Jersey's public schools has issued its final report. The New Jersey School Security Task Force, representing the state Department of Education, Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, and the Schools Development Authority, as well as four state-level education associations, made 42 recommendations in the report, which was commissioned by the Legislature.

"New Jersey has always taken an active role in developing and implementing programs designed to protect our students," said Commissioner of Education David C. Hespe, who co-chaired the 11-member task force with Christopher Rodriguez, Director of the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness.

"This task force worked hard to build upon this tradition of success," Hespe said. "Their report will serve as an important guide in our continuing work to ensure that our schools are safe learning environments for all children."

"One of the major focuses of the task force was to build on the state's movement toward strengthening the school security policies and practices employed in New Jersey," said Rodriguez.

"Protecting our children during school hours and at after-school activities is an around-the-clock job that requires a strong working relationship among law enforcement, school officials, parents and the community," said Rodriguez. "This is consistent with the work of my office and vital to allowing New Jersey's children — and their teachers — to focus on learning."

The panel's recommendations include:

- Establishing a School Safety Specialist Academy;
- Improving response times to emergencies;
- Improving school-based emergency communications capabilities;
- With financial and staffing considerations, deploying trained school resource officers in each school building; and
- Requiring identification cards for staff and students to be displayed in school.

Some of the recommendations would require changes to existing state laws and regulations; other recommendations could be implemented administratively at the state or local levels. Access the full task force report [here](#).

One section of the 59-page report traces New Jersey's history of developing and implementing a series of initiatives, beginning in 1988, to deter threats to school safety and develop programs designed to prevent behavior associated with school violence.

The New Jersey School Security Task Force was created by statute in August 2013. The [act](#) called on the Task Force to investigate a number of specific issues, such as the architectural design of schools, staff training, screening systems and resource officers.

Besides meeting regularly as a full committee and in separate subcommittees, the Task Force visited schools and law enforcement agencies in New Jersey and Connecticut, reviewed work previously accomplished by similar groups in New Jersey and in other states, and met with and listened to experts in the field and members of the general public.

Under co-chairs Hespe and Rodriguez, members of the panel represented the Schools Development Authority; the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials; the New Jersey Education Association; the New Jersey School Boards Association; and the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association. For a complete list of members and their affiliations, see the online report.