

# School Threat Assessment

Interventions and Support to Prevent Violence

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## Senate Bill 1

- Superintendent designate School Safety Coordinator
- Designate a school safety and security threat assessment team at each school consisting of 2 or more staff members
- Identify and respond to students exhibiting behavior that indicates a potential threat to school safety or security
- Members may include school admins, counselors, SROs, school based mental health services providers, teachers and other school personnel (School Social workers, Nurses, etc.)



## Threat Assessment Board Policy 09.429

The purpose of a team shall be to identify and respond to students exhibiting behavior that indicates a potential threat to school safety or school security.



# FBI Recommendations on School Violence

“Although the risk of.....at any one school is very low, threats of violence are potentially a problem at any school. Once a threat is made, having a fair, rational, and standardized method of evaluating and responding to threats is critically important.”

(FBI report p 1)



# What is a threat?

- ▶ A threat is an expression of intent to harm someone.
- ▶ Threats may be spoken, written, or gestured.
- ▶ Threats may be direct or indirect, and need not be communicated to the intended victim or victims.
- ▶ Weapon possession is presumed to be a threat unless circumstances clearly indicate otherwise.
- ▶ When in doubt assume it is a threat.

# Virginia Threat Assessment Model

- Developed 2001 at University of Virginia
- School-based teams gather information
- Follow decisions-tree to determine whether threat is transient or substantive
- Take protective action if substantive
- Attempt to resolve the problem underlying the threat

# Substantive threats: Factors to Consider

- ▶ Age/Maturity of student
- ▶ Capability of student to carry out the threat
- ▶ Student's discipline history
- ▶ Credibility of student and willingness to acknowledge his or her behavior
- ▶ Credibility of witness accounts
- ▶ When in doubt, treat threats as substantive.