



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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Press Release

Norfolk DA Morrissey Working with Local officials to Keep Students Safe

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Preventing targeted violence, responding to dangerous behaviors, safely re-integrating students following mental or behavioral health treatment, visitor threat assessment and securing large spaces during crisis were all explored by local and national experts at Norfolk DA Michael W. Morrissey's "Assessing and Responding to School Threats" training conference last week.

More than 200 teachers, administrators, school nurses and police officers from across the county attended the all-day seminar held in the auditorium at the Bank of Canton's headquarters on Nov. 20th. The group included six police chiefs, three school superintendents and principals or asst.principals of dozens of schools.



"There is significant research and work being done on the best ways to keep schools safe, both here and across the county," District Attorney Morrissey said. "We are fortunate to have been able to bring some impressive experts to Norfolk County to share that information with nurses, teachers and superintendents, patrol officers and police chiefs. There was something here for every level of these organizations."

Three members of the Secret Service addressed research-based strategies for preventing targeted violence in grades Kindergarten through 12: Boston Field Office Assistant Special Agent in Charge Stephen Marks, the National Threat Assessment Center Chief, Dr. Michelle Keeney and NTAC Research Psychologist Lina Alathari. United States Attorney Carmen Ortiz joined DA Morrissey and ASAC Marks opening the program.



Director of School Health Services for the state Dept. of Public Health Mary Ann Gapinski presented for an hour on the growing phenomenon of needing to craft safe and successful school re-integrations for students who have been removed for their behavior, undergone treatment or been absented for other cause.

State Police Sgt. John Suyemoto, from the MSP Special Tactical Operations (STOP) team talked about both visitor threat assessment and techniques for securing large spaces in the event of a disturbance. Attorney Matthew W. MacAvoy from the firm of Nuttall & MacAvoy, P.C., addressed responding to student threats and dangerous behaviors within the state laws and regulations.

DA Morrissey partnered with the Mass Teachers Association to provide continuing education credits to teachers. "When there is a traumatic event at a school anywhere, the media is saturated with the details and the story," DA Morrissey said. "But every day, there is thoughtful work done in school houses and police stations to prevent major events, but also to stop more modest problems before they grow. I commend my partner communities and schools for their demonstrated dedication to this work."