



State of North Carolina

Department of Justice
PO Box 629
Raleigh, North Carolina

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April 23, 2009

ROY COOPER
ATTORNEY GENERAL

Dr. Neil Pedersen, Superintendent
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools
750 S Merritt Mill Road
Chapel Hill, NC 27516-2878

Re: School safety

Dear Superintendent Pedersen:

Ten years ago this week, two armed students walked into Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado and killed 13 people and wounded 23 more in a matter of minutes. This tragic shooting shocked us all and spurred a comprehensive review of the way schools approach safety.

We hope and pray our state never has to experience a tragedy like Columbine, but we owe it to our students and faculty to be ready in the event our worst fears become reality. For this reason, I want to remind you about important steps that you can take to protect children and staff in your district.

First, it's important that you show your staff the video *A Critical Incident: What to Do in the First 20 Minutes*. Showing this short video each year will refresh the memory of those who have seen it and educate those who have not about how to respond safely in the event of a school shooting. If you need another copy of the video, you may contact Billy Lassiter, Director of Communications for the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at (919) 733-3388 ext. 8124 or William.Lassiter@djjdp.nc.gov

Second, if your schools have not done so already, please urge them to work to assemble their Critical Incident Response Kits. My office and the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention introduced these kits several years ago based on lessons learned from Columbine. The kits give law enforcement and schools easy access to the tools they may need if such an emergency takes place. To date, nearly 800 schools statewide have been recognized for completing their kit and meeting the recommendations in the CIRK booklet and video.

Finally, for those schools that have assembled their kits, it's important that you update them regularly by reviewing both the Critical Incident Response Kit Checklist Form and the School Site Survey Form. These forms, as well as information about the recognition program for schools that have implemented CIRK can be found at <http://www.ncdjjdp.org/cpsv/cirk.html>.

Thank you for all you do to educate North Carolina's children. Together, we can work to keep them safe.

With kind regards, I am

Very truly yours,

Roy Cooper