



# New Jersey Office of Homeland Security & Preparedness **NEWS**

Jon S. Corzine, *Governor*

Richard L. Cañas, *Director*

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## **For More Information Contact**

Roger Shatzkin, OHSP(609) 588-7250

Jon Zlock, DOE (609) 292-1126

Lee Moore, OAG (609) 292-4791

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS MEET TO IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS OF STATE'S K-12 SCHOOL SECURITY TASK FORCE**

TRENTON — New Jersey's top county law enforcement and education officials met today to discuss how to continue taking action on the recommendations of the state's K-12 School Security Task Force, Office of Homeland Security Director Richard L. Cañas, Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy and Attorney General Anne Milgram said.

The state's 21 county prosecutors and 21 county superintendents joined state officials at the Trenton War Memorial to discuss provisions of the K-12 School Security Task Force Report that are already in progress, provisions that remain to be implemented and the continued cooperative relationships between law enforcement and education officials at all levels that are essential to enhancing security at the state's elementary through high schools.

"Last week we unveiled a comprehensive plan to fight crime and violence in our state," said Governor Jon S. Corzine. "The K-12 School Security Task Force's recommendations and the ongoing and cooperative work of the law enforcement and education communities will ensure that our children's learning environments receive the same emphasis on safety and security."

"One of the major objectives of the task force was to build on the movement toward stronger school security policies and practices that was already underway in New Jersey," said Cañas, who chaired the group. "Another was to foster stronger relationships between police officers and educators and between schools and first responders. While news accounts remind us almost daily that violence in schools remains a concern, I believe our children are better off because of the steps the task force has taken."

"Today is the first day of School Violence Awareness Week," said Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy who co-chaired the task force. "As schools across the state observe this week by organizing activities to prevent school violence, I think it's fitting we are doing the same by modeling similar collaboration with law enforcement and education officials. Nothing is more important than the safety of every one of our 1.4 million students in New Jersey."



“Protecting our children during school hours is an around-the-clock job, and requires a strong working relationship between law enforcement and the education community,” said Attorney General Anne Milgram, the task force’s other co-chair. “To keep the learning environment as safe as possible, law enforcement, teachers and administrators have been working together on protocols for such situations as bomb threats, active shooter, school lockdowns and school evacuations. This is consistent with the guidance to law enforcement that my office issued in a directive earlier this year, and vital to allowing New Jersey’s children — and their teachers — to focus on learning.”

In the aftermath of a number of high-profile incidents of school violence, Governor Corzine established the K-12 School Security Task Force on October 4, 2006. He designated Director Cañas as chairperson and Commissioner Davy and then-Attorney General Stuart Rabner as co-chairs, and charged the task force with developing a comprehensive agenda to improve school security. Attorney General Milgram became the task force’s co-chair when Rabner became Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court.

**Task Force Recommendations**

Although the task force’s report was made public today, Cañas said that, given the importance of the issue, a number of the report’s recommendations have been implemented on an ongoing basis since Governor Corzine convened the group a year ago. Listed below are the task force’s major recommendations and their current status:

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Status</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint training for county prosecutors and county superintendents</li> </ul>	Begun Oct. 15, 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance training for school resource officers (SROs) and add basic training on model school security policies for all police officer candidates</li> </ul>	Enhanced training endorsed by Police Training Commission, Oct. 3, 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and distribute model policies — to serve as a baseline for local law enforcement agencies — for responding to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bomb threats</li> <li>○ Situations with an “active shooter”</li> <li>○ School lockdowns</li> <li>○ School evacuations</li> <li>○ A need for providing public information in an emergency</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Policies issued via Attorney General Directive, July 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update NJ Department of Education School Security Manual</li> </ul>	Completed and published in January 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create NJ Department of Education School Security Web site</li> </ul>	Site went live in Jan. 2007 (at <a href="http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/">http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/security/</a> )

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and distribute model policies for school administrators and teachers as a companion to law enforcement policies to deal with emergency situations, e.g., bomb threats, active shooter, school lockdowns, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Policies in final review</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop teacher “refresher” training via video or DVD to supplement the model policies for administrators and teachers</li> </ul>	<p>Training video in development</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise uniform memorandum of agreement (MOA) between education and law enforcement, the agreement that guides interactions of educators and police; MOA should also be revised to include fire safety and local emergency management directors</li> </ul>	<p>MOA in final review</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend NJ Fire Code that requires monthly fire drills in schools to add to drills and exercises related to bomb threats, emergency evacuations, active shooter, lockdown, shelter-in-place, and so on.</li> <li>• Amend NJ Fire Code to allow school administrators to employ security measures for potential violent incidents, e.g., lockdowns, without risk of penalty from local fire marshals for violating existing code</li> </ul>	<p>Legislation or revised administrative code required</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop local school security councils/working groups</li> <li>• Develop district policies that incorporate regular drills and training in school security scenarios</li> </ul>	<p>To be implanted at the district level</p>

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A copy of the K-12 School Security Task Force Report is available at [www.njhomelandsecurity.gov/pdfs/10-15-07-school-security.pdf](http://www.njhomelandsecurity.gov/pdfs/10-15-07-school-security.pdf)