



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

June 3, 2016

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: School Safety Audit Requirements for 2016-2017

The Virginia School Safety Survey and the division level survey will begin on Monday, August 1, 2016, and will end on Friday, September 30, 2016, at 5 p.m. In accordance with *Virginia Code* § [22.1-279.8](#), public schools in Virginia are required to complete an annual School Safety Audit. As in the previous school year, division Superintendents are required to:

- **disseminate Safety Audit information to school principals** within their division. (Safety Audit information may be found at <https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/vcscs/audit/index.cfm>);
- **access the Web-based Survey Manager system to update school listings and contact information**, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) will send an e-mail with your division's username and password by June 1;
- **certify the submittal of each school's crisis management plans** (by August 31);
- **certify the submittal of each school's safety survey** (by September 30); and
- **complete the division level safety survey** (by September 30).

School and Division Safety Survey Information

The [Virginia School Safety Survey Web site](#) will serve to assist principals in completing the survey. It is important for principals to review the survey in advance. This Web site also will aid Superintendents or their designees in managing the administration of the school survey within their divisions and will provide additional information and resources.

New Requirements

A review of *Virginia Code* § [22.1-279.8](#) has led the VCSCS to issue new guidance for the required annual safety audit to include a written assessment component. The guidance, new templates, and detailed instructions are available at the following Web site: <https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/vcscs/audit/index.cfm>.

The *Virginia Code* § [22.1-279.8](#) defines the school safety audit as

“a written assessment of the safety conditions in each public school to (i) identify and, if necessary, develop solutions for physical safety concerns, including building security issues and (ii) identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns occurring on school property or at school-sponsored events. Solutions and responses shall include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for student conduct.”

New School Level Requirements

To meet the requirement for a “written assessment,” each school should

- conduct a review of all components of the safety audit (safety survey, building inspection checklist, crisis plan, discipline crime and violence data, and climate survey where appropriate);
- identify areas of concern;
- identify any needed changes;
- identify safety concerns and solutions;
- complete the template provided on the audit website; and
- submit the completed template to the division safety audit committee and/or the Superintendent by December 31 2016.

New Division Level Requirements

By Virginia *Code* § [22.1-279.8](#), the division safety audit committee is required to

“...review the completed school safety audits and submit any plans, as needed, for improving school safety to the division superintendent for submission to the local school board.”

Upon review of each school’s template, the Superintendent should complete the Annual Safety Audit Committee Checklist and Report, forward any recommendations to the school board, and certify audit completion to the Center for School and Campus Safety via the Survey Manager. **This is a new requirement and will be due August 31, 2017.**

Questions regarding the survey may be directed to Donna Michaelis at Donna.Michaelis@dcjs.virginia.gov; telephone (804) 371-6506, or Jessica Smith at Jessica.Smith@dcjs.virginia.gov; telephone (804) 786-5367.

SRS/RCK/rt