



## NEWS BRIEF

Center for the Prevention of School Violence  
North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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### FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF COLUMBINE: REFLECTING ON WHAT WORKS

*Prevention, intervention, and crisis response are modeled throughout North Carolina schools and the nation is listening.* The Center for the Prevention of School Violence (DJJDP – Center), now a part of the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, has emphasized having a comprehensive strategy for preventing school violence since its establishment in 1993. As we approach the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the act of school violence experienced by Columbine High School, four DJJDP – Center initiatives are receiving national attention: conflict management; bullying prevention; School Resource Officers (SROs); and critical incident response.

DJJDP – Center has been nationally recognized for its efforts in preparing current and future teachers and other youth serving professionals to effectively manage conflict. The “Reach to Teach” initiative was created to offer practices and approaches for school and community settings to deal effectively with conflict. This initiative highlighted the need for conducting a self assessment, utilizing effective communication, and implementing conflict management strategies. The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the United States Attorney General has recognized DJJDP – Center’s efforts in preparing teachers, administrators, and youth serving professionals to deal with conflict more effectively.

The annual statewide bullying prevention campaign seeks to create environments which empower youth and adults to take action. DJJDP – Center staff strive to equip youth and those supervising youth to: recognize the signs of bullying behaviors; intervene quickly so that permanent damage is not done; and provide resources for addressing bullying behaviors. The campaign, nationally recognized at the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools’ National Conference, is comprised of numerous activities, including a statewide student art submission opportunity which allows students from across the state to express their concerns about bullying behaviors.

North Carolina remains a national leader in the placement of SROs. The 747 SROs currently working in schools reflect an increase of 504 SROs from the DJJDP – Center’s baseline of 243 SROs in 1996. The three-pronged approach (law enforcement officer, law-related counselor, and law-related educator) employed by SROs in North Carolina continues to be replicated nationally and is specifically examined in a national evaluation of SRO programs to be released from the National Institute of Justice later this year.

Another DJJDP – Center initiative has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as an example of a “promising practice” in school emergency response. Two years ago, starter Critical Incident Response Kits were sent to schools across North Carolina and a continuous effort is being put forth to ensure that schools have critical incident response kits and crisis response plans. DJJDP – Center staff have trained 1,383 schools and have recognized, in collaboration with the North Carolina Attorney General’s Office, 642 schools for their efforts in preparing for a critical incident.

Learning from the act of school violence experienced by Columbine High School five years ago, as well as the other highly publicized incidents since the late 1990s, we see that prevention, intervention, and crisis response are key in creating a comprehensive approach to preventing school violence. Schools in North Carolina have gotten the message and the nation is taking notice.