

February 2024 Newsletter



The Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation at Western Connecticut State University is funded from appropriations through the CT Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the Office of Higher Education.



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The Connecticut Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation formed in 2021 from an agreement between the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and Western Connecticut State University. The Center provides professional development related to all aspects of school safety planning, and it conducts research on prevention, crisis, safety, and trauma related to students and schools. The Center also establishes relationships among area school districts and community stakeholders to create both formal and informal networks. Moreover, the Center provides consultation and on-site support to school districts. This newsletter provides a venue for the Center to become a clearinghouse for

Director's Corner

Dear School Safety Partners,

I am excited to release the findings from our *"Weapons in Connecticut Public Schools"* study.

It is essential that I take a few moments to thank the building level administrators who were able to participate in our weapons research over the summer. They contributed rich data that provides a benefit to school officials across the state.

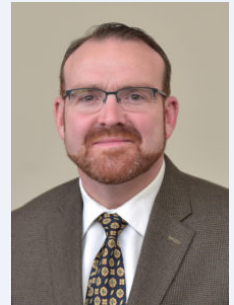
I also want to thank Dr. Gabriel Lomas and Dr. Hasan Arslan for their help with the research and the report. There are some areas of the report highlighted in this newsletter, but I want to encourage everyone to take some time to read the full report.

Also, we have started another working group focused on threat assessment case management. We are exploring the topics of policy guidance, case management software, and grant opportunities. If you would like to be included in the discussion, please email me at Bernhardt@wcsu.edu.

Your partner in school safety,

Amery

Amery Bernhardt, D.M.
Director
CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation



**Department of Emergency Services
and Public Protection
Division of Emergency Management
and Homeland Security**



From the DEMHS State School Safety Program Desk:

Dear School Safety Partners,

I'd like to thank you for signing up to get this important newsletter. As always, please feel free to contact me with any school plan questions.

Recently a question regarding "recommended school safety trainings" was posed at a Regional School Safety Workgroup meeting. It is a great question to ask and I realize that school faculty and staff calendars are full, so quality and time are important. The Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security recommends the following free online trainings:

- [IS-100.C: Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS 100](#)
- [IS-200.C: Basic Incident Command System for Initial Response, ICS-200](#)

For those staff members who serve on the school safety committee, we also recommend:

- [IS-362.A: Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools](#)

All of the above courses are online, free and can be done at your own pace. DEMHS and the CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation offer additional trainings such as a 1-day all Hazards Planning course for schools and PREPaRE Modules 1 and 2. Your CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation Regional Coordinator can provide more information regarding the PREPaRE modules and scheduling.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Your partner in school safety,
Bill Turley

Manager Training and Exercise
School Safety Program Lead
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RESEARCH

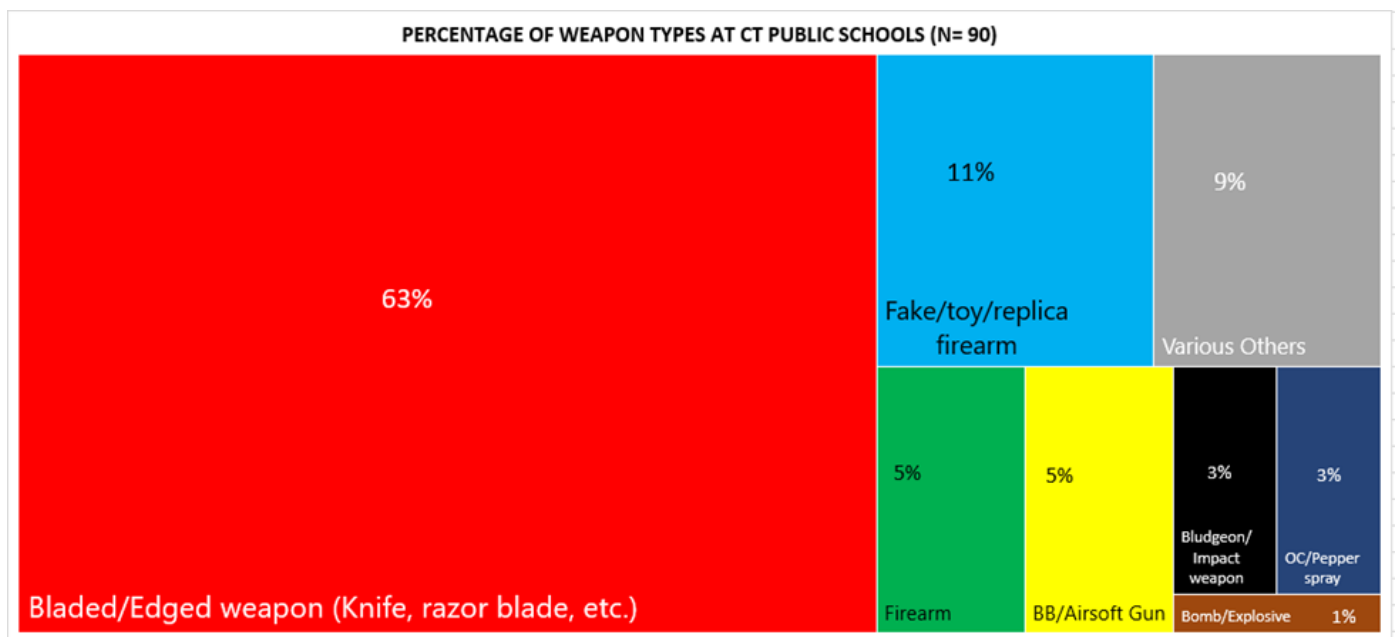
**Weapons at Connecticut Public Schools: An Examination of
Motives and Prevention Methods 2024**

The following are some key figures and descriptions from the research report titled, "Weapons at Connecticut Public Schools: An Examination of Motives and Prevention Methods 2024." You can access the full report [here](#).

One of the primary reasons for conducting this study is to understand why students bring weapons to K-12 schools in the state of Connecticut. Another research goal was to identify ways to reduce weapon incidents in schools. The concept of weapons in the K-12 schools in Connecticut raises many concerns for parents, educators, and school safety professionals. This research provides a first step to understanding what is happening in CT schools and exploring approaches that have successfully reduced it.

Weapon Types

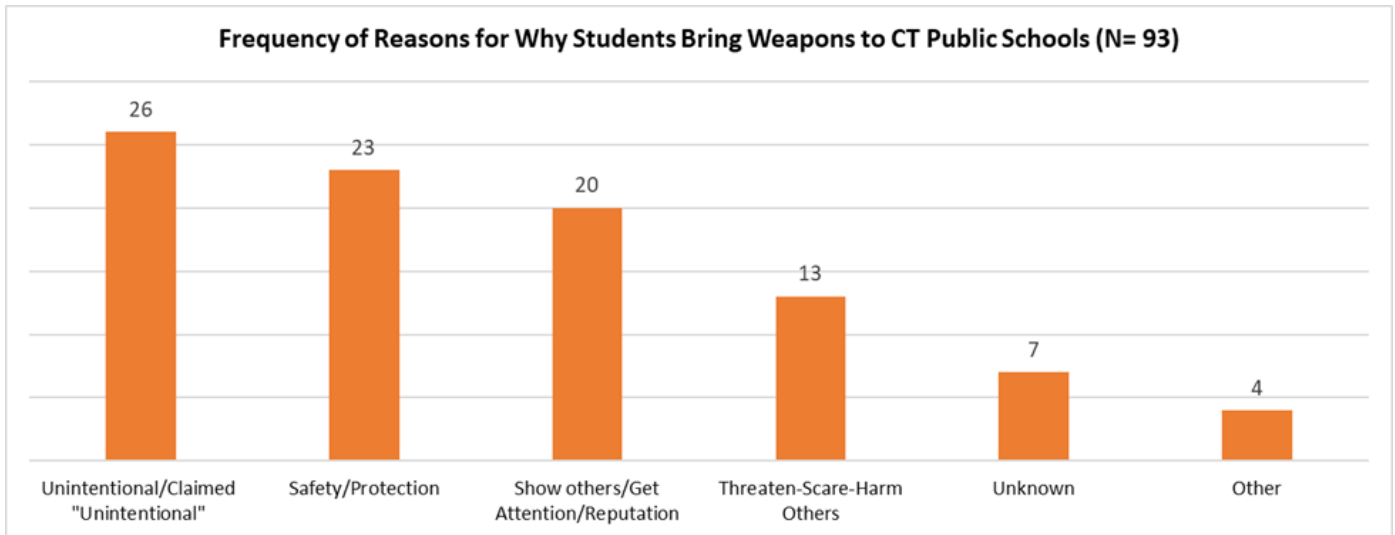
The breakdown of weapon types reported in the survey provides valuable information on the nature of weapons involved in school incidents. The most common type of weapon reported was bladed/edged weapons, accounting for 63% of incidents. This category includes knives, razors, or other bladed instruments. The second most common type of weapon was fake/toy/replica firearms, representing 11% of incidents. These items simulate real firearms but are not functional as actual weapons. The "Other" category was the third most common at 9%. This category may include various unconventional or unspecified items used as weapons. Actual firearms and BB/Airsoft guns were tied for the fourth most common type of weapon, each accounting for 5% of incidents. Bludgeon/impact weapons and OC/pepper spray tied for the sixth most common type of weapon, each representing 3% of incidents. Explosive/bomb was the seventh and least common type of weapon reported, accounting for 1% of incidents. These findings provide a comprehensive overview of the types of weapons involved in incidents at CT public schools. Understanding the prevalence of different weapon types is crucial for developing targeted prevention and intervention strategies to enhance school safety and security.



Reasons Why

The most frequently reported reason was unintentional/claimed unintentional, with 26 instances. This may suggest that, in some cases, students may bring weapons without the intent to cause harm or without fully realizing the consequences. The second most common reason was safety/protection, with 23 instances. This indicates that some students perceive bringing a weapon as a means of protection or personal safety. The third most common reason was to "Show others/Get Attention/Reputation" with 20 instances. This suggests that, in some cases, students may bring weapons to gain recognition or establish a particular reputation. The

fourth-ranked reason was to "Threaten-Scare-Harm Others," with 13 instances. This indicates that a subset of students may bring weapons with the explicit intent to cause harm or create fear. The fifth-ranked reason was "Unknown," with seven instances. In some cases, administrators may need more information to determine the exact motivation behind a student bringing a weapon to school. The "Other" category was the sixth-ranked reason with four instances. This includes one incident of self-harm as well as varied and unspecified motivations not captured by the predefined categories. In sum, the results emphasize the importance of a multifaceted approach considering individual motivations and circumstances.

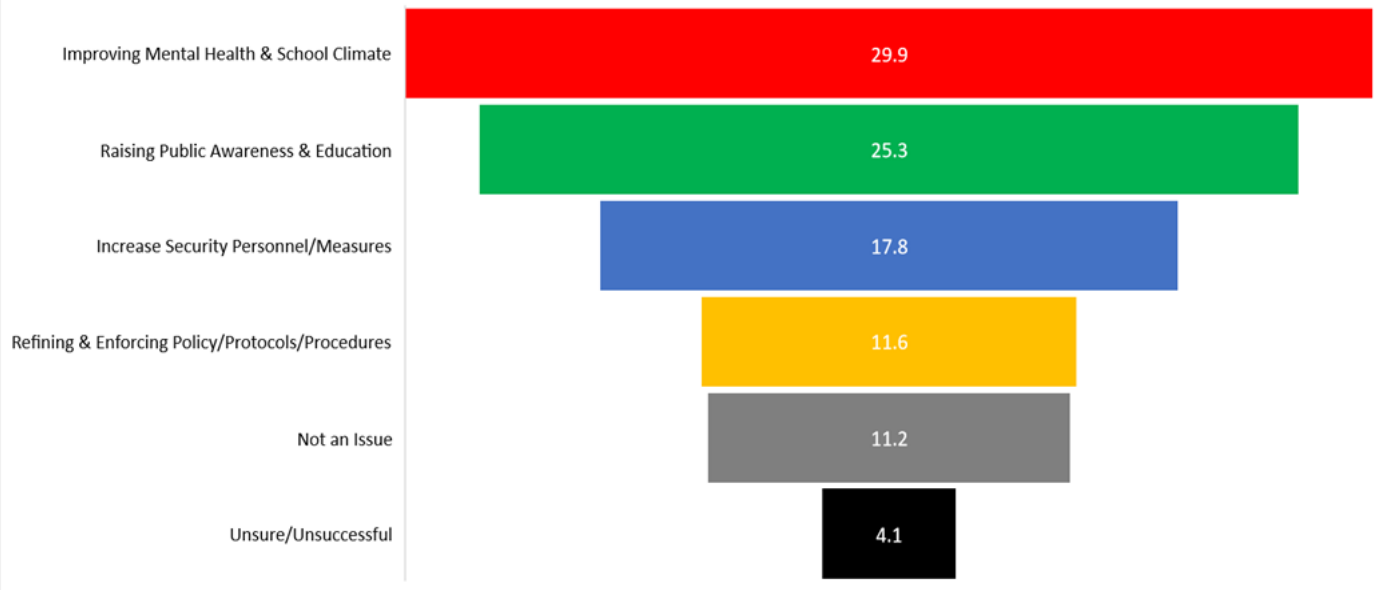


Successful Reduction

The thematic analysis of the open-ended responses from school officials provides valuable insights into the recommended policies for reducing student weapons offenses. These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of recommendations, emphasizing mental health, school climate, public awareness, security measures, and policy enforcement. Here is a summary of the six identified themes and their respective percentages:

1. The largest category, representing **29.9%** of the recommendations, focuses on **improving mental health support and fostering a positive school climate**. This theme suggests that addressing underlying mental health issues and creating a supportive school environment is perceived as an effective strategy.
2. The second-highest category, at **25.3%**, emphasizes **raising public awareness and education**. This theme suggests that informed communities and educational initiatives can contribute to preventing student weapons offenses.
3. The third-highest category, representing **17.8%** of recommendations, focuses on **increasing security personnel and implementing additional security measures**. This suggests a belief that enhancing physical security can be an effective deterrent.
4. At **11.6%**, the fourth-largest category centers on **refining and enforcing school policies, protocols, and procedures**. This theme underscores the importance of clear and strictly enforced policies as a preventive measure.
5. The fifth category, at **11.2%**, suggests that some school officials perceive student weapons offenses as **not being a significant issue** at their institutions.
6. At **4.1%**, the smallest category indicates **uncertainty or a perceived lack of success** in implementing effective policies to reduce student weapons offenses.

Percentages of Successful Reduction Policy Recommendations by CT Public School Administrators (N=241 statements)



The Partnership Post Q3 / Q4 2023

\$100,000 Grant to Support E3: Engage, Encourage, Empower

The Governor's Prevention Partnership is proud to share that it has received a grant award from the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation in the amount of \$100,000 to support expansion of the E3: Engage, Encourage, Empower program. This program educates and mentors high school students on the dangers of opioids, cannabis, vaping, and tobacco with the goal of intervening at the most critical time in a young adult's path. Young people who participate can become peer prevention leaders in their communities by leading awareness campaigns to spread positive prevention messages and getting involved in local and statewide prevention efforts. See full article [here](#).



The goal is to reach 400 young people in Connecticut through the E3 program and equip them with the skills and information they need to make safe and healthy decisions when it comes to substance use.



Lou Giaquinto speaking at The Partnership's annual Governor's Celebration

Lou Gianquinto, President of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Connecticut, announced the award at The Partnership's annual Governor's Celebration on December 6th, stating, "The

entire community--business leaders, parents, community members--must all come together to drive the right kind of change. We are proud to restate our position in the fight to make a difference." Nearly 250 guests representing The Partnership's key public and private funders and program partners were in attendance to hear the exciting announcement.

Kelly Juleson, Co-President of The Governor's Prevention Partnership, thanked the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation for its support, "Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and its Foundation have been leaders in creating opportunities for Connecticut youth to thrive. The Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation's substantial investment in the E3 program amplifies the voice of young people as advocates for prioritizing prevention. Young people talking to their friends, families, and community leaders about how to keep them safe from the dangers of substance use is a powerful prevention tool."

For more information about the E3 program, please visit [Youth Empowerment](#) on our website.

Thank You for Investing in Connecticut's Youth!

Thank you to everyone who joined us at The 2023 Governor's Celebration, including the 43 companies, foundations, and other funders who invested in The Partnership this year. Inspiring testimonials, heartfelt stories, mentoring efforts, and a powerful commitment to Connecticut's youth made this year's event truly exceptional. We're grateful for all who made this possible. Together, we continue our shared mission to create a world where young people can thrive free from the dangers of drugs and alcohol.



Left to right: Youth Advisory Board (YAB) member Daniela Salas, YAB member Alex Kosior, Governor Ned Lamont, YAB member Samantha Pach, and YAB member Neeha Shanavas.

Prevention Starts with YOU!

The Governor's Prevention Partnership kicked off the Prevention Starts with YOU! campaign this fall thanks to a \$1.12 million Congressionally Directed Spending project through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration secured by Senators Richard

Blumenthal and Chris Murphy. This landmark initiative will address substance misuse through a public awareness campaign about the vital role adults can play in drug prevention and the distribution of 50,000 Deterra drug deactivation and disposal pouches and conversation starters on how to talk to kids about drugs and alcohol to residents of Greater Hartford and Greater New Haven. The pouches and conversation starters are offered at no cost and will be distributed by partners including The Open Hearth, The Hartford Marathon Foundation, The City of Middletown Public Health Department, Northern Middlesex YMCA, Connecticut Foodshare, CBIA, The Latino Way, and Manchester Change Collaborative.



Senator Richard Blumenthal speaking at the launch of Prevention Starts with YOU!

We are already hard at work sharing these critical prevention resources with communities! For more information, visit www.PreventionCT.org.



Happy New Year from all of us at The Governor's Prevention Partnership!

RESOURCES

Resources provided by **Safe and Sound Schools:**

NEW: The Enhanced Averted School Violence Database

- Originally established in 2015, the [Averted School Violence \(ASV\)](https://www.avertedschoolviolence.org/) database has been rebuilt to enhance reporting and maximize impact. Learn more about ASV's mission to improve school safety and prevent future violence by anonymously and securely submitting an averted incident for review.
- <https://www.avertedschoolviolence.org/>

Safe and Sound Schools: Violence Prevention Research & Programs

- Safe and Sound Schools' Violence Prevention Research and Programs Team is dedicated to working with national and international stakeholders to assist them in developing and implementing targeted violence prevention, response and recovery policies and strategies that are grounded in research and evidence-based practices. Learn more about these services for your school.
- <https://safeandsoundschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/violence-prevention-research-and-program-brochure-2024.pdf>

Especially Safe: An Inclusive Approach to Safety Preparedness in Educational Settings

- Learn how you can plan and prepare, and teach and train to meet the special needs of students, staff, and visitors in your school community - from developmental disabilities to communication challenges, medical needs to mobility challenges, and more.
- <https://safeandsoundschools.org/programs/especially-safe>

School Safety Experts for Trainings, Workshops and More

- The Safe and Sound Schools Speakers Bureau features a panel of school safety experts who combine deep practical knowledge with engaging delivery to inspire and educate on topics related to safety, crisis prevention, response, recovery, and mental health. Explore topics and book an expert for your next event here:
- <https://safeandsoundschools.org/safe-and-sound-institute/our-speakers/>

Mission Critical: Protecting Every School, Every Student, Every Day

- Our close partner, Safe and Sound Schools, has served more than 16,000 school communities, engaged 100,000 professionals and educational leaders, and has positively influenced the lives of over 5 million students across the nation. See how they are helping schools to protect every student, every day.
- <https://safeandsoundschools.org/resources/2023-annual-report/>

Human Trafficking Resources for the K-12 School Community

SchoolSafety.gov has released a new [youth human trafficking infographic](#) covering indicators of this crime; strategies to identify, prevent, and respond to trafficking incidents in school communities; and resources and training programs for student and staff education. Please feel free to [download and share](#) this new resource with your networks,

stakeholders, and others in the K-12 community as you see fit.

Do you know what human trafficking is? The U.S. Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign website states that human trafficking is a crime that involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of labor or commercial sex act. It's also important to note that causing someone under the age of 18 to engage in a commercial sex act, regardless of using force, fraud, or coercion is human trafficking under U.S. law.

Why does this matter to schools? While there is no standard profile, many traffickers target youth who are vulnerable to exploitation simply because they may be less equipped to make informed decisions when presented with a situation that could lead to trafficking. Schools are uniquely positioned to support students facing human trafficking and exploitation. Because of the regular interaction between educators and students, school personnel can help identify and report suspected cases of trafficking and connect affected students to critical services.

What can you do? January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, an effort dedicated to raising awareness about human trafficking and how to identify and prevent this crime. This month is an opportune time to begin planning how your school and/or district can:

- *Increase awareness and education efforts for both staff and students regarding what human trafficking looks like and how to appropriately prevent and respond to it*
- *Create a safe and supportive school environment where students feel comfortable reporting concerns or seeking help from trusted school staff or other adults*
- *Develop and implement prevention and response plans for school personnel to follow if cases of human trafficking are suspected or disclosed*

[DOWNLOAD THE INFOGRAPHIC](#)

If you'd like to share this resource on your organization's social media channels, sample posts are included below for your use or modification:

- #HumanTrafficking can happen in our community. Learn what this crime can look like and how schools can recognize, prevent, and respond to trafficking with this new @SchoolSafetyGov resource: <https://go.dhs.gov/Jcp>
- Do you know what #HumanTrafficking looks like? Parents, schools, and districts: Get smart on this crime and how to support our students who might be affected. Free resources available at @SchoolSafetyGov: schoolsafety.gov/child-exploitation

For additional human trafficking information and resources, visit [SchoolSafety.gov](https://schoolsafety.gov)'s Child Exploitation topic page. Also See Flyer [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact us at SchoolSafety@hq.dhs.gov.

Message sent on behalf of the Federal Clearinghouse on School Safety Evidence-Based Practices (Federal School Safety Clearinghouse)



Meetings - Please look for meetings in your Region.



Region 1 Gambling Awareness Team consists of community stakeholders working toward raising awareness and developing prevention and treatment capacity in the region. We host gambling awareness trainings and webinars. The team meets quarterly to review gambling trends, needs, gaps, and access to treatment.

- When: 4/9/24 from 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- Where: Virtually via Teams
- Who Should Attend: Meetings are open to all.
- RSVP to **Dena Miccinello** by emailing Dmiccinello@ryasap.org for the meeting link and with any questions or comments.
- Please save the dates for future Region 1 Gambling Awareness Team meetings: Meetings held the 2nd Tuesday of the month, Quarterly; from 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., March - no meeting to celebrate PGAM, 4/9/24 - Virtual Teams Meeting, 6/11/24 - In-Person at The Burroughs Community Center.

Region 2 Gambling Awareness Team consists of community stakeholders working toward raising awareness and developing prevention and treatment capacity in the region. We host gambling awareness trainings and webinars. The team meets quarterly to review gambling trends, needs, gaps, and access to treatment.

- *When: 2/29/24 at 10:30 a.m.*
- *Where: Virtually via Zoom.*
- *Who Should Attend: Meetings are open to all.*
- **RSVP at [Zoom Link](#)**
- For additional info, contact **Brailee Whan** at Bwhan@bhcare.org

The DEMHS Region 2 School Safety & Security Group Meeting

- *When: 2/21/24 from 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.*
- *Where: Virtually*
- *Who Should Attend: This meeting is for Administrators, Facility Directors, Business Officials, SRO's, Security Personnel, Emergency Management Personnel, Mental Health Professionals, Technology Leaders, etc.*
- As always, we ask others to share this great networking opportunity with all of their

school safety partners. Please share my contact information as well.

- Those who are interested in being part of our group are encouraged to email their contact information to **Jeff Nielsen** at **Jnielsen@milforded.org**. Group membership includes receiving correspondence related to meeting announcements and information related to school safety/security.

Region 2/South Central Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization

Alliance for Prevention & Wellness / A Program of BHcare

Regional Suicide Advisory Board (RSAB) Meetings

- When: 2/6/24 at 10:30 a.m.
- Where: Virtually via **Zoom Link**
- Region 2 RSAB supports the overall vision of the statewide CT Suicide Advisory Board, the goals and objectives of the CT Suicide Prevention Plan, and provides the local and regional infrastructure for activities.
- Who Should Attend: For those within Region 2's territory: Ansonia, Bethany, Branford, Chester, Clinton, Cromwell, Deep River, Derby, Durham, East Haddam, East Hampton, East Haven, Essex, Guilford, Haddam, Hamden, Killingworth, Lyme, Madison, Meriden, Middlefield, Middletown, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Orange, Portland, Seymour, Shelton, Wallingford, Westbrook, West Haven, Woodbridge.
- For more information, please contact **Taylor Gainey**, MHA, at **Tgainey@bhcare.org**.
- Please save the dates for future RSAB meetings. All meetings will be held on the first Tuesday, bi-monthly. Meetings: 4/2, 6/4, 8/6, 10/1, 12/3

The DEMHS Region 3 Capitol Emergency Management Meeting

- *When: 3/28/24 from 1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.*
- *Where: In-Person*
- *Who Should Attend: This meeting is for Administrators, Facility Directors, Business Officials, SRO's, Security Personnel, Emergency Management Personnel, Mental Health Professionals, Technology Leaders, etc.*
- *RSVP to **Claudia Nardi** at **Cnardi@cantonschools.org** or call 860-693-7704 if you plan on attending or sending a representative.*

The DEMHS Region 4 ESF-5 School Safety Sub-Committee

- When: 2/7/24 from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.
- Where: Hybrid (Both Zoom and In-Person) In-Person held at East Lyme Public Safety Complex located at 277 West Main Street, Niantic, CT.
- Who Should Attend: For those organizations within Region 4's territory: Ashford, Bozrah, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, East Lyme, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Mansfield, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Plainfield, Pomfret, Preston, Putnam, Salem, Scotland, Sprague, Sterling, Stonington, Thompson, Union, Voluntown, Waterford, Willington, Windham, Woodstock. Attendance/membership for this group could include, but not be limited to: Any school staff who are responsible for school safety planning in their districts; SROs; Emergency Managers; Public Safety Chiefs/Department Heads; Public Health Officials; any others with vested interest.
- If you are interested in attending: Please send an email with your interest to **Julie C. Wilson** at **Jwilson@eastlymepolice.org** in order to be added to the meeting email distribution list, and to receive the Zoom Link.
- Please save the dates for future School Safety Subcommittee meetings. All meetings will be held from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. and will be Hybrid on Zoom and In-Person.

Meetings: 3/6/24, 4/3/24, 5/1/24, 6/5/24, 8/7/24, 9/4/24, 10/2/24, 11/6/24, 12/4/24.

Newly formed - DEMHS School Reunification Planning Committee (Note: meets (Hybrid) immediately after the Region 4 ESF-5 School Safety Sub-Committee Meeting)

- *When: 2/7/24 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.*
- *Where: Hybrid (Both Zoom and In-Person) In-Person held at East Lyme Public Safety Complex located at 277 West Main Street, Niantic, CT.*
- *Who Should Attend: For those organizations within Region 4's territory: Ashford, Bozrah, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, East Lyme, Franklin, Griswold, Groton, Hampton, Killingly, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Lyme, Mansfield, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Plainfield, Pomfret, Preston, Putnam, Salem, Scotland, Sprague, Sterling, Stonington, Thompson, Union, Voluntown, Waterford, Willington, Windham, Woodstock.*
Attendance/membership for this group could include, but not be limited to: Any school staff who are responsible for school safety planning in their districts; SROs; Emergency Managers; Public Safety Chiefs/Department Heads; Public Health Officials; any others with vested interest.
- *If you are interested in attending: Please send an email with your interest to **Julie C. Wilson** at **Jwilson@eastlymepolice.org** in order to be added to the meeting email distribution list, and to receive the Zoom Link.*
- *Please save the dates for future School Reunification Planning Committee Meetings. All meetings will be held 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. and will be Hybrid on Zoom and In-Person. Meetings: 3/6/24, 4/3/24, 5/1/24, 6/5/24.*

The DEMHS Region 5 School Safety and Security Working Group

- *When: 2/22/24 from 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.*
- *The mission of this group is to provide a school safety and security network consisting of school resources who can share lessons learned and quality information pertaining to maintaining a safe and secure environment for our schools.*
- *Where: Virtually*
- *If you are interested in attending: please email **John Field** at **John.field@ct.gov**.*
- *Please save the dates for future School Safety and Security Working Group Meetings: 3/28/24, 4/25/24, 5/23/24, 6/27/24, 7/25/24, 8/22/24, 9/26/24, 10/24/24, 11/28/24, 12/28/24.*

The Western Regional Crisis Team Meetings (covering the RESC regions of EdAdvance & CES)

- *When: 2/13/24 from 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.*
- *Topic/Presenter: Trauma Coordinator Presentation*
- *Where: **Hybrid meeting: In-Person location at CES, 40 Lindeman Drive, Trumbull, CT 06611***
- *Who Should Attend: These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals servicing our K-12 students.*
- *For more information or to join the Team: please email **Tanya Iacono** at **Iaconot@wcsu.edu**.*
- *Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 3/12/24, 4/23/24, 5/14/24, 6/4/24 - Planning Meeting.*

The ACES Regional Crisis Team Meeting (covering the RESC South Central Region)

- *When: 2/15/24 from 9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.*

- *Topics/Presenters: **Pam Mautte**, MS, MCHES, CPS-R, Director of BH Care will be presenting on Child Trafficking. The information she will bring is important and informative, especially in our school community.*
- *Where: Virtually via Zoom*
- *Who Should Attend: These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals servicing our K-12 students.*
- *For more information or to join the Team: please email **Sadie Witherspoon** at **Witherspoons@wcsu.edu**.*
- *Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 3/21/24, 4/18/24, 5/16/24, June planning meeting date TBD.*

The North Central Regional Crisis Team Meeting (covering the RESC Capitol Region Education Council)

- *When: 2/14/24 from 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.*
- *Topic/Presenters: At this Virtual meeting, the Speaker will be **Dr. Paula Gill Lopez**. Dr. Gill Lopez will be presenting to team members on strategies for Grief and Loss and a variety of information in this area to assist school mental health professionals. Dr. Gil Lopez is an Associate Professor, Chair of the Department of Psychological and Education Consultation and directs the school psychology program at Fairfield University.*
- *Where: **Zoom Link**, Meeting ID: 870 9664 2732, Passcode: 856200*
- *Who Should Attend: These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals servicing our K-12 students.*
- *For more information or to join the Team: please email **Kimberly Myers** at **Myersk@wcsu.edu**.*

The Northeastern Regional Crisis Team Meetings (covering the EASTCONN RESC region)

- *This team will meet jointly with the Southeastern Regional Crisis team.*
- *When: 2/14/24 from 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Where: Virtually via Zoom*
- *Towns: Andover, Ashford, Bozrah, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Chaplin, Colchester, Columbia, Coventry, Eastford, Franklin, Griswold, Hampton, Hebron, Killingly, Lebanon, Lisbon, Mansfield, Marlborough, Plainfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Scotland, Sprague, Stafford, Sterling, Thompson, Tolland, Union, Voluntown, Woodstock, Willington, Windham*
- *Who Should Attend: These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals supporting our K-12 students.*
- *For more information or to join the Team: please email **Kiley Young** at **Youngki@wcsu.edu**.*
- *Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 3/13/24, 4/17/24, 5/8/24, June planning meeting date TBD.*

The Southeastern Regional Crisis Team Meetings (covering the LEARN RESC region)

- *This team will meet jointly with the Northeastern Regional Crisis team.*
- *When: 2/14/24 from 9:00 a.m. -10:30 a.m.*
- *Where: Virtually via Zoom*
- *Towns: Chester, Clinton, Deep River, East Haddam, East Hampton, East Lyme, Essex, Groton, Guilford, Haddam, Killingworth, Ledyard, Lyme, Madison, Montville, New London, North Stonington, Norwich, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, Preston, Salem, Stonington, Waterford, Westbrook*
- *Who Should Attend: These meetings are geared towards the mental health professionals supporting our K-12 students.*

- For more information or to join the Team: please email **Kiley Young** at Youngki@wcsu.edu.
- Please save the dates for future Regional Crisis Team Meetings: 3/13/24, 4/17/24, 5/8/24, June planning meeting date TBD.

CT Center for School Safety Training

Our goal is to make trainings accessible to all Connecticut schools, so our trainings are low cost. However, because we do not want cost to be a barrier, we offer scholarships for individuals and districts who are unable to afford training costs.

- March 6-7, 2024 | [PREPaRE Workshop 2: Mental Health Crisis Interventions: Responding to an Acute Traumatic Stressor in Schools, 3rd ed.](#) - Hosted by: PREPaRE Trainers, Dr. Kimberly Myers and Dr. Diana Perry. This 2-day workshop develops the knowledge and skill required to provide immediate mental health crisis interventions to the students, staff, and school community members who have been simultaneously exposed to an acute traumatic stressor. The knowledge and skill developed within this session also help to build a bridge to the psychotherapeutic and trauma informed mental health response sometimes required to address challenges associated with trauma exposure. Intended Audience: Mental Health Professionals who provide mental health crisis intervention services. This workshop will be held at the Capitol Region Council Central Office (CREC) in Hartford from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost: \$55 and Pre-Work is Required. Registration Deadline: February 16th, 2024
- March 14, 2024 | [Digital and Social Media - Navigating Fake Social Media Accounts](#) Virtual Training from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Presented by TFC James White, CT State Police and CT Statewide D.A.R.E. Coordinator (bio) This is the third of our Free quarterly training sessions and it will focus on navigating fake social media accounts and other trends. There will also be an opportunity for networking with federal, state, and local partners to help build the digital / social media knowledge base and plan for information sharing across the state of CT. Intended Audience: This training is appropriate for anyone involved in school safety including but not limited to educators, administrators, mental health professionals, law enforcement officers, security, facility managers and school resource officers.

Additional Trainings and Events

- **February 5, 2024** | [Preventing Mass Attacks in Our Communities](#) - Hosted by: the U.S. Secret Service. Running from 12-2p.m. This module is intended for law enforcement and other community safety stakeholders. Other dates include April 4 and June 5, both 12-2 p.m.
- **February 6 & 8, 2024** | [Youth Mental Health First Aid](#) - Hosted by: The Connection's Institute for Innovative Practice. Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches participants how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use

disorders in adolescents and young adults. This virtual training will give anyone who works with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support for emergent or existing behavioral health problems and make referrals to the appropriate level of care. Participants will receive certification from the National Council for Mental Wellbeing valid for 3 years. Attendees will be required to complete a 2-hour, self-paced online course, before participating in the instructor-led session.

- **February 13, 2024 | [Harnessing Resilience Through Peer Support](#)** - Hosted by: *the CREC RESC Alliance*. This module is part of the UPLIFT Trauma-Informed Care Practice Series. This Free Virtual Training focuses on steps for building trauma-informed peer support programs that build on shared experiences and foster mutually supportive relationships amongst students, staff, and caregivers. To learn more, please see [Flyer](#).
- **February 14, 2024 | [Question, Persuade, Refer \(QPR\) Suicide Prevention Training](#)** - Hosted by: *South Central Region Behavioral Health Action Organization (Alliance for Prevention & Wellness / A Program of BHcare)*. QPR Training gives you the skills and knowledge to intervene to possibly prevent suicide. Learn how to get help for yourself, learn more about preventing suicide, common causes of suicidal behavior, warning signs of suicide and how to get help for someone in crisis. For this upcoming QPR training, there are currently 21 registered out of a 40 participant Cap. **Where:** Zoom Link. Dates for future QPR training dates: 3/13, 4/8, and 4/10, scheduled from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (Register through the same link above.) For more information, please contact Taylor Gainey, MHA, at Tgainey@bhcare.org.
- **March 8, 2024 | [Enhancing School Safety Using Behavioral Threat Assessment](#)** - Hosted by: *The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC)*. In this Virtual training event, NTAC researchers highlight the key findings and implications from our research on school violence prevention. In this training, you will learn about the background, thinking, and behavior of school attackers and how some schools discovered and stopped plots before violence occurred. This training will provide guidance on how schools may develop or improve existing violence prevention programs utilizing a behavioral threat assessment model. Intended Audience: School teachers, administrators, counselors, mental health professionals, school resource officers (SROs), law enforcement officers, and other school safety stakeholders.
- **March 12, 2024 | [TIC in Practice Combo Workshop #1: Fostering a Sense of Safety & Prioritizing Trustworthiness & Transparency](#)** - Hosted by: *the CREC RESC Alliance*. This workshop is part of the UPLIFT Trauma-Informed Care Practice Series. This Free In-Person Training is held at CREC Central. Participants will learn about the key components of physical and psychological safety as well as ways to strengthen these critical domains of well-being. Participants also explore how effective communication and a commitment to transparent decision-making are essential in establishing a school climate that supports all individuals (students, staff, and families). To learn more, please see [Flyer](#).
- **March 14 & 15, 2024 | [CAS Annual Leadership Conference](#)** - Hosted by: *The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS)*. Annual Leadership Conference to be held at the Mystic Marriott in Groton, Connecticut on March 14-15, 2024. For more information, please call (203) 250-1111 or email: mail@casciac.org.

- **April 9, 2024** | [TIC in Practice Combo Workshop #2: Cultural Humility: Unpacking & Addressing Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues; & Empowerment, Voice & Choice for All](#) - Hosted by: the CREC RESC Alliance. This workshop is part of the UPLIFT Trauma-Informed Care Practice Series. This Free and In-Person training is held at CREC Central. Participants will explore the impacts of educational and social inequities on students. Also included is an explanation of cultural humility and a review of Cultural Responsive Teaching strategies that foster inclusivity. To learn more, please see [Flyer](#).
- **May 14, 2024** | [Taking Steps Toward Collaboration & Mutuality](#) - Hosted by: the CREC RESC Alliance. This Free and Virtual module is part of the UPLIFT Trauma-Informed Care Practice Series. In this Virtual training, participants will explore the nuances and many variables that exist when implementing collaboration strategies aimed at students, staff, caregivers, or community members. To learn more, please see [Flyer](#).
- [Recognizing Gang Activity in Schools](#) | National Gang Center (OJP.gov) - Hosted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. This webinar presents formal and informal techniques to recognize signs of gang activity in a school setting. The insights shared in this session are integral to our responsibilities as School Resource Officers.
- [Incident Command System \(ICS\) in Schools - An Overview of ICS for Connecticut School Systems](#) - Sponsored by the State of CT Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection, Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security. This program is designed to introduce you or re-introduce the concepts of ICS and how they apply to school systems in Connecticut. The program will also cover several resources available to schools. The course is generally delivered as a 2-hour in-person program. Please see [Flyer](#) for more information. If you have any questions, please contact DEMHS Training Points of Contact: Michael Paradis, Trainer, email: Michael.Paradis@CT.Gov.



SAVE THE DATE!

Connecticut Suicide Prevention Conference 2024

*“Inspiring Hope:
Coming Together for Suicide Prevention”*

Thursday, May 2, 2024

8:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Rocky Hill, CT

Registration coming soon



Sponsored by the CT Suicide Advisory Board (CTSAB)

Individual and Community Preparedness Announcement



FEMA Seeking Leaders for Youth Preparedness Council

Do you know a young leader who is passionate about making a positive impact on their community? The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is looking for students in grades eight through 11 interested in supporting disaster preparedness to join the Youth Preparedness Council (YPC).

Why is it Important for Youth to Apply?

FEMA created the Youth Preparedness Council in 2012 to bring together young leaders from across the country who are interested in disaster preparedness and community service. The YPC demonstrates FEMA’s commitment to involve America’s youth in preparedness-related activities. It also provides young people an opportunity to present their perspectives, feedback and opinions to FEMA staff.

During their terms, YPC members can make a difference in their community, gain valuable leadership and emergency management experience, and work with like-minded peers to help strengthen preparedness and resilience across the country.

What Do YPC Members Do?

YPC members meet with FEMA staff throughout their term to develop strategies, initiatives and project proposals. YPC members will also participate in a biennial YPC Summit held in Washington, D.C. At the Summit, YPC members will meet FEMA leaders and other preparedness professionals to network and learn more about the field of emergency management.

Who Should Join the YPC?

Students in grades eight through 11 who have a passion for preparedness and helping others, are involved in their community and have an aptitude for working on teams and as leaders.

Spread the Word!

You can spread the word by sharing information about the YPC with parents, educators, schools and organizations, and reaching out to friends and family! Do you know a student who would make a great candidate? Encourage them to apply today!

Download our YPC Application Promotional Toolkit for sample messaging, social media content, graphics and more.

How to Apply

The online application is now open, and closes March 4, 2024 at 11:59 p.m. PT. To learn more about the YPC and application requirements, visit [Ready.gov/kids/youth-preparedness-council](https://ready.gov/kids/youth-preparedness-council) and visit <https://community.fema.gov/PreparednessCommunity/s/apply-to-ypc> to apply. **FEMA will also host two webinars for potential applicants on Jan. 25, 2024 and Feb. 27, 2024. Join to learn more about the program and how to apply.**

[Register for the Feb. 27 Webinar](#)



Volunteers Wanted to Participate in Study!

Dr. Kathlyn Elliott works for Boston Children's Hospital as a postdoctoral fellow in the Trauma and Community Resilience Center as a researcher looking at the role that schools play in violence prevention. Her background as a K-12 teacher and her dissertation looked at the role that educators played in preventing violent extremism in Finland. She is leading the research for MA and CT for the Best Practices in School-Based Threat Assessment and Management Teams, a larger comparison study.

Dr. Elliott is looking for school districts and agencies that would be willing to participate in this study, and the CT Center for School Safety was hoping to make a connection for her.

For each district, this would involve allowing researchers from Boston Children's hospital and the University of Illinois Chicago to conduct interviews and focus groups within school administrators, staff, students, and parents during year 1 and agreeing to share School Climate Survey with the research teams in year 2. School districts will receive a small honorarium for participating, as will individuals who participate in interviews. Focus groups will have snacks provided as an incentive for participation.

Dr. Elliott is also looking for people to interview who are involved at the State level in developing and implementing Threat Assessment and Management. If you believe you provide a valuable perspective in your concern for area schools and the threat assessment process, please contact her at Kathlyn.elliott@childrens.harvard.edu. Please see

BEST PRACTICES FOR SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT TEAMS (TAMT)

Funded under grant number 21STFRG00014

from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T).

Project Background

TAMTs (threat assessment and management teams) are evidence-based best practices for dealing with terrorism and targeted violence in schools. However, given complications of local implementation combined with concerns about stigmatization and over-policing of minoritized communities, there is a need to understand barriers and facilitators to successful implementation in a range of settings including urban, suburban, and rural, and within different states' existing legal frameworks.

This project focuses on a public health approach on the national priority of ending school violence. We will examine elements of school culture and procedures that contribute to safety, specifically:



School-based TAMTs



Bullying and school responses



School belongingness

Year 1 will focus on school-based TAMTs and Year 2 will focus on individual-level measures of belongingness.

What We Expect to Accomplish in Year 1

AIM 1: Examine structural and situational barriers and facilitators of implementing TAMTs in six school districts within urban, suburban, and rural school districts in Connecticut, Illinois, and Massachusetts.



Data collection:

- Semi-structured interviews with school-based stakeholders and statewide experts
- Focus groups with students, educators, and parents in each district
- Policy documents, best practices, laws, and white papers
- District-level survey around use of TAMTs

Year 1 Deliverables

- Best practice guides focused on implementation and recommendations
- Manuscripts and reports to share findings

What We Expect to Accomplish in Year 2

AIM 2: Examine levels of perceived school belongingness, experiences of bullying, and trust in school administration/adults by collecting data from six districts in three states.



Data collection:

- Access to previously collected Youth Risk Behavior Survey and (if available) School Climate Survey Data
- Potentially a short survey with a representative student population depending on School Climate Survey

Year 2 Deliverables

- Summary guides for participating schools including an overview of best practices and feedback on risk and protective factors.
- Manuscripts and reports to share findings

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Boston Children's Hospital
Until every child is well



**HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL
TEACHING HOSPITAL**

School Safety Legislative Meetings

The CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation has conducted several meetings with elected officials across the state to promote awareness of our important work. We highlighted our services which include coordinate regional crisis teams, research, consultation, and direct training of school staff in models of prevention and intervention. The goal of the meetings are to keep elected officials informed about the work we do to keep schools safe.



Legislative Informational Meeting North Central Capitol Region - Nov. 3, 2023

(Left-Right) Senator Matthew Lesser, Senator Henri Martin, Dr. Paula Gill Lopez, Faculty Affiliate-CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation & Professor and Program Director-Fairfield University, Alex Rios, Director of Security-CREC, Senator Douglas McCrory, Dr. Kimberly Myers (Host), Regional School Safety Coordinator, North Central Capitol Region-CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation, Dr. Amery



Legislative Informational Meeting Western Region - Nov. , 2023

(Left-Right) Representative Rachel Chaleski, Representative Jonathan Steinberg, Senator Julie Kushner, Representative Maria Horn (back), Senator Ceci Maher, Dr. Tanya Iacono (Host), Regional School Safety Coordinator, West Region-CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation, Representative Lucy Dathan, Amery Bernhardt, D.M., Director-CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation.

Bernhardt, D.M., Director-CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation, Jon Bishop, Assistant Superintendent-Canton Public Schools, Representative Kerry Wood, Dr. Diana Perry, Regional Trauma Coordinator-CREC.



Legislative Informational Meeting South Central Region - Nov. 6, 2023 (Left-Right) Dana M. Bossio, M.A., Regional Trauma Coordinator/School Psychologist-CES, Cindy Ratchelous, Regional Trauma Director-ACES, Dr. Paula Gill Lopez, Faculty Affiliate-CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation & Professor and Program Director-Fairfield University, Gabriel I. Lomas, Founder-CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation, Senator Jorge Cabrera, Senator Julie Kushner, Representative Seth Bronko, Representative Robyn A. Porter, Sadie Witherspoon, M.S., (Host), Regional School Safety Coordinator, South Central Region, CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation, Amery Bernhardt, D.M., Director-CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation, Representative Ron Napoli, Jr., Taylor Gainey, MHA, Suicide Prevention Coordinator-Alliance for Prevention & Wellness Program of BHcare, Representative Kathy Kennedy, Jeffrey Nielsen, Director, School Safety & Security-Milford Public Schools, Daniel Levy, Principal-Hamden Public Schools, Dr. Michael Finley, Chief of Staff-New Haven Public Schools.

Meet Garth Betts

Social Media Intern at the CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation



Welcome Garth!

Garth joined the CT Center for School Safety and Crisis Preparation in January as a Student Intern. He has been helping the Center with our School Safety Newsletter, our social media platform and other projects.

Garth is currently working towards a Bachelor's degree in Digital & Interactive Media Arts at Western Connecticut State University.

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Associate Professor & Program Director, Fairfield University
Executive Board, CT Association of School Psychology (CASP).

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CONTRIBUTE to our NEWSLETTER

If you have content such as meetings, trainings, resources, and/or research to include in the next issue of our newsletter, please email **Mary Pupazzoni** at Pupazzonim@wcsu.edu no later than the 15th of the month prior.

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