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## **Pennsylvania School Safety Task Force Report Recommends Holistic Approach to Making Schools Safe**

**Harrisburg, PA** – Governor Tom Wolf and Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today released the [full](#) report from the Pennsylvania School Safety Task Force created by Gov. Wolf and the Auditor General in March after the high school shooting in Parkland, Florida.

“After reading the full report, I am impressed by the frank and honest discussions that the task force had with students, teachers, administrators and law enforcement and I commend them for the important and comprehensive recommendations to protect our students and schools,” said Governor Tom Wolf. “It’s abundantly clear that by working together, schools, communities and the state can take a holistic approach to make our classrooms a safe place for students to learn. Our focus is on preventing violence that threatens schools, while also taking every precaution to protect and provide security for students and teachers.”

The initial report findings were [released](#) in June after a review of the discussions at six regional task force meetings held from April through June, and the feedback provided via an online survey. The roundtable events were held to listen to students, parents, school officials, school nurses and other health care professionals, law enforcement, education organizations and community members about their ideas to improve safety and security.

“I want to thank the students, teachers, parents and community leaders who shared their personal experiences and provided invaluable input to our task force,” said Auditor General DePasquale. “Six times, in six vastly different schools, young men and women stood before us and described their feelings of helplessness and anxiety that they want more and better mental health services. Now, it is our job to heed those concerns and to do everything in our power to create safer spaces for learning.”

Each meeting included over 40 community participants invited to create a discussion focused on the needs of that region. Based on the expertise and opinions shared during the regional roundtables and hundreds of comments provided through the online feedback survey, the task force identified multiple themes, including recommendations, barriers and opportunities. The overarching themes to strengthen school security heard by the task force include:

- Improved communication and information sharing

- Enhanced social and emotional learning
- Increased access to mental health services, including more health professionals in schools
- Building community connections
- Effectively integrating law enforcement and school resource officers
- Providing guidance on establishing priorities for schools
- Providing schools with more resources

These themes are expanded upon in the report, including detailed recommendations on how the state, community and school officials should work collaboratively with each other and students and families to use all the tools at their disposal to prevent school-based violence from occurring.

Read the full report [here](#).

In addition to the task force report, Governor Wolf's 2018-19 budget includes \$60 million that will be distributed by a new School Safety and Security Committee with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to help school districts across the state address their unique school safety needs.

The committee will award grants to school districts and other school entities for physical building upgrades, security equipment, teacher training, alternative education programs, community violence prevention programs, and special and individualized mentoring programs to keep teachers and students safe.

The 17-member committee will also establish best practices when conducting school safety and security assessments for school buildings, trainings and student behavioral health support, as well as issue a survey to school entities to measure school safety and security preparedness.

Read more about the School Safety and Security Committee [here](#).

In addition to Governor Wolf and Auditor General DePasquale, members of the School Safety Task Force include vice-chairs Derin Myers, Acting Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency; Mark DiRocco, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators; Bonita Allen, President of the Pennsylvania Parent Teacher Association; Judy Morgitan, Immediate Past President of the Pennsylvania Association of School Nurses and Practitioners; and Dolores McCracken, President of the Pennsylvania State Education Association.

Several members of the Wolf Administration provided support to the task force, including Homeland Security Director Marcus Brown, Education Secretary Pedro Rivera, Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine, Labor & Industry Secretary Jerry Oleksiak, Acting State Police Commissioner Colonel Robert Evanchick, and Human Services, Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Deputy Secretary Lynn Kovich.

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