



ERIE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
NEWS RELEASE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY JOHN J. FLYNN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 17, 2018

**ERIE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY FLYNN INSTATES SCHOOL
CRITICAL INCIDENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM**

BUFFALO - Erie County District Attorney John J. Flynn announces that after finalizing his office's School Critical Incident Initiative Program, prosecutors will begin working directly with district officials and law enforcement agencies to improve our investigative response to threats towards schools in Erie County.

Immediately following the tragedy at Stoneman Douglas High School, numerous threats were reported at school districts throughout Western New York. In an effort to streamline the investigative response to these threats, District Attorney Flynn contacted every public school district superintendent in Erie County to ensure that our office and law enforcement respond quickly and thoroughly investigate each threat and other critical incidents.

The ECDA School Critical Incident Initiative Program is a coordinated approach to establish uniform protocol between school districts, law enforcement and the Erie County District Attorney's Office in the investigation of any critical incident. A critical incident is any circumstance that presents a threat of harm to students, staff or property of a school or where harm has been done. Critical incidents include, but are not limited to: a verbal statement, social media post, a weapon on a school campus or a completed act of harm.

This collaborative effort will ensure a fast response and comprehensive investigation by assigning an Assistant District Attorney to act as a liaison to each public school district in Erie County. Through this partnership, Assistant District Attorneys, designated school officials and the local police agency will develop protocols in response to critical incidents, including securing physical evidence, preserving digital evidence, obtaining search warrants and conducting interviews with witnesses and suspects.

Last month, District Attorney John J. Flynn announced the School Critical Incident Initiative at the 15th annual Safe Schools Initiative Seminar hosted by University at Buffalo. Earlier this week, DA Flynn met with Assistant District Attorneys to officially launch this new program. Each Assistant DA was assigned to a school district. In the coming weeks, prosecutors will contact their assigned district to schedule a meeting with school officials and law enforcement officials to learn about their current protocols and what measures can be taken to ensure a faster, comprehensive investigation into threats and other

critical incidents. Our Assistant District Attorneys will continue to work directly with school officials and law enforcement in investigating critical incidents at their assigned school district moving forward.

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