



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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PRESS RELEASE

More than 100 attend DA Morrissey's School Shooter Response Training

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FIGHT, FLIGHT OR FREEZE

Those are the three instinctual reactions humans have to danger. But for years, most schools have implemented violent intruder response protocols that started and ended with "freeze."

On February 5 and 6, More than a hundred Norfolk County police and educators – including numerous police chiefs, superintendents and principals – attended a two-day training in the evolving thinking on how best to save lives in the event of a school shooting, hosted by Norfolk DA Michael Morrissey.

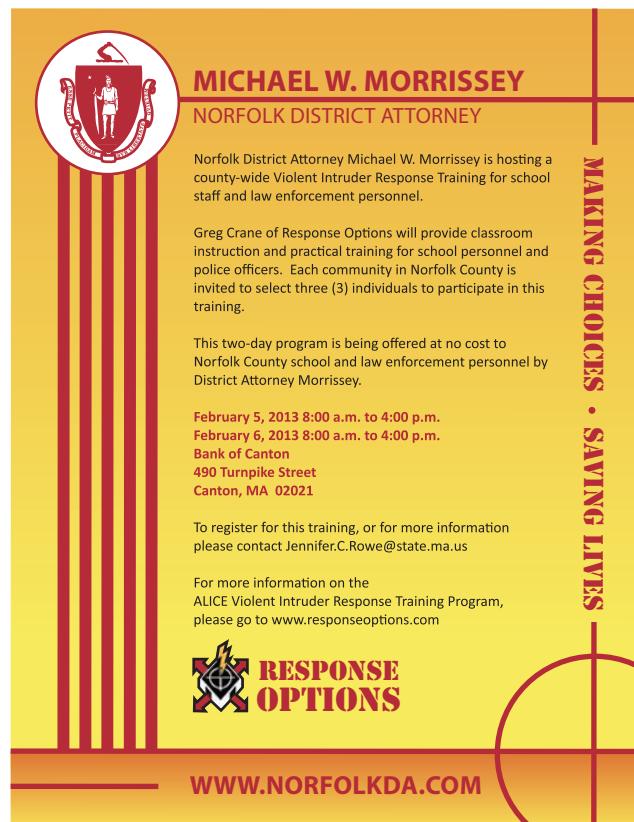
"The straight lockdown model has become almost a default protocol to any violent intruder incident," Morrissey said. "But there is a growing conversation nationally whether a more flexible response, including evacuating the building, barricading the doors and other actions, might not save lives. We wanted to bring Norfolk County schools and police into that conversation, so that they can weigh all of the options available to keep their students safe."

The training was provided by Response Options, a Texas-based school safety firm presented the ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) Program, developed by Greg and Lisa Crane - Greg a former SWAT police officer, Lisa a school principal.

The classroom training was held in donated seminar space at the headquarters of the Bank of Canton; live-action demonstration was held in the now-vacant Avery School in Dedham. The classroom training included an analysis of 25 years of school shooting incidents, and which actions helped end the incidents more quickly with fewer lives lost, and which protocols appeared to be counter-productive. The training included hearing the disturbing 911 call placed from the library at Columbine High School, in which students were ordered to hide under tables instead and not to use the exterior exit door available to them. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HsYMgn9aHs> Although those students had more than 4 minutes to flee to safety before the shooter entered the library, none did. Ten were killed.

"The District Attorney's Office hosted a similar training the month before the Sandy Hook shooting in Connecticut last year, but obviously that event has put a new focus on the issue," said Morrissey, who used drug forfeiture money to finance the training. "Our towns are all looking at their safety protocols. I think it is important that as we do that, we base our decisions on solid research, lessons learned from previous incidents, and the widest array of information we can collect."

Morrissey said he hopes the information provided can help towns with future planning. "Every community should have a plan, but that plan must be developed at the local level, with input from the police and school community," he said.



Canton detective Chip Yeaton plays the part of an armed intruder in the live-action demonstration on the second day of the training, attended by police and school personnel from 18 Norfolk County communities.



DA Morrissey spoke with Stoughton's Police Chief Paul Shastany and Executive Officer Robert Devine during a training break.