

*Office of the Governor
State of North Carolina*

*Roy Cooper
Governor*



20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-0301

May 15, 2019

Dear Sheriffs, Chiefs of Police, School Superintendents, Charter and Independent School Officials:

Just over one year ago the nation mourned the loss of seventeen lives in the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Florida. In the wake of the tragedy, I reached out to you about steps we should take as state leaders, law enforcement and education professionals to help prevent a similar event from happening in North Carolina.

Last month the horror and senseless violence of a school shooting happened here when a shooter opened fire on the campus of UNC-Charlotte, killing two students and injuring four. We join the families and friends and the entire UNC-Charlotte community to mourn the loss of Riley Howell and Ellis "Reed" Parlier, who died during the assault, and to pray for full recovery for those injured.

We also offer our sincere appreciation to the UNC-Charlotte campus, local and state first responders. They were well-prepared ahead of the incident and that preparation and training paid off in the immediate aftermath of the shooting. This tragedy underscores that school administrators should continue to include local law enforcement and emergency management agencies in their annual school-wide preparedness drills. These partnerships are vital to our ability to provide a coordinated response like we saw at UNC-Charlotte. In fact, UNC-Charlotte had participated in a violence on campus drill only about two months before the shooting actually happened.

It's also critical that educators, families and students share information regarding real or potential threats with school leaders and local law enforcement. Reporting suspicious activity to officials prevents tragedies and saves lives. We must continue to stress the message in our schools and our communities for people to speak up and report if they see a possible threat.

We owe it to North Carolina's students and their families to do everything we can to make our schools safe and secure places for students of all ages to learn, grow and thrive. The enclosed letter includes important updates from my Secretary of Public Safety, Erik Hooks, about what we are doing and can do to keep our students, schools and communities safe.

Thank you for your service to North Carolina and for your commitment to protecting our students so they can grow and lead productive lives.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roy Cooper".
Roy Cooper