Department of Criminal Justice Services

Virginia Center for School & Campus Safety

Presentation to the MSD

July 10, 2018

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

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Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

- Legislation
- Threat Assessment in Virginia
- School Resource Officers
- Data Collection/ Research
- School Safety Audits
- Resources
- Training
- Challenges/ Future Plans

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Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

- 132 public school superintendents
- 2,200 school administrators
- 4,500 assistant school administrators
- 120,000 teachers and school staff
- 69 colleges and universities
- 42 campus law enforcement agencies
- 367 law enforcement agencies
- 23,000 law enforcement officers
- 780 School Resource Officers
- 1,200 School Security Officers
- 600 Campus Security Officers

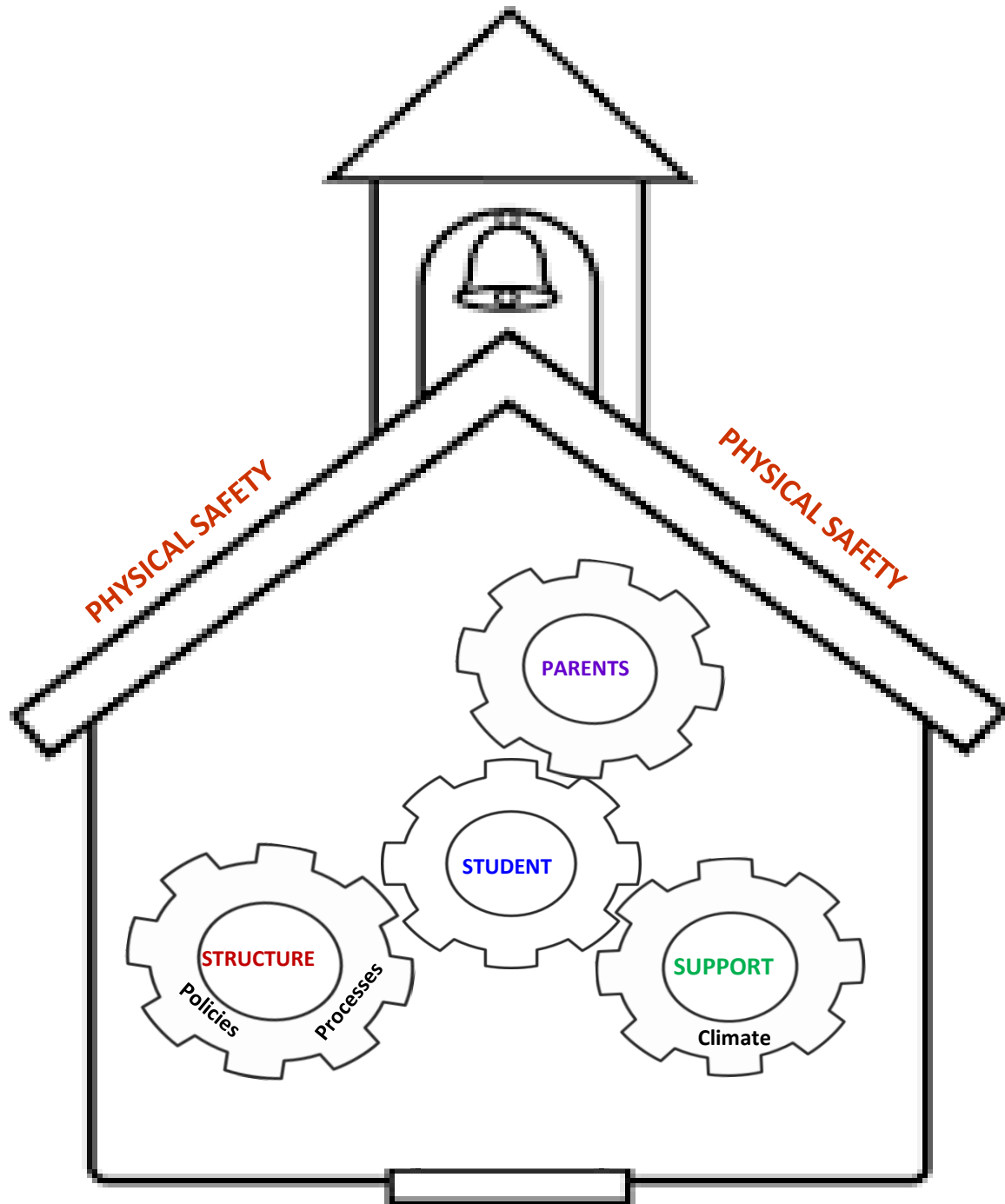# *Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety*

School Safety in Virginia

- Local educational control

- State Level Mandates
  - Physical (physical deterrents)
  - Structural (policies and processes)
  - Support (climate and engagement)

Legislation

Legislation

1999 - Columbine

2000

- Established the Virginia Center for School Safety (Va. Code § 9.1-184)

- Placed at DCJS

- Provide services to K-12 public schools

Legislation

Center is responsible for:

K12

- Providing **training** for all school personnel
- Serving as a **resource and referral center** and providing technical assistance for Virginia school divisions
- Facilitating the annual **school safety audit** pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-279.8
- **Maintaining and disseminating information** to local school divisions on effective school safety initiatives in Virginia and across the nation
- Encouraging **development of partnerships** to promote school safety in Virginia

Legislation

- 2004- School Safety Audits
- 2004, 2006 – School and Campus Security Officer training and certification
- 2008 - Higher Education Threat Assessment Teams
- 2012 – Sandy Hook

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Legislation

2013 – **School and Campus Safety Task Force**

- Plethora of other changes to include:
    - Renamed the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety
    - **K12 Threat Assessment teams**
    - Critical Incident Response Curriculum
    - Emergency managers
    - Model Policies and Procedures
    - Lockdown drills

2015 – Center for Public Integrity -Governor's Children's Cabinet

- School- Law Enforcement Partnership Guide and Model MOU

Threat Assessment in Virginia Public Schools

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Threat Assessment

- Threat Assessment is a **preventative system**, not punitive, meant to intervene with individuals posing a risk of harm to self or others and get them off of a pathway to violence.

- Emphasis on "posing" a threat versus "making a threat"

- Behavior driven

Threat Assessment

VIRGINIA CARES FOR SCHOOLS & CAMPUSES

C.A.R.E.S. involves communities working together to build:

Caring & Connection

Awareness

Recognition

Engagement

Support

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Threat Assessment

- After Columbine, many K-12 schools across the country implemented threat assessment voluntarily.

- In 2008, after the Virginia Tech tragedy, Virginia mandated threat assessment teams and violence prevention committees in institutions of higher education.
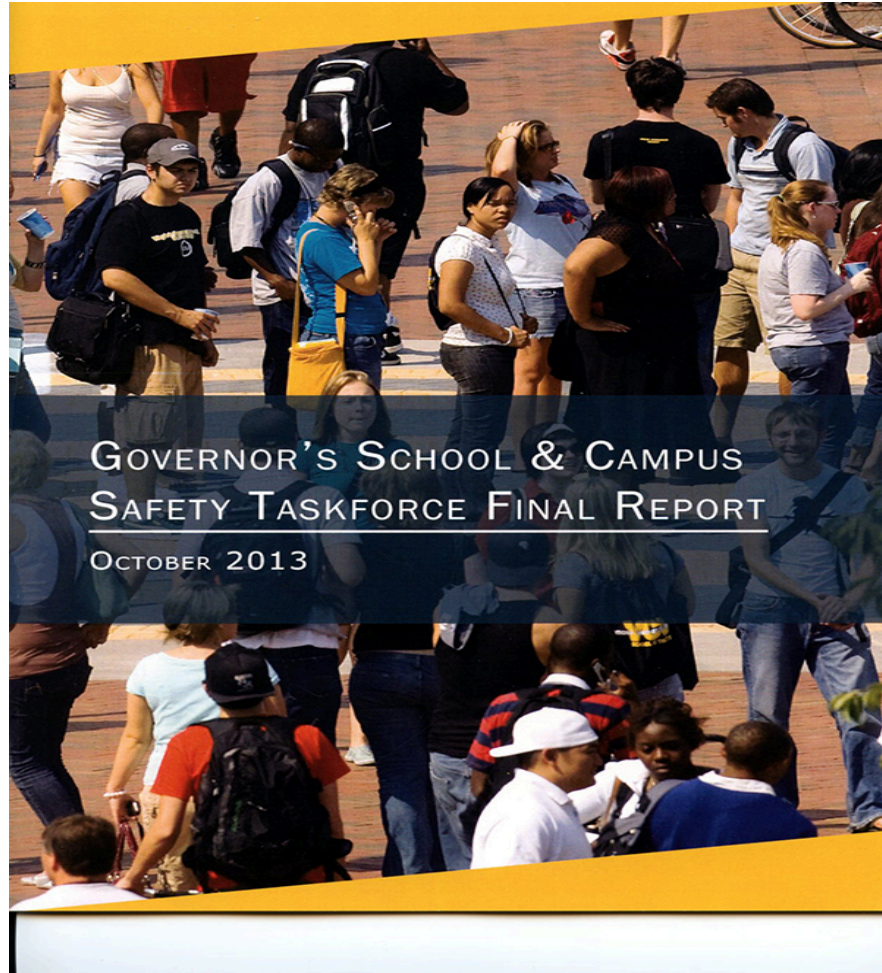
Threat Assessment

Governor's School and Campus Safety Task Force

- Convened in the aftermath of Sandy Hook

- Made 61 recommendations

- Concluded its work on September 30, 2013

- 2013 General Assembly enacted many legislative actions

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Legislation

Virginia law (§ 22.1-79.4) requires threat assessment teams for public schools:

- Each local school board shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams
  - Including the assessment of and intervention with **individuals** whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students
  - Consistent with the model policies developed by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety in accordance with § 9.1-184.
  - Such policies must include procedures for referrals to community service boards and health providers where appropriate.

Legislation

The superintendent of each school division shall establish a threat assessment team for each school.

- Each team shall include persons with expertise in:
    – Counseling
    – Instruction
    – School administration
    – Law enforcement
- Threat assessment teams may serve more than one school (as determined by the superintendent).

Legislation

Each threat assessment team shall:

- Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff on recognizing threatening/aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self;

- Identify members of the school community to whom threats should be reported;

- Implement policies adopted by the school board for threat assessment;

- Report quantitative data on its activities according to guidance developed by the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

Legislation

Upon a preliminary determination that a **student** poses a threat of violence or physical harm to **self or others**, the team shall:

- Immediately report its determination to the division superintendent or designee.

- The division superintendent or designee shall immediately attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian.

- Nothing in this subsection shall preclude school division personnel from acting immediately to address an imminent threat.

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Legislation

- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exemptions in place,

- Information concerning security plans and specific assessment components of school safety audits, as provided in § 22.1-279.8.

- Records received by the Department of Criminal Justice Services pursuant to §§ 9.1-184, 22.1-79.4, and 22.1-279.8 or for purposes of evaluating threat assessment teams to the extent such records reveal security plans, walk-through checklists, or vulnerability and threat assessment components.

Legislation

Access to health records and adult and juvenile criminal records

- Central Criminal Records Exchange

- to members of a threat assessment team established by a school board pursuant to § 22.1-79.4, by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805, or by a private nonprofit institution of higher education, to aid in the assessment or intervention with individuals whose behavior may present a threat to safety

Legislation

Access to health records and adult and juvenile criminal records

Exceptions to health records privacy:

- Health care entities may, and, when required by other provisions of state law, shall, disclose health records:

- To a threat assessment team established by a local school board pursuant to § 22.1-79.4, by a public institution of higher education pursuant to § 23.1-805, or by a private nonprofit institution of higher education;

Legislation

Higher Education Threat Assessment Teams

• http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title23.1/chapter8/section23.1-805/

K12 Threat Assessment Teams

• http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter7/section22.1-79.4/

• http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title9.1/chapter1/section9.1-184/

• http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title19.2/chapter23/section19.2-389.1/

• http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title16.1/chapter11/section16.1-301/

• http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3705.2/

• http://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title2.2/chapter37/section2.2-3705.4/

• https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/32.1-127.1:03/

SRO Role in Virginia K12 Threat Assessment Teams

Virginia SRO Program

- SROs in Virginia schools in mid 1980s
- DCJS began funding SROS through Byrne funding in mid 1990s and offering SRO training
- Provide services to K-12 public schools

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Legislation

§ 9.1-101 defines a SRO **FOR purposes of grant funding:**

- A certified law-enforcement officer

- Hired by local law-enforcement agency

- Provides law-enforcement and security services to public elementary and secondary schools

- Police Departments and Sheriff's Offices can place any officer in a school as they deem appropriate.

- There is not a separate certification for SROs

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Legislation

§ 9.1-101 defines a SSO:

- Employed by local school board

- Maintains order and discipline, prevents crime, investigates violations of school board policies

- Detains students violating the law or school board policies on school property or at school-sponsored events

- Ensures safety, security, and welfare of school students, faculty, staff and visitors

Schools in Virginia 2015-2017

Type of School	2015	2016	2017
Elementary	1,106	1,111	1,104
Middle	341	337	338
High	319	315	317
Other	194	198	197
Total Schools	1,960	1,961	1,956

Source: DCJS 2017 Statewide School Safety Audit Survey

Total Number of Schools with Full-Time School Resource Officers

Type of School	2015	2016	2017
Elementary	**34** (3%)	**43** (4%)	**37** (3%)
Middle	**248** (72%)	**246** (73%)	**231** (68%)
High	**271** (85%)	**266** (84%)	**250** (79%)
Other	**57** (29%)	**62** (31%)	**66** (34%)
Total Schools	**610** (31%)	**617** (31%)	**584** (30%)

Source: DCJS 2017 Statewide School Safety Audit Survey

Total Number of Schools with Part-Time School Resource Officers

Type of School	2015	2016	2017
Elementary	**326** (29%)	**342** (31%)	**334** (30%)
Middle	**58** (17%)	**67** (20%)	**58** (17%)
High	**29** (9%)	**29** (9%)	**28** (9%)
Other	**52** (27%)	**51** (26%)	**43** (21%)
Total Schools	**465** (24%)	**489** (25%)	**463** (24%)

Source: DCJS 2017 Statewide School Safety Audit Survey

Total Number of Schools with FT and PT School Resource Officers

Type of School	2015	2016	2017
Elementary	358 (32%)	381 (34%)	371 (34%)
Middle	305 (89%)	305 (91%)	286 (85%)
High	298 (93%)	291 (92%)	276 (87%)
Other	106 (55%)	109 (55%)	107 5(4%)
Total Schools	1067 (54%)	1086 (55%)	1040 (53%)

Source: DCJS 2017 Statewide School Safety Audit Survey

Total Number of Schools with Full-Time School Security Officers

Type of School	2015	2016	2017
Elementary	64 (6%)	71 (6%)	58 (5%)
Middle	97 (28%)	89 (26%)	85 (25%)
High	141 (44%)	135 (43%)	124 (39%)
Other	38 (20%)	43 (22%)	38 (19%)
Total Schools	340 (17%)	338 (17%)	305 (16%)

Source: DCJS 2017 Statewide School Safety Audit Survey

DCJS

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§ 22.1-280.2:1

- within 10 years immediately prior to being hired by the local school board he was an active law-enforcement officer as defined in § 9.1-101 in the Commonwealth;

- school board grants him the authority to carry a firearm

- retired or resigned from his position as a law-enforcement officer in good standing;

Legislation

- meets the training and qualifications described in subsection C of § 18.2-308.016;

- provided proof of completion of a training course that includes training in active shooter emergency response, emergency evacuation procedure, and threat assessment to DCJS

Legislation

- local school board solicits input from the chief law-enforcement officer of the locality regarding the qualifications of the school security officer and receives verification from such chief law-enforcement officer that the school security officer is not prohibited by state or federal law from possessing, purchasing, or transporting a firearm;

Threat Assessment

- Each team shall include persons with expertise in:
    - Counseling
    - Instruction
    - School administration
    - **Law enforcement**

- Law enforcement role is critical to the operation of the team.

Threat Assessment

- SROs are a vital link between the schools and community and can provide valuable resources to assist the family and connect them to services.

- LEOs/SRO's are intimately familiar with the ECO process as well as CPS and can facilitate those connections as appropriate

Threat Assessment

- LEOs/SROs are experienced in dealing with youth in crisis and can be a stabilizing influence.

- Some students may find SROs safer to open up with than MHPs in schools or school administrators.

Data Collection and Research

Annual Safety Audit Process
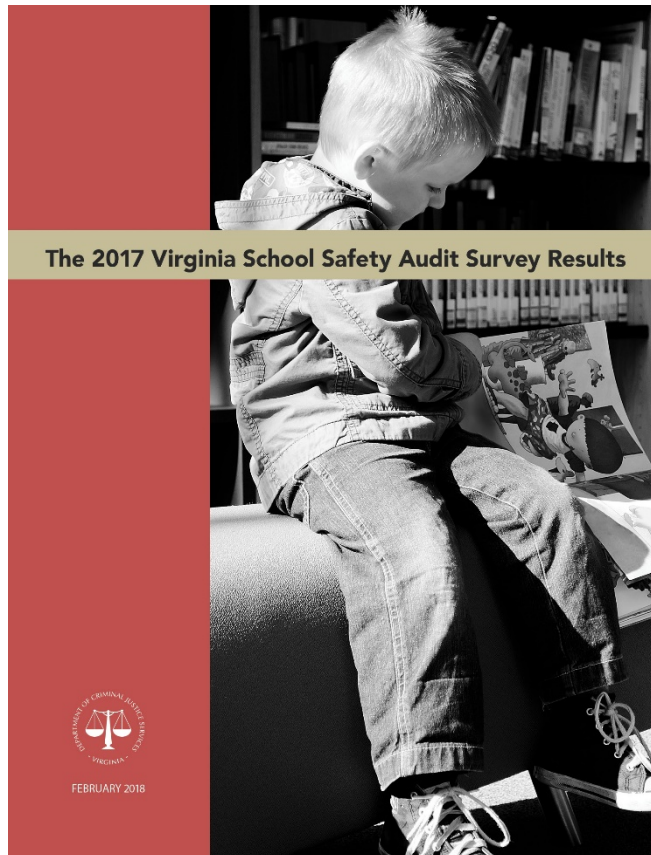
The 2017 Virginia School Safety Audit Survey Results

FEBRUARY 2018

School Climate and Safety in Virginia High Schools:
Technical Report of the Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey, 2014 Results for 9th–12th Grade Students and Teachers

August 14, 2014

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Safety Audit

- Collect, analyze, and disseminate various Virginia school safety data, including school safety audit information submitted to it pursuant to § [22.1-279.8](#), collected by the Department;

- **§ 22.1-79.4. Threat assessment teams and oversight committees.**

  - E. Each threat assessment team established pursuant to this section shall report quantitative data on its activities according to guidance developed by the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

Data Collection

1. **Virginia School Safety Survey** (completed online annually)

2. **Division Level Survey** (every 3 years)

3. **Virginia School Crisis Management Plan Review and Certification** (annually by August 31)

4. **Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey** (administered in the Spring alternating middle and high schools)

5. **School Safety Inspection Checklist** (every 3 years)

Data Collection

- Facilitate the annual school safety audit pursuant to Va. Code § 22.1-279.8

- Audit data provides picture of school safety in Virginia to drive best practices and improve school safety for school administrators and first responders

- Threat assessment teams shall report quantitate data on their activities
Va. Code § 22.1-79.4(E)

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2016-17 Data

- Nearly two-thirds of schools (1,285, 66%) reported conducting one or more threat assessments in 2016–2017.

- These schools conducted a total of 9,238 threat assessments, most of which involved students currently enrolled at the schools (9,087, 98%).

Data Collection

2016-17 Data

- Half of the threats from current students involved threats against self only (suicide, self harm), 45% involved threats against others only, and 5% involved threats against others and self.

Data Collection

Number of Threat Assessment Cases, by Subject of Assessment

Subject of Assessment	Number of TA Cases Conducted
Student from your school	9,087
Student not from your school	25
Student formerly from your school	24
Faculty/staff currently employed by your school	36
Faculty/staff formerly employed by your school	8
Parent/guardian of a student	50
Someone else	8
Total	9,238

Data Collection

- <u>Threats involving current students</u>
- The schools that reported threat assessments involving students currently enrolled in their school were asked to identify the type of threat made by the student(s). The 1,161 schools that conducted 8,168 threat assessments involving these students reported the following:
- Threatened self only   4,085 cases (50%)
- Threatened other(s) only   3,640 cases (45%)
- Threatened other(s) and self   443 cases (5%)

Data Collection

2016-17

- Just over one-third of schools reported that no threat assessments were conducted: 671 schools (34%)
- Schools reporting that no threat assessments were conducted, by school type:
- 38% of elementary schools,
- 22% of middle schools,
- 19% of high schools, and
- 58% of other schools.

Data Collection

2016-17 Data

- 76 schools reported threat assessments involving "other persons" (those who were not students enrolled at their school in 2016– 2017).
- Of these assessments, most involved threats against others only (82%), 13% involved threats against self only, and 5% involved threats against others and self.

Data Collection

- <u>Threats involving others (not current students)</u>
- Schools were also asked to identify the type of threat made in cases involving other persons (those who were not students enrolled at their school). The 76 schools that conducted 141 threat assessments involving these persons reported the following:
- Threatened other(s) only   116 cases (82%)
- Threatened self only   18 cases (13%)
- Threatened other(s) and self   7 cases (5%)

Data Collection

2016-17 Data

- 928 threat assessments classified at the highest threat level at some point in the threat assessment process (imminent/high risk, very serious substantive).

- In most of these (96%) the threat was ultimately averted (the threat did not occur).

- Of the 40 high level threat cases where an event occurred, nearly half (18) involved suicide attempts by students.

Data Collection

- Among the highest level threats that were assessed, the rate among elementary schools was lowest (1.77 HLTs assessments per school) and the rates among middle, high and other schools were higher, and were the same among the three types of schools (2.90 per school).

Data Collection

- *In summary, of the reported 9,238 threat assessment cases conducted in 2016-2017, 928 (10%) were classified as a highest level threat (HLT) by 380 schools, and among those HLT cases, 40 (<1%) resulted in an act being carried out at 27 schools.*

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Data Collection

Safety Audit – Climate Survey

What is the purpose of the survey?

- to provide schools with information on school climate and safety conditions in order to maintain a safe and orderly school environment conducive to learning

- measures student and teacher/staff perceptions of school rules and discipline, teacher-student relationships, student engagement in school, and the extent of bullying and teasing at school

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Data Collection

Safety Audit

"a **written assessment** of the safety conditions in each public school to

    (i) **identify** and **if necessary**, **develop solutions** for **physical safety concerns**, including building security issues and

    (ii) **identify and evaluate any patterns of student safety concerns** occurring on school property or at school sponsored events. Solutions and responses shall include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to the school board's standards for student conduct."

Student Perceptions of Safety
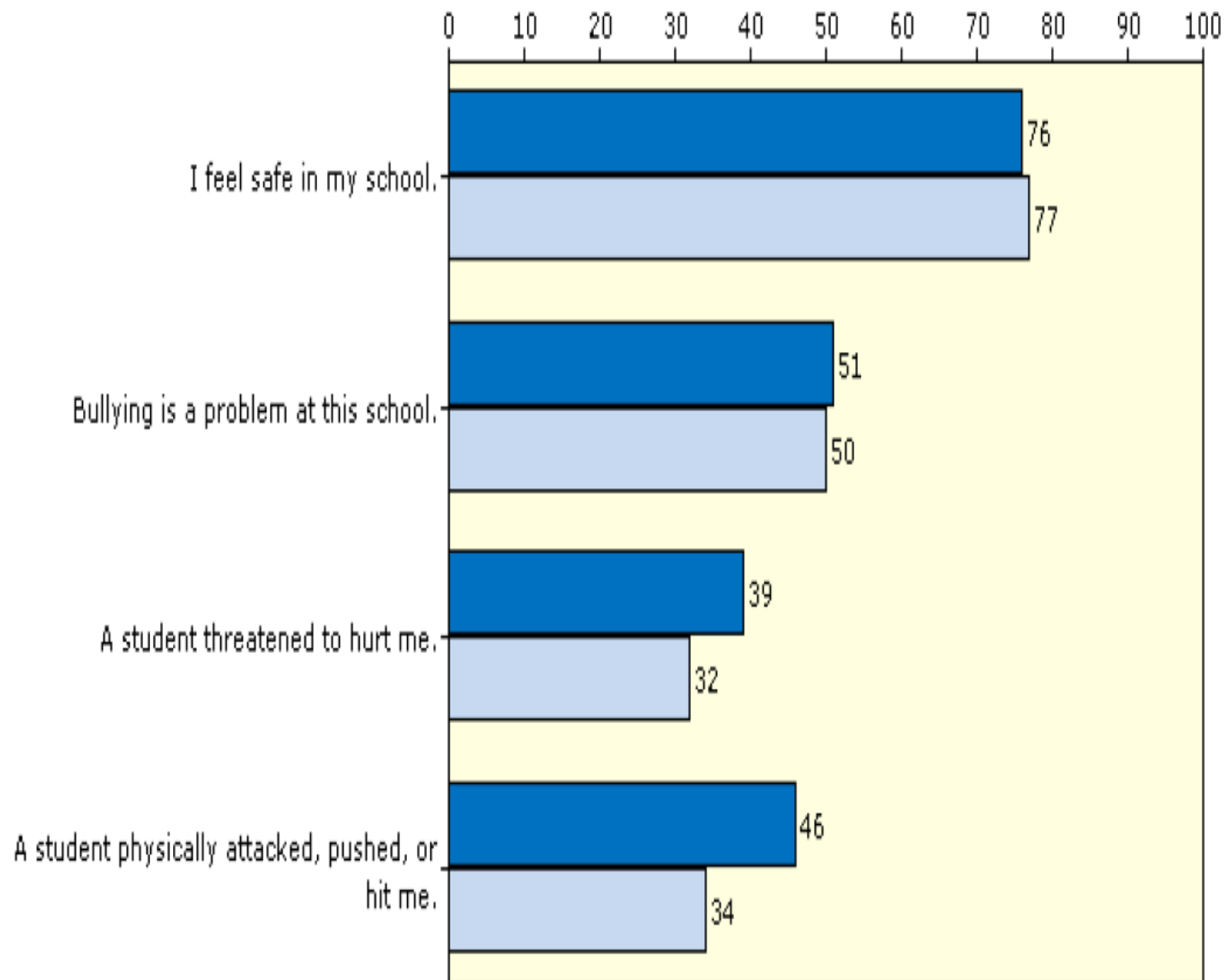
Climate Survey Summary
A Virginia High School

Student Support Scale Most teachers and other adults at this school…	School	Region	State
Care about all students.	65%	63%	74%
Want all students to do well.	79%	81%	86%
Listen to what students have to say.	50%	50%	61%
Treat students with respect.	60%	63%	74%
How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?			
There are adults at this school I could talk with if I had a personal problem.	77%	73%	76%
If I tell a teacher that someone is bullying me, the teacher will do something to help.	76%	75%	84%
I am comfortable asking my teachers for help with my school work.	80%	83%	86%
There is at least one teacher or other adult at this school who really wants me to do well.	95%	94%	95%
Average for 8 items above	2.8	2.8	3
Additional items not included in overall scale, but relevant to safety.			
If another student talked about killing someone, I would tell one of the teachers or staff at school.	77%	76%	81%
If another student brought a gun to school, I would tell one of the teachers or staff at school.	80%	80%	88%
I feel safe in my school.	72%	67%	82%

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Data Collection

Climate Survey – Student Results

- Most students (74%) reported that they feel safe in their school.

- One reason why some students might not feel safe is that 34% of all students reported that bullying is a problem at their school and 5% reported being bullied once or more per week at school this year.

- Many students reported that students are teased or put down about their clothing or physical appearance (61%), sexual topics (54%), sexual orientation (38%), and race or ethnicity (31%).

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Data Collection

Climate Survey - Student Results

- A substantial number of students reported that another student stole something from them (36%), physically attacked, pushed, or hit them (21%), or threatened to hurt them (26%) at school this year.

- Fewer than half (28%) of students who reported being teased or bullied at school told a teacher or other adult what happened

Climate Survey- Student Results

- Nearly one-fifth (17%) of students reported that they had been bullied at least once in the past year by a teacher or other adult at school.

- Approximately six percent of students reported being bullied in this way about once a week or more.

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Data Collection

Climate Survey- Student Results

- Staff were asked whether they had observed a teacher or another adult at school engage in bullying a student.
- Staff agreed (somewhat to strongly agree) that there are teachers or other adults at their school who make fun of students (25%), say things that make students feel badly (36%), and pick on certain students (23%).

Data Collection

Climate Survey- Student Results

- Students endorsed the view that most teachers (and other adults at school) want all students to do well (93%), care about all students (88%), and treat students with respect (80%).

- Approximately 95% of students reported that there was at least one teacher or other adult at their school who really wants them to do well and 81% said there was an adult at school they could talk with if they had a personal problem.

Climate Survey – Student Results

- Majority have favorable perceptions of their school's rules and disciplinary procedures.
- Students reported that their school rules are fair (61%), that the punishment for breaking school rules is the same for all students (61%), and that students are treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnicity (78%).

Climate Survey – Student Results

Strong student engagement in school was reflected in the high percentages of students who said they liked school (78%), are proud to be a student at their school (77%), and feel like they belong at their school (72%).

Data Collection

Climate Survey – Staff Results

A majority of staff reported that they feel physically safe at their school (69%), but fewer than half feel that there is adequate safety and security at their school (47%).

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Climate Survey – Staff Results

- Staff reported less teasing and bullying than do students.
- Only 9% of staff agreed that bullying is a problem at their school, and relatively few agreed that students are teased or put down about their clothing or physical appearance (11%), sexual topics (12%), sexual orientation (8%), and race or ethnicity (8%).

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Climate Survey – Staff Results

The majority (63%) of staff reported that their students treat them with respect. They were asked about their experiences of aggressive behavior in their interactions with students, parents, and colleagues.

Climate Survey – Staff Results

Staff reported that a student engaged in the following actions at least once during the school year:

- Said mean or insulting things to them (59%)
- Stole personal property (21%)
- Threatened to hurt them (13%)
- Physically attacked, pushed, or hit them (6%)
- Threatened them with a weapon (1%).

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Data Collection

Climate Survey – Staff Results

School resource officers.

- Nearly all staff (98%) reported that their school had a school resource
- 54% reporting that they interacted with the officer weekly or every day,
- 17% reporting they never interacted with the officer.
- A large majority of staff agreed (somewhat to strongly) that the SRO makes a positive contribution to the school (91%) and makes them feel safer at school (87%).

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Research

- National Institute of Justice Grants with the University of Virginia focusing on School Climate and Threat Assessment

- National Institute of Justice Grant with Virginia Tech focusing on the School to Prison Pipeline

- National Institute of Justice grant to study School Resource Officers

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Resources

Resource Development and Technical Assistance Tools

1. Publications

2. Videos

3. Guidance

4. Curriculum to support sustainability of trainings

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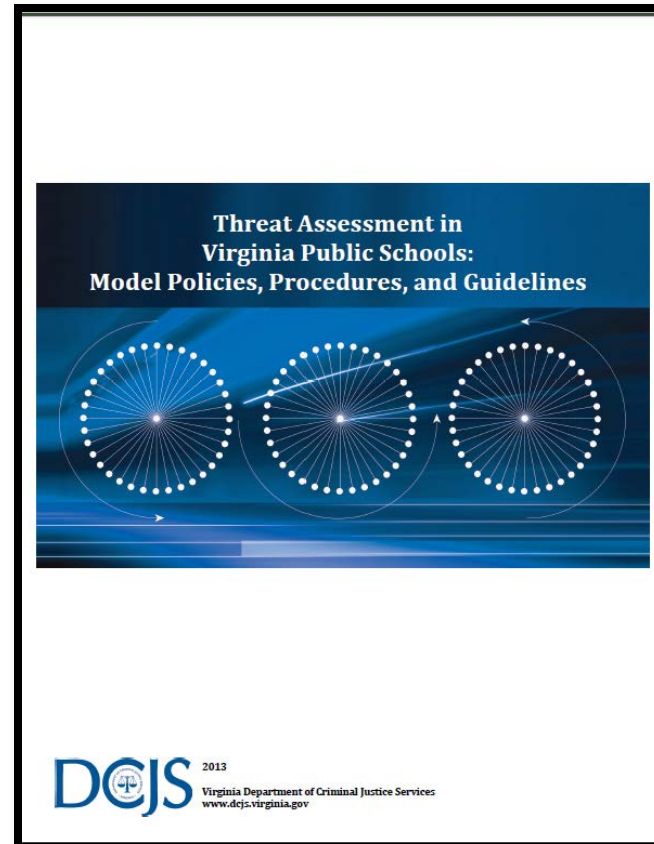
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Resources

- **<u>DCJS MODEL POLICIES</u>:** A synthesis of best current practices and information, developed by Policy Works, Ltd
  - *not* intended to be prescriptive. Although required to adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams, local school boards have authority to establish any policies or procedures that are consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

- **<u>DCJS Higher Ed and K12 CURRICULUM</u>:**
  - RFP conducted for both
  - Developed by Threat Assessment Resources International and Sigma Threat Management
  - K12 version is based upon the model policies

Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

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Resources

K-12 Threat Assessment in Virginia

A Prevention Overview for School Staff, Parents, and Community Members

- K12 Threat Assessment Prevention Manual & Video

Resources

- Critical Incident Response Video and Accompanying Manual
- *Guidance for Emergency Manager Designee*
- *Guidance for School Systems in the Event That Victims Arise from an Emergency*
- *Guidance on Required Drill*
- *Juvenile Law Handbook*
- *K12 Threat Assessment: A Prevention Overview Video and Accompanying Manual*
- *Model School Resource Officer (SRO) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Program Guide*
- *School – Law Enforcement Partnership Guide*
- *School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical Emergency Response Plan and Quick Guide*
- *School Safety Audit Infographic*
- *School Safety Audit Template for Divisions*
- *School Safety Audit Template for Schools*
- School Safety Inspection Checklist
- Threat Assessment Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines
- *Technical Assistance for Threat Assessment and Management Teams*
- *Threat Assessment Video and Accompanying Manual*
- *Virginia's Educator's Guide to Conducting Drills*
- *Virginia School Bus Driver and Monitor Video and Manual*

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Resources

- John More, Response Law, LLC
- Multiple workshops and trainings including
  - SABeR
  - K 12 Threat Assessment: Legal Aspects of Threat Assessment Teams

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Resources

Threat Management Consultant

- Dr. Gene Deisinger, Sigma Threat Management
- Nationally recognized expert
- Agency developed model protocols and policies
- TA Instructor

Resources

- Threat Assessment Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines.pdf
  Threat Assessment Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines.docx
- School Threat Assessment Training: Participant Manual
- Fillable Threat Assessment Form (Word)
- K12 Threat Assessment: A Prevention Overview
- Fillable Threat Assessment Form (2016)
- K12 Threat Assessment Updates (Summer 2016)
- K12 Threat Assessment Video
- Request for Service Technical Assistance for Threat Assessment and Management Teams
- Technical Assistance for Threat Assessment and Management Teams for Virginia Schools and Institutions of Higher Education

School
Threat Assessment Training:

Using DCJS Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

What is Threat Assessment?

A systematic process that is designed to:

1 • **IDENTIFY** situations / subjects of concern

2 • **INQUIRE/INVESTIGATE** & gather information

3 • **ASSESS** situation

4 • **MANAGE** the situation / mitigate risk

Threat Assessment

- Threat assessment involves asking: Is this subject on a pathway toward violence?

- Using a team can be particularly effective for gathering and evaluating information, and intervening if necessary.

- Threat assessment and management is not typically an adversarial process.

- Engagement with a subject of concern can be critical to preventing violence or harm.

Threat Assessment Process

Threat assessment is fact-based and deductive:

Facts → **Conclusions** → **Strategies**

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Goal of Threat Assessment

The primary goal of threat assessment is the **safety** of all persons involved.

Counseling, support, confrontation, termination, arrest, prosecution, etc., are tools to reach that goal.

Rationale for
Threat Assessment Approach

Assumptions & Principles

- There are certain assumptions that provide rationale for the school threat assessment model.

- These assumptions come from major research on school shootings and other acts of targeted violence, as well as research on threat assessment.

- The principles that govern threat assessment are derived from decades of research and practice in assessing and managing threatening situations.

Safe School Initiative Findings

1. Prior to the attacks, others usually knew of attacker's idea/plan.

2. Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to the attack.

3. School-based attacks are rarely sudden, impulsive acts

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of Targeted School Violence in the U.S.* (2002).

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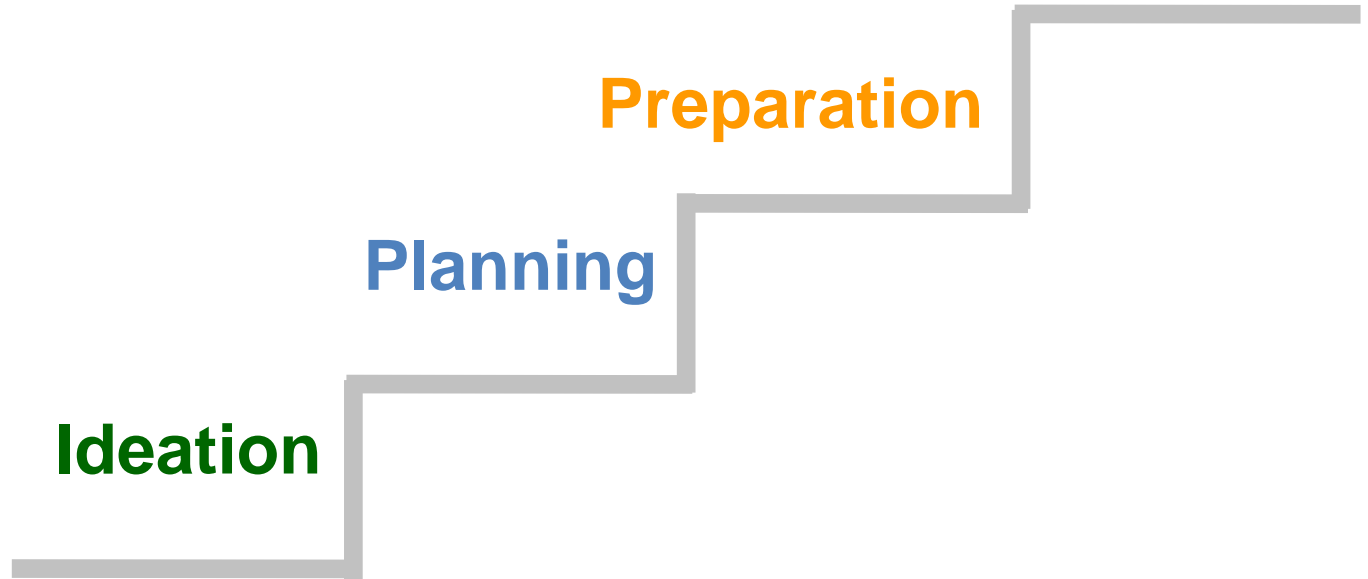Criminal Justice Services**
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Pathway to Violence

Implementation

Preparation

Planning

Ideation

Safe School Initiative Findings

4. Most attackers had seriously concerned others in their lives prior to the attack.

5. Most attackers had significant difficulties with losses or failures. Many were suicidal.

6. There is no accurate or useful profile of a school shooter

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of Targeted School Violence in the U.S.* (2002).

Safe School Initiative Findings

7. Many felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack.

8. Most attackers had access to weapons – and has used weapons -- prior to the attack.

9. In many cases, others were involved in some capacity.

10. Despite prompt law enforcement response, most incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention. Most were very brief in duration.

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Implications for Prevention

- Many school attacks/crime can be prevented.

- Information about a subject's ideas and plans for violence can be observed or discovered before harm can occur.

- But information available is likely to be scattered and fragmented.

- Key is to act quickly upon an initial report of concern, gather other pieces of the puzzle, then assemble to see what picture emerges.

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Guiding Principles of Threat Assessment

- Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and oftentimes discernible, process of thinking and behavior.

- Targeted violence stems from an interaction among the:
  - **S**ubject
  - **T**arget(s)
  - **E**nvironment
  - **P**recipitating events.

- A skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.

Guiding Principles of Threat Assessment

- Effective threat assessment is based upon facts, rather than upon characteristics or "traits."

- The central question in a threat assessment inquiry is whether an individual <u>poses</u> a threat (i.e., is building the capability to cause harm), not just whether the person has <u>made</u> a threat (directly expressed intent to harm).

- An "integrated systems approach" should guide threat assessment & management inquiries and interventions.

Developing and Operating a Threat Assessment Team

Identifying and Reporting Threats

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How to Conduct a Threat Assessment

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Key Questions

1. What are the subject's motive(s) and goals? / What first brought him/her to someone's attention?

2. Have there been any communications suggesting ideas or intent to attack?

3. Has the subject shown any inappropriate interest in targeted attacks/attackers, weapons, incidents of mass violence?

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates* (2002).

Key Questions

4. Has the subject engaged in attack-related behaviors or are they developing. Does the subject have the capacity to carry out an act of targeted violence?

5. Is the subject experiencing hopelessness, desperation, and/or despair?

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates* (2002).

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Key Questions

6. Does the subject have a trusting relationship with at least one responsible adult?

7. Does the subject see violence as an acceptable, desirable – or the only – way to solve a problem?

8. Are the subject's conversation and "story" consistent with his or her actions?

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, *Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates* (2002).

Key Questions

9. Are other people concerned about the subject's potential for violence?

10. What circumstances might affect the likelihood of violence?

Source: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and Creating Safe School Climates (2002).

Classifying the Threat and Threat Case Management

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Classifying the Threat

- **Low Risk**: Subject/situation does not appear to pose a threat and any exhibited issues/concerns can be resolved easily.
- **Moderate Risk**: Subject/situation does not appear to pose a threat but exhibits behaviors that indicate a continuing intent or potential for future violence; and/or exhibits other concerning behavior that requires intervention.
- **High Risk**: Subject/situation appears to pose a threat, exhibiting behaviors that indicate a continuing intent to harm and efforts to prepare to carry out the plan; and may also exhibit other concerning behavior that require intervention.
- **Imminent**: Subject/situation appears to pose a significant and immediate threat of serious violence toward others that requires containment and action to protect identified target(s).

Responding by Threat Level

Legal Issues and Confidentiality

Reporting & Record Keeping

Steps for Implementing Threat Assessment in Your School

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Enhancing School Climates

Enhancing School Climate

- Assess and enhance school climate:
  - Surveys for faculty, staff, students, parents, others
  - Data-driven enhancements
  - Student input for solutions and implementation
- Connection with all students:
  - Powerful protective factor
  - Low-cost or no-cost options

Trainings and Conferences

Trainings and Conferences

School Safety

Campus Safety

Public Safety

Mixed Audience

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Trainings and Conferences

Annually:

- 6-8 conferences

- 150 training events

- 6,000- 8,000 constituents

Trainings and Conferences

Conferences

- School Safety Training Forum
- Campus Safety & Violence Prevention Forum
- The Briefings: A School Safety Symposium
- Virginia Threat Assessment Conference
- Strengthening Connections: School Climate Conference

Trainings and Conferences

Trainings

– School Climate Training Forum

– SRO- SSO-School Administrator courses

– K-12 Basic, Applied and TTT Threat Assessment (1-2 days)

– Legal Issues Concerning K12 Threat Assessment

– Identification of Aberrant Behavior

Trainings and Conferences

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

- Mental Health First Aid (Youth, Higher Education, Public Safety, and Adult)

- Disability Awareness for Law Enforcement Officers (TTT)

- Trauma Informed Classrooms and Schools

Trainings and Conferences

School Safety

- School Resource Officer and School Administrator Training
- Adult Sexual Misconduct in Schools
- Bomb Threat Management in Schools
- Human Trafficking for Schools
- K12 Threat Assessment
- Legal and Liability Considerations in School Safety
- Gang Awareness for School Personnel
- Title IX Investigations and the Role of the Office for Civil Rights

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Trainings and Conferences

School Safety

- Next Steps in Crisis Management Planning
- Critical Incident Response
- Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events
- Social Media for Educators
- Title IX Investigations and the Role of the Office for Civil Rights
- Drug Abuse Awareness and Prevention
- Trauma Informed Discipline Practices
- Restorative Justice Practices
- Impact of Implicit Biases

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Trainings and Conferences

Campus Safety

- Basic & Advanced Campus Threat Assessment

- Campus Crime Prevention

- Enhancing the Campus & Community Response to Adult Sexual Assault

- Trauma Informed Sexual Assault Investigations

- Investigation of Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, and Stalking for Campus Police

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Trainings and Conferences

Campus Safety

- Title IX Investigations
- Managing Critical Incidents for Higher Education Institutions
- Mental Health First Aid for Higher Education
- Strategic Legal Guidelines for University Police Operations

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Trainings and Conferences

Public Safety

- Financial Investigations in Heroin and Opioid Abuse

- Dynamics of Officer /Citizen Encounters

- Interview and Interrogation Skills

- Animal Cruelty and Fighting Investigations

- Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs)

Trainings and Conferences

Public Safety

- Law Enforcement First Responders Training Program

- Sovereign Citizens Movement Training

- Gang Awareness and Investigation Training

- Fair and Impartial Policing Training Human Trafficking Investigations

- Introduction to Domestic Extremism and Hate Groups

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Trainings and Conferences

Mixed Audience

- Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training

- Social Media Awareness

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Challenges

Challenges

- **Need dedicated staff at state level to orchestrate rollout**
- No legislative mandate to provide training assigned to any agency
- **Ongoing need for training due to turnover in localities**
- Continual need to keep resources updated and current
- **Need for grant writing and research opportunities to examine collected data**

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Challenges

- **Need online training for hard to reach constituencies (teachers)**

- Lack of qualified trainers within school divisions necessary for sustainability

- **Lack of centralized school division personnel to oversee and support school threat assessment teams.**

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Challenges

- Lack for dedicated funding stream
- **Lack of formalized legal guidance around information sharing and other legal issues in published documents**
- Lack of cooperation (knowledge) with mental health providers
- **Need for qualified subject matter experts**

Future Plans

- **Seeking dedicated staff at state level to support school divisions**

- **Community Behavioral Threat Assessment Team Trainings**

- Case Management Tool

- **Cadre of threat assessment trainers for sustainability**

- Funding – for continual training, resource updates

Future Plans

- **Development of online learning modules**

- Publication of "white papers" / FAQs for sensitive issues and information sharing questions

Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety

We are here to help!
www.dcjs.virginia.gov

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