

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

AVERTED SCHOOL VIOLENCE SPECIAL REPORT



COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

iaclea

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS

AVERTED SCHOOL VIOLENCE SPECIAL REPORT



This project was supported, in whole or in part, by cooperative agreement 2018-CK-WX-0024 awarded to the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The opinions contained herein are those of the author(s) or contributor(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific individuals, agencies, companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement by the author(s), the contributor(s), or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

The internet references cited in this publication were valid as of the date of publication. Given that URLs and websites are in constant flux, neither the author(s), the contributor(s), nor the COPS Office can vouch for their current validity.

This resource was developed under a federal award and may be subject to copyright. The U.S. Department of Justice reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use and to authorize others to use this resource for Federal Government purposes. This resource may be freely distributed and used for noncommercial and educational purposes only.

Recommended citation:

Allison, Jeff, Mo Canady, and Frank G. Straub. 2020. *School Resource Officers: Averted School Violence Special Report*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

Published 2020

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Letter from the Director of the COPS Office | v |
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Background..... | 5 |
| Case Studies..... | 7 |
| Teen arrested for threatening multiple schools in two states | 8 |
| Freshman with full plan to engage in school shooting reported by friends..... | 10 |
| Student helps stop planned homicide of fellow student..... | 11 |
| Behavioral specialist and SRO stop potential shooter..... | 12 |
| SRO and backup officers mortally wound potential school shooter..... | 14 |
| Student accused of threatening mass shooting at school | 15 |
| Student arrested after threatening school | 16 |
| Four students arrested after one brought a gun to school | 18 |
| Student planned mass violence attack at high school..... | 19 |
| SRO alerted about school shooting plan through anonymous tip..... | 21 |
| Student arrested for threat and gun at school..... | 23 |
| Student arrested for threatening explosion and mass shooting..... | 24 |
| Lessons Learned | 27 |
| Conclusion | 29 |
| References | 31 |
| About the Authors | 33 |
| About the COPS Office..... | 35 |



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE COPS OFFICE

Colleagues:

Communities across the country are responding to school violence with a number of measures, including assigned school resource officers (SRO). School administrations, law enforcement agencies, families, and community stakeholders are diligently working to protect children and education personnel from school attacks. The National Police Foundation (NPF), in collaboration with the COPS Office, created the Averted School Violence (ASV) database in 2015 as a platform for law enforcement, school staff, and mental health professionals to share information about ASV incidents and lessons learned with the goal of mitigating and ultimately preventing future injuries and fatalities in educational institutions. The database includes school incidents beginning with the Columbine High School attack (1999) and continuing to the present day.

The NPF has partnered with stakeholder groups National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA) to conduct research and analysis on improving school safety. This report examines a dozen case studies of targeted violence incidents thwarted by the positive and often heroic actions of classmates, school administrators, SROs, and law enforcement agencies. It also includes recommendations and lessons learned from all cases in the ASV database. In addition, a companion publication entitled *Targeted Violence Averted: College and University Case Studies* presents information on post-secondary averted violence incidents and lessons learned to support student safety.

I urge school and law enforcement officials to continue reporting incidents to the ASV database to improve school safety and enable children and teens to be successful students in a positive learning environment. I would like to thank the staff and leadership of the NPF, IACLEA, and NASRO for their continued work to improve the safety of our children and families in communities across the country.

Sincerely,



Phil Keith

Director

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services



INTRODUCTION

Tuesday, April 20, 1999, was sadly the last day of school for the seniors of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. On that day, two 12th-grade students armed with a semiautomatic pistol, two shotguns, and a rifle murdered a teacher and 12 of their fellow students; an additional 21 people were injured by gunfire, and three were injured escaping from the school. The perpetrators took their own lives in the school library where they had killed most of their victims. At the beginning of the attack, one of the shooters exchanged gunfire outside with the school resource officer (SRO).

While the Columbine shooting inarguably contributed to the expanded deployment of SROs in schools, it was not the advent of school-based law enforcement in the United States. There are indications in the research literature that Flint, Michigan, assigned a police officer to its schools in 1953, and the Fresno (California) Police Department first assigned plainclothes officers to its elementary and middle schools in 1968 (West and Fries 1995). The Fresno initiative was an attempt to enhance police-community relations specifically with youth.

The federal impetus for increasing the number of SROs can be traced in part to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 as well as the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994. The Cops in School program, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), grew out of the former statute. The latter statute was enacted in response to juvenile and gang violence.

Soon after the tragedy at Columbine, which at the time was the worst mass casualty shooting at a school in the United States, the U.S. Department of Education (DoED) and the U.S. Secret Service undertook a study of past school shootings to identify factors that might help prevent future targeted school attacks (Vossekuil et al. 2004). The key recommendation from that study was that all schools should establish behavior threat assessment teams. The report recommended that school administrators, law enforcement officers (especially SROs), teachers, and counselors participate in these teams to address concerning behavior by members of the school community.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 42 percent of schools had an SRO present full or part time during the 2015–2016 school year (Jackson et al. 2018).¹ The Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety says the “ability of specially selected and trained SROs to establish trust relationships with students has been demonstrated to prevent school shootings. In addition, there have been numerous documented instances of SROs directly intervening to prevent or quickly mitigate active school shootings.” (Federal Commission on School Safety 2018) The commission went on to state its conviction that “the school personnel best positioned to respond to acts of violence are those with specialized training such as school resource officers (SRO), who are typically sworn law enforcement officers, and school safety officers (SSO), who are typically unsworn school security staff.”

The commission’s conclusions are supported by research conducted by the U.S. Secret Service that examined 41 attacks carried out in K–12 schools in the United States from 2008 to 2017. In 66 percent of the cases, a security officer or SRO was assigned to the school on a full- or part-time basis. During 49 percent of the attacks the officer was on duty at the school. In almost 30 percent of the cases, the officer or SRO made it to the scene of the attack within one minute. In contrast, there was only one incident in which outside law enforcement was able to make it to the scene in less than one minute, and in that case the officer was already on school grounds for other reasons. (National Threat Assessment Center 2019)

As indicated by the Federal Commission, SROs have played a significant role in preventing and mitigating targeted school violence. This is accomplished by adhering to the Triad Model developed by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) and endorsed by the COPS Office. The Triad Model embodies three primary roles for SROs: (1) law enforcement officer, (2) teacher, and (3) informal counselor. The value of an SRO goes beyond responding to critical incidents. They mentor and educate students and build trust, which may have a profound impact on the school’s ability to prevent targeted violence and other maladaptive behaviors.

Following Columbine, more jurisdictions and school districts ensured that SROs and other law enforcement officers as well as school administrators, faculty, staff, and students receive active shooter training. While this is necessary and commendable, it addresses only the response to major critical incidents.

1. The federal definition of an SRO is a career law enforcement officer with sworn authority who is deployed by an employing police or sheriff’s department agency in a community-oriented policing assignment to work in collaboration with one or more schools (34 U.S.C. §10389(4)).

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, however, law enforcement, school safety professionals, school administrators, teachers, and counselors have turned their attention to the prevention of targeted school violence. In large part this shift has flowed from tragedies occurring in K–12 school communities, such as the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, and the 2017 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Preventive strategies now being explored and implemented in K–12 schools include the following:

- Focusing on positive school climate and anti-bullying
- Expanding access to mental health services
- Creating anonymous reporting systems
- Educating community members on indicators of potential self-harm and targeted violence
- Promoting “See Something, Say Something” (<https://www.dhs.gov/see-something-say-something>)
- Mandating the creation of behavior threat assessment and management teams, which build relationships and facilitate information sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and other key school safety stakeholders
- Expanding the number and training of SROs

Our goal, of course, has been and continues to be zero casualties from school shootings. To achieve that goal, law enforcement and schools have expended vast resources on target hardening, drills, and procedures designed to reduce law enforcement response time. These efforts will and should continue.

This report offers evidence, however, that focusing our attention and resources on prevention can help us attain the goal of zero school shootings. To reach this goal it will be incumbent on all of us to identify best practices and success stories and to share lessons as widely as possible.



BACKGROUND

In the aftermath of the mass casualty shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012, Congress created the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI) and appropriated \$75 million to the U.S. Department of Justice to enhance school safety and security. With CSSI funding, the COPS Office entered into a cooperative agreement with the National Police Foundation (NPF) to create and maintain the national Averted School Violence (ASV) database.

The overarching purposes of the ASV initiative are to

- identify the number of planned school attacks that are averted;
- identify the critical factors that, alone or in combination, contribute to the successful prevention of school attacks.

Answers to these questions are critical for school and law enforcement executives to make informed policy, operations, training, and procurement decisions.

A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) study of active shooter incidents in the United States identified 160 incidents between 2000 and 2013 and noted that the frequency of these events was increasing. Thirty-nine of the incidents took place in educational settings (Blair and Schweit 2014). Because of the extreme loss of life and ensuing media coverage, the whole world knew about these tragedies within minutes of their occurrence. Less well known were planned attacks that could have been equally catastrophic but were averted.

It is not enough for school administrators and law enforcement executives to be guided by anecdotes about averted attacks suggesting potential value in behavior threat assessment teams, anonymous tip lines, and social media monitoring. They also need hard evidence to inform their policy, operations, training, and procurement decisions, including evidence that answers the following questions:

- How many potential mass casualty attacks have been averted at K–12 schools?
- What were the critical factors that allowed school and law enforcement officials to successfully intervene and stop the attacks?
- Were there missed opportunities to intervene earlier on the individual’s pathway to violence?

For more information about the ASV database, go to www.avertedschoolviolence.org.



CASE STUDIES

The NPF defines an averted school violence incident as a shooting, bombing, stabbing, or other violent attack that was prevented—either before or after the potential perpetrator arrived on school grounds—before any injury or loss of life occurred at the educational institution. This definition does not include averted incidents of violence on school grounds that were unrelated to the school (e.g., gang-related violence). The ASV database includes only incidents that occurred in the United States after the Columbine tragedy in 1999.

Cases are submitted by education officials, law enforcement, mental health professionals, and other school safety stakeholders. On a continuous basis, NPF staff also receive open-source alerts about potential attacks that were averted. Regardless of source, all cases are assessed to determine if sufficient credible information is available to establish means, opportunity, motive, and intent to carry out an act of targeted school violence. Because intent is sometimes difficult to establish conclusively, the totality of circumstances are reviewed in each case and a preponderance of the evidence standard is applied in deciding whether a case will be published in the ASV database.

It is important to note that when a case is published in the ASV database, the name of the school is not included. Also, personally identifiable information about the person submitting the case is scrubbed before the case is included in the database.

As of May 2020, there are 236 cases in the ASV database including both averted (168) and completed (68) attacks. Of the total cases, 185 occurred at K–12 schools. Thirty-four of those cases involve SROs. In a number of these cases, the SRO was an intended target.

The following 12 case studies describe planned targeted violence at K–12 schools that were averted through the actions of the potential attackers' peers, SROs, school administrators, and other school safety stakeholders. Each case is followed by an enumeration of the lessons learned from that case. A compilation of lessons learned is provided at the end of this report.

The cases reported in this paper represent a diverse group of schools in terms of region, geographic setting, and demographics. While some of these cases involved a limited number of specific individuals being targeted, they all had the potential for mass casualties had the perpetrators' planned targeted violence been fully executed. In the first two cases, an SRO was an intended target.

These cases can also be reviewed at www.avertedschoolviolence.org.

Teen arrested for threatening multiple schools in two states

On several occasions an 18-year-old entered a local high school in the Midwest after school hours. During one of these surveillance trips he was seen on video surveillance holding an electronic device with which he appeared to be filming the hallways and intersections of hallways, stairways, and exits. When he was confronted by a school custodian and other school personnel, he fled before he could be identified or caught. The school officials shared the surveillance footage with local law enforcement, who opened an investigation. The day after that incident, someone the suspect had been talking to for months about planning to shoot people at the school during lunch hour—and to whom the suspect had made frequent remarks about terrorism, white supremacy, and his knife collection—identified the suspect. The school attack was planned for the following week and included placing an improvised explosive device outside the SRO's office. Local police went to the suspect's home to investigate and interview him.

During a search of the residence, officers seized items that could be used to make an explosive device, gun magazines, ammunition, knives, computers, and other electronic devices. They arrested the teenager on charges of attempting to use an explosive device. During an examination of one of the his laptops, the FBI found a diary in which the individual noted that he was also responsible for calling a local law enforcement agency in another state claiming someone was being held hostage inside an elementary school two months earlier. This computer forensic exam also revealed the subject posing with weapons on various chat apps. Other diary entries detailed conflicts with his parents and his urge to commit a mass shooting. Evidence suggests this individual was working with an acquaintance to obtain firearms from a gun store and began planning the school shooting 18 months earlier. Also of note, this subject had been homeschooled for the previous six years; he was not a student at the high school he was targeting.

The subject was indicted by a federal grand jury for attempted use of an explosive device and interstate communication of threats.

Lessons learned

- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with. (In this case, a school custodian reported concerning behavior from video surveillance, and school administrators and law enforcement took the report seriously and acted expeditiously to neutralize the threat.)
- “See Something, Say Something” is an essential violence prevention tool.
- It is important to educate all members of the school community on indicators of potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.
- Relationships between school officials and law enforcement and between local and federal law enforcement are critical to quickly assessing the viability of all threats and taking preventive action.
- Social media monitoring can identify individuals on the pathway to violence, and resources such as an anonymous tip line like Safe2Tell (<https://safe2tell.org/>) can be used a violence prevention tool.
- The individual engaging in concerning behavior may not always be a current student. Former students, faculty, staff, and unaffiliated individuals can also pose a threat.
- In this case, the SRO was a potential target. School-based law enforcement officers and security officers may be attacked first to eliminate impediments to a wider-scale attack.

Recommendations

- Resources and community culture permitting, consider establishing an anonymous reporting system.
- The individual allegedly conspiring with the arrestee was an adult not affiliated with the target school. However, community education on the tactics and consequences for “straw purchases” of firearms should be considered especially with those cohorts who are of age to purchase firearms.
- The subject in this case, having been indicted, should be added to the firearms “no purchase” list maintained by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.
- Resources permitting, engage a defensive social media monitoring and alert system that ensures privacy rights or have school-based law enforcement engage students via social media for passive monitoring.

Freshman with full plan to engage in school shooting reported by friends

During an emergency evacuation drill at his high school, a freshman told fellow students how easy it would be to attack and kill lots of kids while they were flooding out of the school. One of his expressed ideas was to call in a bomb threat and shoot students as they ran outside. The 14-year-old issuing the threats told fellow students that he had a shotgun and that if he texted them they should not go to school that day. According to other students, he had a floor plan of the school with markings showing where he would place bombs and smoke devices and a mental list of whom to kill and whom to spare. The student also told his classmates that he planned to shoot the SRO first while he was on his lunch break and that he was considering shooting people at lunch because that was where there was the largest mass of students. Then he would commit suicide after shooting up the school. If he decided not to kill himself after the mass shooting, he would flee, hide the evidence, and disguise himself to avoid capture. Two days after he told fellow students of his plan there was a school shooting in a nearby state. This prompted two of the students he told to report him to the school's principal, who then contacted the police. Police took the teenager into custody and confiscated two shotguns from his house. The student was placed on an involuntary mental health hold and criminally charged with disorderly conduct for interfering with school operations. The ensuing law enforcement investigation revealed the student to be severely depressed and obsessed with mass shootings and thoughts of hurting people. According to school officials, this student had expressed suicidal ideation in the past.

Lessons learned

- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with. (Although delayed in this case, students reported concerning behavior, and school administrators and law enforcement took their reports seriously and acted expeditiously to neutralize the threat.)
- Relationships between school officials and law enforcement are critical to quickly assessing the viability of all threats and taking preventive action.
- See Something, Say Something is an essential violence prevention tool.

- Available open-source information indicates that school officials were aware of this student expressing suicidal thoughts in the past. It is unclear if this school or school district had a behavior threat assessment and management (BTAM) team and, if so, whether the team engaged with this student.
- The SRO, who was a potential target, was an integral part of the investigation of these threats.

Recommendations

- Assess and invest in school climate through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) or Safe and Supportive Schools Model of School Climate (Safe Supportive Learning 2020).
- Educate members of the school community (students, parents, teachers, and staff) about the indicators for potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.
- To the extent possible, schools should ensure they have mental health resources or the ability to refer students and staff for mental or behavioral health diagnosis and treatment.
- If one does not already exist, establish and maintain a behavior threat assessment and management team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return. These teams can also facilitate critical information sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and other key school safety stakeholders.

Student helps stop planned homicide of fellow student

Two 14-year-old students were indefinitely removed from classes and face juvenile court charges for planning to shoot a fellow student at their middle school in New England. One of the two students made a specific threat about the attack and the other offered to supply the firearms to carry out the attack. Another student overheard conversations between the two students mentioning using firearms to harm the intended victim and others at the school and notified the school principal, who then contacted local police. Led by the SRO, the local police department involved the Department for Children & Families and launched an investigation, which revealed a detailed plan for acquisition of firearms and carrying out the attack. An Emergency Risk Protection Order was executed at the home of a relative of one of the charged students and numerous firearms were removed. The student who intended to carry out the attack was ordered to undergo a mental health evaluation.

Lessons learned

- It is essential that every student have at least one person in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with. (In this case, a student reported concerning behavior and school administrators and law enforcement took the report seriously and acted expeditiously to neutralize the threat.)
- “See Something, Say Something” is an essential violence prevention tool.
- The presence of an SRO facilitated the investigation and made it possible to quickly assess the viability of the threat and take preventive action.

Recommendations

- If one does not already exist, establish a behavior threat assessment and management team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return.
- To the extent possible, schools should ensure they have mental health resources or the ability to refer students and staff for mental or behavioral health diagnosis and treatment.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider adopting a defensive social media monitoring and alert system that ensures privacy rights.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider using an anonymous reporting system.
- It is important to educate all members of the school community (students, parents, teachers, and staff) on indicators of potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.
- From open-source information, it appears that the student who planned to carry out the attack was “having trouble” with the intended victim. It is important to keep in mind that seemingly minor incidents can escalate into a significant grievance for some individuals.

Behavioral specialist and SRO stop potential shooter

An armed man went into a high school in a Southeastern state and threatened to start shooting people in the cafeteria during the busy lunch period. The suspect traveled to the school from out of state intent on killing two staff members at the school and had the “kill list” in his car. Upon arriving at

the school, the individual entered the courtyard with two guns and a backpack with boxes of bullets. A behavioral specialist saw the individual walk into the courtyard without a visitor's badge. The behavioral specialist followed the suspect through a building and into the cafeteria. The individual had a smile on his face and was resting his hand on a gun in his belt. The individual told the behavioral specialist to come closer and radio for the two people on his "kill list" to come down to the cafeteria. The behavioral specialist suggested that they wait until after the lunch period was over. The behavioral specialist then radioed for the two people to come to the cafeteria, despite knowing they did not have radios. The specialist hoped that someone would hear the suspicious requests and radio messages and would come provide assistance. During this interaction, the individual threatened to start shooting in the cafeteria. The assistant principal picked up on the suspicious radioing, responded to the cafeteria, and asked the suspect what was wrong and then stepped closer when she could not hear him. The individual pulled out the gun and yelled, "get back." The assistant principal ran out of the cafeteria and into the courtyard radioing for a lockdown. The behavioral specialist radioed for the SRO. The individual made his way to the courtyard where he was confronted by the SRO, who unholstered his weapon. The suspect had guns in both hands and pointed them at the SRO before fleeing. The SRO pursued the individual as he fled the campus and radioed for backup. Another officer and the SRO deployed an electronic control device (Taser) to subdue the suspect and place him under arrest.

Lessons learned

- A school official quickly noticed the individual did not have a visitor's badge or staff ID and confronted him.
- "See Something, Say Something" is an essential violence prevention tool.
- Having an SRO on campus facilitated a quick intervention that may have saved numerous lives.
- Strategies for emergency communication during critical incidents must be clear to all school staff and first responders.
- Threats are not always students. From open sources, it appears the suspect in this case had an association with the staff or teachers he was targeting.

Recommendations

- If one does not already exist, establish a behavior threat assessment and management team to address concerning behavior by any individual, including non-students, who may pose a threat to the school community.

- Educate all members of the school community (students, parents, teachers, and staff) about indicators of potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.
- When conducting school safety assessments to identify gaps in safety and security, controlling access to the school building must be considered

SRO and backup officers mortally wound potential school shooter

A 62-year-old man loaded 13 bullets into his two handguns and drove to a local high school, where his brother was a janitor. The individual parked in a handicapped space just in front of the school's main entrance and entered the waiting area (man trap) where a student was also waiting to be buzzed in. The man told the girl to go ahead of him and said he wanted to see the principal. The principal and the SRO entered the waiting area and contacted the subject. The principal asked if she could help the individual, but he said to take care of the student first. The principal found out that the student was just checking in and turned her attention back to the individual. Again, she asked what he needed, at which point he pulled his gun on the principal. The SRO pulled her gun and stood between the perpetrator and the principal. The principal told the student to leave, called a code red lockdown, and went back into the building. Because the door did not close immediately, the SRO was able to draw the perpetrator into the vacant cafeteria just inside the entrance and isolate him. During this time, the individual spoke of concerns he had with the government monitoring him. Two other police officers entered the school and worked with the SRO to try and get the perpetrator to relinquish his weapon and surrender. The subject waved his gun at the SRO, then at the backup officers, and then again at the SRO, at which time the officers fired their weapons, mortally wounding him. The county sheriff estimated that the entire incident was over in approximately two minutes from the time the perpetrator first pulled his weapon. This individual had a history of erratic behavior, a criminal history and a long-standing distrust of the government.

Lessons learned

- There is some suggestion that the backup officers were not able to gain immediate access to the school because of locked doors and limited radio communication response.
- The presence of the SRO resulted in rapid contact with the perpetrator and neutralization of the threat.
- The threat is not always a student. The subject in this case had a tenuous affiliation with the school through his brother, who was an employee.

Recommendations

- It is imperative that all emergency responders (law enforcement, fire, and EMS) be able to quickly gain access to school buildings via radio-frequency identification, key fobs, or physical keys maintained in a secure, centralized location.
- It is imperative that school officials work with law enforcement and community-based threat assessment teams to share information for collaboration regarding students and others who are a threat to the school.

Student accused of threatening mass shooting at school

A 15-year-old student began typing up a document on his laptop detailing his desire to commit a school shooting after being made fun of for his cell phone going off in class. Two classmates saw the student's document, and one of them used their cellphone to take a picture of the document. The student then shared the picture of the document with school administrators and the SRO. During the ensuing investigation, police were unable to find the document on the boy's laptop, but from the pictures they were able to see some of the threats, including, "I want to murder every single [expletive] sack of [expletive] inside this school. There is about no valuable life anywhere to be found in this place." The student wrote about how he planned to purchase an automatic weapon and a shotgun and detailed his plans to begin shooting on the ground floor and then work his way up in the building. The student was arrested by the SRO, charged with Written Threat to Kill or Injure, and taken to a juvenile assessment facility. At the juvenile assessment facility, the student also indicated that he hated the school and the country.

Lessons learned

- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with. (In this case, students reported concerning behavior and school administrators and law enforcement took their reports seriously and acted expeditiously to neutralize the threat.)
- "See Something, Say Something" is an essential violence prevention tool.
- The presence of an SRO facilitated the investigation and made it possible to quickly assess the viability of the threat and take preventive action.

Recommendations

- Assess and invest in school climate.
- If one does not already exist, establish and maintain a behavior threat assessment and management team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return. These teams can also facilitate information-sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and other key school safety stakeholders.
- To the extent possible, schools should ensure they have mental health resources or the ability to refer students and staff for mental or behavioral health diagnosis and treatment.
- It is important to keep in mind that seemingly minor incidents can escalate into a significant grievance for some individuals.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider adopting an anonymous reporting system.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider establishing a defensive social media monitoring and alert system that ensures privacy rights.
- It is important to educate all members of the school community on indicators of potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.

Student arrested after threatening school

An 18-year-old student told a peer that he was going to “shoot up” their high school and that he had access to guns that were kept in a safe at his house. The 18-year-old also posted a threat on social media. The peer reported the threat to the SRO, and an investigation was initiated. Law enforcement contacted the student at his residence. He was interviewed along with his parents, and a search was conducted. During the search, police found four rifles and one handgun, which were confiscated, and the student was taken into custody. He faces a felony charge of terroristic threats, causing a serious public inconvenience, and misdemeanor disorderly conduct. The felony charge carries a possible prison sentence of seven years. Although open-source reports do not indicate a motive for the possible attack, it was planned for the day before the second anniversary of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Florida.

Lessons learned

- “See Something, Say Something” is an essential violence prevention tool.
- It is unclear if this school or school district had a behavior threat assessment and management team and, if so, whether the team engaged with this student.
- Social media monitoring can identify individuals on the pathway to violence. In this case, a student and parent reported concerning behavior and school administrators, and law enforcement took the report seriously and acted expeditiously to neutralize the threat.
- The presence of an SRO made it possible to immediately assess the viability of the threat and take preventive action.
- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with.

Recommendations

- Assess and invest in school climate.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider adopting a defensive social media monitoring and alert system that ensures privacy rights.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider establishing an anonymous reporting system.
- While the motive in this case is not clear, it is important to keep in mind that anniversaries of other high-profile mass casualty attacks can have significance for some individuals.
- If convicted of the felony charge, the individual’s name should be placed on the firearms “no purchase” list maintained by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.
- Educate members of the school community (students, parents, teachers, and staff) about the indicators for potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.
- If one does not already exist, establish and maintain a behavior threat assessment and management team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return. These teams can also facilitate critical information-sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and other key school safety stakeholders.

Four students arrested after one brought a gun to school

A 16-year-old student brought a revolver onto campus and pointed it at another student and threatened to kill him. The armed student then handed the gun to another student, who hid the weapon. Another student saw the gun and reported it to the school resource deputy (SRD). After determining that there was indeed a weapon on campus, administrators placed the school on lockdown and additional deputy sheriffs responded to assist with the investigation and securing the school. Deputies reviewed surveillance footage, which showed the gun in the possession of two other students. Law enforcement quickly located the gun. Although the gun was unloaded, deputies found a bullet for the weapon in another student's backpack. All four students were taken into custody immediately. The student who brought the revolver to campus was charged with possession of a firearm on school grounds, possession of a concealed firearm, disruption of a school function, aggravated assault with a firearm, tampering with evidence, exhibition of a firearm, and possession of a firearm by a minor. Two students were charged with possession of a firearm on school grounds, possession of a concealed firearm, tampering with evidence, disruption of a school function, and possession of a firearm by a minor. All three students had prior arrests. The fourth student was charged with two misdemeanors. It is not clear from available open sources why the 16-year-old pointed the weapon at another student and threatened to kill him or whether his criminal intent extended to other students.

Lessons learned

- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with.
- The presence of an SRD made it possible to immediately assess the viability of the threat and take preventive action.
- “See Something, Say Something” is an essential violence prevention tool.
- It is not clear from open-source reporting whether this school has a behavior threat assessment and management team and, if so, whether it was engaged with these students.
- Research by the U.S. Secret Service indicates that targeted school violence sometimes occurs following breaks in attendance. This incident occurred soon after students returned to classes from winter break.
- This incident may serve as an impetus for community education on safe gun storage.

Recommendations

- Assess and invest in school climate.
- To the extent possible, schools should ensure they have mental health resources or the ability to refer students and staff for mental or behavioral health diagnosis and treatment.
- It is important to keep in mind that seemingly minor incidents can escalate into a significant grievance for some individuals.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider adopting an anonymous reporting system.
- Review and update as needed school and school district policies and procedures for notifying the school community (including parents) about active threat investigations.
- If these individuals are convicted of a felony or certain gun-related misdemeanors, their names should be added to the firearms “no purchase” list maintained by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.
- It is important to educate all members of the school community on indicators of potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.
- If one does not already exist, establish and maintain a behavior threat assessment and management team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return. These teams can also play a critical role in facilitating information-sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and other key school safety stakeholders.

Student planned mass violence attack at high school

A 16-year-old student exchanged emails with a 33-year-old individual plotting simultaneous mass violence attacks. The student planned to commit a mass violence attack at his high school on September 11, because the date was “already iconic.” An entry in his notebook the day before he was arrested included, “I wanna break the current shooting record. I wanna get instant recognition. The only thing that stops me is the fact of being put in jail forever, or having to kill myself, or getting killed by an officer.” There were handwritten entries in a spiral notebook expressing his hatred for most of the people at his school.

The plot came to the attention of law enforcement during an investigation of an unrelated threat. During that investigation, an SRO discovered social media posts in which the suspect discussed his support for the Columbine shooters. The suspect admitted to officers that he started having violent thoughts after his girlfriend broke up with him. Around then, he began chatting online with the other individual about obtaining guns and bombs. He researched the “Anarchist’s Cookbook,” buying a 9mm handgun and making propane bombs. He had a collection of more than 100 knives at his home.

The suspect was arrested and charged with a juvenile count of conspiracy to commit murder.

Lessons learned

- Social media monitoring can identify individuals on the pathway to violence.
- “See Something, Say Something” is an essential violence prevention tool.
- Seemingly minor incidents can be perceived as significant grievances by students.
- Relationships between school officials and law enforcement are critical to quickly assessing the viability of all threats and taking preventive action. The presence of the SRO made it possible to identify the threat before this individual was further along on the pathway to violence.
- School officials and law enforcement took the social media post seriously and acted expeditiously to neutralize the threat.
- Research conducted by the U.S. Secret Service indicates some perpetrators of completed school attacks were motivated by a desire to emulate previous mass attackers.

Recommendations

- Assess and invest in school climate.
- To the extent possible, schools should ensure they have mental health resources or the ability to refer students and staff for mental or behavioral health diagnosis and treatment.
- If one does not already exist, establish and maintain a behavior threat assessment and management team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return. These teams can also play a critical role in facilitating information-sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and other key school safety stakeholders.

- Resources and community culture permitting, consider adopting a defensive social media monitoring and alert system that ensures privacy rights.
- It is important to educate all members of the school community on indicators of potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.
- Depending on the disposition in the court case, the individual's name should be placed on the firearms "no purchase" list maintained by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

SRO alerted about school shooting plan through anonymous tip

Two students (ages 15 and 16) spent approximately two months developing a detailed plan to commit an act of targeted violence at their high school after winter break. The plan was brought to the attention of the SRO through an anonymous tip. The tip indicated that one of the suspects was making threats about "shooting up" the high school. Officers interviewed the suspect, who claimed he did not make any threats, but when the officers talked to other students and teachers, everyone confirmed that the student had made threats. At that point, extra security was put into place at the school. Officers also learned about the older student involved in the plan. Both students were questioned again and admitted to feeling like they had been bullied and how they idolized the shooters from Columbine High School in 1999 and the movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, in 2012. The younger student attributed his actions to having been bullied. This near miss occurred one week after a fatal shooting at another high school in the same state. According to law enforcement, although no firearms were found in the students' homes, they had a plan for acquiring weapons.

Both students were arrested and charged with interference with school-credible threat and inciting destruction of life or property.

Lessons learned

- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with. (In this case, someone used an anonymous reporting system and reported a threat to law enforcement, which acted expeditiously to neutralize the threat. Resources and community culture permitting, consider adopting an anonymous reporting system.)
- "See Something, Say Something" is an essential violence prevention tool.

- The presence of an SRO made it possible to immediately investigate, assess the viability of the threat, and take preventive action.
- There is evidence of a school shooting “contagion effect” following student suicides and mass casualty attacks that can last a year or longer after the precipitating event
- Research by the U.S. Secret Service indicates that targeted school violence sometimes occurs following breaks in attendance. (In this case, the averted attack was planned for the beginning of the spring semester.)

Recommendations

- Assess and invest in school climate.
- It is not clear from available open sources whether this school has a behavior threat assessment and management team and, if so, whether the team was engaged with these students. If one does not already exist, establish and maintain a team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return. These teams can also play a critical role in facilitating information-sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and key campus safety stakeholders.
- To the extent possible, schools should ensure they have mental health resources or the ability to refer students and staff for mental and behavioral health diagnosis and treatment.
- If these individuals are convicted of a felony or certain gun-related misdemeanors, their names should be placed on the firearms “no purchase” list maintained by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.
- It is important to educate all members of the school community on indicators of potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.

Student arrested for threat and gun at school

A 15-year-old student brought a gun to his high school in a Northwestern state and showed it to other students. He said he planned to shoot another student. The students seeing the gun and hearing the threats reported their concerns to school administrators. The school was immediately placed on lockdown. School officials, the SRO, and officers from the municipal law enforcement agency quickly located the juvenile suspect. He was detained, and his backpack was searched. The search uncovered the loaded handgun. Although the student's motivation for planning to harm a fellow student is not clear from open sources, law enforcement deemed the threat credible. The suspect was arrested and charged with possession of a firearm in a public building, unlawful possession of a firearm, and carrying a concealed weapon.

Lessons learned

- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with.
- The presence of an SRO made it possible to immediately assess the viability of the threat and take preventive action.
- “See Something, Say Something” is an essential violence prevention tool.
- It is not clear how this teenager obtained the firearm and ammunition, but if unsafe gun storage was a factor, the incident may serve as the impetus for community education on safe gun storage.

Recommendations

- Assess and invest in school climate.
- It is not clear from available open sources whether this high school has a behavior threat assessment and management team and, if so, whether the team was engaged with this student. If one does not already exist, establish and maintain a team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return. These teams can also play a critical role in facilitating information-sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and key campus safety stakeholders.

- To the extent possible, schools should ensure they have mental health resources or the ability to refer students and staff for mental or behavioral health diagnosis and treatment.
- While the motive in this case is not clear, it is important to keep in mind that seemingly minor incidents can escalate into a significant grievance for some individuals.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider adopting an anonymous reporting system.
- If this individual is convicted of a felony or certain gun-related misdemeanors, his name should be placed on the firearms “no purchase” list maintained by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.
- In this case, students reported concerning behavior to school officials, who, along with law enforcement, took the threat seriously and acted expeditiously to neutralize it.
- Educate all members of the school community (students, parents, teachers, and staff) about the indicators for potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior

Student arrested for threatening explosion and mass shooting

A 16-year-old student told peers about his detailed plan to commit an act of mass violence at their high school. The suspect told fellow students he intended to start by shooting his teacher and then use C-4 (a plastic explosive) to collapse the school buildings. He would finish the attack by shooting students as they were evacuating. Some of the peers were disturbed by the threats and reported them to their SRD. The SRD worked with local law enforcement to open an investigation. In an interview with investigators, the suspect admitted that he had devised a mental plan for the destruction because he has a high IQ and is good at strategy. The suspect also said, “I enjoy bringing pain and seeing other people suffer,” during the interview. During a search of his parents’ house, law enforcement discovered several firearms, which were seized. The suspect was detained and charged with making a false report concerning the use of a firearm in a violent manner, a second-degree felony.

Lessons learned

- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with. (In this case, students trusted their SRD and reported concerning behavior to the deputy. School officials and law enforcement then took the threat seriously and acted expeditiously to neutralize it.)

- The presence of an SRD made it possible to immediately assess the viability of the threat and take preventive action.
- “See Something, Say Something” is an essential violence prevention tool.
- There is evidence of a school shooting “contagion effect.” School officials and law enforcement are encouraged to exercise increased vigilance in the immediate aftermath of student suicides and mass casualty attacks. This near miss occurred approximately one week after the mass casualty shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Recommendations

- Assess and invest in school climate.
- Educate all members of the school community (students, parents, teachers, and staff) about the indicators for potential self-harm and targeted violence and how to report concerning behavior.
- Resources and community culture permitting, consider adopting an anonymous reporting system.
- It is not clear from available open sources whether this high school has a behavior threat assessment and management team, and if so, whether the team was engaged with this student. If one does not already exist, establish and maintain a team to address concerning behavior and monitor students who are removed from the community but may return. These teams can also play a critical role in facilitating information-sharing between school officials, law enforcement, mental health providers, and key campus safety stakeholders.
- To the extent possible, schools should ensure they have mental health resources or the ability to refer students and staff for mental and behavioral health diagnosis and treatment.
- This incident may serve as an impetus for community education on safe gun storage.
- If this individual is convicted of a felony or certain gun-related misdemeanors, his name should be placed on the firearms “no purchase” list maintained by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.



LESSONS LEARNED

Implementation of the lessons learned contained in this report will depend on a number of factors. Resources, community culture, state laws, and school policies must be considered before translating these lessons learned into planning, training, procurement, and operational actions. In addition, it is important to gain input and buy-in from school safety stakeholders.

The following compilation represents lessons learned from *all* cases of averted targeted school violence in the ASV database:

- Seemingly minor incidents can escalate into a significant grievance for some individuals.
- Assess and invest in school climate through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) or Safe and Supportive Schools Model of School Climate.
- “See Something, Say Something” is a basic and essential school violence prevention tool. (Safe Supportive Learning 2020)
- It is essential that every student have at least one adult in their school community that they trust enough to share concerning behavior with.
- When students or others report concerning behavior, it is critical that school administrators, teachers, counselors, and law enforcement take the reported threat seriously, investigate thoroughly, and take appropriate action to neutralize the threat.
- There is a risk of adverse consequences when school administrators decide to conduct an “internal investigation” and delay notifying law enforcement.
- In many cases, the presence of an SRO made it possible to immediately assess the viability of the threat and take preventive action.
- In the absence of an SRO, positive working relationships between school officials and local law enforcement are vital to quickly assessing and resolving threats of targeted school violence.
- Relationships between school-based law enforcement officers with federal, state, and local law enforcement and other first responders are critical and should be used to quickly assess the credibility of all threats and to take preventive action.

- Individuals exhibiting concerning behavior who have been indicted or convicted of a felony offense or some gun-related misdemeanors or have been involuntarily committed to a mental health institution should be reported to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System for placement on the “no purchase” list.
- Anniversaries of other high-profile mass casualty attacks can have significance for some individuals.
- While witnessing or engaging in domestic violence is not alone a predictor of future targeted violence, there is evidence of an association between negative home life factors and adverse outcomes for youth.
- Research conducted by the U.S. Secret Service indicates some perpetrators of targeted school violence were motivated by a desire to emulate previous school shooters.
- There is evidence of a school shooting “contagion effect” following student suicides and mass casualty attacks that can last a year or longer after the precipitating event
- Threats of targeted school violence are not always current students. Former students, employees and contractors, and individuals loosely or not at all affiliated with the school may pose a threat. This fact underscores the imperative of school officials working with law enforcement and community-based threat assessment teams to share information.
- Research by the U.S. Secret Service indicates that targeted school violence sometimes occurs following breaks in attendance, e.g., scheduled school holidays, student suspensions, etc.
- If an international student poses a substantiated threat of violence, the student visa system may serve as a vehicle for addressing the threat.
- There is some suggestion that the backup officers were not able to gain immediate access to the school because of locked doors and limited radio communication response..
- Incidents of averted school violence may serve as an impetus for community education on safe gun storage practices.
- In near miss incidents where the perpetrator is apprehended on school property, there will be a massive law enforcement response that will necessitate a need for family reunification plans.

CONCLUSION

The cases described in this report and others in the ASV database establish an evidentiary basis in support of the proposition that targeted school violence can be prevented. All of us at the COPS Office, the National Police Foundation, and NASRO hope the information in this report is useful to you. We encourage you to use these lessons learned to inform your policy, training, procurement, and operational decisions. In addition to the lessons learned, the fact patterns described in this report may assist you in preparing for community violence prevention presentations and designing tabletop exercises.

Mark Sullivan, the 22nd Director of the United States Secret Service, recently stated in the introduction to a major report that in order to protect our communities we must “collaborate fearlessly” (Verton and Sullivan 2020). Indeed, we must. A cogent argument can be made that the single biggest impediment to preventing targeted school violence is communication and the lack of information-sharing between entities that ultimately have the same mission: to keep our young people safe.

The ultimate success of this report will be its use in starting discussions and promoting timely and actionable information-sharing among all campus public safety stakeholders.



REFERENCES

34 U.S.C. Subchapter XVI—Public Safety and Community Policing; “Cops on the Beat.” §10389(4).

[https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=\(title:34%20section:10389%20edition:prelim\)](https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:34%20section:10389%20edition:prelim)).

Blair, J. Pete, and Katherine W. Schweit. 2014. *A Study of Active Shooter Incidents, 2000–2013*.

Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation. <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-study-2000-2013-1.pdf/view#:~:text=A%20Study%20of%20Active%20Shooter%20Incidents%20in%20the%20United%20States,and%20recover%20from%20these%20incidents>.

Federal Commission on School Safety. 2018. *Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety*.

Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. <https://www.ed.gov/school-safety>.

Jackson, Michael, Melissa Diliberti, Jana Kemp, Steven Hummel, Christina Cox, Komba Gbondo-Tugbawa, Dillon Simon, and Rachel Hansen. 2018. *2015–16 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) Public-Use Data File User’s Manual*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2018107>.

National Threat Assessment Center. 2019. *Protecting America’s Schools: A U.S. Secret Service*

Analysis of Targeted School Violence. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

<https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/usss-analysis-of-targeted-school-violence.pdf>.

Safe Supportive Learning. 2020. “School Climate Improvement.” National Center on Safe Supportive

Learning Environments. Accessed August 11, 2020. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/school-climate-improvement>.

Verton, Dan, and Mark Sullivan. 2020. *Sources and Methods: The LifeSafe Guide to Early-Warning*

Threat Detection and Reporting for School Safety and Security Programs. Arlington, VA: LiveSafe.

<https://www.livesafemobile.com/prevention-resources/white-papers/sources-methods-the-livesafe-guide-to-early-warning-threat-detection-and-reporting-for-school-safety-and-security-programs/>.

Vossekuil, Bryan, Robert A. Fein, Marisa Reddy, Randy Borum, and William Modzeleski. 2004. *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED466024>.

West, Marty L., and John M. Fries. 1995. "Campus-Based Police/Probation Teams—Making Schools Safer." *Corrections Today* 57(5): 144–148.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jeff Allison served as a trooper with the Maryland State Police and as a field training officer and juvenile detective with the Aurora (Colorado) Police Department (APD). He represented the APD on the Adams County Multi-Disciplinary Child Protection Team. His 30-year career with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) began as a police trainer in the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. For the last 11 years of his DOJ career, Mr. Allison served as the Special Adviser for Campus and School Safety in the Office of Partner Engagement at FBI Headquarters. Following the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School, he represented the FBI on a DOJ intra-agency working group responsible for implementing the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative. Through the working group, he provided leadership and advocacy for creation of the national ASV database.

Mr. Allison now serves as a Special Adviser with the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. In this role he is responsible for expansion of the ASV database to include colleges and universities. He also serves as the chairperson for the COPS Office School Safety Working Group.

Maurice “Mo” Canady is the Executive Director for the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO). He is a former lieutenant with the Hoover (Alabama) Police Department. As part of his 25-year career in law enforcement, Mr. Canady was a member of the Hoover Police Department’s Special Response Team and served the last 12 years of his career as the commander of the School Services Division, which provided services to more than 13,000 students. He has served as a law enforcement instructor since 1993, teaching courses such as Tactical Response to School Shootings and Student Violence.

Frank G. Straub, PhD, is the Director of the National Police Foundation’s Center for Mass Violence Response Studies. Dr. Straub has led in-depth after-action studies of the San Bernardino terrorist attack, the Kalamazoo mass shooting, the Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, and the University of North Carolina–Charlotte shooting. He is also the project manager for the national ASV database.

Dr. Straub is a 30-year veteran of federal and local law enforcement. During his career, he served for six years on the FBI-NYPD terrorist task force as the NYPD’s Deputy Commissioner of Training and Assistant Commissioner of Counterterrorism. As the Commissioner of Public Safety in White

Plains, New York, he established Westchester County's first police-mental health co-responder team. As the police chief in Spokane, Washington, he organized a multidisciplinary, multiagency mental health steering committee, established the first police-mental health co-responder team in eastern Washington, and required all officers to receive 40 hours of CIT training.

Dr. Straub holds a BA in psychology, an MA in forensic psychology, and a PhD in criminal justice.

Dr. Straub has authored articles and reports on mass violence attacks, critical incident response, officer safety and wellness, and homeland security. He has testified before Congress and spoken at national and international conferences regarding the prevention, response, and recovery from public mass violence attacks; crisis response; and averting school violence.

ABOUT THE COPS OFFICE

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 130,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, round tables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, www.cops.usdoj.gov. This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.

The National Police Foundation and the COPS Office created the Averted School Violence (ASV) database to provide a platform for sharing information about averted incidents of violence in elementary, secondary, and higher education. This report examines 12 case studies of incidents in which planned violence targeting K–12 schools was averted by the potential attackers’ peers, school administrators, and other school safety stakeholders including school resource officers (SRO). Each case includes a discussion of lessons learned from examining the potential attackers’ intentions and the actions of those who averted the attack.



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street NE
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs,
call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.