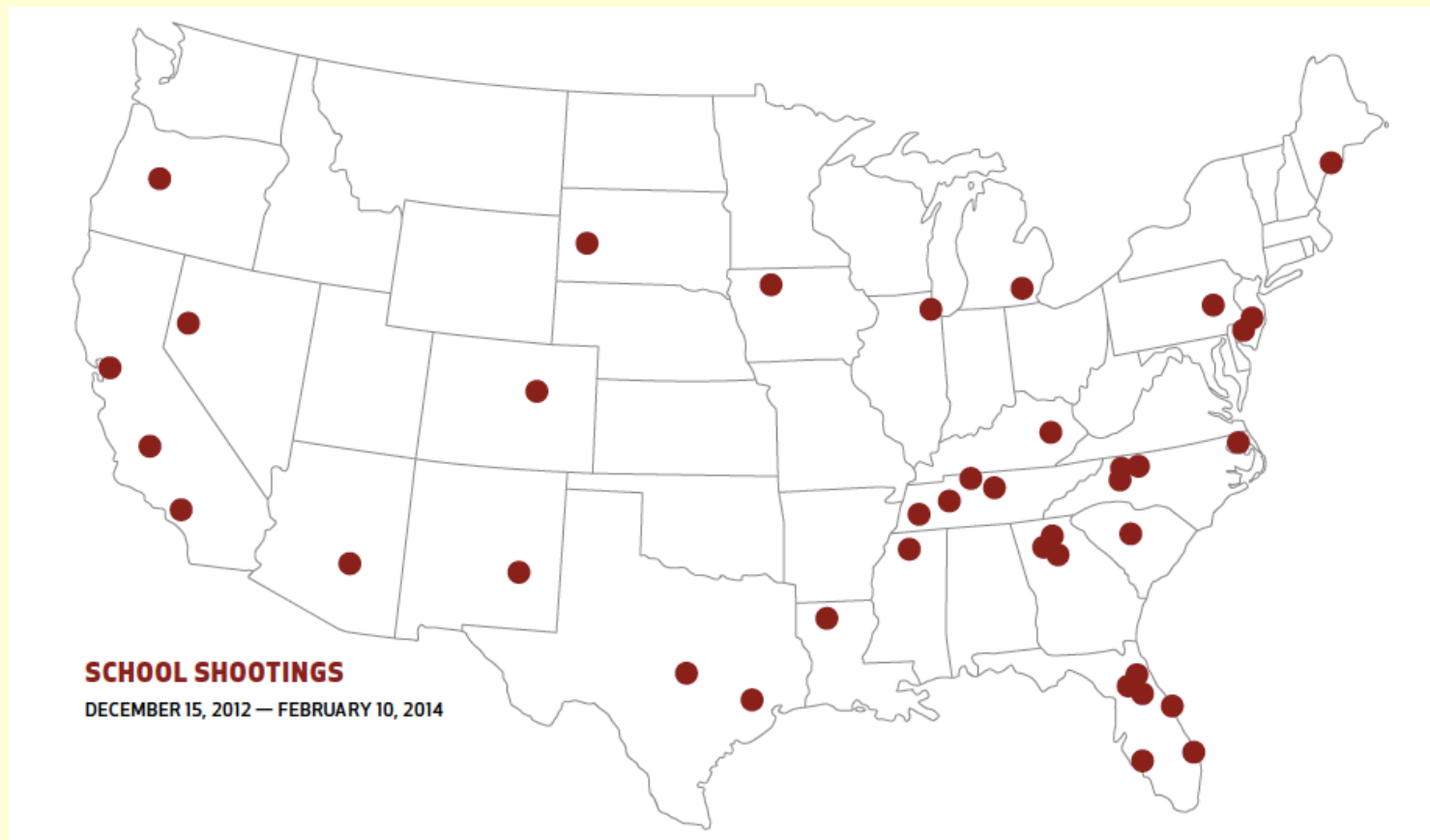


# School Threat Analysis: Exploring School Security Breaches, Threats to Safety, and Coordinated Response



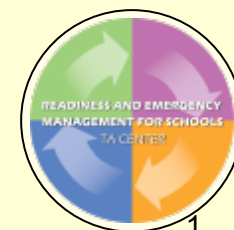
Dr. Jason Lody, Ed. D.  
Innovative Educational Programs, LLC  
Basking Ridge | Washington, DC

# Why Are We Here?

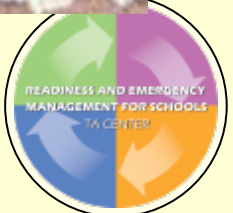


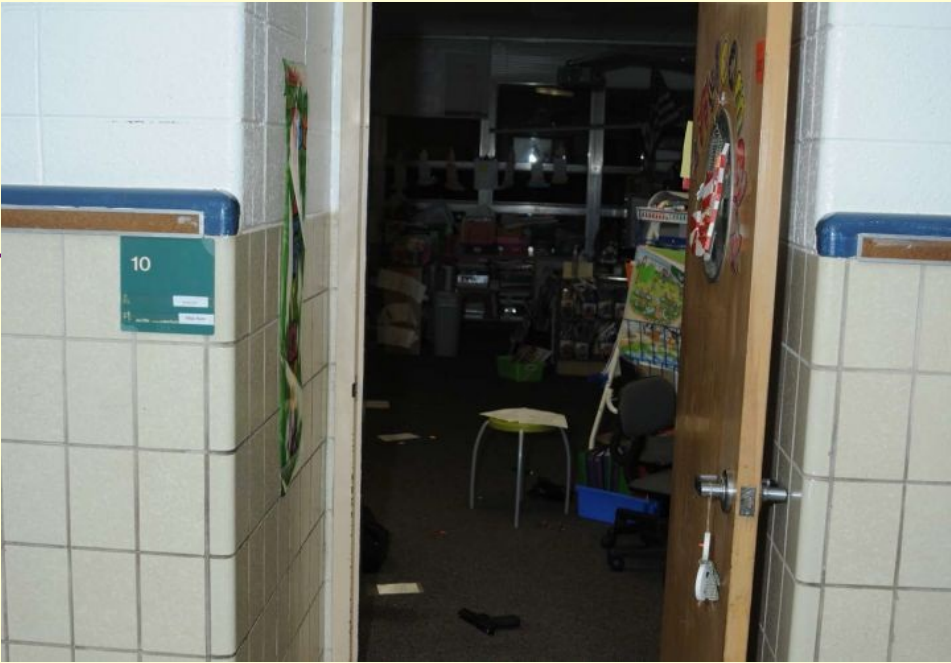
***44 shootings in 14 months...***











# Problem Statement

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Most schools in the U.S. are ‘open’ campuses, meaning they are easily accessed by the public. Budget cuts have impacted resources like security and law enforcement personnel typically assigned to schools. Increased school size (construction and enrollment) amplifies the threats of security breaches and impacts traditional responses by public safety.





# Types of School Violence

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Security Breach

Domestic Violence

Personnel Violence (disgruntled worker syndrome)

Student-on-Student (bullying)

Active Shooter



# Section 1: Introduction

## What is School Emergency Management All About?





# What is School Emergency Management All About?

- Our purpose:
  - Introduce the four phases of emergency management and illustrate their interrelationship in the school setting
  - Illustrate the importance of planning and practice
  - Describe how to take an “all-hazards” approach to school emergency management
  - Emphasize the importance of collaboration with community partners



# What is Emergency Management?

- Characteristics of an emergency or a crisis in schools:
  - Vary in scope and intensity
  - Can happen before, during, or after school hours
  - Can happen on or off school grounds.



# Four Phases of School Emergency Management

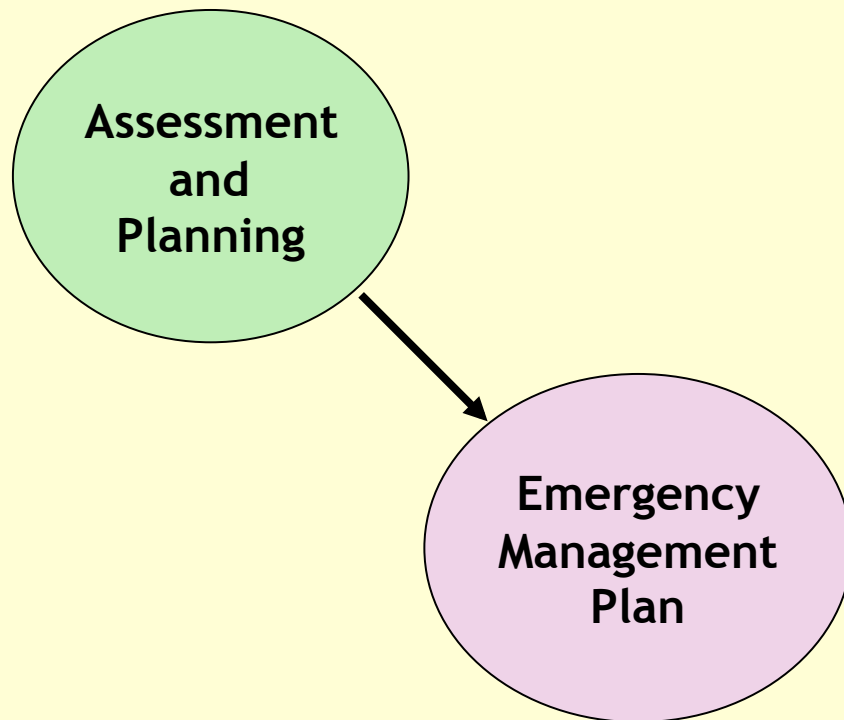


# Developing an Emergency Management Plan





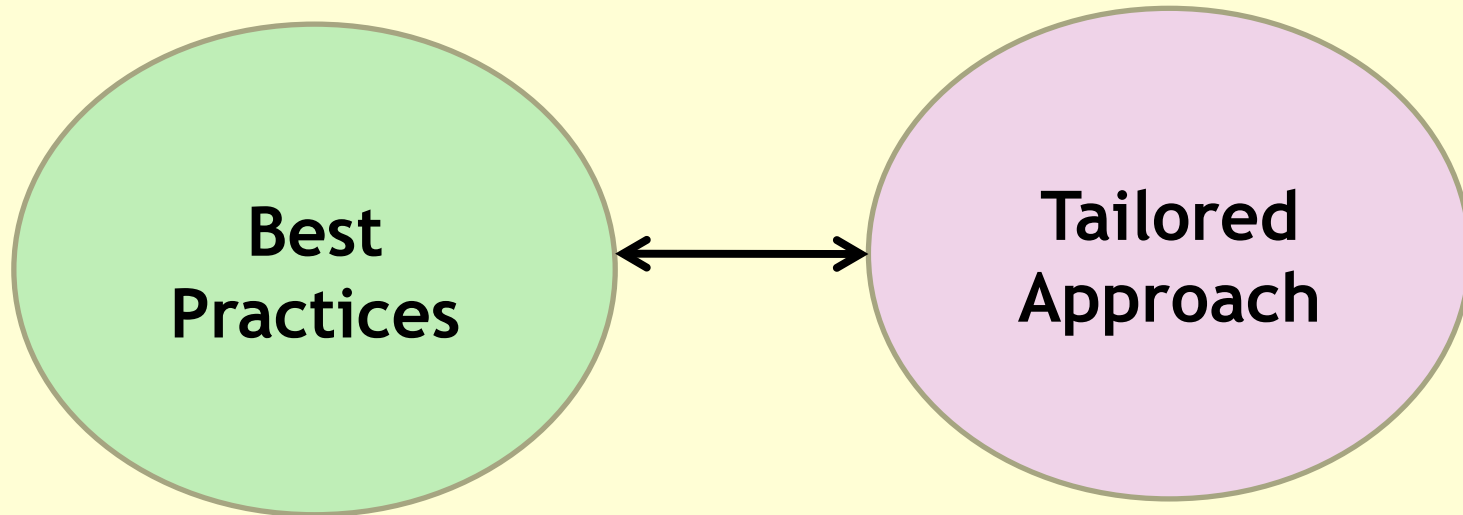
# Importance of Assessment and Planning



- An emergency management plan:
  - Addresses all hazards
  - Defines roles and responsibilities
  - Emphasizes collaboration and communication with community partners
  - Outlines action steps
  - Establishes training and practice protocols
  - Is based on actual community and campus data



# Best Practices Combined with Tailored Approach



History and culture  
Types of risks  
Safety laws

The school environment is special!



# Importance of Involving Community Partners

- Emergency management agencies
- Law enforcement
- Fire and emergency medical services
- 9-1-1 communications centers
- Public health agencies
- Hospitals, medical clinics, and ambulance service providers
- Mental health resources
- Public works, building inspection, and planning agencies
- Nonprofit organizations providing disaster relief and other human services
- State agencies involved in emergency management
- Media organizations
- Others?

Build partnerships before the onset of emergencies!



# Definitions

- **Dynamic Situation**: *The situation is evolving very rapidly along with the suspect's action. Example, shooting and moving.*
- **Static Situation**: *The situation is not evolving or in motion, it suspect actions appear to be contained. Example, suspect is barricaded in a room.*
- **Time Line of Violence**: *The period of time from the suspects first violent action until his action is stopped or he/she transitions to another activity.*
- **Incident Transition**: *That point in the incident where the "active shooter" stops his/her violent actions and tries to escape or barricades themselves.*





# Barricade Situations

- Suspect is in a position of advantage, usually barricaded in a room or building.
- Suspect is armed and has displayed violence.
- May or may not be holding a hostage (s)
- There is no indication that the suspect(s) activity is immediately causing death or serious bodily injury. The event is not dynamic but rather static.

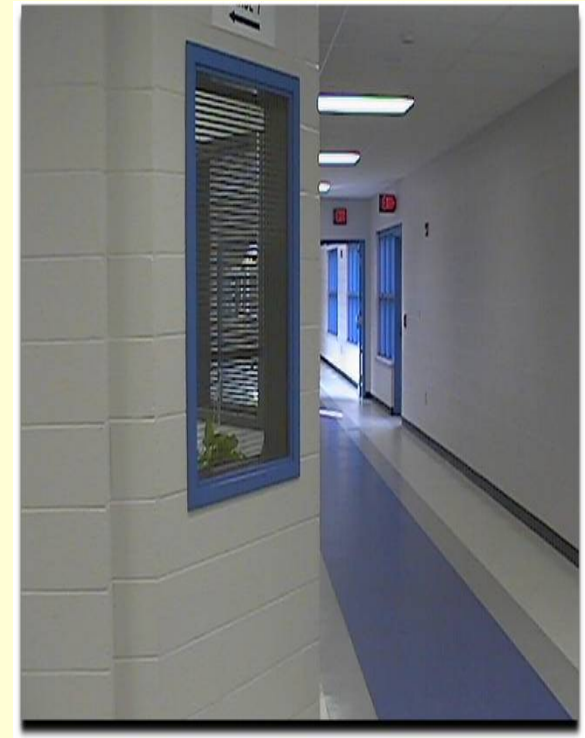


# Section 2: Prevention-Mitigation Phase

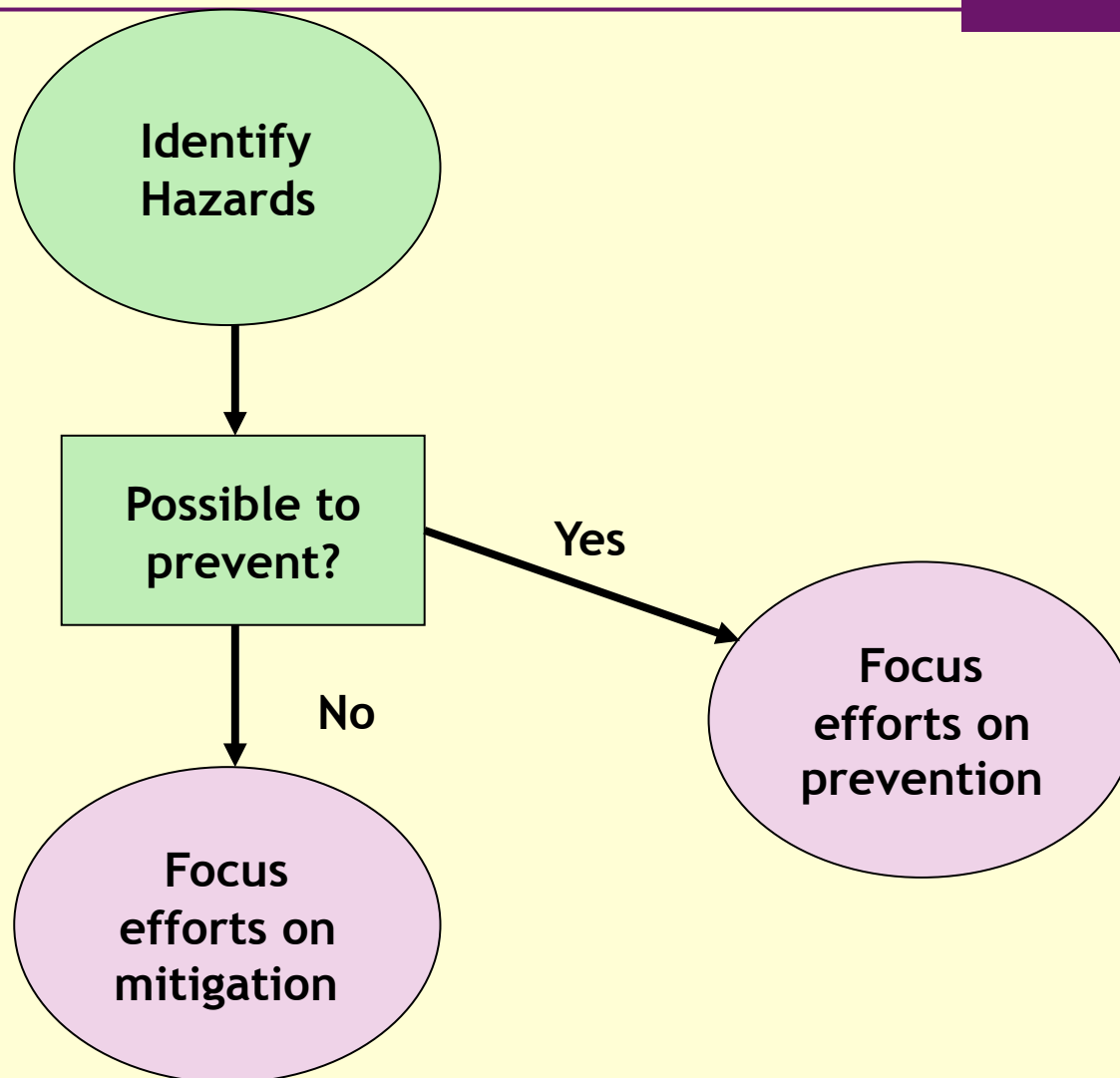


# Prevention-Mitigation Phase

- **Prevention** is the action schools and districts take to **decrease the likelihood** that an event or crisis will occur.
- **Mitigation** is the action schools and districts take to eliminate or **reduce the loss of life and property damage** related to an event or crisis, particularly those that cannot be prevented.

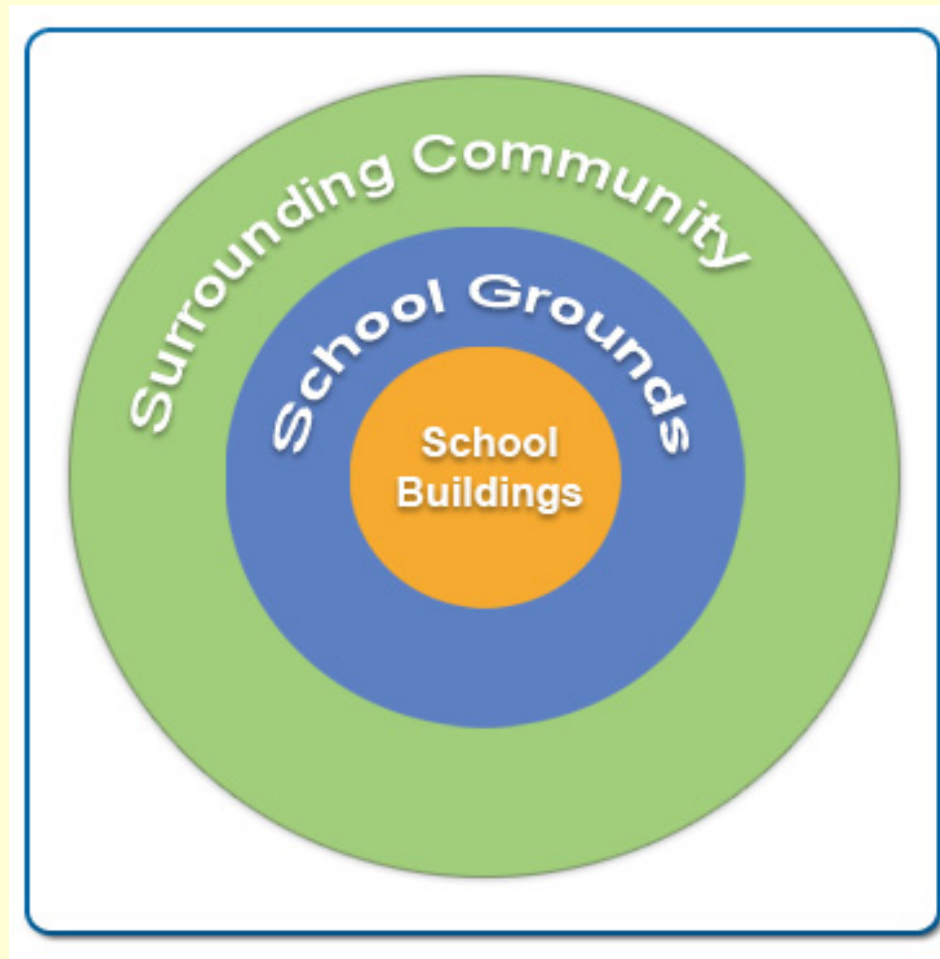


# Prevention-Mitigation: Connection to Risk Assessment





# Prevention-Mitigation: The Physical Environment



# Prevention-Mitigation: School Buildings

- Risk assessment team - facilities managers, teachers, janitors, groundskeepers
- Areas of concern:
  - Building access and exits
  - Visibility and surveillance
  - Structural integrity

Resource: American Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities (ACEF) - <http://www.acefacilities.org/>

Guide to School Vulnerability Assessment - <http://rems.ed.gov>



# Example: Building Access and Exits

- Control access - know who is entering school buildings
- Lock doors when practical
- Use access cards or coded entry locks if possible
- Anticipate exit routes during an emergency



# Prevention-Mitigation: School Grounds

- School grounds - buffer between school buildings and the outside world
  - Campus entry points
  - Trees and shrubs around buildings and hidden areas
  - Emergency vehicle access
  - Unsafe equipment



# Prevention-Mitigation: Surrounding Community

- Neighborhoods and community-at-large:
  - Traffic control and safety
  - Neighborhood safety
  - Nearby hazards
  - Planning for evacuation (Mitigation)



# Preventing Violence - School Culture and Climate

Positive culture and climate = Less likelihood of violence  
Welcoming \* Connectedness \* Respect \* Cooperation



# Culture and Climate Assessment

- Useful for violence prevention and other important objectives
- Culture and climate improvement requires a long-term strategy
- Includes program-based solutions, e.g. anti-bullying program





# Threat Assessment Process

- **Threat assessment...** a specific inquiry or investigation regarding a student of concern with the purpose of determining if in fact that student represents a threat and what measures if any should be taken to address the issue.

Resource: *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates* (U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education, July 2004).

<http://rems.ed.gov/docs/ThreatAssessmentinSchools.pdf>



# Know the Facts about Targeted Violence

- Rarely sudden, impulsive acts
- Usually others knew about the coming attack
- Warning signs are usually present
- Most attackers felt bullied
- There is no standard profile for an attacker

Resource accessible at:

<http://ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/threatassessmentguide.pdf>



# Suspect Profile



*“Kill yourselves, or you will never know how the dorky kid that you publicly humiliated and spat on will come behind you and slash your throats. Kill yourselves or you will never know the hour the little kid will come in with hundreds of ammunition on his back to shoot you down.”*



# Suspect Profile

“I will hunt you down and put a hole in your head.  
With explosives...RIP. You must DIE.”

## Common Characteristics\*

- Social withdrawal
- Excessive feelings of rejection
- Being a victim of violence
- Low school interest and poor academic performance



# Suspect Profile



- Expression of violence in writings and drawings directed at specific individuals (family members, peers, other adults)
- Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying behaviors
- History of discipline problems
- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.
- Severe destruction of property



# Suspect Profile

"They shall not mind the mud on my feet if there is blood on your sheet. Now! Feel death, not just mocking you. Not just stalking you but inside of you. Wriggle and writhe. Feel smaller beneath my might. Seizure in the Pestilence that is my scythe. Die, all of you."

- Past history of violent and aggressive behavior
- Intolerance for differences and prejudicial attitudes
- Affiliation with gangs
- Inappropriate access to, possession of, and use of firearms
- Serious threats of violence



# Suspect Profile

"I'm not insane. I am angry. I killed because people like me are mistreated everyday."



- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons
- Detailed threats of lethal violence
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide





# Section 3: Preparedness Phase



# School Priorities

- Protect the lives of children, teachers and staff
- Have a crisis management team and detailed School Safety Plan
- Implement an “Armed Intruder” procedure
- Notify police
- Provide follow-up counseling to children, teachers, and staff



# Criteria for Response Decisions: Lockdown

- Used when there is an immediate threat of violence in or around the school
- No one enters or leaves school buildings and grounds
  - Need to define procedures for locking doors and windows
  - Consider contingencies such as lockdown between class periods
  - Consider special needs students





# Criteria for Response Decisions: Shelter-in-Place

- Used when students and staff should remain indoors
- In the event of an environmental hazard, usually close windows and doors, turn off HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning system)
  - Prepare for extended sheltering periods



# Conducting Training and Emergency Exercises

- Tabletops
- Drills
- Full-Scale Exercises



# Student Accountability Procedure

- Define in advance how students will be accounted for:
  - Before classes
  - During classes
  - In between classes
  - After classes, and
  - In the case of an emergency





# Parent/Guardian Reunification Procedure

- Need for accurate contact information
- Define notification procedures
- Need for clear instructions to parents/guardians - photo identification



# Persons with Special Needs

- Visual
- Hearing
- Mobility
- Cognitive
- Attentional
- Emotional
- Medical



Include district special needs experts on your planning team



# Section 4: Response Phase



# School Priorities in Active Shooter Situations

- Call 911 and stay on the phone.
- Isolate and evacuate as soon as possible.
- Collect as much information as possible.
- **Don't try to be a hero.**
- Allow police first responders to make contact.



# Police Priorities in Active Shooter Situations

- The capture or neutralization of the suspect, as soon as possible.
- The lives of those in proximity of the shooter.
- The lives and safety of citizens in the area.
- The safety of police officers.
- Containment.
- After event investigation and a return to normalcy.



# Key Elements of Response

- ✓ Assess magnitude of the problem
- ✓ Activate the emergency management plan and the Incident Command System
- ✓ Deploy resources and make informed decisions
- ✓ Work with first responders and other community partners
- ✓ Decide whether to use evacuation, lockdown, or shelter-in-place
- ✓ Account for students, faculty, and staff
- ✓ Reunify parents/guardians with students
- ✓ Initiate transition to the Recovery Phase
- ✓ Conduct an after-action assessment as a tool for learning and improvement



# Response Phase - Summary

- What you need to do during Response:
  - Activate the Incident Command System
  - Coordinate with first responders
  - Adapt to an evolving situation
  - Decide on Response strategies
  - Account for students - reunify with parents/guardians
  - Communicate with parents/guardians and the media





# Parting Comments

- It all starts with an Emergency Management Plan
- Address all four phases in your plan
- Action Planning Checklist (in manual)

Thank You!

... for your attention

... for what you do to keep our children safe!

Questions? [jlody@ieponline.com](mailto:jlody@ieponline.com)

**Resources:**

<http://rems.ed.gov>

<http://www.ed.gov/emergencyplan>

