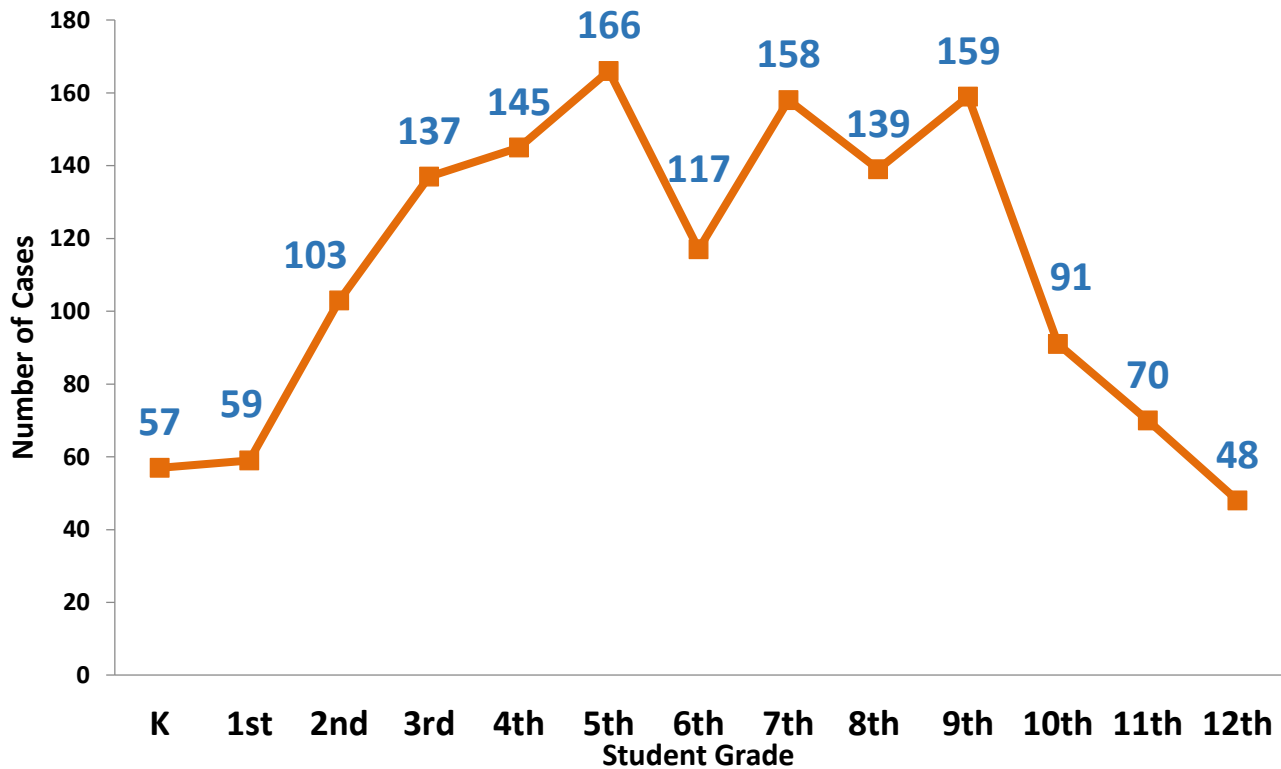


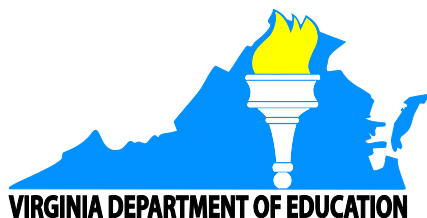
Threat Assessment in Virginia Schools:

Technical Report of the Threat Assessment Survey for 2013-2014

Student Threats to Harm Others



1,470 threat assessment cases reported by 810 Virginia public schools during the 2013-14 school year



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Executive Summary

In 2013, Virginia passed legislation (§ 22.1-79.4) which required local school boards to establish threat assessment teams for each public school. The Threat Assessment Survey was designed to gather information on the quantity and quality of threat cases in Virginia schools in order to assist them in developing effective school safety practices. Threats are broadly defined as a student's communication or behavior that indicates intent to harm someone. Schools were asked to describe their threat assessment program and report on up to five threat assessment cases. An initial summary of overall results is provided in the 2014 School Safety Audit Report.

This report is a technical supplement to the 2014 School Safety Audit Report that is intended to provide information specific to elementary, middle, or high schools, excluding 196 other types of schools such as alternative, pre-kindergarten, and special education schools. Many of the analyses in this report are limited to the 810 schools that had at least one threat assessment case during the 2013-14 school year and focused specifically on cases involving threats to harm others. Readers are cautioned that these results are based on a selected sample and may not generalize to all Virginia schools.

This report is concerned with describing the threat assessment process from start to finish, with information on the prevalence of threats across school levels and student populations, description of the kinds of threats, how schools responded to threats, and the outcomes for students and their intended victims. One caveat is that prevalence rates and other results obtained from this survey may change in future years as all school threat assessment teams refine their procedures and become more experienced in conducting threat assessments.

Prevalence of Threat Assessment Cases

- The 810 schools reported 3,283 cases, generating a prevalence rate of approximately 4 cases per school and 6.1 cases per 1,000 students.
- Threats were identified to school authorities by faculty (51%), students (34%), administrators (11%), other school staff members (9%), parents (7%), and others (4%). (Percentages exceed 100 because some threats were reported by more than one source).
- High schools had lower prevalence rates (4.3 per 1,000) than elementary (6.6) and middle (6.7) schools.
- The highest frequencies of threats were in grades 3-9.
- Most threats were made by boys (81%).
- Students receiving special education services made up approximately 12% of the statewide student population, but accounted for 36% of the threat cases; thus, these students were reported to make threats three times more frequently than students in regular education.
- Threats were made by students identified as White (52%), Black (32%), Hispanic (9%), Asian (3%), or other racial/ethnic groups (4%).

Threat Characteristics

- Most threats were communicated orally to the intended victim (63%) or a third party (17%), with other threats communicated on paper (8%), by digital communication (7%), through graffiti (1%), or through other means (10%).
- The most common intended targets of a threat were students (64%), faculty (16%), staff (5%), and administrators (3%). Six percent of threats were directed at the school as a whole.
- In 4% of cases the student threatened to harm both self and others.

- The most common threats were threats to kill (20%), hit or fight (18%), cut or stab (13%), shoot (11%), or use some other kind of weapon (10%). Less common were threats involving arson (1%), a bomb or other explosive device (6%), or sexual assault (1%).
- Approximately two-thirds of threats were classified by the school teams as either Low Risk or Transient, which are categories that indicate the person made a threat that not did pose a serious risk of violence.
- The 75 most serious threats were made primarily by students in 8th, 9th, and 10th grade.

Responses to Student Threats

- The school response will vary widely depending on the seriousness of the threat. In most cases, the team notified the student's parents (88%), cautioned the student about the consequences of carrying out the threat (65%), and increased monitoring of the student (53%). In approximately half (51%) of cases, the threat was resolved with the student giving an explanation or apology.
- Various kinds of safety precautions are undertaken when the threat is deemed to be serious. These included consultation with the school resource officer or other school safety specialist (42%), notifying the intended target's parents (35%), protecting and notifying intended targets (29%), developing a behavior intervention or safety plan (25%), and providing direct supervision of the students until removed from campus by law enforcement or a parent (21%).
- A guiding principle of threat assessment is that the most effective way to prevent violence is to address the problem or conflict that underlies the threat. Accordingly the student was referred for school-based counseling (33%), mental health assessment (20%), review of an existing Individualized Education Program (18%) or 504 Plan (2%), special education evaluation (4%), or hospitalization (4%).
- Disciplinary procedures were followed in 80% of cases. This included out-of-school suspension (47%), reprimand (38%), in-school suspension (13%), or detention (6%). Less frequently, students were recommended for an expulsion that was reduced to an out-of-school suspension (6%) or were expelled (2%).
- Law enforcement responses included charging the student with an offense (4%), arrest (2%), and placement in juvenile detention (1%).
- The great majority of students (80%) were able to return to their original school, with others 10% transferred to an alternative school (10%), placed on homebound instruction (5%), or transferred to another regular school (1%).

Violence Not Attempted, Averted, or Not Averted

- In almost all cases (96%) there was no known attempt to carry out the threat. Although a reassuring finding, this observation does not clearly demonstrate that the threat assessment process prevented the threat because there was no control group of threats made in schools without a threat assessment process.
- There were 30 threats (2%) judged by schools to have been averted when a student attempted to carry them out. These cases primarily involved attempted battery, but there were 2 cases in which the student had possession of a firearm and 11 attempts to stab in which a student had possession of a knife or cutting weapon.
- There were 29 threats (2%) judged by the schools to have been carried out by the student. These cases primarily involved battery, with 2 stabbings.

Response to the Intended Victims

- The school's response to the intended victim of a threat will depend on the nature of the threat and whether this person was a student. In approximately half of the cases (51%) the school notified the parent or guardian of the intended victim.
- Other responses were to provide supportive counseling (39%), increase protective monitoring (21%), and change the class schedule for the targeted student (3%).
- In some cases, school authorities advised the intended victim or parents of the right to report the threat to law enforcement (17%).
- School authorities also informed the intended victim or parents of the outcome for the student who made the threat (such as letting them know when the student was returning to school (16%).

Training Issues

- Some schools reported that they had not yet fully established their threat assessment teams and/or had no identified threat cases. Training and guidance may be needed for these schools.
- Of the 810 schools with functioning threat assessment teams, 88% reported that they had in-service training for their team members.
- Of the 810 schools with functioning threat assessment teams, they reported using the University of Virginia model (43%), a model created by their school division (36%), the Department of Criminal Justice Services model (19%), or another model (2%). There is a need to define the critical or distinguishing features of different models of threat assessment, as well as determine features that are associated with favorable case outcomes.
- Schools should make certain that their faculty and staff are aware of the threat assessment program in their school. A school climate survey completed by teachers in 323 Virginia high schools in Spring 2014 found that the majority (59%) reported that they did not know whether their school had formal threat assessment guidelines.
- Schools are not consistent in whether they include suicide threats in their threat assessment process and data collection. One recommendation is that schools distinguish suicide assessment from threat assessment, and use both procedures when students threaten harm to both self and others. Survey data and records should clearly distinguish suicide assessment and threat assessment cases.
- Many schools did not report warning targeted victims and/or parents. It is not clear from the survey whether schools authorities have concerns about confidentiality that prevent them from warning targeted victims, and if so, training and guidance on this issue are needed.

Overall, Virginia schools were able to implement threat assessment teams that responded to 3,283 student threats. Examination of a sample of those cases indicated that 96% of all threats were resolved without violence. In the remaining cases, there was a fight or assault, but no serious injuries. The vast majority of students received disciplinary consequences and support services that permitted them to return to school.

1: PURPOSE OF THE VIRGINIA THREAT ASSESSMENT SURVEY

In 2013 new Virginia legislation (in § 22.1-79.4) required that “Each local school board shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams, including the assessment of and intervention with students 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...” and that “Each division superintendent shall establish, for each school, a threat assessment team that shall include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement.” The law further directed that “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.”

In response to the new legislation, the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services adapted its Annual School Safety Audit to include questions about its threat assessment procedures and cases. An initial set of questions asked schools to report whether they had conducted any threat assessments during the 2013-2014 school year. Schools answering in the affirmative were asked to complete an additional set of questions about their threat assessment cases.

In 2014 the University of Virginia was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to evaluate and improve the implementation of student threat assessment in Virginia public schools. The grant involves three phases carried out over four years. Phase 1 involves a comprehensive statewide inventory of how threat assessment is currently implemented, with a goal of identifying different models of threat assessment and development of an instrument to assess fidelity of implementation. This technical report contributes to Phase 1.

Phase 2 will examine student and school outcomes for schools based on their threat assessment models and implementation fidelity. Student outcomes include the resolution of threats without violence, continuation in school without suspension, and provision of student support services. School outcomes are levels of violence and bullying, suspension rates, especially for disproportionately suspended minority students, and school climate.

Phase 3 will consist of a randomized controlled study comparing schools that receive technical assistance with control schools that do not receive such assistance. Technical assistance will focus on improving implementation fidelity and reducing school suspension among minority students.

Overall the project will produce instruments, procedures, and training materials that can be used to establish a national model of threat assessment as an effective school discipline and safety practice. Research findings will be widely disseminated through scholarly journals, professional conferences, and non-technical briefs for education and law enforcement.

2: STUDY METHODS

Threat Assessment School Sample

The 2013-2014 School Safety Survey was completed in the fall of 2014 by school administrators in 100% of the state's 1,111 elementary schools, 339 middle schools, 312 high schools, and 178 other schools. (The other group consists of a heterogeneous group of schools such as correctional schools, special education centers, adult learner schools, and Governor's schools). The Threat Assessment Case Survey was administered as a follow-up survey in order to gain more information from the 1,114 elementary, middle, and high schools whose principals reported that they had at least one threat assessment case during the 2013-2014 school year. However, when administered this follow-up survey, 304 of these schools reported that they did not have any threat assessment cases, perhaps as a result of some misunderstanding of the question on the 2014 School Safety Survey. Consequently, those 304 schools had no information to report and are not included in the analyses. Five of these eligible schools did not complete the follow-up survey. As a result, the final sample used in this report consisted of 810 schools, including 431 elementary schools, 198 middle schools, and 181 high schools. In order to minimize the reporting burden on schools, the follow-up survey did not ask for detailed information about each threat assessment case. Instead, the survey asked about five cases. For schools with more than five cases, schools were instructed to select cases as follows: for case 1, report information about the most serious case during the 2013-14 school year; for case 2, report the least serious case; for cases 3-5, report the three most recent unselected cases. By limiting the sample to five cases per school, schools with large numbers of cases are not given disproportionate weight in the sample. Schools were asked to identify both their most serious and least serious cases, as well as three intermediate cases, in order to obtain a wide range of cases and to avoid potential biases in selecting the most memorable cases. This selection procedure protects against overweighting of schools with larger numbers of cases, but it does not produce a completely unbiased random sample of cases. Random selection of cases would have required a more complex process that was individualized to each school based on the number of cases in each school.

Of the 810 schools in the sample, 646 (79.8%) schools had 5 or fewer cases and 164 (20.2%) had more than 5 cases, for a total of 3,283 cases. The survey collected case information on 1,883 cases, which represents 57.4% of the total. Readers are reminded that these results are based on a selected sample rather than a random sample, and may not generalize to all Virginia schools. Furthermore, prevalence rates and other results obtained from this survey may change in future years as all school threat assessment teams refine their procedures and become more experienced.

The results presented in this report are descriptive. More complex analyses will be summarized in future reports.

School Climate Survey of Students and Teachers

The Threat Assessment Case Survey was supplemented with data from the Virginia Secondary School Climate (VSSC) Survey, which was completed by 323 of Virginia's 324 public high schools in Spring of 2014. The VSSC survey was completed by 48,027 students and 13,455 teachers in grades 9-12. Students and teachers were asked several questions about being threatened at school. Teachers were also asked about their knowledge of the school's threat assessment program. Additional information about the VSSC survey can be found in the high school survey technical report (Cornell et al., 2014; download from <http://www.dcjv.virginia.gov/vcss/audit/student/>).

3: DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

Threat Assessment Incidence Rates

There were a total of 3,283 student-related threat assessment cases reported by 810 schools, an average of 4.1 threat assessment cases per school. The rate of threat assessment cases was approximately 6 cases per 1,000 students, with a lower rate of 4 cases per thousand students in high schools.

Threat assessment cases, including suicide assessments, reported by schools

Table 1.

Number of Threat Cases (n)	Elementary (431 schools)		Middle (198 schools)		High (181 schools)		All Schools (810 schools)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
1	190	44.1%	67	33.8%	66	36.5%	323	39.9%
2	86	20.0%	35	17.7%	32	17.7%	153	18.9%
3	39	9.0%	17	8.6%	15	8.3%	71	8.8%
4	31	7.2%	9	4.5%	16	8.8%	56	6.9%
5	21	4.9%	9	4.5%	9	5.0%	39	4.8%
6-10	32	7.5%	35	17.7%	20	11.2%	87	10.7%
11-20	23	23.0%	18	7.5%	18	10.1%	59	7.2%
21+	6	1.2%	8	4.0%	4	2.3%	18	1.8%
Rate per 1000 students	6.6		6.7		4.3		6.1	

Several caveats must be noted about these estimated threat assessment rates. First, the schools in this sample may not be representative of the entire state, so that the rates may differ when all schools are actively using threat assessment. Second, there is variation among schools in their threat assessment models or procedures that may affect their rates. Notably, some schools included suicide assessments in their threat assessment counts. Some schools also distinguished suicide threats from threats to injure self, such as through cutting, without intent to commit suicide.

Threat Case Characteristics

As noted above, in order to minimize the reporting burden on schools, the follow-up survey asked for information on no more than five cases from each school.

Virginia legislation on threat assessment includes student threats to harm self as well as others. As a result, students who make suicidal threats in the absence of a threat to harm someone else might be included in the school's threat assessment process. However, in practice, a threat assessment is typically concerned with a threat to harm another person and can be distinguished from a suicide assessment conducted when a student threatens to harm self. Furthermore, the response to a student who is suicidal will differ in important ways from the response to a student who threatens to harm others, and many of the survey questions (such as whether a victim was warned) are not meaningful when both kinds of cases are combined. For purposes of this report, analyses of case characteristics are limited to cases in which a student has threatened to harm another person. It should be noted that suicide assessment procedures are already established in most schools and specific guidance and training on suicide prevention are available (see <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/ofhs/prevention/preventsuicideva/>).

In order to obtain a better understanding of threats to harm others, 413 cases involving a threat to harm self but not others have been omitted from these analyses, leaving a sample of 1,470 threat assessment cases. Of these 1,470 cases, 65 threat assessment cases in which a student threatened to harm both self and others.

What are the grade levels of students who threatened others?

Threats were made by students across all grades K-12, with the highest number of threats made by students in grades 3-9 (see Table 2 and Figure 1).

Table 2.

Grade	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
preK	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%
K	57	8.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	57	3.9%
1	59	8.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	59	4.0%
2	103	14.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	103	7.0%
3	137	19.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	137	9.3%
4	145	21.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	145	9.9%
5	160	23.1%	6	1.5%	0	0.0%	166	11.3%
6	21	3.0%	96	23.5%	0	0.0%	117	8.0%
7	1	0.1%	157	38.5%	0	0.0%	158	10.7%
8	1	0.1%	133	33.6%	1	0.3%	139	9.5%
9	0	0.0%	4	1.0%	155	41.9%	159	10.8%
10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	91	24.6%	91	6.2%
11	0	0.0%	1*	0.2%	69	18.6%	70	4.8%
12	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	48	13.7%	48	3.3%

*A middle school reported a threat assessment of an 11th grade student who threatened one of their students.

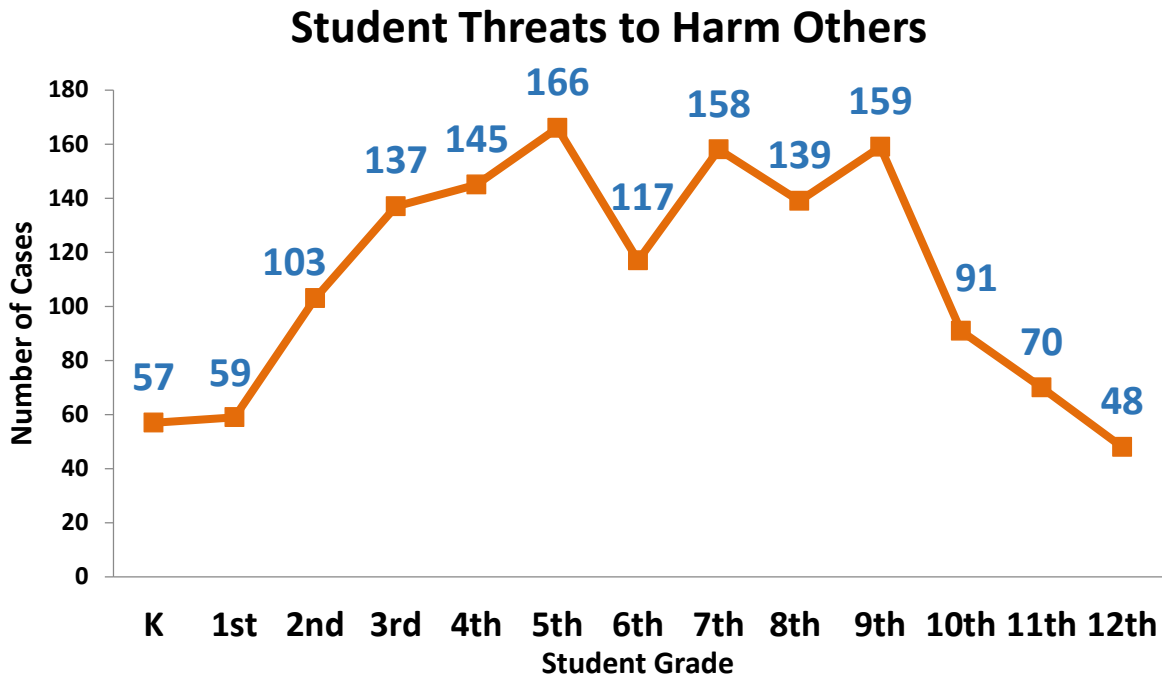


Figure 1. Student threats to harm others by grade.

What are the demographics of students who threatened others?

As might be expected, boys made 80% of threats. The racial/ethnic composition of students making threats was similar to the general composition of the student population. According to state enrollment data from the Virginia Department of Education (<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/>), students were categorized as 52.5% White, 22.9% Black, 13.0% Hispanic, and 11.6% other ethnicities. The similarity in composition is notable because there are well-known racial disparities in school suspension rates, with Black students suspended at a higher rate than other racial/ethnic groups (Cornell, 2014).

Table 3.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Gender								
Male	577	83.4%	319	78.2%	300	81.1%	1196	81.4%
Female	114	16.5%	89	21.8%	66	16.8%	269	18.3%
Unknown	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	3	0.8%	5	0.3%
Race/Ethnicity								
Asian	25	3.6%	10	2.5%	13	3.5%	48	3.3%
Black	237	34.2%	120	29.4%	108	29.2%	465	31.6%
Hispanic	60	8.7%	40	9.8%	30	8.1%	130	8.8%
White	340	49.1%	218	53.4%	199	53.8%	757	51.5%
Other	2	0.3%	2	0.5%	5	1.4%	9	0.6%
Unknown	11	1.6%	11	2.7%	10	2.7%	32	2.2%
Multiple Races	21	3.0%	8	2.0%	4	1.1%	33	2.2%

What is the school background of students who threatened others?

According to the Virginia Department of Education, in the 2013-14 academic year, 11.9% of K-12 students received special education services. Thus, a disproportionately high percentage (35.9%) of students making threats were reported as receiving special education services; this high percentage for threats by students with special education services is similar to previous research findings (47%) by Kaplan and Cornell (2005). Although prior violent behavior is often cited as a risk factor for violence, relatively few of the students making threats had a known history of violent behavior in school (25%) or out of school (14%). However, the majority (61%) of the students making threats had prior discipline referrals.

Table 4.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Total %	n	Total %	n	Total %	n	Total %
Receiving special education services	243	35.1%	152	37.3%	132	35.7%	527	35.9%
History of violent behavior in school	175	25.3%	94	23.0%	101	27.3%	370	25.2%
History of violent behavior out of school	108	15.6%	38	9.3%	66	17.8%	212	14.4%
History of discipline referrals	415	60.0%	245	60.0%	233	63.0%	893	60.7%

Who reported the threat?

Threat assessments cannot be conducted unless someone reports that a threat has been made. The most common reporter was a faculty member (51%) followed by a student (34%), administrator (11%), parent (7%), or school support staff member (6%). Few threats were reported by facility support staff (3%) or anonymous sources (< 1%). School authorities should make sure that everyone understands the need to report threats and how to make a report.

Table 5.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Student	207	29.9%	162	39.7%	135	36.5%	504	34.3%
Faculty	420	60.7%	187	45.8%	149	40.3%	756	51.4%
Administrator	67	9.7%	38	9.3%	57	15.4%	162	11.0%
Student support staff (e.g., counselor, psychologist)	43	6.2%	22	5.4%	22	5.9%	87	5.9%
Facility support staff (e.g., bus driver, custodian)	19	2.7%	16	3.9%	13	3.5%	48	3.3%
Parent	33	4.8%	36	8.8%	34	9.2%	103	7.0%
Anonymous	0	0.0%	2	0.5%	1	0.3%	3	0.2%
Other	25	3.6%	11	2.7%	18	4.9%	54	3.7%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

How are reports made?

The vast majority (89%) of reports are made in person, with relatively few made by telephone (9%), email (3%), or text message (< 1%).

Table 6.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
In person	629	90.9%	367	90.0%	311	84.1%	1307	88.9%
Phone call	43	6.2%	39	9.6%	43	11.6%	125	8.5%
Text message	1	0.1%	2	0.5%	6	1.6%	9	0.6%
Email	17	2.5%	8	2.0%	19	5.1%	44	3.0%
Other	25	3.6%	17	4.2%	18	4.9%	60	4.1%

How serious was the threat?

The most critical distinction in threat assessment is between making a threat and posing a threat. A person making a threat does not necessarily pose a threat unless he or she has both the intent and capability to carry out the threat. Most threats made by children and adolescents are not serious expressions of intent to carry out a violent act. This poses a challenge for threat assessment in schools that differs from threat assessment in other settings, where threats are more likely to be serious. One reason for this difference is that children are more expressive of their emotions and more likely to make threatening statements, whereas adults tend to have better self-control and have been socialized more extensively not to make threatening statements.

Schools use different means of classifying the seriousness of a threat. The DCJS model policy recommends a four-group classification, whereas the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines developed at the University of Virginia uses a three-group classification. The two classification systems do not neatly map onto one another because there are qualitative, conceptual differences between them.

Table 7.

DCJS Threat Category	Description
Imminent Risk	The person/situation appears to pose a clear and immediate threat of serious violence toward others that requires containment and action to protect identified target(s).
High Risk	The person/situation appears to pose a threat of violence, exhibiting behaviors that indicate both a continuing intent to harm and efforts to acquire the capacity to carry out the plan.
Moderate Risk	The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence at this time but exhibits behaviors that indicate a continuing intent to harm and potential for future violence.
Low Risk	The person/situation does not appear to pose a threat of violence and any underlying issues can be resolved easily.

From: Department of Criminal Justice Services (2013). *Threat Assessment in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines*. <http://dcjs.virginia.gov/vcscs/training/K-12ThreatAssessment/>

Table 8.

Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines	Description
Transient Threat	The threat is an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be resolved with a clarification and/or apology so that there is no sustained intent to harm someone and no need for further protective action.
Serious Substantive Threat	The threat is to assault, strike, or beat up someone and could not be resolved as a transient threat.
Very Serious Substantive Threat	The threat is to kill, rape, or inflict serious injury with a weapon and could not be resolved as a transient threat.

From Cornell & Sheras (2006).

Schools classified threat cases based on the threat assessment model they employed. Both the DCJS and UVa categorizations show that the majority of threats were judged to be at the lowest level of seriousness, with fewer than 8% at the highest level.

Table 9.

DCJS categories	Elementary (315 cases)		Middle (209 cases)		High (214 cases)		All Schools (738 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Imminent	3	1.0%	6	2.9%	11	5.1%	20	2.7%
High	26	8.3%	24	11.5%	34	15.9%	84	11.4%
Moderate	81	25.7%	72	34.4%	59	27.6%	212	28.7%
Low	205	65.1%	107	51.2%	110	51.4%	422	57.2%

Table 10.

UVa Categories	Elementary (377 cases)		Middle (199 cases)		High (156 cases)		All Schools (732 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Very Serious Substantive	11	2.9%	17	8.5%	28	17.9%	56	7.7%
Serious Substantive	41	10.9%	39	19.6%	39	25.0%	119	16.3%
Transient	325	86.2%	143	71.9%	89	57.1%	557	76.1%

What kind of threat was made?

The most common threat was a threat to kill (20%), although it must be emphasized that the content of the threat does not determine its level of seriousness. Threats to kill can be rhetorical statements that are intended to intimidate someone or express strong feelings without representing a genuine intent to commit a homicide. Notably, threats to kill are more common in elementary school than in middle school and least common in high school. In contrast, the second most common kind of threat was a battery threat without a weapon (18%), such as hitting or fighting someone. Battery threats without a weapon were most common in high school and least common in elementary school.

Threats in which the student had a weapon are most likely to be regarded as serious. There were 18 threats in which a student had a firearm and 66 threats in which a student had an edged weapon.

Table 11.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Arson	6	0.9%	3	0.7%	5	1.4%	14	1.0%
Battery without a weapon <i>(hit, fight, strangle, etc.)</i>	96	13.9%	73	17.9%	94	25.4%	263	17.9%
Battery with a weapon <i>(gun, knife, club, etc. and other objects not typically considered weapons but used as one in this event)</i>	75	10.8%	46	11.3%	20	5.4%	141	9.6%
Bomb or other explosive device ¹	36	5.4%	25	6.1%	20	5.4%	81	5.5%
Firearm <i>(had possession)</i>	9	1.3%	3	0.7%	6	1.6%	18	1.2%
Firearm <i>(threat of, no possession)</i>	78	11.3%	33	8.1%	36	9.7%	147	10.0%
Homicide <i>(threat to kill)</i>	165	23.8%	73	17.9%	62	16.8%	300	20.4%
Sexual <i>(threat to rape, molest)</i>	2	0.3%	7	1.7%	11	3.0%	20	1.4%
Stab, cut, use an edged weapon <i>(student had possession)</i>	27	3.9%	21	5.1%	18	4.9%	66	4.5%
Stab, cut, use an edged weapon <i>(threat of, no possession)</i>	70	10.1%	39	9.6%	13	3.5%	122	8.3%
Suicide	15	2.2%	6	1.5%	13	3.5%	34	2.3%
Unspecified threat to harm	109	15.8%	83	20.3%	96	25.9%	288	19.6%
Other	99	14.3%	53	13.0%	36	9.7%	188	12.8%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

¹ Schools were asked whether the student had possession of a bomb or explosive device. Based on the narratives completed by respondents, no bombs were found in students' possession. However, one student was reported to have a shotgun shell and matches.

How was the threat communicated?

Most threats (63%) were communicated directly to the intended target or victim, with a smaller percentage (17%) made to a third party or expressed in writing on paper (8%) or by graffiti (1%). Relatively few threats were made by electronic communication directly (4%) or to a third party (3%). Threats were reported as communicated in other ways as well (10%; for example, drawings, gestures, or possession of a weapon).

Table 12.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Verbal (direct): Direct verbal or gestured threat expressed to intended victim(s)	490	70.8%	242	59.3%	193	52.2%	925	62.9%
Verbal (3 rd party): Indirect verbal threat expressed to a third party	94	13.6%	86	21.1%	76	20.5%	256	17.4%
Electronic (direct): Electronic threat (website, text, email, chat room, etc.) expressed to intended victim(s)	7	1.0%	16	3.9%	29	7.8%	52	3.5%
Electronic (3 rd party): Electronic threat (website, text, email, chat room, etc.) expressed to a third party	3	0.4%	12	2.9%	30	8.1%	45	3.1%
Threat communicated on paper	60	8.7%	35	8.6%	23	6.2%	118	8.0%
Threat communicated by graffiti	5	0.7%	3	0.7%	7	1.9%	15	1.0%
Other	67	9.7%	43	10.5%	37	10.0%	147	10.0%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

Who was the intended target?

Most threats were directed at other students (64%), but there were a substantial number directed at faculty (16%) as well as other school staff (5%) and administrators (3%). High school students are somewhat more likely than younger students to threaten school employees.

Table 13.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Self + other	27	3.9%	15	3.7%	23	6.2%	65	4.4%
Student(s)	461	66.6%	275	67.4%	205	55.4%	941	64.0%
Faculty	100	14.5%	55	13.5%	73	19.7%	228	15.5%
Staff	31	4.5%	22	5.4%	23	6.2%	76	5.2%
Administrator(s)	22	3.2%	10	2.5%	14	3.8%	46	3.1%
Entire school	38	5.5%	27	6.6%	23	6.2%	88	6.0%
Community at large	2	0.3%	2	0.5%	6	1.6%	10	0.7%
Unknown	38	5.5%	37	9.1%	42	11.4%	117	8.0%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

School Responses to Student Threats

How did the school respond to the threat?

Threat assessments are intended to produce an individualized plan that depends on the student and the nature of the threat. Therefore, there is no expectation that all schools respond to all threats in the same way, but there are some responses that are commonly used. Future study will examine what kinds of responses are associated with different kinds of cases, and whether those actions are associated with differential outcomes.

In the great majority of cases, the school notified the parents of the student who made the threat (88%) and followed the school's discipline procedures (80%). In about two-thirds of cases, there is consultation with the threat assessment team. Typical responses to the student are to caution the student about the consequences of carrying out the threat (65%), increase monitoring of the student (53%), and resolve the threat through an apology or explanation (51%).

There are other responses that are carried out in fewer than half of the cases. The less common responses include: consulting with the school resource officer (42%) or notifying law enforcement (24%), school-based counseling (33%), notifying the intended victim's parents (35%) and the superintendent (33%) protecting and notifying the intended victim (29%), developing a behavior intervention or safety plan (25%), and providing direct supervision until law enforcement or a parent comes for the student (21%). On relatively few occasions, the school will review the student's Individualized Educational Program (18%), alter the student's schedule (11%), refer the student for special education evaluation (4%), hospitalize the student (4%), and review the student's 504 plan (2%).

Table 14.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Notify subject student's parents/guardians	624	90.2%	354	86.8%	319	86.2%	1297	88.2%
Consult with/mobilize threat assessment team	447	64.6%	277	67.9%	265	71.6%	989	67.3%
Follow discipline conduct policy	528	76.3%	345	84.6%	296	80.0%	1169	79.5%
Caution student about the consequences of carrying out the threat	456	65.9%	264	64.7%	235	63.5%	955	65.0%
Increase monitoring of subject student	370	53.5%	214	52.5%	194	52.4%	778	52.9%
See that threat is resolved through explanation/apology/making amends	419	60.5%	179	43.9%	153	41.4%	751	51.1%
Consult with Security Specialist and/or SRO	142	20.5%	239	58.6%	229	61.9%	610	41.5%
Refer subject student for school-based counseling	257	37.1%	126	30.9%	101	27.3%	484	32.9%
Notify superintendent or designee	143	20.7%	157	38.5%	178	48.1%	478	32.5%
Notify intended victim's parents/guardians	249	36.0%	151	37.0%	120	32.4%	520	35.4%
Develop/monitor behavior intervention plan/safety plan	180	26.0%	88	21.6%	92	24.9%	360	24.5%
Refer subject student for mental health assessment	106	15.3%	92	22.5%	100	27.0%	298	20.3%
Protect and notify intended victim(s)	159	23.0%	134	32.8%	129	34.9%	422	28.7%
Provide direct supervision of student until custody of law enforcement or parent	98	14.2%	93	22.8%	119	32.2%	310	21.1%
Notify law enforcement per regulation	78	11.3%	120	29.4%	151	40.8%	349	23.7%
Review of existing IEP	98	14.2%	87	21.3%	78	21.1%	263	17.9%
Alter subject student's class schedule	51	7.4%	53	13.0%	52	14.1%	156	10.6%
Hospitalization of student	11	1.6%	16	3.9%	24	6.5%	51	3.5%
Referral for special education evaluation	31	4.5%	9	2.2%	16	4.3%	56	3.8%
Review of 504 plan	10	1.4%	11	2.7%	6	1.6%	27	1.8%
None of these	3	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.2%
Other	62	9.0%	19	4.7%	14	3.8%	95	6.5%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

How was the threat documented?

There are multiple ways to document a threat assessment case, and some schools reported completing multiple procedures. In the majority of cases (80%) the school completed the Student Threat Assessment and Response Report that was placed in the student’s discipline record. Some schools reported maintaining the threat assessment in the Student Threat Assessment and Response Report (49%) and some reported submitting reports to their administrative office (33%).

Table 15.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Complete appropriate parts of Student Threat Assessment and Response Report and maintain with student’s discipline record	528	76.3%	345	84.6%	296	80.0%	1169	79.5%
Submit report to designated administrative office within 72 hours of receipt of threat	202	29.2%	141	34.6%	139	37.6%	482	32.8%
Maintain threat assessment documentation in the Student Threat Assessment and Response Report	315	45.5%	209	51.2%	200	54.1%	724	49.3%
Submit updated report every 30 days until resolution and closure of case	25	3.6%	26	6.4%	32	8.6%	83	5.6%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

What threat assessment team members were involved in the assessment?

Membership of the threat assessment team is described in the Code (§ 22.1-79.4.) but the law does not require that all team members participate in every threat assessment case. A school administrator is involved in almost all (97%) threat assessment cases and a school counselor is involved in the great majority of cases (82%). Other team members involved in fewer than half of the cases include the school resource officer (38%), psychologist (32%), instructional staff or faculty (25%), social worker (21%), and others (9%), such as superintendent, school nurse, or special education directors.

Table 16.

Team Members	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Administrator	674	97.4%	401	98.3%	354	95.7%	142 9	97.2%
Counselor	576	83.2%	336	82.4%	292	78.9%	120 4	81.9%
Law enforcement (e.g., SRO)	120	17.3%	223	54.7%	217	58.6%	560	38.1%
Instructional staff, faculty	210	30.3%	80	19.6%	79	21.4%	369	25.1%
Psychologist	202	29.2%	130	31.9%	145	39.2%	477	32.4%
Social worker	135	19.5%	82	20.1%	94	25.4%	311	21.2%
Other	61	8.8%	33	8.1%	34	9.2%	128	8.7%

What disciplinary actions were taken against the student making the threat?

Almost all students received disciplinary consequences (6% reported no disciplinary action), but there was a wide range of actions. Out-of-school suspension was the most common disciplinary response to a student making a threat, but occurred in less than half (46%) of the cases. A reprimand was reported in only 38% of cases. In-school suspension was used in only 13% and detention in only 6% of cases. Approximately 8% of students were recommended for expulsion, with 2% expelled and 6% reduced to out-of-school suspension. Students were arrested in just 22 (2%) of cases and placed in detention in 14 (1%) cases.

Table 17.

	Elementary (n = 692)		Middle (n = 408)		High (n = 370)		All TA Cases (n = 1470)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Suspension (out of school)	272	39.3%	209	51.2%	203	54.9%	684	46.5%
Reprimand	372	53.8%	101	24.8%	89	24.1%	562	38.2%
Suspension (in school)	107	15.5%	67	16.4%	20	5.4%	194	13.2%
Recommended for expulsion that was reduced to out of school suspension	9	1.3%	32	7.8%	51	13.8%	92	6.3%
Detention	64	9.2%	19	4.7%	8	2.2%	91	6.2%
Student charged with offense by law enforcement	4	0.6%	22	5.4%	27	7.3%	53	3.6%
Expelled	7	1.0%	8	2.0%	15	4.1%	30	2.0%
Student arrested	1	0.1%	2	0.5%	19	5.1%	22	1.5%
Student placed in juvenile detention	2	0.3%	1	0.2%	11	3.0%	14	1.0%
Other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
None	35	5.1%	20	4.9%	36	9.7%	91	6.2%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

What types of school placement changes (if any) were made in response to the threat assessment?

The great majority of students (80%) were able to return to their school, but others were transferred to an alternative school (10%), placed on homebound (5%), transferred to a different regular school (1%), or had a change in residence that placed them in a different school (1%). Other placement changes (6%), included attending after school/evening programs, hospitalization, homeschooling by parents, and virtual high school.

Table 18.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
No change	624	90.2%	295	72.3%	256	69.2%	1175	79.9%
Transferred to alternative school	18	2.6%	56	13.7%	65	17.6%	139	9.5%
Placed on homebound instruction	20	2.9%	31	7.6%	19	5.1%	70	4.8%
Transferred to another regular school	5	0.7%	8	2.0%	6	1.6%	19	1.3%
Student changed residence resulting in change in school	12	1.7%	5	1.2%	4	1.1%	21	1.4%
Other	38	5.5%	27	6.6%	27	7.3%	92	6.3%

How did the school respond to the intended target of the threat?

The school’s responses to the intended target of a threat will depend on the nature of the threat and whether this person was a student. In approximately half of the cases (51%) the school notified the parent or guardian of the intended target. Other response were to provide supportive counseling (39%), increase protective monitoring (21%), advise the intended target or parents of the right to report the threat to law enforcement (17%), inform the intended target or parents of the outcome for the student who made the threat (such as letting them know when the student was returning to school (16%), and changing the class schedule for a student target (3%).

Table 19.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Notified parents/guardian	379	54.8%	208	51.0%	165	44.6%	752	51.2%
Supportive counseling	286	41.3%	164	40.2%	121	32.7%	571	38.8%
Increased protective monitoring of student	139	20.1%	80	19.6%	92	24.9%	311	21.2%
Advised victim of right to report to law enforcement	39	5.6%	91	22.3%	116	31.4%	246	16.7%
Informed victim of outcome for student who made threat (e.g., date and plan for student's return to school)	80	11.6%	74	18.1%	81	21.9%	235	16.0%
Altered class schedule	11	1.6%	18	4.4%	12	3.2%	41	2.8%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

Was the threat carried out?

In almost all cases (96%) there was no attempt to carry out the threat. However, these results do not demonstrate that the threat assessment process prevented the threat from being carried out because there is no control group of threats made without a threat assessment. There is evidence from a survey of high school studies that most threats between students are not carried out (Nekvasil & Cornell, 2012).

There were 30 threats (2%) judged by schools to have been averted when a student attempted to carry them out. For example, a review of the written descriptions of these threats indicated that 12 were battery without a weapon, 5 were battery with a weapon, 2 involved a firearm with possession, 1 involved a firearm without possession, 11 involved stabbing with possession, and 2 involved stabbing without possession of a weapon.

There were 29 threats (2%) judged by schools to have been carried out by the student. These are threats that potentially represent a failure of the threat assessment process. For example, a review of the written descriptions of these threats indicated that 12 were battery without a weapon, 2 were battery with a weapon, none involved a firearm (with or without possession), 2 involved stabbing with possession of a weapon.

However, it is important to note that upon reading the narrative provided by the respondents for both averted and non-averted threats, some of these threats appear to be misclassified and the acts of violence took place prior to conducting a threat assessment. This speaks to the need to ensure schools understand that threat assessments are conducted and reported for *future* threatened acts of violence. The fact that there was violence at the time of the threat does not mean the threat was not averted. Averted or non-averted only applies to events *after* a threat assessment is conducted. Thus, if a threat is made and not reported and violence ensues prior to a threat assessment, then the classification of averted or not averted does not apply.

Table 20.

	Elementary (692 cases)		Middle (408 cases)		High (370 cases)		All Schools (1470 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
No attempt	662	95.7%	397	97.3%	352	95.1%	1411	96.0%
Averted	16	2.3%	4	1.0%	10	2.7%	30	2.0%
Carried out	14	2.0%	7	1.7%	8	2.2%	29	2.0%

Threats by Non-Students

Across all schools, 12 threats were reported as made by non-students. Of these, 2 were made by staff, 3 were made by parents, and 5 were anonymous threats. Other threats were made by persons of interest in the community (1), and a student's relative (1). Note that Virginia law only requires threat assessment teams to deal with student threats, but that threat assessment can be used with threats by any individual, and that law enforcement should be advised of these threats.

Threats of Suicide

This report is concerned primarily with student threats to harm others. However, some schools included cases of students who threatened suicide in the absence of a threat to harm others. Some schools also included cases of students who threatened to harm themselves without a suicidal intent (e.g., superficial cutting). Many of the survey questions about the type of threat, the intended target, and school response to the threat are not appropriate for these kinds of cases.

There were a total of 405 cases of threats to self in the absence of a threat to harm others, which represent approximately 22% of the total number of detailed cases reported by the schools. These were classified as imminent (14), high risk (52), moderate risk (97), low risk (151), very serious substantive (12), serious substantive (9), and transient (70). Of these cases, 377 were not attempted, 23 were averted, and 5 were reported as not averted. More detailed information about these cases was not collected.

School Demographics

How do schools reporting threat cases compare to schools not reporting any threat cases?

There are some relatively small demographic differences between the schools that reported threat cases and the schools that had no cases. The reasons that some schools had no cases could include: (1) student threats did not occur; (2) student threats were not reported to school authorities; (3) the threat assessment team was not fully functioning or did not record these cases.

Table 21.

	Elementary School			Middle School			High School		
	Threats reported	No threats reported	All Schools in State	Threats reported	No threats reported	All Schools in State	Threats reported	No threats reported	All schools in state
Average Enrollment	584	520.7	520.3	833.5	701.1	841.7	1317.9	1054.8	1207.4
%FRPM ¹	45.6%	53.7%	43.5%	41.5%	49.5%	40.0%	34.9%	45.1%	33.4%
% White	50.6%	48.4%	50.9%	56.7%	54.4%	53.2%	61.1%	59.0%	54.5%
% Black	21.7%	28.6%	22.5%	21.4%	30.3%	23.3%	20.6%	26.5%	23.3%
% Hispanic	15.8%	13.5%	14.4%	12.3%	7.9%	12.1%	9.5%	8.0%	11.4%
% Urban	21.9%	29.9%	23.8%	18.2%	32.3%	19.8%	14.4%	16.4%	15.1%
% Suburban	44.7%	33.2%	40.2%	42.4%	27.7%	36.6%	40.9%	30.9%	36.2%
% Rural/ town	33.4%	37.0%	36.0%	38.8%	40.0%	43.7%	44.7%	52.8%	48.7%

¹ Students eligible for Free/Reduced Price Meal program.

How are threat rates correlated with school demographics?

There were small, but statistically significant, correlations between the threat rate in a school and school demographics. Schools with higher threat rates tended to have lower enrollments, more students from low income families, more Black students, and fewer Hispanic students.

Table 22.

	Threat rate	Enrollment	% Free/Reduced Meals	% White	% Black	% Hispanic
Threat rate (number of threats/enrollment)		-.202**	.204**	-.009	.133**	-.075*
Enrollment			-.331**	-.154**	.001	.126**
% Free/Reduced Meals				-.476**	.595**	.236**
% White					-.714**	-.594**
% Black						-.049

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

4: MOST SERIOUS CASES

Incidence of Most Serious Cases

Several strategies were considered for identifying the most serious threat cases for further analysis. Although each school was asked to identify its most serious cases, these cases varied considerably and did not provide a suitable subgroup for examining the most dangerous or threatening situations that schools experienced. Instead, the cases classified by the respondent as “Imminent” or “Very Serious Substantive” were selected for analysis. (Note that a case could only be classified as one of these.) These two classifications are the most serious categories in the DCJS and University of Virginia classification systems, respectively. Of the 1470 cases reported for elementary, middle, and high schools that involved a student who threatened others, 75 (5.1%) were classified by the school as Imminent (20) or Very Serious Substantive (55) threats.

Table 23.

Threat Classification	Elementary		Middle		High		All Imminent or VSS Threat Cases	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Imminent	3	21.4%	6	26.1%	11	29.0%	20	26.7%
Very Serious Substantive	11	78.6%	17	74.0%	27	71.1%	55	73.7%
Total Cases	14	18.7%	23	30.7%	38	50.7%	75	100%

Characteristics of Most Serious Cases

What are the grade levels of students who threatened others?

Threats classified in the most serious categories by school authorities were made primarily by students in grades 8, 9, and 10.

Table 24.

Grade	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
PreK	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
K	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
1	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.3%
2	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.3%
3	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
4	3	21.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	4.0%
5	8	57.1%	1	4.4%	0	0.0%	9	12.0%
6	0	0.0%	7	30.4%	0	0.0%	7	9.3%
7	0	0.0%	3	13.0%	0	0.0%	3	4.0%
8	0	0.0%	12	52.2%	0	0.0%	12	16.0%
9	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	16	42.1%	16	21.3%
10	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	29.0%	11	14.7%
11	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	7.9%	3	4.0%
12	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	10.5%	4	5.3%
Unknown	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	4	10.5%	5	6.7%

Most Serious Student Threats to Harm Others

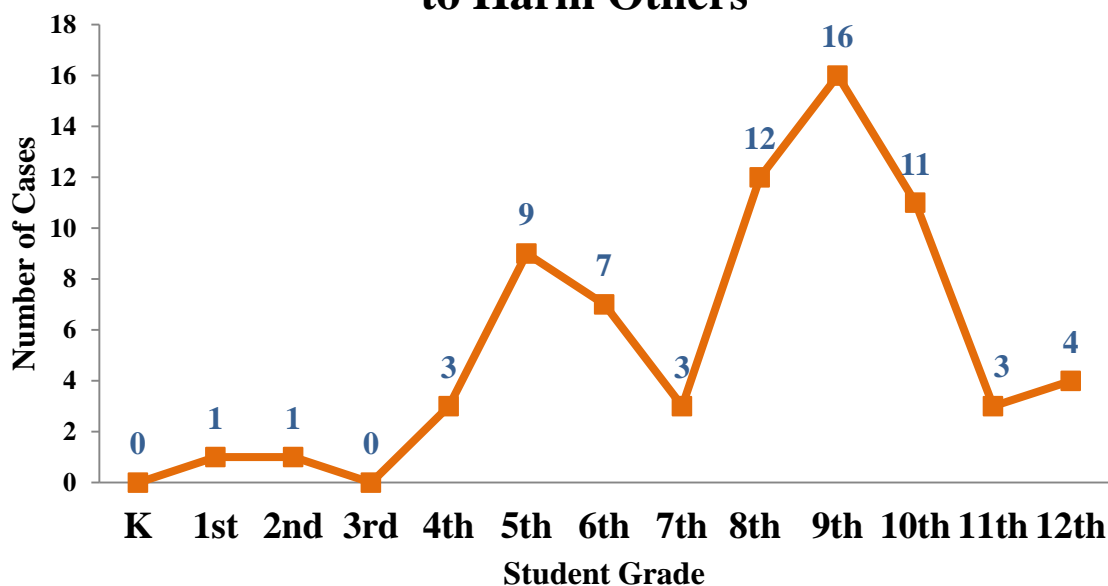


Figure 2. Most serious student threats to harm others by grade.

What are the demographics of students who made the most serious threats to others?

Students who made the most serious threats were primarily boys (81%). Their racial/ethnic background was White (49%), Black (28%), and Hispanic (7%).

Table 25.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Gender								
Male	11	78.6%	19	82.6%	31	81.6%	61	81.3%
Female	2	14.3%	4	17.4%	3	7.9%	9	12.0%
Unknown	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	4	10.5%	5	6.7%
Race/Ethnicity								
Asian	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	2	2.7%
Black	5	35.7%	6	26.1%	10	26.3%	21	28.0%
Hispanic	0	0.0%	1	4.4%	4	10.5%	5	6.7%
White	5	35.7%	15	65.2%	17	44.7%	37	49.3%
Other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	1	1.3%
Unknown	1	7.1%	1	4.4%	4	10.5%	6	8.0%
Multiple Races	2	14.3%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	3	4.0%

What is the school background of students who threatened others?

According to the Virginia Department of Education, 11.9% of K-12 students received special education services during the 2013-14 academic year. Thus, a disproportionately high percentage (48%) of students making the most serious threats received special education services. Prior violent behavior is often cited as a risk factor for violence and 45% of students making the most serious threats had a history of violent behavior in school (45%) and out of school (29%). Additionally, the majority (67%) of the students making serious threats had prior discipline referrals.

Table 26.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Special Education Services	8	57.1%	14	60.9%	14	36.8%	36	48.0%
History of Violent Behavior in School	8	57.1%	13	56.5%	13	34.2%	34	45.3%
History of Violent Behavior out of School	8	57.1%	3	13.0%	11	29.0%	22	29.3%
History of Discipline referrals	11	78.7%	18	78.3%	21	55.3%	50	66.7%

Who reported the threat?

Threat assessments cannot be conducted unless someone reports that a threat has been made. The most common reporter of the most serious threats was a student (45%) followed by a faculty member (39%), administrator (19%), parent (11%), or school support staff member (8%). Few threats were reported by facility support staff (5%) or anonymous sources (none). School authorities should make sure that everyone understands the need to report threats and how to make a report.

Table 27.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Student	4	28.6%	13	56.5%	17	44.7%	34	45.3%
Faculty	5	35.7%	11	47.8%	13	34.2%	29	38.7%
Administrator	3	21.4%	2	8.7%	9	23.7%	14	18.7%
Student support staff (e.g., counselor)	2	14.3%	1	4.4%	3	7.9%	6	8.0%
Facility support staff (e.g., bus driver, custodian)	1	7.1%	1	4.4%	2	5.3%	4	5.3%
Parent	1	7.1%	3	13.0%	4	10.5%	8	10.7%
Anonymous	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other	1	7.1%	2	8.7%	3	7.9%	6	8.0%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

How are reports made?

Similar to all threats, the vast majority (88%) of reports of the most serious threats were made in person, with relatively few made by telephone (10%), email (3%), or text message (1%).

Table 28.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
In person	14	100.0%	19	82.6%	33	86.8%	66	88.0%
Phone call	0	0.0%	4	17.4%	6	15.8%	10	13.3%
Text message	0	0.0%	1	4.4%	0	0.0%	1	1.3%
Email	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	5.3%	2	2.7%
Other	0	0.0%	2	8.7%	3	7.9%	5	6.7%

What kind of threat was made?

Among the most serious threats, the most common threat was a threat to kill (21%) and battery without a weapon (21%). Notably, serious threats to kill and assault without a weapon were more common in high school than in middle school and elementary school.

Threats in which the student had a weapon were more likely to be regarded as serious. Of threats classified as serious, there were 5 threats in which a student had a firearm (all high school) and 11 threats in which a student had an edged weapon.

Table 29.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Arson	0	0.0%	0	0.00%	1	2.6%	1	1.3%
Battery without a weapon <i>(hit, fight, strangle, etc.)</i>	1	7.1%	6	26.1%	9	23.7%	16	21.3%
Battery with a weapon <i>(gun, knife, club, etc. and other objects not typically considered weapons but used as one)</i>	1	7.1%	5	21.7%	4	10.5%	10	13.3%
Bomb or other explosive device	3	21.4%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	4	5.3%
Firearm <i>(had possession)</i>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	13.2%	5	6.7%
Firearm <i>(no possession)</i>	4	28.6%	0	0.0%	2	5.3%	6	8.0%
Homicide <i>(threat to kill)</i>	2	14.3%	3	13.0%	11	29.0%	16	21.3%
Sexual <i>(threat to rape, molest)</i>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	7.9%	3	4.0%
Stab, cut, use an edged weapon <i>(student had possession)</i>	3	21.4%	4	17.4%	4	10.5%	11	14.7%
Stab, cut, use an edged weapon <i>(no possession)</i>	0	0.0%	3	13.0%	0	0.0%	3	4.0%

Suicide	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	1	1.3%
Unspecified threat to harm	0	0.0%	5	21.7%	6	15.8%	11	14.7%
Other	3	21.4%	6	26.1%	2	5.3%	11	14.7%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

How was the threat communicated?

The most serious threats were most often (65%) communicated directly to the intended target or victim, with a smaller percentage (15%) made to a third party or expressed in writing on paper (1%) or by graffiti (1%). Relatively few threats were made by electronic communication directly (7%) or to a third party (5%).

Table 30.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Verbal (direct): Direct verbal or gestured threat expressed to intended victim(s)	10	71.4%	16	69.6%	23	60.5%	49	65.3%
Verbal (3 rd party): Indirect verbal threat expressed to a third party	2	14.3%	2	8.7%	7	18.4%	11	14.7%
Electronic (direct): Electronic threat (website, text, email, chat room, etc.) expressed to intended victim(s)	0	0.0%	1	4.4%	4	10.5%	5	6.7%
Electronic (3 rd party): Electronic threat (website, text, email, chat room, etc.) expressed to a third party	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	10.5%	4	5.3%
Threat communicated on paper	3	21.4%	3	13.0%	2	5.3%	8	10.7%
Threat communicated by graffiti	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.3%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

Who was the intended target?

Most threats were directed at other students (77%), but there were a substantial number directed at faculty (17%) as well as other school staff (15%) and administrators (8%). High school students were somewhat more likely than younger students to threaten school employees.

Table 31.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Self + other	1	7.1%	1	4.4%	3	7.9%	5	6.7%
Student(s)	10	71.4%	17	73.9%	31	81.8%	58	77.3%
Faculty	2	14.3%	7	30.4%	4	10.5%	13	17.3%
Staff	1	7.1%	5	21.7%	5	13.2%	11	14.7%
Administrator(s)	5	35.7%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	6	8.0%
Entire school	1	7.1%	2	8.7%	1	2.6%	4	5.3%
Community at large	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	2	5.3%	3	4.0%
Unknown	0	0.0%	1	4.4%	0	0.0%	1	1.3%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

School Responses to Most Serious Student Threats

How did the school respond to the threat?

Threat assessments are intended to produce an individualized plan that depends on the student and the nature of the threat. Therefore, there is no expectation that all schools respond to all threats in the same way, but there are some responses that are commonly used.

In the great majority of most serious cases, the school notified the parents of the student who made the threat (91%) and followed the school's discipline procedures (87%). In about three-quarters of cases, there was consultation with the threat assessment team (79%). Typical responses to the student were to consult with the SRO (76%), notify the superintendent (68%), notify law enforcement (65%), caution the student about the consequences of carrying out the threat (64%), increase monitoring of the student (64%), and supervise the student until removed from school premises (57%).

There are other responses that were less common. These included: referring student for mental health assessment (54%) or school-based counseling (38%), notifying the intended victim's parents (52%), protecting and notifying the intended victim (48%), developing a behavior intervention or safety plan (35%) or reviewing the student's Individualized Educational Program (35%). On relatively few occasions, the school asked the student to apologize (25%) altered the student's schedule (20%), referred the student for special education evaluation (7%), hospitalized the student (11%), and/or reviewed the student's 504 plan (4%).

Table 32.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Notify subject student's parents/guardians	14	100.0%	20	87.0%	34	89.5%	68	90.7%
Consult with/mobilize threat assessment team	10	71.4%	18	78.3%	31	81.6%	59	78.7%
Follow discipline/conduct policy	13	92.9%	20	87.0%	32	84.2%	65	86.7%
Caution the student about the consequences of carrying out the threat	8	57.1%	16	69.6%	24	63.2%	48	64.0%
Increase monitoring of subject student	11	78.6%	15	65.2%	22	57.9%	48	64.0%
See that threat is resolved through explanation/apology/making amends	6	42.9%	3	13.0%	10	26.3%	19	25.3%
Consult with Security Specialist and/or SRO	7	50.0%	19	82.6%	31	81.6%	57	76.0%
Refer subject student for school-based counseling	7	50.0%	7	30.4%	15	39.5%	29	38.7%
Notify superintendent or designee	9	64.3%	14	60.9%	28	73.7%	51	68.0%
Notify intended victim's parents/guardians	8	57.1%	11	47.8%	20	52.6%	39	52.0%
Develop/monitor behavior intervention/safety plan	6	42.9%	9	39.1%	11	29.0%	26	34.7%
Refer subject student for mental health assessment	9	64.3%	12	52.2%	20	52.6%	41	54.7%
Protect and notify intended victim(s)	6	42.9%	11	47.8%	19	50.0%	36	48.0%
Provide direct supervision of student until in custody of law enforcement or parent	10	71.4%	11	47.8%	22	57.9%	43	57.3%
Notify law enforcement per regulation	6	42.9%	13	56.5%	30	79.0%	49	65.3%
Review of existing IEP	4	28.6%	9	39.1%	13	34.2%	26	34.7%
Alter subject student's class schedule	6	42.9%	4	17.4%	5	13.2%	15	20.0%
Hospitalization of student	2	14.3%	1	4.4%	5	13.2%	8	10.7%
Referral for special education evaluation	1	7.1%	1	4.4%	3	7.9%	5	6.7%
Review of 504 plan	0	0.0%	2	8.7%	1	2.6%	3	4.0%
None of these	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Other	2	14.3%	4	17.4%	2	5.3%	8	10.7%

How was the threat documented?

There are multiple ways to document a threat assessment case, and some schools reported completing multiple procedures. In the majority of cases (53%) the school completed the Student Threat Assessment and Response Report that was placed in the student’s discipline record and reported submitting reports to their administrative office (51%). Some schools reported maintaining the threat assessment in the Student Threat Assessment and Response Report (49%).

Table 33.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Complete appropriate parts of Student Threat Assessment and Response Report and maintain with student’s discipline record	9	64.3%	12	52.2%	19	50.0%	40	53.3%
Submit report to designated administrative office within 72 hours of receipt of threat	7	50.0%	14	60.8%	17	44.7%	38	50.7%
Maintain threat assessment documentation in the student Threat Assessment and Response Report	7	50.0%	13	56.5%	17	44.7%	37	49.3%
Submit updated report every 30 days until resolution and closure of case	1	7.1%	2	8.7%	3	7.9%	6	8.0%

What disciplinary actions were taken against the student making the threat?

Almost all students received disciplinary consequences (5% reported no disciplinary action) for making serious threats, but there was a wide range of actions. Out-of-school suspension was the most common disciplinary response to a student making a threat (61%). A reprimand was reported in only 12% of cases. In-school suspension was used in only 4% and detention in only 1% of cases. Approximately 16% of students making serious threats were recommended for an expulsion that was reduced to out-of-school suspension, with 7% expelled. Students were arrested in 6 (8%) cases and placed in detention in 7 (9%) cases.

Table 34.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Suspension (out of school)	9	64.3%	17	73.9%	20	52.6%	46	61.3%
Reprimand	4	28.6%	0	0.0%	5	13.2%	9	12.0%
Suspension (in school)	1	7.1%	1	4.4%	1	2.6%	3	4.0%
Recommended for expulsion; expulsion reduced to out of school suspension	0	0.0%	3	13.0%	9	23.7%	12	16.0%
Detention	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.3%
Student charged with offense by law enforcement	0	0.0%	4	17.4%	5	13.2%	9	12.0%
Expelled	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	4	10.5%	5	6.7%
Student arrested	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	5	13.2%	6	8.0%
Student placed in juvenile detention	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	6	15.8%	7	9.3%
None	0	0.0%	2	8.7%	2	5.3%	4	5.3%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

How many students were able to return to their school?

Placements of students making the most serious threats were changed in approximately 50% of cases. Approximately 39% of students had no change in placements and 3% had a change in residence that placed them in a different school. Other placement changes (9%) included attending after school/evening programs and modifying student schedules.

Table 35.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
No change	4	28.6%	10	43.5%	15	39.5%	29	38.7%
Transferred to alternative school	4	28.6%	3	13.0%	9	23.7%	16	21.3%
Placed on homebound instruction	4	28.6%	8	34.8%	7	18.4%	19	25.3%
Transferred to another regular school	0	0.0%	2	8.7%	1	2.6%	3	4.0%
Student changed residence resulting in change in school	1	7.1%	1	4.4%	0	0.0%	2	2.7%
Other	1	7.1%	1	4.4%	7	18.4%	9	12.0%

How did the school respond to the intended target of the threat?

The school’s response to the intended target will depend on the nature of the threat and whether this person was a student. In over half of the cases (64%) the school notified the parent or guardian of the intended target. Other response were to provide supportive counseling (33%), increase protective monitoring (31%), advise the intended target or parents of the right to report the threat to law enforcement (43%), inform the intended target or parents of the outcome for the student who made the threat (such as letting them know when the student was returning to school (31%), and changing the class schedule for a student target (7%).

Table 36.

	Elementary (14 cases)		Middle (23 cases)		High (38 cases)		All Schools (75 cases)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Notified parents/guardian	10	71.4%	14	60.9%	24	63.2%	48	64.0%
Supportive counseling	7	50.0%	8	34.8%	10	26.3%	25	33.3%
Increased protective monitoring of student	7	50.0%	5	21.7%	11	29.0%	23	30.7%
Advised victim/guardians of right to report to law enforcement	3	21.4%	9	39.1%	20	52.6%	32	42.7%
Informed victim/guardian of outcome for student who made threat (e.g., date and plan for student’s return to school)	3	21.4%	8	34.8%	12	31.9%	23	30.7%
Altered class schedule	2	14.3%	3	13.0%	0	0.0%	5	6.7%
Other	1	7.1%	4	17.4%	7	18.4%	12	16.0%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked.

Violence Averted in Most Serious Cases

Was the threat carried out?

In 81% of the most serious cases, there was no attempt to carry out the threat. In 9% of the most serious cases the threat was attempted but averted. However, these results do not demonstrate that the threat assessment process prevented the threat from being carried out because there is no control group of threats made without a threat assessment.

The survey asked schools to identify threats that were not averted and were carried out by the student. Seven cases were identified as not averted, but there may have been some misunderstanding of this question. For each of these cases, the narrative provided by the school indicated that the student committed a violent act that prompted a threat assessment. Since the violent act was committed before a threat was identified and before a threat assessment was undertaken, the case should not be classified as an example of a threat carried out despite the threat assessment. Instead, the school should determine whether the student committed a violent act after being identified for a threat assessment. The narratives suggest that no violent acts were committed after the threat was identified and assessed.

Several examples of imminent or very serious substantive cases were selected as case examples. The survey included brief descriptions of cases, but did not obtain sufficient information to construct detailed case examples. Some details of these cases were altered to disguise the identity of the student and school. There are similar cases in multiple schools.

Below are three examples in which there was no attempt to carry out the threat:

No Attempt of a Very Serious Substantive Threat. A high school student receiving special education services became obsessed with a fictional video about a school shooting. The student wrote about the video and talked about it repeatedly with staff members and the SRO, expressing the belief that he would become popular if he carried out a similar shooting. The student was referred for mental health and school counseling, but remained fixated on the idea and continued to fantasize about it. The student is closely monitored and his status is regularly reviewed at team meetings.

No Attempt of a Very Serious Substantive Threat. A middle school student receiving special education services and with a history of violent behavior in school drew a picture of hanging another student, gestured and made statements threatening violence around other students. The student was placed in in-school detention for the remainder of the day and the next two days. He was closely monitored at school and his movements were limited. The threat assessment team decided that he should be sent home and placed on administrative home-bound pending the results of a psychological evaluation. The evaluation supported his eventual return to school under certain conditions. His Individualized Education Program was revised to include a behavior plan and additional counseling.

Very Serious Substantive Threat Identified After a Violent Incident. A male elementary school student became upset with another student while riding the bus. The student punched the other student repeatedly and threatened to bring a knife to stab him. The student was suspended for several days until a conference with the parents was held to discuss conditions for the student's return to school. The SRO met with the student and the parents to discuss the seriousness of his actions and the potential for court charges. The student was closely monitored when he returned to school.

The seven most serious cases identified by respondents as attempted but averted included one battery threat without a weapon, two firearm threats with possession of a weapon and four stabbing threats with possession of a weapon. Here are three examples:

Averted Imminent Threat with a Firearm. A male student with a history of violent behavior at school brought a loaded gun to high school. The threat was reported by a faculty member (no additional information was available about these circumstances). School security personnel located the student and he was placed in the custody of the school resource officer. The loaded gun was secured. The student was arrested, charged with an offense, and expelled.

Averted Imminent Threat with a Knife. A high school student receiving special education services and with a history of violent behavior (both in and out of school) threatened to stab a fellow student. A faculty member reported the threat and a search revealed a knife in the student's possession. The parents and school resource officer were immediately notified. The student was recommended for expulsion, but was later reinstated.

Very Serious Substantive Threat Identified After a Violent Incident. In some cases a threat assessment is conducted in response to a violent incident. In such circumstances, the threat assessment is concerned with averting further acts of violence. In this case, a male elementary school student refused to obey a teacher's instructions and became physically aggressive. He kicked the teacher and threatened the teacher with a stapler. The student's parents were contacted and he was taken to a hospital for assessment. Additional problems and concerns in the home were identified. The student received in-home counseling services and psychiatric support. The school team continued to monitor the student after his return to school. Later in the year the student made another threat and again was hospitalized. Upon return to school, the team continued to provide school-based support in coordination with community-based treatment and support services.

5: SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY DATA

In the spring of 2014, 48,027 students and 13,455 teachers in 323 of Virginia's 324 public high schools completed school climate surveys. The survey included several questions related to threats and threat assessment. The results of this survey indicate that threats are highly prevalent in schools, suggesting that only a small proportion of threats are reported to threat assessment teams. There is no expectation that a threat assessment team could or should evaluate every threat that takes place in a school, but it is important to recognize their prevalence. It may be useful to educate students about the consequences of making threats and to discourage the use of threatening language, just as the public has learned not to make joking comments about bombs or guns in an airport.

1. Students report a high rate of being threatened by peers.

Previous studies have found that students frequently make threatening statements to one another, but that most threats are not taken seriously and are not reported to school authorities, even if they are regarded as serious (Nekvasil & Cornell, 2012). In the Nekvasil and Cornell study, fewer than 10% of threats were carried out, according to student reports.

In the Virginia School Climate Survey administered in Spring 2014, approximately 23% of students reported being threatened by another student. If this percentage was extrapolated to the high schools included in the threat assessment case survey, this would involve 181 high schools with a total enrollment of 231,951 students, which hypothetically would mean 53,249 student threats of peers in those schools. Threat assessment teams should be aware that student threats are a frequent event and do not necessarily indicate that violence is imminent.

Of special concern is that 5% of students completing the school climate survey reported that they had been threatened with a weapon. Students should be encouraged to report weapons at school because of the potential for conflicts to escalate into serious acts of violence and physical injury.

2. Teachers report a low, but concerning, rate of being threatened by students.

In the Virginia School Climate Survey, teachers were asked whether a student had threatened them. Approximately 10% reported "a student threatened to harm me" and 1% reported "a student threatened me with a weapon." A small percentage, 4%, indicated, "a student physically attacked, pushed, or hit me." Although the percentages are small, they are serious disciplinary violations and can have a disruptive influence on the school and a broad impact on the school staff. Aggression against teachers is a serious concern that contributes to teacher burnout and attrition.

3. Teachers also report a low, but concerning, rate of being threatened by parents and colleagues.

Although the state mandate for threat assessment is directed toward threats made by students, there are a small number of threats made by non-students. A threat assessment approach is appropriate for threats made by adults, although the responses to the threat will differ and there may be a greater need to involve school and law enforcement authorities. Teachers reported the following rates:

- A parent threatened to harm me (2%; 249 cases)
- A parent physically attacked, pushed, or hit me (<1%, 41 cases)
- A colleague threatened to harm me (1%, 107 cases)

4. Most teachers are not aware that their school follows formal threat assessment guidelines.

When teachers were asked, "Does your school follow formal threat assessment guidelines", the majority responded "I don't know (59%), followed by Yes (37%) and No (4%). The school climate report provided to schools included an explanation about the threat assessment requirement. School authorities were encouraged to inform their staff about the threat assessment procedures used in their school.

6: TRAINING ISSUES

Schools were asked to report which threat assessment model they used. The most frequently reported model was the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines developed at the University of Virginia (43%), followed by a school division-created model (36%) and the DCJS model (19%). Some important caveats to these results are that there are few well-specified models of student threat assessment, making the designation of a model difficult. Moreover, some school administrators might not be knowledgeable of the model they are using. For example, some large school divisions adopted the University of Virginia model, modified it to some degree, and established their own training program.

The overwhelming majority (88%) of schools reported that they had in-service training on their threat assessment model. This training was primarily carried out with their school division (67%), although some reported training with the University of Virginia (10%), DCJS (6%), or another source (4%). Other sources included online modules, Virginia Tech, the local university, attorneys, and local police/fire/rescue.

Table 37.

Training	Elementary (431 schools)		Middle (198 schools)		High (181 schools)		All Schools (810 schools)	
	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %	n	Column %
Model used								
UVA	188	43.6%	73	36.9 %	87	48.1%	348	43%
DCJS	70	16.2%	48	23.2%	38	21%	156	19.3%
Division	165	38.3%	72	36.4%	55	30.4%	292	36%
Other	8	1.9%	5	2.5%	1	.6%	14	1.7%
In-service training								
Yes	395	91.6%	167	84.3%	154	85.1%	716	88.4%
No	22	5.1%	20	10.1%	11	6.1%	53	6.5%
Don't Know	14	3.2%	11	5.6%	16	8.8%	41	5.1%
Training source								
None	9	2.1%	2	1%	4	2.2%	15	1.9%
Training with Division	302	70.1%	131	66.2%	107	59.1%	540	66.7%
UVa	47	10.9%	12	6.1%	20	11%	79	9.8%
DCJS	23	5.3%	17	8.6%	11	6.1%	51	6.3%
Other	14	2.8%	5	2.5%	16	9%	35	4.3%
Not Reported ¹	36	8.4%	31	15.7%	27	14.9%	94	11.6%

Note: ¹The 94 schools that responded that they did not have or did not know what type of in-service training they received, did not provide a response to this question (12%).

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APPENDIX A

Threat Assessment Follow-Up Survey 2013-2014 School Year

As part of the School Safety Audit, we are collecting case-specific information from schools that conducted one or more threat assessments in the 2013-2014 school year. In the school safety survey conducted in August/September 2014, you indicated that your school conducted one or more threat assessments during the 2013-2014 school year. The primary focus of this effort is to collect information on threats made by students at your school, however we will ask a few questions about non-student threats too.

I. Identification

I-1. What is the name of your school division? (drop down list)

I-2. What is your school ID number? _____

I-3. What is the full name of your school? _____

The person completing this form should be a member of the threat assessment team at your school who is familiar with the facts of the case(s).

I-4. Name of person completing this form _____ I-5.

Title/Position _____

I-6. Email address _____

I-7. Phone number _____

I-8. Which threat assessment model was used by the threat assessment team for your school in 2013-2014? (*select one*)

Model from DCJS (Threat Assessment in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines)

Model from University of Virginia (Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence)

Model from Salem Keizer schools

Model from another source

Model developed by staff within school division

Model adapted from one or more sources

I-8a. You indicated that your school used a threat assessment model from another source. Please identify the source whose model your school used. _____

I-8b. You indicated that your school used a threat assessment model adapted from one or more sources. Please identify the source(s) from which your school's model was adapted. _____

I-9. Have members of your threat assessment team received staff in-service training using your current threat assessment model?

Yes

No

Don't know

I-9a. What kind of threat assessment training was provided to your threat assessment team members when your school began to use your current threat assessment model? (*select one*)

No formal training was provided

Training provided by someone within the school division
Training provided by the University of Virginia (UVA)
Training provided by the Department of Criminal Justice Services
(DCJS) Training provided by another source (describe): ___

II. Threat Assessments Conducted in 2013-2014

II-1. Did your school's threat assessment team conduct ANY threat assessments due to a threat/perceived threat during the 2013-2014 school year?

Yes

No (if no is selected, survey will end)

II-2. Please provide the total number of threat assessment cases conducted by your threat assessment team in the 2013-2014 school year. (Include all cases regardless of risk classifications or sources of threats; include threats made by students from your school, students not from your school, and/or non-students). _____

II-3. Of these, how many threats were made by each of the following:

(Enter the number of threats made by each type of group listed below. If no threats were made by a group, enter 0. The sum total of the number of threats made by all three groups should equal the number of all threats reported in QII-2.)

Students from your school? _____ (if 0, the respondent will exit the survey after answering the remaining questions in section II)

Students NOT from your school? _____

Non-students? _____

(if = non-student)

II-3a. In the previous question you indicated that at least one threat assessed in 2013-2014 was made by a non-student.

What type of non-student(s) presented/made the threat(s)? (select all that apply)

Faculty Staff

Administrator

Parent

Anonymous

Other (describe) _____

(if = non-student and/or students not from your school)

II-3b. Was your most serious threat assessment case in 2013-2014 perpetrated by a non-student and/or a student not from your school? (If you respond yes, we will contact you for additional information about this case.)

Yes

No

III. Student Threat Cases

In this section, you will be asked to provide the following outcome information for up to FIVE student threat cases that occurred in your school during the 2013-2014 school year. (These should be only threats made by students that were enrolled in your school.)

If you have five or fewer cases, report all of them.

If you have more than five cases, choose the following five:

- most serious case, in your judgment;

- *least serious case, in your judgment, and*
- *the three most recent cases in the 2013-2014 year (other than the most serious and least serious cases you have already selected.)*

Questions will be asked one case at a time for up to 5 cases.

CASE

1

(Questions will repeat for each case)

III. Please provide a brief narrative description of what the student threatened to do (e.g., hit a teacher, shoot a classmate, brought a knife to school.) Do not include names or other identifying information. ____

Threat Report

1. Date threat occurred (if known) ____ (*mm/dd/yyyy*)
2. Date threat assessment team/school authorities learned of threat _____ (*mm/dd/yyyy*)
3. Who reported the threat to the threat assessment team/school authorities? (*select all that apply*)
 - Student
 - Faculty
 - Administrator
 - Student support staff (counselor, psychologist, etc.)
 - Facility support staff (bus driver, custodian, etc.)
 - Parent
 - Anonymous
 - Other ____
4. How was the report received? (*select all that apply*)
 - In person
 - Phone call
 - Text message
 - Email
 - Other ____
5. What was the date that the threat assessment team began conducting the threat assessment? _____ (*mm/dd/yyyy*)

Student That Made Threat

6. Was more than one student involved in making this threat?
Yes/No

(If 6 = yes)

You said that there was more than one student involved in making the threat in this case.

There are a few questions where we will ask you to tell us about each of the students involved for up to four students. Please try to answer the questions while consistently using "student 1, student 2, student 3, etc." to portray the same students throughout these questions.

- 6a. How many students were involved in making this threat? (*select one*)
 - two students
 - three students
 - four or more students

7. What is the gender of each student involved? (check one per student)

	Female	Male	Unknown
Student 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student 4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What is the race/ethnicity of the students involved? (select all that apply for each student)

	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White	Unknown	Other
Student 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Do the students receive Special Education Services or have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)? (select all that apply for each student)

	Receives Special Education	Has IEP	Unknown
Student 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. For each student involved, please indicate whether they have a history of violent behavior in school, a history of violent behavior away from school, and/or a history of discipline referrals. (select all that apply for each student)

	Student has a history of			
	Violent behavior in school	Violent behavior away from school	Discipline referrals	None of these
Student 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. In what grade were each of the students involved? (enter the grade level for each student)

	Grade level
Student 1	
Student 2	
Student 3	
Student 4	

(if 6 = no)

7. What is the student's gender?

- Female
- Male
- Unknown

8. What is the student's race/ethnicity? (select all that apply)

- Asian
- Black

Hispanic
 White
 Unknown
 Other _____

9. Does the student receive Special Education Services or have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)? *(select one)*

	Yes	No	Unknown
Special Education Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individualized Education Plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Does this student have a history of violent behavior in school, violent behavior away from school, or discipline referrals?

	Yes	No	Unknown
History of violent behavior in school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History of violent behavior away from school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
History of discipline referrals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. In what grade was the student? _____

Threat Information

12. What was the nature of the threat? *(select all that apply)*

- Arson
- Battery without a weapon *(hit, fight, kick, strangle, etc.)*
- Battery with a weapon *(gun, knife, club, etc. and other objects not typically considered weapons but used as one in this event)*
- Bomb or other explosive device (student had possession)
- Bomb or other explosive device (threat of, no possession)
- Firearm (had possession)
- Firearm (threat of, no possession)
- Homicide (threat to kill)
- Sexual (threat to rape, molest)
- Stab, cut, use an edged weapon (student had possession)
- Stab, cut, use an edged weapon (threat of, no possession)
- Suicide
- Unspecified threat to harm
- Other

13. Who/what was the intended victim? *(select all that apply)*

- Self
- Student(s)
- Faculty
- Staff
- Administrator(s)
- Entire school
- Community at large
- Unknown
- Other _____

(if 13 = student/s)

13a. In what grade(s) was the intended victim(s)? _____

14. How was the threat communicated? *(select all that apply)*

- Verbal (direct): Direct verbal or gestured threat expressed to intended victim(s)
- Verbal (3rd party): Indirect verbal threat expressed to a third party
- Electronic (direct): Electronic threat (website, text, email, chat room, etc.) expressed to intended victim(s)
- Electronic (3rd party): Electronic threat (website, text, email, chat room, etc.) expressed to a third party
- Threat communicated on paper

Threat communicated by graffiti
Other _____

Response to Threat

15. What was the threat classification for this event as determined by the threat assessment team?
(select only one based on which threat assessment model you use)

- Imminent threat
- High risk
- Moderate risk
- Low risk
- Very serious substantive
- Serious substantive
- Transient

16. On what date was the threat classification determined? _____ (mm/dd/yyyy)

17. Which of the following responses were used in this case? (select all that apply)

- Consult with/mobilize threat assessment team
- See that threat is resolved through explanation, apology or making amends
- Caution the subject student about the consequences of carrying out the threat
- Increase monitoring of subject student
- Notify subject student's parents/guardians
- Follow discipline procedures as per conduct policy
- Alter subject student's class schedule
- Develop/monitor behavior intervention plan/safety plan
- Consult with Safety and Security Specialist and/or SRO
- Notify superintendent or designee
- Protect and notify intended victim(s)
- Notify intended victim's parents/guardians
- Refer subject student for school-based counseling
- Refer subject student for mental health assessment
- Review of existing IEP
- Review of 504 plan
- Referral for special education evaluation
- Hospitalization of student
- Notify law enforcement per regulation to contain threat
- Provide direct supervision of subject student until removed from campus by law enforcement or parent/guardian
- (Documentation) Complete appropriate parts of Student Threat Assessment and Response Report and maintain with student's discipline record
- (Documentation) Submit report to [designated administrative office] within 72 hours of receipt of threat
- (Documentation) Maintain threat assessment documentation in the student Threat Assessment and Response Report
- (Documentation) Submit updated report every 30 days until resolution and closure of case
- None of these
- Other _____

(if 15 = imminent/very serious substantive)

17a. Your response in Q.15 indicated that this case was classified as an imminent threat/very serious substantive threat.
Please describe the steps that were taken to contain the threat. _____

18. Was the threat averted (what was the consequence of the threat)? (select one)

- Averted - no attempt made to carry out the threat
- Averted - student attempted to carry out threat but threat was not successfully carried out (e.g., stopped in parking lot) Not averted - threat was carried out (e.g., assault took place)

(if 18 = not averted)

18a. You reported that the threat was not averted. Please describe the nature of the event and whether anyone was injured. _____

Outcomes

(if 6 = no)

19. What disciplinary actions were taken? (select all that apply)

- Reprimand
- Detention
- Suspension (in school)
- Suspension (out of school)
- Recommended for expulsion; expulsion reduced to out of school suspension
- Expelled
- Student arrested
- Student placed in juvenile detention
- Student charged with offense by law enforcement
- Other _____

(if 6 = yes)

In a previous question you told us that this threat event involved more than one student. For the next two questions, please respond for each student involved (for up to 4 students). As before, please try to answer the questions while consistently using "student 1," "student 2," etc. to portray the same students throughout these questions.

19. What disciplinary actions were taken? (select which students received which disciplinary actions)

	Reprimand	Detention	Susp in sch	Susp out of school	Recc for expul, reduced to susp out	Expelled	Arrested	Placed in juv det	Charged w offense by LE	Other	None
Student 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(if 19 = "suspension out-of-school" or "recommended for expulsion; expulsion reduced to suspension") (if 6 = no)

19a. You responded that the student received out of school suspension. For how many days was the student suspended? _____

(if 6 = yes)

19a. You responded that the following student(s) received out of school suspension in a disciplinary action. Please provide the number of days suspension for each student listed. (enter the number of days of out of school suspension received per student)

	# days suspension
Student 1	
Student 2	
Student 3	
Student 4	

(if 6 = no)

20. What changes were made in the subject student's school placement? (select all that apply)

- Student returned to original school - no change in placement
- Transferred to another regular school
- Transferred to alternative school or similar
- Placed on homebound instruction
- Student changed residence resulting in change in school
- Other _____

(if 6 = yes)

20. For each student involved in the threat, please indicated what changes were made in their school placement, if any? *(select school placement/s for each student)*

	No change - returned to orig sch	Tranferred to antoher reg sch	Transferred to alt sch or sim	Homebound instruction	Changed residence resulting in change in sch	None	Other
Student 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21. What was the response to the (intended) victim(s)? *(select all that apply)*
 Supportive counseling Notified
 parents/guardian Altered class schedule
 Advised victim/guardians of right to report to law enforcement
 Increased protective monitoring of student
 Informed victim/guardian of outcome for student who made threat (e.g., date and plan for student’s return to school) Other _____

Case Update

22. Which threat assessment team members were involved in the assessment/follow-up with the subject student(s)? *(select all that apply)*
 Administrator
 Counselor
 Law enforcement (e.g., SRO)
 Instructional staff/faculty
 Psychologist
 Social worker
 Other _____

23. Was an update conducted on this case?
 Yes/No
(if 23 = yes)
 23a. Date(s) of case update(s) *(mm/dd/yyyy)* _____

24. Is this case closed?
 Yes/No
(if 24 = yes)
 24a. On what date was this case closed? _____ *(mm/dd/yyyy)*

25. Please provide any additional information that you think we should know about this case (the circumstances of the threat, how it was handled, etc.). _____

26. Do you have another student threat case to report?
 Yes/No *(if = yes, will be directed to questions for Case 2)*

APPENDIX B

The school climate surveys have been extensively examined for information on student safety, discipline, and support practices that best maintain a safe and orderly school environment and facilitate learning. Here is a list of current articles prepared for refereed journals. For copies of these articles, contact youthviolence@virginia.edu

Articles based on the 2007 survey of 9th grade students and teachers

1. Lacey, A., & Cornell, D. (2013). The impact of bullying climate on schoolwide academic performance. *Journal of Applied School Psychology* 29, 262-283.
2. Mehta, S., Cornell, D., Fan, X., & Gregory, A. (2013). Bullying climate and school engagement in ninth grade students. *Journal of School Health*, 83, 45-52.
3. Cornell, D., Gregory, A., Huang, F., & Fan, X. (2013). Perceived prevalence of bullying and teasing predicts high school dropout rates. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105, 138-149.
4. Gregory, A., Cornell, D., & Fan, X. (2012). Teacher safety and authoritative school climate in high schools. *American Journal of Education*, 118, 401-425.
5. Cornell, D., Klein, J., Konold, T., & Huang, F. (2012). Effects of validity screening items on adolescent survey data. *Psychological Assessment*. Advance online publication 24, 21-33. doi: 10.1037/a0024824
6. Huang, F., & Cornell, D. (2012). Pick your Poisson: A tutorial on analyzing counts of student victimization data. *Journal of School Violence*, 11, 187-206.
7. Gregory, A., Cornell, D., & Fan, X. (2011). The relationship of school structure and support to suspension rates for Black and White high school students. *American Educational Research Journal*.
8. Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2011). Reductions in long-term suspensions following adoption of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines. *Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals*. 95, 175-194.
9. Lee, T., Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2011). High suspension schools and dropout rates for black and white students. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 34, 167-192
10. Gregory, A., Cornell, D., Fan, X., Sheras, P., Shih, T., & Huang, F. (2010). Authoritative school discipline: High school practices associated with lower student bullying and victimization. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102, 483-496.
11. Eliot, M., Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2010). Supportive school climate and student willingness to seek help for bullying and threats of violence. *Journal of School Psychology*, 48, 533-553.
12. Klein, J., & Cornell, D. (2010). Is the link between large high schools and student victimization an illusion? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102, 933-946. doi: 10.1037/a0019896
13. Gregory, A., & Cornell, D. (2009). "Tolerating" adolescent needs: Moving beyond zero tolerance policies in high school. *Theory into Practice*, 48, 106-113.
14. Bandyopadhyay, S., Cornell, D., & Konold, T. (2009). Internal and external validity of three school climate scales from the School Climate Bullying Survey. *School Psychology Review*, 38, 338-355.
15. Cornell, D., Sheras, P., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2009). A retrospective study of school safety conditions in high schools using the Virginia Threat Assessment Guidelines versus alternative approaches. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 24, 119-129.

Articles based on the 2013 survey of 7th and 8th grade students and teachers

1. Konold, T., Cornell, D., Huang, F., Meyer, P., Lacey, A., Nekvasil, E., Heilbrun, A., & Shukla, K. (2014). Multi-level multi-informant structure of the Authoritative School Climate Survey. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 29, 238-255. doi: 10.1037/spq0000062
2. Huang, F., Cornell, D., & Konold, T. (2014). Aggressive attitudes in middle schools: A factor structure and criterion-related validity study. *Assessment*. Advance online publication: doi: 1073191114551016
3. Lacey, A., & Cornell, D. (2014). School administrator assessments of bullying and state-mandated testing. *Journal of School Violence*. Advance online publication: doi: 10.1080/15388220.2014.971362
4. Heilbrun, A., Cornell, D., & Lovegrove, P. (in press). Principal attitudes and racial disparities in school suspensions. *Psychology in the Schools*.
5. Konold, T., & Cornell, D. (in press). Multilevel, multitrait - multimethod latent analysis of structurally different and interchangeable raters of school climate. *Psychological Assessment*.
6. Huang, F., & Cornell, D. (in press). Using multilevel factor analysis with clustered data: Investigating the factor structure of the Positive Values Scale. *Journal of Psychoeducational Assessment*.
7. Huang, F., Cornell, D., Konold, T., Meyer, P., Lacey, A., Nekvasil, E., Heilbrun, A., & Shukla, K. (in press). Multilevel factor structure and concurrent validity of the teacher version of the Authoritative School Climate Survey. *Journal of School Health*.
8. Huang, F., & Cornell, D. (in press). The impact of definition and question order on the prevalence of bullying victimization using student self-reports. *Psychological Assessment*.
9. Cornell, D., Shukla, K., & Konold, T. (in press). Peer victimization and authoritative school climate: A multilevel multivariate approach. *Journal of Educational Psychology*.