

WEST VIRGINIA School Safety INITIATIVE

Protecting Our Schools with a
Multi-Agency, Collaborative, Statewide Approach



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I. Introduction

West Virginia's most precious resource is our children. Our collective responsibility is to ensure that our youth are learning in the safest environment possible, and being safe starts with being prepared. Consequently, Governor Jim Justice has directed the West Virginia Department of Homeland Security (WV DHS) to devise a comprehensive school safety initiative (Initiative), which will also operate as a reference tool for each county school system. The broad purpose of this Initiative is to provide guidance so that school personnel, students, parents, and community members will have the knowledge needed to recognize threatening or concerning behavior in students, the information necessary to detect and potentially prevent acts of school violence, or to mitigate the harm resulting from an act of school violence, and the tools necessary to seek assistance in the event of a crisis or threat.

In the event of a school crisis, all school staff members, students, community members, and first responders must have uniform crisis plans across the State of West Virginia to ensure an effective response no matter where the crisis occurs. By implementing the principles and methods within the School Safety Initiative, all West Virginia Schools will have uniform crisis response plans, making all response efforts more practical and successful. A reliable crisis plan will not only develop trust and confidence between faculty, students, and parents, but it will also save lives in the event of a school crisis. The Initiative is developed in conjunction with West Virginia Code § 18-9f-9, which was adopted in 2011 to guide school personnel, students, parents, and community members regarding creating, filing, and distributing a school crisis response plan.

In addition to statewide uniform school crisis response plans, the Governor's Office and the West Virginia Department of Homeland Security identified the need for school personnel to have access to information and research that is essential to school crisis prevention and response. History provides helpful examples of successes and failures during critical incidents in school settings. Unfortunately, mistakes made during school shootings and other tragedies must influence how West Virginia school systems approach the development of a school crisis response plan. Therefore, the School Safety Initiative has analyzed those mistakes and successes and condensed them into a comprehensive, easy-to-read document designed to educate, instruct, and empower school personnel, students, parents, and community members regarding school safety and crisis planning.

The Model Plan and Reference Manual is laid out in three broad categories:

- Detection and Prevention,
- Crisis Response, and
- Post-Crisis Response.

The subcategories contain evidence-based information to aid school personnel, students, parents, community members, and first responders in identifying potentially dangerous behavior and developing a consistent state-wide plan for use during a crisis to minimize loss of life and other injuries resulting from a school crisis. The overall goal is for each school in West Virginia to utilize the information and strategies in this Initiative to establish their own school crisis response plan that is suited to their individual needs.

II. Before a School Crisis

A. Threat Detection and Violence Prevention

Understanding the common characteristics and traits of past mass shooters is of critical importance to better prepare for and possibly prevent mass shooting incidents in West Virginia Schools. The National Institute of Justice reports that approximately 1 in 5 mass shooters studied past mass shootings before committing the violence, seemingly attempting to repeat successes and avoid mistakes. Although there is no set profile of a school shooter, nor is there a set profile of schools more susceptible to attacks, [research into past school shootings](#) has shown that school attackers often exhibit easily observable concerning behaviors.¹ Most of the time, school shootings are not impulsive; rather, extensive planning is involved. If concerning behaviors are recognized and reported by observers (which can be done through the use of the threat assessment process discussed below), the next school tragedy could potentially be detected, intercepted, and prevented.

The United States Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) has been using the threat assessment process for over 20 years to prevent targeted violence against United States Citizens. Specifically, NTAC has intently studied patterns in school violence incidents and has disseminated research and statistics to educate individuals relating to violence detection and prevention in hopes of ensuring our students' safety in American schools. In the most recent study, the Secret Service analyzed 41 incidents of targeted school violence at K-12 schools in the United States from 2008 to 2017. Although every incident is different and school shooters do not always fit into a particular mold, the Secret Service has identified a profile of past school shooters, which should help teachers, staff, other students, and community members identify concerning behaviors quickly and effectively.

B. Understanding the School Shooter

The majority of school shooters are white males that have ranged from 7th to 12th graders. The Secret Service reports that 63% of school shooters are white and 83% are male,

meaning only seven of the 41 incidents have involved a female attacker. Most of these attackers had several different motivations to commit a school attack, but 39 of the attackers had an identifiable primary motive for their attack.

Although a shooter's motives vary depending on the personality of the shooter, his or her specific life circumstances, etc., the commonalities among school shooters regarding their motivations for committing school attacks have been studied in depth. In 2001, the United States Department of Homeland Security, using research conducted by the Secret Service, found that common traits of past school shooters could be broken down in the following way:

- 91% of school attackers had observable psychological (depression, suicidal ideation, anger, psychotic symptoms, etc.), behavioral (defiance, poor impulse control, violation of social norms, etc.), or neurological (developmental delays, cognitive deficits, etc.) symptoms.
- 41% of school attackers were motivated, at least partly by a desire to commit suicide.
- 94% of school attackers had at least one identifiable "home life factor," which includes:
 - Parental divorce/separation (71%),
 - Family discord including
 - Domestic family financial difficulty (69%),
 - Violence/abuse (40%),
 - Parent/sibling arrested/incarcerated (23%),
 - History of family mental health issues (54%),
 - Abuse/neglect of attacker (23%),
 - Parent/sibling substance abuse (46%),
 - The attacker was in non-parental custodial care (11%).
- 83% of school attackers threatened others, including the target, and/or communicated their intent to conduct an attack.
- 83% of school attackers retaliated for a grievance.
- 80% of school attackers were bullied by their classmates. Some of the attackers actively sought help to address being bullied but received ineffective assistance or little to no response at all.
- 74% of school attackers showed signs of frequent, intense anger and/or communicated that they were becoming increasingly prone to anger.
- 63% of school attackers showed signs of severe depression, sadness, or isolation or openly talked about experiencing these emotions.
- 51% of school attackers had engaged in observable planning behaviors before the attack.
- 100% of school attackers experienced at least one social risk factor (e.g., bullying or problems with a romantic partner),
- 91% of school attackers experienced family-related risk factors (e.g., abuse, neglect, or financial problems), and
- 89% of school attackers experienced academic failure or disciplinary actions (e.g., failing grades or suspension from school).

- The risk factors referenced above are not predictive, but they can include the following:
 - Suicidal ideation,
 - Depression,
 - Intense anger,
 - Mental illness,
 - Social isolation,
 - Family financial difficulties,
 - Family-based substance abuse,
 - Family-based arrest/incarceration,
 - Family-based discord,
 - Family-based mental health problems,
 - Abuse/neglect,
 - Parental absence,
 - Poor academic performance,
 - Previous Disciplinary actions, or
 - Holding a grievance.

According to the [report disseminated](#) by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO)² regarding the commonalities between school shooting situations, “[r]esearch suggests that a young person’s propensity to commit an act of violence, like a school shooting, is influenced by the interplay of multiple risk factors and protective factors.” Those identifiable factors are broken down into three categories, including individual, relationship, and community factors, and are described as follows from the GAO report:

Individual

- Risk Factors:
 - Impulsiveness,
 - Substance abuse,
 - Antisocial or aggressive beliefs and attitudes,
 - Weak school achievement, peer conflict, rejection,
 - Prior history of exposure to violence or abuse,
 - Unsupervised access to a firearm,
 - Depression, anxiety, chronic stress and trauma, and
 - Previous history of arrest.
- Protective Factors:
 - Development of healthy social, problem-solving, and emotional regulation skills, and
 - School readiness and academic achievement.

Relationship

- Risk Factors:
 - Association with peers engaging in violent or delinquent behavior, including gang activity,

- Parental conflict and violence,
- Poor parental attachment and lack of appropriate supervision, and
- Use of harsh or inconsistent discipline.
- Protective Factors:
 - Strong parent-child attachment
 - Consistent, developmentally appropriate limits at home,
 - Stable connections to school and school personnel, and
 - Feeling of connectedness to prosocial, nonviolent peers.

Community

- Risk Factors:
 - Residential instability and crowded housing,
 - The density of alcohol-related businesses,
 - Poor economic growth or stability,
 - Concentrated poverty,
 - High levels of crime or gang activity,
 - High levels of unemployment, and
 - High levels of drug use or sales.
- Protective Factors:
 - Residence and neighborhoods that are regularly repaired and maintained and are designated to increase visibility and control access (parks, schools, businesses),
 - Policies related to the density of alcohol outlets and sales,
 - Stable housing and household financial security,
 - Economic opportunities (e.g., employment), and
 - Access to services and social support.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has [emphasized the importance of those protective factors](#), and their role in preventing school violence. According to the CDC, “[s]chools are uniquely positioned to strengthen protective factors through CDC’s framework for school health: the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model. This framework is student-centered and emphasizes the importance of key protective factors: social and emotional climate, parent engagement, and community involvement in supporting the school.” The WSCC was developed by the CDC and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum (ASCD) so that school leaders and staff can better serve the needs within the school, which could play an active role in preventing school violence.³

The WSCC Model includes ten components, which are listed as follows:

- Physical education and physical activity,
- Nutrition environment and services,
- Health education,

- Social and emotional climate,
- Physical environment,
- Health services
- Counseling, psychological, and social services,
- Employee wellness,
- Community involvement, and
- Family engagement.

If the school environment is structured with the ten components of the WSCC in mind, the CDC and the ASCD opine that students and staff within the school will be healthier physically and psychosocially, thereby lessening the potential for negative behaviors, which can include school violence.

C. Understanding the School Shooting Through Data

The Congressional Research Service has defined a public mass shooting as a “multiple homicide incident in which four or more victims are murdered with firearms within one event, and [where] at least some of the murders occurred in a public location or locations in a close geographical proximity, and the murders are not attributable to any other underlying criminal activity or commonplace circumstance”. The definition does not include the shooter in the death count. Understanding the common characteristics of school shootings is vital to better prepare for and possibly prevent mass shooting incidents in West Virginia Schools.

The GAO reported that, between the 2009-2010 school year and the 2018-2019 school year, there were 318 shootings in K-12 schools in the United States. Approximately half of the shootings, or 49%, were committed by students or former students. The others are attributed to people with no relation to the school or with minimal connection to the school (parents, relatives, staff, etc.). Furthermore, research has shown that nearly 61% of school shootings happen outside the school building and are motivated by a dispute or grievance. Some examples of those grievances have included conflicts between students and other students or teachers but can also include gang-related conflicts and similar situations. The rest of the documented shootings that have taken place inside the school building are most commonly “accidental” or “school-targeted”.¹

According to the Washington Post, which collected information from news articles, open-source databases and research, law enforcement reports, and communication with school officials and police departments, there were 42 school shootings in 2021 alone, which is a total number higher than any other year since 1999. The Washington Post also reports that more than 85% of the known school shooters used weapons they found at home, which is also reflected in the research conducted by the National Institute of Justice

(NIJ). However, NIJ's report identified that over 80% of K-12 shooters stole guns from family members.⁴

D. Creating a Comprehensive Targeted Violence Prevention Plan

As discussed above, the School Safety Initiative focuses heavily on detecting and preventing violence in our schools. Research indicates that before most incidents of school violence, perpetrators usually show indicators of future violence; sometimes, perpetrators even report their violent intentions to another party. Analyzing past failures and successes to learn from the tragic school shooting events that have shaken our nation far too many times will help West Virginia leaders stay ahead of the curve in the context of school safety. For example, following the May 18, 2018, shooting at Santa Fe High School in Santa Fe, Texas, the Texas Governor immediately organized a “roundtable” exercise with all school safety stakeholders. In that discussion, three overarching topics were discussed:

- Making schools safer places,
- Identifying threats in advance and resolving them, and
- Improving mental health assessments and services.

These three categories focus heavily on threat detection, which could ultimately prevent school violence. An in-depth explanation of the Texas Governor's initiatives was condensed into a publicly available report titled, “School and Firearm Safety Action Plan.” This plan emphasized the use of a “threat assessment” process to identify early warning signs of students in crisis so that school administrators can meaningfully intervene at the earliest possible time.

In July 2018, the United States Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) disseminated an operational guide titled, “[Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model](#)”.⁵ In this guide, the NTAC delineated eight steps that schools should take in an effort to prevent school violence, which are

- To form a multidisciplinary threat assessment team,
- Define prohibited and concerning behaviors,
- Create a central reporting mechanism,
- Determine the threshold for law enforcement intervention,
- Establish assessment procedures,
- Develop risk management options,
- Create and promote safe school climates, and
- Conduct training for all stakeholders.

WV DHS thoroughly examined these steps and used them as guidelines when developing this initiative.

1. Threat Assessment Process

In the context of school violence, detection and intervention lead to prevention. Most of our children spend more time in classrooms with their peers and teachers than outside the classroom; therefore, it stands to reason that classmates, school administrators, and teachers would be among the first, if not the very first, to detect concerning behaviors in students. In situations where those concerning behaviors are seen, focusing on the individual of concern and their specific actions and communications through the “threat assessment process” is a proactive step in preventing targeted violence. A threat assessment is exactly as it sounds – simply put, it is the process of evaluating known threats to determine whether they pose a risk to school safety. In other words, a threat assessment is a process that involves the identification, assessment, and management of individuals or groups of individuals who may pose threats of targeted violence.

Threat assessments have been conducted in private and public industries for decades but have become prominent in schools since the escalation of school shooting events. The first school-based threat assessment program/training was developed by Professor Dewey G. Cornell at the University of Virginia. This program is embodied in a document entitled, the “Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG)”. A new version of the manual was released in 2018, and its guidelines have been used to influence threat assessment policies and procedures across the country.

The CSTAG Model emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between a “transient” threat (not serious) or a “substantive” threat (threat that poses a continuing risk to others”). This distinction is important in the evaluation of a threat because it helps school officials rule out empty threats and focus on threats that could potentially result in significant harm. Furthermore, categorizing the threat as either “transient” or “substantive” will prevent the school environment from becoming oppressive and domineering by eliminating offensive or inappropriate language that is non-threatening from continuing in the threat assessment process.

The CSTAG Model encourages school officials to classify the threat as transient or substantive using a “decision tree,” which has a total of five steps. The first step is evaluating the threat, the second step is attempting to resolve the threat as transient, the third is to respond to a substantive threat, the fourth is to conduct a safety evaluation for a very serious substantive threat, and the final step is to implement and monitor the safety plan. Although many school systems have created their own version of the threat assessment process, all of them contain similar methods of evaluation, which closely resemble the CSTAG Model.

However, the [Secret Service's Exceptional Case Study Project \(ECSP\)](#), which was a five-year study of the thinking and behavior of individuals who carried out or attempted to carry out large-scale attacks on public or prominent individuals, placed the focus on an individual's behavior rather than solely on stated threats or traits. By focusing on student behaviors in addition to addressing communicated threats, school officials are fostering a culture of mutual respect and compassion. Essentially, school personnel can monitor and detect concerning behaviors in students and, once detected, school personnel can intervene in that student's life in a meaningful way. This will create a school environment that places an emphasis on providing emotional support to students in times of crisis. Research has shown that 91% of school attackers have demonstrated observable psychological, behavioral, or neurological symptoms that could have been detected by school officials. If students in crisis or emotional distress are identified and supported by school officials, school violence can be deterred and prevented.⁶

Additionally, the United States Secret Service and the United States Department of Education⁵ have identified six principles that form the foundation of the threat assessment process, which are as follows:

- Targeted violence results from an understandable and, often, discernible process of thinking and behavior.
- Targeted violence stems from an interaction between the individual, the situation, the setting, and the target.
- An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to successful threat assessment.
- An effective threat assessment is based upon facts rather than on characteristics or "traits."
- An "integrated systems approach" should guide threat assessment inquiries and investigations.
- The central question in a threat assessment inquiry or investigation is whether a student poses a threat, not whether the student has made a threat.

In addition to the six principles above, the Secret Service and the Department of Education have identified three essential elements in developing and implementing an effective threat assessment in schools.

First, school officials must have the authority to conduct threat assessments. This can be done by adopting and implementing an official school policy that delineates the scope of the threat assessment process. Please note: seeking advice from your school's legal counsel will be crucial in developing these policies and procedures. For example, the sharing of certain legal records, the scope of any search conducted by school officials, and the policy's purpose should all be addressed and memorialized in writing.

Next, the school must have the capacity to conduct inquiries and investigations. To facilitate the use of threat assessments in schools, school districts can mandate the use of a threat assessment team. Usually, threat assessment teams are made up of a member of senior faculty at the school, an investigator (PRO or SRO), a mental health professional (school counselor, potentially), a member of the community or the clergy, and any other individual that can be beneficial to the school threat assessment process.

Finally, schools must have integrated systems relationships to successfully implement a threat assessment process. As discussed above, creating a school environment based on trust and compassion can help promote students' emotional and physical well-being. This can be achieved through relationship building between faculty, students, and the community at large.

2. Uniform Threat Reporting:

Again, please note, if law enforcement intervention is immediately necessary, please dial 911 as soon as practicable.

West Virginia My Mobile Witness App

Governor Justice, WV DHS, and the West Virginia Department of Education recognize the importance of establishing a central reporting system across the state that is easy to use and accessible to all West Virginia residents. Thus, West Virginia has partnered with My Mobile Witness to implement a “see something, send something” reporting system that can be done with a click of a button on your smartphone or other mobile devices. Thus, concerned citizens, law enforcement, and first responders can quickly connect with intelligence centers in West Virginia and, if necessary, nationwide.

First, the user must connect to the app store on their chosen device and initiate the free download of the See Send mobile reporting app. However, My Mobile Witness is also compatible with web-based reporting and is not strictly for cell phone use. Once the app is downloaded to your device, users will be prompted to enter their first and last name (though any reporting can be done anonymously, if the user prefers), their phone number, and then select a state of residence. Once those fields are entered, the app will be ready to use. The user may submit tips for “Crime/Suspicious Activity” or “School Threat or Safety Issues,” and they may also request help for “Suicide or Addiction”.

Once the category of concern is selected on the app, the user will be prompted to send a note through the app with as much detail as possible. The user can also take a photo or add a photo from his or her photo library. The app will also ask for a location description. Once those fields are completed, the user will be able to “send a tip” through the app. All My Mobile Witness tips will be monitored by the West Virginia Emergency Management

Division's Watch Center on a 24/7 basis. The Watch Center will forward reports to the appropriate law enforcement office, the proper school officials, and the necessary state leadership.

West Virginia Safe Schools Hotline and the WV Watch Center

The West Virginia Safe Schools Hotline and the WV Watch Center are both maintained and managed by the Emergency Management Division of the West Virginia Department of Homeland Security. The Watch Center (1-866-WVWATCH or 866-989-2824) is an operations center that receives non-emergency calls from around the state concerning school safety, arson, drugs, and environmental protection issues, and is available 24/7.

Important Note: The center does not receive 911 calls. If there is an emergency that needs immediate law enforcement involvement, do not call the Watch Center.

West Virginia Fusion Center

The West Virginia Fusion Center was established to provide the citizens of West Virginia with a centralized operation that results in enhanced coordination, strengthened partnerships, and improved crime-fighting and anti-terrorism capabilities. The Fusion Center collects, integrates, evaluates, analyzes, and then disseminates information and intelligence to support local, state, and federal agencies in detecting, preventing, and responding to criminal and terrorist activity. By visiting www.fusioncenter.wv.gov or calling (304) 558-4831, concerned citizens can report drug activity, human trafficking, and other suspicious activity.

School Resource Officers (SRO) and Prevention Resource Officers (PRO)

Justice and Community Services, a section within the WV Department of Homeland Security, developed and implemented the [Prevention Resource Officer \(PRO\) Program](#).⁷ The PRO Program is a cooperative effort between schools and law enforcement agencies to “improve students’ attitude and knowledge of criminal justice and law enforcement; to prevent juvenile delinquency; to mentor youth; to provide a safer school environment, and to combine safety and child advocacy assuring a better school experience for all WV youth.”

There are three components of the PRO Program, which are prevention, mentoring, and safety. To ensure those three components are supported in the school system, the Program places certified WV law enforcement officers, and certified Prevention Resource Officers in local middle and high schools. The PROs are required to have an office in the school and be on duty in the school a minimum of 35-40 hours per week. Additionally, the PROs typically attend extracurricular school activities throughout the year. All information related to the PRO Program is located at www.djcs.wv.gov.

Although similar, the School Resource Officer program is not provided through Justice and Community Services. However, these programs are usually provided through the sheriff's offices in each county.

School Safety and Security Division, School Safety Officers

Notwithstanding the existence or nonexistence of PROs or SROs in schools, Governor Justice and the WV DLS developed the School Safety and Security Division within the Division of Protective Services to increase accountability regarding school safety and to make reporting and investigating school threats more effective. The School Safety and Security Division consists of a director and a safety team of School Safety and Security Officers located within each region of the state. This system provides all West Virginia schools with a centralized command, specifically tasked with the organization, implementation, and management of school safety policies, procedures, and protocols. The School Safety and Security Division will provide support and guidance to all public schools within his or her region. They will play a key role in making West Virginia schools safer and more prepared for a crisis.

The director of the School Safety and Security Division will lead and manage the regional officers and personnel. The director must be an active, certified law enforcement officer, as are all the regional officers under his or her command. The director will be responsible for coordinating efforts between the School Safety and Security Division and the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Support and Accountability, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, and all law enforcement and first responders to develop, implement, and maintain school safety protocol, plans, and procedures.

The regional officers, "School Safety Officers," will act in an oversight and management capacity to optimize the safety and security of each public school facility in their region. Regional officers will be responsible for establishing and maintaining a unified emergency response plan for each school within his or her designated region. This plan shall include coordination between the school and local emergency responders before a school tragedy so that post-crisis response can be as effective as possible. Thus, the director shall take whatever action necessary to collaborate with all stakeholders, including, but not limited to, local emergency facilities and law enforcement of appropriate jurisdiction.

The School Safety Officer will collect and compile all required school safety information, which will be recorded in the "School Safety Officer Program Report." The PRO or SRO Program Report will be constantly updated and maintained and shall include the following information:

School Safety Officer Program Report:

Safety Inspection Reports

The director and each regional officer will be accountable for conducting unannounced security and safety inspections during the school year. Each school will undergo an inspection at least once a year, but the number of inspections is wholly dependent on the needs of each school. The inspection report will contain a detailed accounting of all school-related safety and security risks or areas of concern. The School Safety Officer will work with school officials to remediate each deficiency by developing and implementing a Safety Strategy, which will be designed to improve all safety and security risks discovered in the Safety Inspection Report.

Each Safety Inspection Report and, if required, Safety Strategy will be documented in writing and will be submitted to West Virginia Emergency Management, the West Virginia Department of Education, and the respective county board of education upon completion. For ease of sharing and effective communication before, during, or after a crisis, the reports will also be uploaded to WebEOC, which is an emergency management software that is available to all telecommunicators, who will relay information to first responders, so that they can have access to the reports in the event of an emergency.

- During the Safety Inspection, the School Safety Officer must indicate whether the school has taken the following measures:
- Each classroom has an interior door locking system, as well as a secondary door locking system, and each lock is functioning properly (all interior door locking systems must be West Virginia Fire Marshal approved),
- Window film is on all first-floor exterior windows,
- Use of [Window Armor](#) (US patent number US 11,225,828 B2), developed by Window Armor, LLC, is encouraged for further fortification of classrooms,
- Each exterior has a door locking mechanism, and the mechanism is functioning properly,
- All security cameras and other monitoring systems are functioning correctly,
- All emergency plans are established, updated, and shared with the local 911 center, West Virginia Emergency Management Division and are uploaded to WebEOC, the local school board, and a hard copy is maintained in the school,
- A system that provides controlled access to the interior of the school, requiring visual identification,
- All exterior gates are equipped with a locking mechanism, which is fully functioning, and
- Training exercises.

Blueprints

Blueprints are required to show each floor and each room of the structure, including windows and doors. Although the blueprints must meet the minimum threshold described

above, they can also include other information that can be helpful to law enforcement in a crisis, such as camera locations, electrical junctions, water mains, etc.

Aerial and Ground-Level Photographs of School

- Bird's-Eye – Aerial photos allow tactical planners to establish plans about entering and exiting the school and establishing security perimeters.
- Ground-Level from Outside – Ground-level photos help unfamiliar law enforcement navigate the school during a critical event. Although your local law enforcement should be familiar with the layout of your school, many of the first responders will not be, and having detailed photographs can be helpful.
- Inside – Inside photos are just as important as ground-level photos from outside, as they can assist unfamiliar law enforcement in navigating the interior of a school during a crisis.

Labeling

Labeling each indoor room and hallway enables first responders, teachers, and students to communicate effectively during a tragedy. Labeling should also be present on all outer buildings, identifying them from the ground level and from aerial views (which can be achieved by labeling the tops of each building).

Location of Front Office

Most schools have a central or front office where announcements are made, and general business of the school is conducted. Usually, these offices are equipped with Public Address (PA) Systems, which emergency responders can use to listen to and/or communicate with the threat.

Alternative Key Access

Swipe keys are commonly used to access schools. If the swipe key is not effective or available in an emergency, alternative access must be developed. One of the most effective ways to ensure that emergency responders will have access to the school in the event of an emergency is to equip the school with multiple exterior lock boxes that contain the school's master key and strategically place them around exterior doors. The locations and passcodes of the lock boxes will be on file in the WebEOC. It is recommended that each school have at least two lock boxes, each placed on opposite sides of the school building.

Important Note: The lock box should also contain a grease pencil or chalk so that emergency responders can mark each room as “cleared” of the threat as they work their way through the school.

Training

Each School Safety Officer will be responsible for conducting or facilitating training at each school. It is recommended that this training occur quarterly, though it must be conducted annually. Training and education will meet minimum standards as set forth by the Department.

E. Suggested Action for Schools

First, West Virginia school personnel should encourage using the My Mobile Witness App in all schools throughout West Virginia; an app recently rolled out under Governor Justice's administration. Each school should prominently advertise the "See, Send" app, which can include a QR code that will allow students to quickly and easily scan and download the app to their smartphone. Furthermore, the West Virginia Department of Education will enable the My Mobile Witness App on every computer, iPad, or mobile device the school issues. The application will be automatically installed on the homepage of each school-owned computer so that every student will have access to the "See, Send" app, regardless of whether they have a smartphone.

Next, many school districts across the United States have passed legislation requiring Threat Assessment Teams in all state-sanctioned schools, but West Virginia is not one of them. However, the WV DHS urges each school to develop a Threat Assessment Team tasked with the operation and implementation of the threat assessment protocols. According to the U.S. Secret Service, the Threat Assessment Team should be made up of people from multiple disciplines so that the threat assessment process can be conducted using varying opinions and perspectives. For example, the Threat Assessment Team could include a school resource officer or another law enforcement officer, a school counselor, a mental health professional, a community member, a coach, etc. However, each Threat Assessment Team shall be required to include a PRO or SRO. Each Threat Assessment Team requires a team leader to oversee the development of the group's threat assessment protocols and procedures. The team leader is responsible for the implementation of those protocols and procedures and will maintain scheduled meetings for the team and facilitate the flow of communication between the team and other necessary parties.

Once the team is assembled, team members should be prepared to meet, preferably in person, at any time a threat or concerning behavior is detected or reported. However, the Threat Assessment Team should also meet regularly to share information, engage in

discussions, and work together to make the threat assessment process more effective. Each team should use the guidelines in this manual to create forms, protocols, procedures, and other necessary tools to make the threat assessment process effective, clear, and uniform.

1. Model Threat Assessment Process

The suggested threat assessment creation method is as follows:

STEP 1: IDENTIFY

Identify the threat and/or the concerning behavior. When creating the Threat Assessment Team, members should define what types of behaviors will be prohibited and what types of behaviors are particularly concerning, therefore, warranting immediate action.

Examples of prohibited behaviors include bullying, violence, bringing weapons to school, etc.

Examples of concerning behaviors can include absenteeism, negative trends in performance (including academic and extracurricular performance), drastic changes in appearance (including excessive changes in weight or overall health), noticeable social isolation, etc.

Important Note: While threat assessment teams are developing these policies, the Historical Common Traits of School Shooters should be considered.

The threat assessment team should identify and promote methods of threat reporting. The reporting methods should consider what types of reports can be made, and what will happen in each reporting scenario. Preferably, each school should have multiple reporting systems that are properly advertised to students and staff.

The method of reporting can include **any or all** of the following:

- Verbal reporting to an adult at the school (to PRO, SRO, school personnel, other students, etc.),
- MyMobileWitness “See, Send” App,
- Specified email address maintained by the school,
- Physical drop-box in a dedicated location on campus, and
- Any other reporting mechanism deemed appropriate by the team.

Once the threat or concern is reported, the threat assessment process should begin. Gather as much information as possible to identify the perceived threat or concerning behavior, including the names of potential witnesses, the intended target or targets, the surrounding circumstances, etc.

Gather information about the student subject to the threat assessment, including the student's name, physical description, date of birth, and any school identification numbers or social security numbers.

Important Note: Sometimes, the threat seems so imminent that the threat assessment process is not feasible at the time you receive the threat or witness the concerning behavior. If this is the case, please call 911 immediately.

STEP 2: ASSESS AND ACT

If law enforcement intervention is not immediately required (which shall be determined by the team at the outset of the threat or concern), the team should complete the threat assessment protocols.

Important Note: Documentation, including the completion of the threat assessment form(s) shall be maintained throughout the completion of the threat assessment process.

The following steps should be performed in this phase:

- Obtain the student's background information, including the residence of the student, the home life of the student, any issues within the school, social network accounts maintained or "followed" by the student that present concerns, etc.
- Identify any significant relationships the student may have within the school or the community so that this person (or those people) can aid in the threat assessment process to potentially mitigate any concern.
- Review class assignments that involve creative writing or other artistic expression.
- Attempt to identify any possible motive the student or students would have to carry out a school attack.
 - This can include any incidents of bullying, turmoil in a romantic relationship, disagreements with a teacher/any school personnel, discord in any extracurricular activities, any issues at the student's place of employment, etc.
- Determine whether the student had any emotional or developmental issues.
- Talk to the student's peers and friends to determine if they have identified any issues.
- Engage in other necessary steps to gather information for the threat assessment.

After compiling the necessary information, the team should work together to classify the threat as "transient" or "substantive," in that order, by conducting interviews and reviewing evidence.

Transient threats: Is the language or behavior a threat of harm, or is it an expression of humor, frustration, or anger that is not likely to result in harm? If the threat is transient, the situation is not emergent, and the student can be provided support through services such as counseling, mentoring, etc.

Most schools have protocols in place to address mental health crises in students, and those methods can be utilized in situations where the threat is transient, but the student needs services to prevent future violence.

The WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau of Behavioral Health will assist schools when requested, regarding student assessments and care. In these cases, the threat assessments do not need to be submitted to law enforcement. However, all records, documents, interviews, notes, etc., shall be maintained in the student's file (or in an alternate recording system that the school utilizes) if future incidents occur.

Substantive Threats: Is the language or behavior serious in nature and aimed at a specific person or group of people, and is it likely to cause physical harm? If the threat is substantive, the PRO or SRO will be obligated to call the appropriate law enforcement authority and immediately act to protect victims or potential victims.

Immediately submit the threat assessment to law enforcement (SRO, PRO) in cases of substantive threats. When the PRO or SRO receives the threat assessment team's final report of a substantive threat, he or she will submit the threat assessment to the Fusion Center, along with an official request to aid the school in detecting and preventing violence.

The Fusion Center will then assess the threat. If the student being assessed appears to need mental health or other intervention, the Fusion Center shall inform DHHR, Bureau of Behavioral Health, and any other necessary entities, including medical professionals.

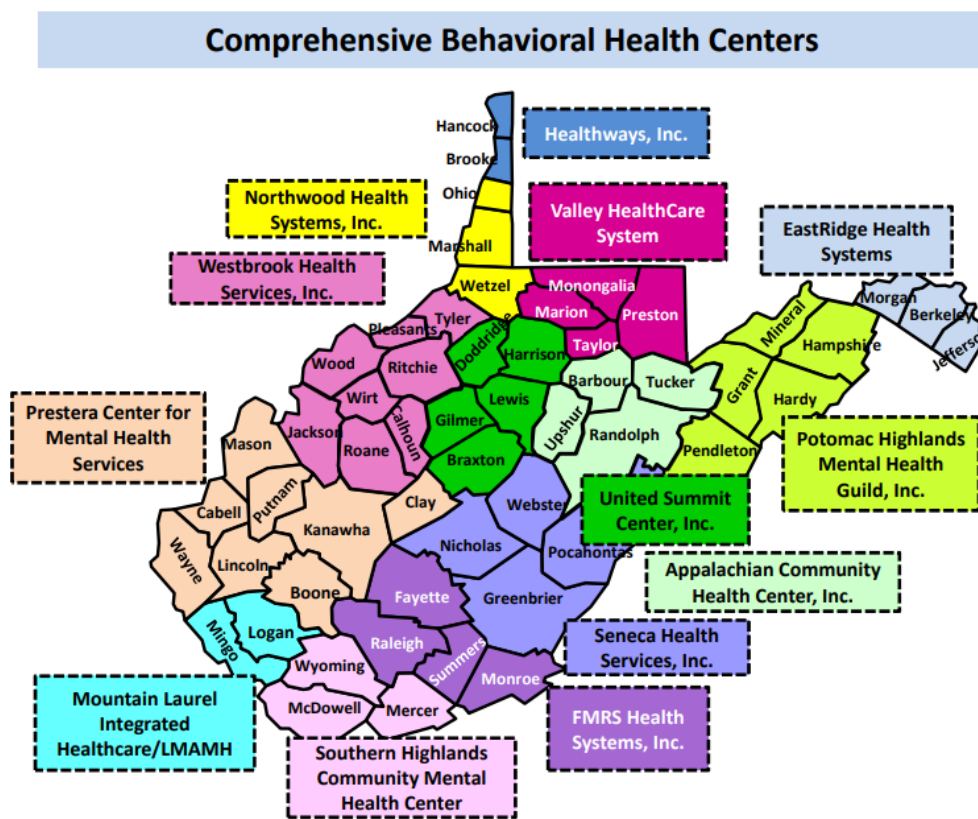
Simultaneously, the PRO or SRO will notify the Superintendent of the particular school district, who shall inform all necessary personnel and any other individual that has a need or right to know the information.

PRO or SRO shall warn parents and the appropriate school officials. When the threat is neutralized (proper intervention has resulted in the situation becoming non-emergent), look for ways to resolve the conflict and take appropriate disciplinary action when warranted.

STEP 3: ADMINISTRATE

The team should work to develop a continuing safety plan to monitor the student and provide needed services to facilitate long-term care. This safety plan should be individualized to the student and based on the goal of long-term violence prevention.

For example, the school should provide resources designed to help the student manage and overcome the stressors that could be contributing to the concerning behavior. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources has [Comprehensive Behavioral Health Centers](#) located all around the state. West Virginia’s publicly-funded community-based behavioral health system is anchored by thirteen (13) Comprehensive Behavioral Health Centers, as shown below.



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Additionally, the WV DHHR funds and supports the Children’s Crisis & Referral Line, which can be reached 24 hours a day and 7 days a week at 10844-HELP4WV. By calling this line, parents or other concerned individuals can speak to a trained Helpline Specialist and link you directly to treatment. Additional resources are available at help4wv.com. Schools could also develop a mentorship program designed to encourage close relationships and continued communication between the student and a trusted school official.

If necessary, the school may choose to temporarily remove the student from the school setting while still maintaining a positive communicative relationship with the student and his or her family.

The threat assessment team should review the assessment at an appropriate time after the plan is implemented to determine if the student still poses a threat. If the team determines that the student does not pose a threat, the safety plan can be discontinued, and the file can be closed.

It is further suggested that each school create procedures and protocols based upon the “Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child” (WSCC) Model if they have not already incorporated the principles delineated in that model. Focusing on the physical and psychosocial health of students, staff, and students is vital to school violence prevention.

F. Suggested Action for Community Members

The responsibility of preventing school violence is not limited to those individuals inside school facilities. The “See Something, Say Something” principle extends to every member of the community, which is why the My Mobile Witness, See, Send app is available to anyone who wishes to have access to the app. Whether you are an employee at the gas station located near your local K-12 school, or a K-12 parent who makes frequent visits to and from your child’s school, you can be a critical factor in the prevention of school violence by maintaining awareness of indicators and warning signs that commonly lead to school related violence.

STEP 1: RECOGNIZE

Be aware of your surroundings and stay informed about the warning signs of impending violence. According to the [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency](#), some observable warning signs can include:

- Disgruntlement towards peers or others,
- Unwillingness to abide by rules or policies,
- Making inappropriate statements or jokes,
- Asking questions about security, cameras, police response, etc.
- Uncommon attire (i.e., face mask unrelated to sickness, dark color clothing, protective vests, visible weapons, etc.).⁸

STEP 2: ASSESS

Assess the situation to determine if your immediate safety is in jeopardy. If it is not, assess whether you can safely de-escalate the situations in cases of active violence. Take note of

everything. Pay attention to the race, height, gender, clothing description, vehicle, number of associates or companions, time of day, etc. These descriptive factors can help law enforcement effectively thwart the threat.

STEP 3: DE-ESCALATE AND REPORT

If you can act safely to immediately protect the safety of another (active fight or other such threat), take the proper steps to attempt to de-escalate and thwart the threat. No matter what, report. Even if you determine that the situation has resolved or will resolve, a report of suspicious or concerning behavior or an act of open violence or aggression can help law enforcement piece together facts if there is a crime related to any of those incidents.

DO NOT assume that someone else will report a concerning incident. Most of the time, concerning incidents that happen prior to a school shooting are unreported.

G. Creating An Active Shooter Evacuation Plan

All schools in the state of West Virginia should work to develop an easy-to-remember active shooter evacuation plan. By developing and implementing a uniform plan that is easy for students to recall and practice, students will be able to act quickly in an active shooter situation by calling upon their memories and training. The West Virginia Department of Homeland Security has developed the L.I.I.V. (Listen, Identify, Implement, Vacate) Approach, which is an evacuation plan that can be adapted to the individual needs of each school. This approach combines an easy-to-recall acronym with life-saving strategies for survival and escape. The L.I.I.V. Approach was developed with one goal: to train our children to “L.I.I.V.” through a school shooting.

Listen

Listen to your surroundings and quickly gather as much information as you can using your senses. When you hear the gunshots, are they close to you or far away (are they loud or are they soft)? Can you tell where the shots are coming from (to your left or right, upstairs or downstairs, etc.)? Do you hear screaming, and can you determine where the screaming is coming from?

Identify

Identify your best option for survival. Here, each school is responsible for educating students and staff about effective survival methods in cases of active shooters. Although some methods discussed below have associated implementation costs, it is highly

encouraged that training is provided to every school within each district. Those methods may include the following tactics, but remember, there is nothing off limits when you are fighting for your life:

- **Run, Hide, Fight:** The United States Department of Homeland Security describes [Run, Hide, Fight](#) as follows:⁹
 - **Run/Evacuate:**
 - Attempt to have an escape route planned previously,
 - Leave the building regardless of whether others come with you, but help others if possible,
 - Do not search for or take your belongings with you, and
 - Do not try to move injured people.
 - **Hide Out:**
 - If you cannot leave the building, hide out as best you can.
 - Try to block the entrance, if possible.
 - Use doors or other objects to protect from fire,
 - State quiet,
 - Dial 911 if possible, and turn your cell phone on silent.
 - **Fight:**
 - If you have no other options, fight for your life.
 - Throw items, yell, and act as aggressively as possible.
 - Don't hesitate when you are fighting—commit to the fight.
 - There is nothing off-limits when you are fighting for your life.

- **ALICE:** [Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate](#)
 - **Alert:**
 - When you first become aware of the threat and realize you're in danger, time is of the essence. Overcome the denial and start making survival decisions.
 - **Lockdown:**
 - If you cannot evacuate, barricade yourself into a safe location.
 - **Inform:**
 - If you can safely call 911, call.
 - The ALICE training suggests schools include the communication methods used in their emergency response plans. For example, schools should decide how to communicate an active shooter situation to staff and students (i.e., the PA system, etc.).
 - **Counter:**
 - The ALICE training method does not teach the “fight” method. Instead, the “Counter” method is taught.
 - This method advises individuals to “create noise, movement, distance and distraction to reduce the shooter’s ability to shoot accurately.”

- **Evacuate:**
 - When it's safe, remove yourself from the dangerous situation.
 - ALICE Training is provided at a cost and is a tool that school districts can choose to utilize to provide training and education to students and staff.
 - One important consideration when reviewing the ALICE training method is that this system is adapted to students based on age, intellect, and physical ability.
- **Stop the Bleed:** The crux of this strategy is to stop the bleed if you can safely help any other injured individual.
 - Stop the Bleed training can be completed online by visiting www.stopthebleed.org/training/online-course/ free of charge.
 - There is also an in-person lecture presentation that is available upon request.
 - The training discusses personal safety, alerting first responders, identifying life-threatening and other types of bleeding, and controlling bleeding.

Implement

Once you identify the best survival methods, commit and implement. If you run, run as fast as you can and don't look back, despite whether anyone is joining you. When you hide, be as quiet as you can and prepare to fight if you are forced. When you are fighting for your life, nothing is off-limits. Commit to your choices, and don't hesitate.

Vacate

If you have evaluated your circumstances and found a safe exit, vacate immediately with your hands empty and above your heads with your fingers spread wide. Responding law enforcement needs to immediately differentiate between the victims and the shooter(s). By keeping your hands empty and up and your fingers spread, you are signaling to law enforcement that you are not the shooter.

Key Concepts

- In conjunction with physical security and emergency management, a threat assessment process effectively ensures the safety and security of our nation's schools.
- Threat assessment procedures recognize that students engage in a continuum of concerning behaviors, the vast majority of which will be non-threatening and non-violent but may still require intervention.

- The threshold for intervention should be relatively low so schools can identify students in distress before their behavior escalates to the level of eliciting safety concerns.
- A person's behaviors and communications are often disclosed through nonverbal means. Pay Attention to what people say through non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, outward display of emotions, and body language.
- Individuals are unique and will likely not discuss intentions or needs in a uniform manner. Some people find behaviors troubling or threatening may very well be someone's way of asking for help.
- People have bad days. Even though people may display sadness, anger, aggression, or other emotions of concern, that does not mean they intend to cause harm.
- Confirming a threat requires a solid understanding of context and a comprehensive assessment of the person's circumstances and stressors.
- When you report concerning behavior, you create an opportunity to prevent potentially violent situations.
- Everyone has a role in preventing school violence and creating safe school climates. Students should feel empowered to come forward without fear of reprisal. Faculty and staff should take all incoming reports seriously and assess all information regarding troubling behavior or statements.

III. During a School Shooting

A. Trusting Your Instincts to Act

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has found that historically 70% of mass shootings are over in five minutes or less. Additionally, the FBI has found that 90% of mass shootings are over in ten minutes or less. During a school shooting, your body's stress responses will be triggered as soon as you know the situation. According to the [Cleveland Clinic](#), your body will immediately assess the situation, and your stress response will help you determine what actions are necessary to keep you alive.¹⁰

All your training will be put to the test. If your school has meaningfully implemented the model plans, methods, and initiatives discussed in this document, it is much more likely your instinct for survival will allow your mind to draw upon the knowledge you have gained through your training. If you are a teacher or any other school personnel and have students in your care, your only goal is to keep those students alive. If you are a student, your only goal is to survive.

The LIIV Method can be called upon and utilized to avoid losing critical time for survival during a shooting, whether you are a student or a school staff member. As discussed above, listen to the things happening around you. Do you hear loud noises? Can you identify these noises as gunshots? Are the gunshots happening at a rapid pace? Can you tell whether the

shots are coming from the floor above you or below you? Use all your senses to inform your decision-making. What are you smelling? What do you feel? Once you gather the information that your brain will use to make your next move, identify your best strategy for survival. Do you have students to care for? Can you safely exit the building? Do you need to barricade the door? Can you rally your students together and make a plan of attack? If you are a student, can you run to safety? If you are too close to the threat, do you need to prepare to fight? As your brain rapidly cycles through these options, you can assess each one and decide which strategy will give you the best chance for survival.

Once you have identified your strategy using the information gathered through listening and assessing the situation, implement that strategy without hesitation. No matter what your strategy is, commit to it, and focus on survival. Flee if you can. Fight for your life if you're forced. Teachers, protect students at all costs. When you get the chance to flee the danger, get as far away as possible and vacate the school with your hands up and empty so that law enforcement can quickly decipher between you and any threat. During a school shooting, survival and limiting loss of life is the only goal. Through the tools provided in this document, you will be ready to face the situation head-on with confidence.

B. Trusting Your Law Enforcement and Emergency Responders

They were ready for this, and they're coming for you. Implementing the Governor's Safe Schools Initiative will streamline law enforcement and emergency response efforts. Communication barriers have been addressed and remedied, and an information-sharing system has been established. Using the SIRM intermodal network, a system worth over fifty million dollars, law enforcement, emergency responders (ambulance authorities), and fire departments will be one on a radio channel, making communication seamless while working on any critical incident. All West Virginia first responders have SIRM radio communication access, which is essential in crises so accurate information is streamlined and response efforts can be organized and effective.

During a school shooting crisis, a unified command post will be on the scene and working quickly to eliminate the threat. Immediately, law enforcement and emergency personnel gather as much information as possible to locate the threat and evaluate the circumstances so the threat can be eliminated. Your law enforcement and emergency personnel have been trained in their specific tactical plans, and they have access to all critical information to minimize loss of life. They know where your entry points are, how to locate the threat, and are prepared to lay down their lives to save yours. They were ready for this, and they're coming for you.

IV. After the School Shooting: Post-Crisis Response

The Reunification method endorsed by the Justice Administration and the West Virginia Department of Homeland Security was developed by the ["I Love U Guys" Foundation](#) (the Foundation). Stemming from the tragic loss of their daughter, Emily Keyes, due to a hostage situation at her high school in 2006, Emily's parents created the Foundation. The Foundation's mission is "to restore and protect the joy of youth through educational programs and positive actions in collaboration with families, schools, communities, organizations, and government entities.

A. "I Love U Guys" Foundation, Standard Reunification Method

In 2012, the "I Love U Guys" Foundation introduced the Standard Reunification Method (SRM), a comprehensive plan designed to reunify students and staff with their loved ones least chaotically and most effectively possible in the wake of a crisis. SRM's objective is to guide school leaders to develop and implement an effective reunification plan and create and mobilize a reunification team. The Standard Reunification method was developed as a part of the Foundation's mission to educate and assist school systems in implementing effective crisis recovery plans. However, it is important that school leadership consider individual school needs as they adopt principles from the manual.

The Foundation prides itself on the simplicity and conciseness of the process, which is briefly outlined as follows:

- Establish a parent check-in location.
- Deliver the students to the student staging area beyond the field of vision of parents/guardians.
- Once students are on site, notify parents of their location.
- "Greeters" direct parents/guardians to the parent check-in location and help them understand the process.
- Parents/guardians complete Reunification Cards.
- The procedure allows parents/guardians to self-sort during check-in, streamlining the process.
- The "Reunifier" recovers the student from the student staging area and delivers them to the parent.
- A controlled line of sight allows for an orderly flow, and issues can be handled with diminished drama or anxiety.

- Medical, notification or investigative contingencies are anticipated.
- Pedestrian "flows" are created so lines don't cross.
- When it's all said and done, successful reunification is about managing the student and parent experience.

The ILoveUGuys Foundation provides all materials and guidance on its website free of charge and can be easily contacted as the implementation of the SRM begins. The Foundation also provides training and training materials to assist in the development of the SRM within each school. Incorporating the SRM into all West Virginia schools is an extensive but necessary process. Once the system is developed into an individualized plan at each school, drills and practice are mandatory so that the system operates effectively in the event of a crisis.

In order to adopt and implement the SRM, the following procedures should be followed:

- A copy of the SRM can be found at www.dhs.wv.gov.
- Find more information at the ILoveUGuys foundation website, and locate the section labeled "Standard Reunification Method."
- Under the "Standard Reunification Method" tab, you will locate downloadable versions of all required materials, including the SRM Operational Guidance, the SRM Parent Handout, the Reunification Card, and the SRM Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- First, download the SRM Operational Guidance and thoroughly read through the document. This document provides essential information about the RM process and instructions on successfully implementing the SRM in your school. The SRM Operational Guidance contains everything a school needs for successful reunification, including 'ready to print signage'.
- Each school district is highly encouraged to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, although not required by the Foundation. With the MOU in place, the Foundation will provide more materials and guidance.
- The rest of the necessary materials can also be located and downloaded from the same web page.

Although all materials are offered to schools for free, there are costs associated with preparation, such as duct tape, batteries, binders, wrist bands, caution tape, lanyards, reflective vests, etc. A list of suggested items is included on the web page. Furthermore, the ILoveUGuys Foundation provides checklists for each assigned job title, which can be downloaded and used to guide each member as they implement the SRM. You can also download Role ID badges, binder spine labels, and reunification organization charts. By utilizing this free research, West Virginia schools will be given the framework to reunite children with their parents or guardians, which is the most important part of any event requiring the SRM protocols.

B. Establishing Care Plans; Three Stages of Healing

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a United States Department of Health and Human Services division, authored a research bulletin on Mass Violence and Behavioral Health in September 2017. The bulletin discussed Active Shooter Incidents and the resulting behavioral health reactions of those involved. SAMHSA has identified multiple phases of healing after an individual's involvement in a school shooting.¹¹

The phases of healing are as follows:

- **Acute Phase:** “Characterized by denial, shock, and disbelief. In this stage, behavioral health officials can help survivors by providing them with resources and information.”
- **Intermediate Phase:** “Characterized by fear, anger, anxiety, transient panic, retaliatory attacks, difficulty paying attention at work or school, depressed feelings, and disturbed sleep.”
- **Long-Term Phase:** “Characterized by coming to terms with realities with alternate periods of adjustment and relapse. This is the period when untreated behavioral health reactions might solidify into illnesses that would need specialized mental health or substance use disorder-related attention.”

Each phase of healing is vitally important. According to the National Center for PTSD's estimation, 28% of individuals that witness a mass shooting experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and approximately a third of individuals develop acute stress disorder.¹² The trauma endured by mass shooting survivors manifests itself in many ways, emotionally and physically, and long-term recovery must be a consolidated effort undertaken by the school community and the community at large.

According to the American Psychological Association (APA), establishing and encouraging community connection in the aftermath of violence can be essential to the recovery of mass shooting survivors. In a mass tragedy, mental health and emotional healing are tended to by allowing the community to grieve, mourn, and heal together.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources' Comprehensive Behavioral Health Centers will be utilized to provide the needed support to students, staff, parents, and the community as they deal with the devastating emotional and physical side effects experienced through the three phases of healing. The thirteen Comprehensive Behavioral Health Centers located regionally will stand ready to provide care to any and all individuals involved in a mass shooting, including first responders, law enforcement, and other emergency responders. Additionally, the SAMHSA-funded National Child Traumatic Stress Network has compiled several resources to aid in the aftermath of a school shooting or other acts of mass violence. These resources, located via the National Child Traumatic Stress Network's website, include information about responses and recovery after school

violence, tips to help students deal with grief, managing traumatic stress, and other guidance.

To reduce confusion and limit frustration in the aftermath of a school shooting crisis, Governor Justice and the WV DLS highly encourage each school to develop "Care Plans" for each phase of healing described above. Each care plan should be developed with the West Virginia Department of Education's assistance and contain a list of all available resources at the school's disposal. It shall also include how each resource's availability will be communicated to school staff, students, and parents. Each Care Plan should contain plans to encourage community connections. For example, when individuals go through the acute stage of healing, the school administration may choose to hold a candlelight vigil for survivors. During the intermediate stage of healing, the school may organize weekly roundtable discussions at the school so that students can share their grieving experience with other students, who can specifically identify with their emotional reactions. Finally, during the long-term phase of healing, an administration may decide to hold an anniversary remembrance for the victims lost to school violence. The Care Plans should clearly identify the actions the school will take and the services that will be available.

V. Conclusion

Although home to many natural resources and some of the most beautiful scenery in the country, West Virginia's most precious resource is undoubtedly our children. Through the creation and implementation of the Safe Schools Initiative, West Virginia will be a safer place for our youth to learn, grow, and thrive. However, our work is not done—the Safe Schools Initiative is only the first step toward a safer West Virginia.

West Virginia leadership is committed to the expansion of the School Safety Initiative and will continue to diligently pursue the most accurate and up-to-date information and data to develop the Initiative further. Through the collaboration of all West Virginia state government agencies and by placing accountability on all West Virginia citizens, the School Safety Initiative exists to aid in the prevention of school violence and to establish uniform crisis response protocols throughout West Virginia school systems.

Each day, school officials, law enforcement officers, and community members throughout the country are faced with new challenges relating to school safety. With those challenges come new opportunities to learn and expand upon the principles and concepts presented in the West Virginia School Safety Initiative. As we move forward together, school safety remains a top priority in West Virginia.

VI. Contributors

Governor Jim Justice	United States Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency
West Virginia State Senate	
West Virginia House of Delegates	West Virginia Division of Administrative Services
West Virginia Department of Education	West Virginia Law Enforcement Coalition
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources	Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives
West Virginia State Police	United States Secret Service
Wood County Sheriff's Department	Cabell County Sheriff's Department
Winfield Police Department	Ohio County Sheriff's Department
Mountain State Educational Service Cooperative	West Virginia State Fire Marshal
West Virginia Fusion Center	West Virginia Emergency Managers
West Virginia Division of Protective Services Capitol Police	West Virginia Department of Administrative Services
West Virginia School Building Authority	West Virginia Justice and Community Services section
Cabell County Schools	West Virginia Department of Homeland Security Legal Services
Putnam County Schools	West Virginia Emergency Management Division
Kanawha County Schools	West Virginia State School Board
Federal Bureau of Investigation	Hurricane Police Department
United States Department of Homeland Security	West Virginia Board of Risk and Insurance Management

VII. Endnotes

¹ [United States Department of Homeland Security. *Public Awareness Bulletin: Mitigating the Threat of School Violence*](#)

² [United States Government Accountability Office. *Report to Congressional Requesters, K-12 Education, Characteristics of School Shootings*](#)

³ [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Protective Factors in Schools*](#)

⁴ [National Institute of Justice. *Public Mass Shootings: Database Amasses Details of a Half Century of U.S. Mass Shootings with Firearms, Generating Psychosocial Histories.*](#)

⁵ [United States Department of Homeland Security, United States Secret Service. *National Threat Assessment Center, July 2018*](#)

⁶ [Center for Homeland Defense and Security. *Preventing Assassination: Secret Service Exceptional Case Study Project*](#)

⁷ [West Virginia Department of Homeland Security Justice & Community Services. *Prevention Resource Officer Program \(PRO\)*](#)

⁸ [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. *De-Escalation Series for Critical Infrastructure Owners and Operators*](#)

⁹ [U.S. Department of Homeland Security. *Active Shooter How to Respond.*](#)

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¹¹ [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\) *Disaster Technical Assistance Center Supplemental Research Bulletin, Mass Violence and Behavioral Health, September 2017*](#)

¹² [American Psychological Association. *What Happens to the Survivors*](#)