

National Center for School Safety

Initial Survey of School Threat Assessment Experts¹

Dewey Cornell & Jennifer Maeng
School of Education and Human Development, University of Virginia
December 9, 2020

Executive Summary

We report survey results for 175 experts in K-12 school threat assessment asked to identify the top priorities for the field. From a curated list of topics, the experts identified the quality and quantity of school team training as the top priority in the field. The second priority was delineation of the threat assessment process, including how referrals are obtained and how comprehensive the assessment should be. The third priority was determination of team composition and meetings, followed by records and information sharing; protection of student rights, fairness, and equity; and how teams should handle threats of self-harm. The next priorities were the role of law enforcement; work on cases involving special education; sustainability of the threat assessment program; and how threat assessment affects school disciplinary decisions.

Recruitment of Experts

Threat assessment is a relatively young and multidisciplinary field with no established standards for expert status. Rather than attempt to establish *a priori* criteria for expertise in a nascent field, we decided to make membership inclusive and open to all individuals who identified themselves as experts in school threat assessment. We measured the qualifications of these experts with background questions in our initial survey.

Experts were recruited primarily by emails sent to persons identified as school threat assessment trainers, authors of publications on school threat assessment, heads of professional and government organizations concerned with threat assessment (such as the National Threat Assessment Center), as well as persons with administrative responsibility for school threat assessment in all 50 state governments and the 25 largest school districts in the United States. Recruitment requests were posted on the websites of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals and the National Center for School Safety.

Altogether, we invited more than 680 experts in school (K-12) threat assessment via email, personal referral, and website recruitment postings to participate in our cadre of experts. Of those invited, 219 experts indicated their willingness to serve in our cadre of experts. The first survey was completed between May 11 and July 1, 2020 by 175 experts for a participation rate of 80%. This survey had two purposes: (1) assess the background and qualifications of the experts; and (2) identify priorities for K-12 threat assessment.

The experts reported backgrounds in education (52%), psychology (29%) or criminal justice/law enforcement (20%). Approximately two-thirds (62%) reported a master's degree and one-third (32%) a doctoral degree. Approximately half (49%) currently work in a K-12 school setting, with others working in government, higher education, independent consulting, and law enforcement

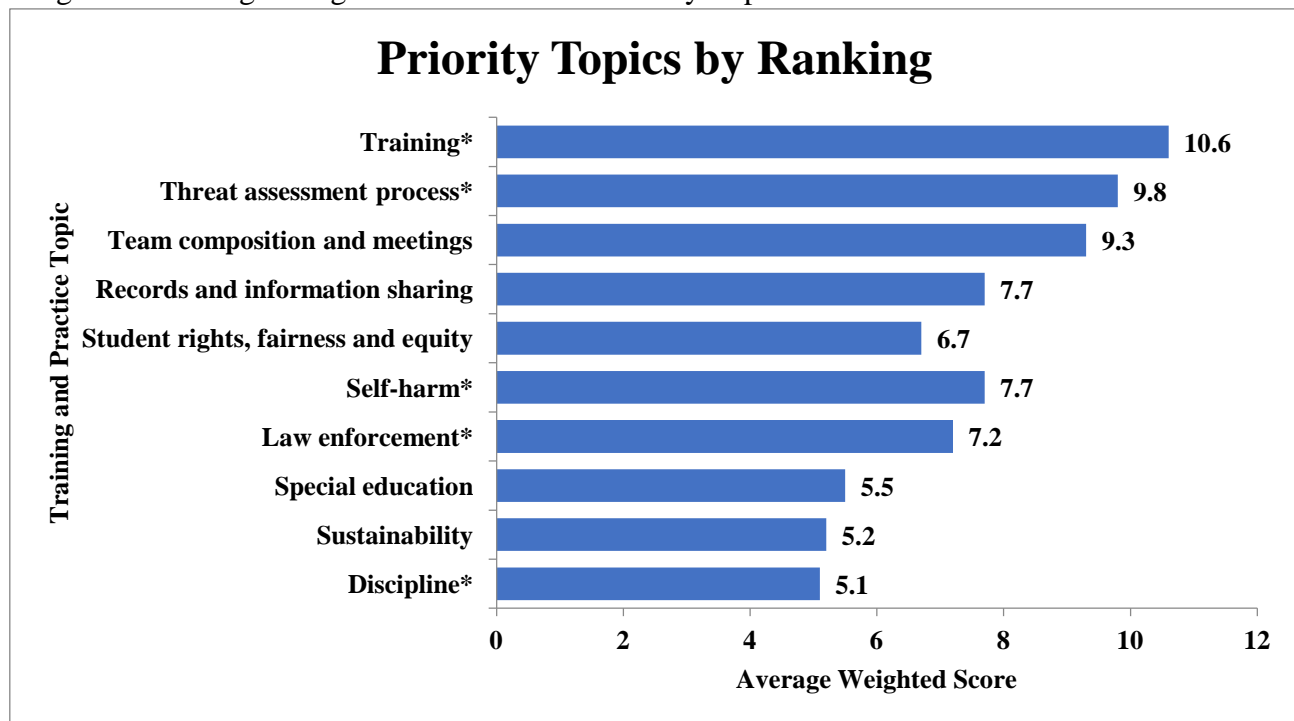
settings. Most (65%) experts had personally conducted more than 10 threat assessments. Although some experts reported being relatively new to the field of threat assessment (42% < 5 years), they hold positions of responsibility and engagement in threat assessment, making their input desirable. Experts were 50% female and predominantly White (78%), Hispanic (11%), and Black (6%).

Priorities for school threat assessment. The survey presented ten priority topics for ratings. As noted above, experts identified training and threat assessment process as their two top priorities for the field (Figure 1), followed by team composition and meetings; records and information sharing; student rights and fairness; self-harm; role of law enforcement; special education; sustainability; and school discipline.

The ten priority topics were also included on a separate survey of 113 Bureau of Justice Assistance STOP grant recipients conducted by the National Center for School Safety. The results for grant recipients were strikingly similar to those for the experts, with training and threat assessment process again identified as the highest priorities.

Overall, these results provide us with a basis for focusing our work on the development of training standards and best practices for the threat assessment process. Future surveys will concentrate on those areas.

Figure 1. Average Weighted Score for each Priority Topic.



School Threat Assessment Experts Survey 1 Results

The first School Threat Assessment Expert Survey was designed to characterize the background of the experts and to collect their views on priorities in the field.² This brief report summarizes survey results for these 175 participants who completed the survey between May 11, 2020 and July 1, 2020. The results are reported in summary form so as not to identify individual respondents.

RECRUITMENT OF EXPERTS

Experts were recruited primarily by emails to persons identified as school threat assessment trainers (n = 272), authors of publications on school threat assessment (n = 150), heads of professional and government organizations concerned with threat assessment (n = 30, e.g., National Threat Assessment Center), as well as persons with administrative responsibility for school threat assessment in all 50 state governments and the 25 largest school districts in the United States (n = 185). Recruitment requests were posted on the websites of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals and the National Center for School Safety. Respondents were also encouraged to recommend additional participants.³

Altogether, we invited more than 680 experts in school (K-12) threat assessment via email, personal referral, and website recruitment postings to participate in our cadre of experts. Of those invited, 219 experts indicated their willingness to serve in our cadre of experts. The first survey was completed between May 11 and July 1, 2020 by 175 experts for a participation rate of 80%. This survey had two purposes: (1) assess the background and qualifications of the experts; and (2) identify priorities for K-12 threat assessment.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EXPERTS

1. How were you invited to join the expert group?	N	%
Email solicitation (total)	134	76.6
• Persons identified as school threat assessment trainers	61	45.5
• Requests sent to 50 state Departments of Education	29	21.6
• Authors of publications on school threat assessment	26	19.4
• Requests sent to professional and government organizations concerned with TA ^a	8	6.0
• Requests sent to the 25 largest school districts in the U.S.	7	5.2
• Other	3	2.2
Website Posting (total)	15	8.6
• Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) website	13	86.6
• National Center for School Safety (NCSS) website	2	13.3
Colleague referred me	26	14.9
Note. ^a SIGMA Threat Management Associates, Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center, Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP), National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC).		

2. What degrees do you hold? ^a	N	%
M.A./M.S./M.Ed.	86	49.1
Ph.D.	40	22.9
Other-B.A./B.S. ^b	14	8.0
M.S.W.	13	7.4
Other-Other Masters ^b	9	5.1
Other-Ed.S. ^b	8	4.6
Ed.D.	7	4.0
Other-Psy.D./Psy.S. ^b	6	3.4
J.D.	5	2.9
M.D.	3	1.7
Other: Left blank (4), Licensed Professional Counselor (1), Criminal Justice Administration (1), Certified Threat Manager (1), Superintendent Eligibility Certification (1), N/A (1)	9	5.1
Note. ^a Participants could report more than one degree. Participants were not asked to report only their highest degree, but many may have interpreted the question this way since everyone with a Ph.D. likely has a Bachelor's degree as well. ^b These categories were derived from classification of "other" responses.		

3. Occupational field (select all that apply) ^a	N	%
Education	91	52.0
Psychology	51	29.1
Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement	35	20.0
Counseling	32	18.3
Social Work	19	10.9
Other-Safety/Security/Emergency Management ^b	10	5.7
Other-Government ^b	5	2.9
Law	4	2.3
Medicine	3	1.7
Human Resources	2	1.1
Sociology	2	1.1
Other: Left blank (3), Threat Assessment Manager (1), Family Nurse Practitioner (1)	5	2.9
Note. ^a Some participants selected more than one occupational field. ^b These categories were derived from classification of "other" responses.		

4. In the course of your career, approximately how many threat assessment cases have you conducted (individually or as part of a team)? For estimation purposes, enter a single number.	N	%
None (0)	27	15.4
Few (1-10)	35	20.0
Some (11-100)	74	42.3
Many (>100)	39	22.3

5. How many years have you worked or been engaged in the threat assessment field?	N	%
Limited experience (0-5 years)	73	41.7
Experienced (6-15 years)	51	29.1
Highly experienced (16+ years)	51	29.1

6. Which of the following applies to you? (Choose all that apply)	N	%
Conducted workshops or training on threat assessment	134	76.6
Served as threat assessment team leader or supervisor (or member of TA team)	113	64.6
Developed a TA model or procedure	83	47.4
Conducted research on TA	59	33.7
Published article(s) or chapter(s) on TA or related topic	36	20.6
Testified on TA at legislative proceeding	20	11.4
Testified on TA at court proceeding	20	11.4
Other TA role: Left blank (3), Develop the Latin America Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (1), Participated in TA training (4)	8	4.6

7. In what setting do you work currently?	N	%
K-12 school	86	49.1
Government agency	43	24.6
College or university	30	17.1
Independent consulting	25	14.3
Law enforcement agency	16	9.1
Other-Safety/Security support center or organization ^a	5	2.9
Other: Left blank (3), Corporate setting (1), Private psychotherapy practice (1), Educational agency (1), Non-profit (1), State hospital, county jail, and Superior Court (1)	8	4.6
Note. ^a These categories were derived from classification of “other” responses.		

8. How many years have you worked in a K-12 school setting over the course of your career?	N	%
No K-12 experience	40	22.9
Limited K-12 experience (1-5 years)	32	18.3
Experienced (6-15 years)	47	26.9
Highly experienced (16+ years)	56	32

9. What is your reported gender?	N	%
Male	87	49.7
Female	88	50.3
Prefer not to answer	0	0
Prefer to self-describe	0	0

10. Which best describes your race/ethnicity? (We recognize that these are flawed albeit conventional categories. Choose all that apply.)	N	%
White	136	77.7
Black or African-American	10	5.7
Asian	3	1.7
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1	.6
Mixed race	5	2.9
Hispanic	20	11.4

Priority Topics for School Threat Assessment Training and Practice

Survey participants were asked to rate the priority of 10 topics important to training and practice in school threat assessment. The topics were described in the table below. (See also Figure 1 above.)

PRIORITY TOPICS BY RATING

12. Indicate whether you regard each topic below as high, medium or low priority for the field of school threat assessment. If you have no "Other Topic," mark this as a low priority. ^a	Frequency	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Training. How much training do school-based teams need to begin conducting threat assessments & what topics should be covered in training? How should we evaluate training quality? Should participants demonstrate some kind of proficiency after training? What ongoing training is needed after initial training to sustain the team & promote continued professional development & high quality work?	N	155	17	1
	%	89.6%	9.8%	.6%
Team Composition and Meetings. Who should be on a school threat assessment team? Should teams be based within a school or outside the school, & should one team cover more than one school? Who should lead the team? How frequently should teams meet? Who should attend meetings?	N	101	62	10
	%	58.4%	35.8%	5.8%
Threat Assessment Process. How should teams obtain referrals? How should they determine whether a referral needs an assessment & how comprehensive the assessment should be? How should teams deal with threats by non-students?	N	137	32	4
	%	79.2%	18.5%	2.3%
Records and Information Sharing. What should be recorded in a threat assessment, where should records be stored, & who should have access? When & how should information be shared with persons outside the threat assessment team? How should information be obtained & shared with agencies outside the school?	N	120	48	5
	%	69.4%	27.7%	2.9%
Self-harm. How should threat assessment teams handle threats of suicide & self-harm? Since secondary schools tend to have more students identified as threatening to harm self than others, & often have separate procedures for responding to students who are suicidal or have engaged in self-injurious behaviors such as cutting, what role should the threat assessment team play?	N	104	50	19
	%	60.1%	28.9%	11.0%
Law Enforcement. What are the roles of law enforcement on threat assessment teams? When should law enforcement be involved? What access should they have to threat assessment information? What information should they provide to threat assessment teams?	N	91	73	9
	%	52.6%	42.2%	5.2%

Student Rights, Fairness, and Equity. How should student rights be protected in the threat assessment process? Do students (and/or parents) have a right to decline participation in a threat assessment, to have access to threat assessment records & findings, & to challenge threat assessment findings or decisions? How do schools assure fairness & equity of the threat assessment process & consequences for students? What safeguards are in place to deal with potential for disproportionate adverse outcomes for students across groups defined by gender, race, ethnicity, or special education status?	N	108	56	9
	%	62.4%	32.4%	5.2%
Special Education. How should the threat assessment process differ when a student is receiving special education services? How should teams proceed when a student appears to need special education services? In other words, how do threat assessment teams coordinate their actions with the special education process and the procedures guiding a student's Individualized Education Program?	N	103	61	9
	%	59.5%	35.3%	5.2%
Discipline. How does the threat assessment process affect disciplinary decisions? Who makes disciplinary decisions in threat assessment cases?	N	75	79	19
	%	43.4%	45.7%	11.0%
Sustainability. What systems arrangements are needed so that schools can implement & sustain high-quality threat assessment programs? How can they be designed to thrive in the education community? How can they be funded?	N	123	43	7
	%	71.1%	24.9%	4.0%
Note. ^a N = 173; 2 participants did not respond to this question.				

After rating each topic as high, medium, or low in priority, participants were asked to arrange the topics in order of priority. This provided an alternative way to measure their priority. Each topic was given a priority score based on the rankings it received, with a ranking of 1 weighted as score of 12 points, a ranking of 2 weighted as 11 points, etc. The total score for each topic was sum of the weighted ranks. The virtue of this process (in comparison to the percent endorsing the topic as a high priority) is to identify middle range topics more accurately. The Pearson correlation between the two measures was $r = .77$ ($p = .009$).

PRIORITY TOPICS BY SCORE

13. Rearrange the list of topics so that the highest priority is ranked 1.

		Training	Team composit- ion and meetings	Threat assess- ment process	Records and informat- ion sharing	Self- harm	Law enforce- ment	Student rights, fairness and equity	Special education	Discipline	Sustain- ability
Rank ^a	Score	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
1	12	112 (64.7)	9 (5.2)	31 (17.9)	2 (1.2)	5 (2.9)	0 (0)	10 (5.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1.2)
2	11	30 (17.3)	44 (25.4)	62 (35.8)	7 (4)	6 (3.5)	4 (2.3)	12 (6.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (4)
3	10	11 (6.4)	42 (24.3)	48 (27.7)	13 (7.5)	13 (7.5)	11 (6.4)	12 (6.9)	5 (2.9)	5 (2.9)	9 (5.2)
4	9	6 (3.5)	20 (11.6)	14 (8.1)	37 (21.4)	23 (13.3)	11 (6.4)	19 (11)	19 (11)	4 (2.3)	13 (7.5)
5	8	2 (1.2)	18 (10.4)	10 (5.8)	29 (16.8)	24 (13.9)	21 (12.1)	20 (11.6)	18 (10.4)	7 (4)	17 (9.8)
6	7	5 (2.9)	9 (5.2)	4 (2.3)	28 (16.2)	28 (16.2)	31 (17.9)	15 (8.7)	14 (8.1)	16 (9.2)	18 (10.4)
7	6	2 (1.2)	9 (5.2)	2 (1.2)	18 (10.4)	25 (14.5)	33 (19.1)	32 (18.5)	21 (12.1)	17 (9.8)	7 (4)
8	5	1 (0.6)	10 (5.8)	0 (0)	20 (11.6)	20 (11.6)	23 (13.3)	22 (12.7)	43 (24.9)	15 (8.7)	15 (8.7)
9	4	2 (1.2)	4 (2.3)	1 (.6)	10 (5.8)	7 (4)	28 (16.2)	22 (12.7)	34 (19.7)	46 (26.6)	15 (8.7)
10	3	2 (1.2)	8 (4.6)	0 (0)	8 (4.6)	17 (9.8)	8 (4.6)	8 (4.6)	15 (8.7)	51 (29.5)	53 (30.6)
11	2	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (.6)	1 (0.6)	1 (0.6)	2 (1.2)	1 (0.6)	3 (1.7)	10 (5.8)	13 (7.5)
12	1	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (2.3)	1 (0.6)	0 (0)	1 (0.6)	2 (1.2)	4 (2.3)
	Total Score	1920	1543	1786	1266	1186	1092	1224	992	790	936
	M (SD)	11.09 (1.79)	8.91 (2.38)	10.32 (1.50)	7.31 (2.12)	6.85 (2.48)	6.31 (2.07)	7.07 (2.54)	5.73 (2.03)	4.56 (1.97)	5.41 (2.84)

Note. ^a N = 173; 2 participants did not respond to this question. Ranks were assigned by survey participants. Ranks were converted to scores and then the total scores for each priority were calculated as shown in the table. A ranking of 1 earns 12 points and a ranking of 2 earns 11 points. For example, the topic of Training was ranked 1 by 112 of the participants and there given 12 x 112 = 1,344 points. Training was ranked 2 by 30 of the participants and given 11 x 30 = 330 points, etc. The total points for Training was 1,920, an average of 11.09 per participant.

Priorities as a Function of Expert Characteristics

Regressions were run for each of the threat assessment priorities using the following predictors: white/non-white, degree type, gender, occupation is law enforcement, occupation is education, occupation is mental health, years working in a K-12 setting, years experience in threat assessment and number of threat assessments completed to assess whether priority scores differed as a function of expert characteristics. There were no statistically significant relationships between any of these predictors and any of the threat assessment priorities.

Other Priorities

Participants were able to propose additional priority topics. Of the 86 proposed additional topics, most (52) could be recoded into one of the existing topics.⁴ For example, “perceived need for yearly training” and “refresher training” as well as “methods to evaluate trainers” were all recoded into the Training topic. Responses including “types of data collected” and “transfer of information between schools” were recoded into the Records topic.

The other proposed additional topics were coded into three groups:

- (1) 17 participants (9.8%) suggested topics that were classified as *follow-up interventions* as a high priority, including “development of effective monitoring and intervention strategies”, “social-emotional supports for students”, and “reintegration strategies”.
- (2) 10 (5.8%) nominated *school climate interventions* as a high priority. Responses included, “prevention efforts”, “multi-tiered systems of support”, and “campaigns such as ‘See Something, Say Something’.”
- (3) 4 (2.3%) identified *administrative/district support and oversight* as a high priority, including “district monitoring” and “oversight”.

NCSS Grantee Needs Assessment Survey⁵

Threat Assessment Topic Priorities

PRIORITY TOPICS BY SCORE

Participants were asked to rearrange the list of topics so that the highest priority was ranked 1. Each topic was given a priority score based on the rankings it received, with a ranking of 1 weighted as 12 points, a ranking of 2 weighted as 11 points, etc. The total score for each topic was sum of the weighted scores. This process identifies middle range topics more accurately.

		Training	Team composition and meetings	Threat assessment process	Records and information sharing	Self-harm	Law enforcement	Student rights, fairness and equity	Special education	Discipline	Sustainability
Rank ^a	Score	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
1	12	57 (50.4)	17 (15)	15 (13.3)	3 (2.7)	3 (2.7)	4 (3.5)	4 (3.5)	1 (.9)	1 (.9)	7 (6.2)
2	11	21 (18.6)	28 (24.8)	27 (23.9)	8 (7.1)	10 (8.8)	7 (6.2)	4 (3.5)	1 (.9)	3 (2.7)	4 (3.5)
3	10	15 (13.3)	18 (15.9)	36 (31.9)	12 (10.6)	12 (10.6)	5 (4.4)	6 (5.3)	2 (1.8)	1 (.9)	6 (5.3)
4	9	2 (1.8)	17 (15)	16 (14.2)	20 (17.7)	14 (12.4)	16 (14.2)	7 (6.2)	6 (5.3)	9 (8)	6 (5.3)
5	8	6 (5.3)	11 (9.7)	9 (8)	22 (19.5)	19 (16.8)	20 (17.7)	14 (12.4)	4 (3.5)	4 (3.5)	4 (3.5)
6	7	5 (4.4)	5 (4.4)	3 (2.7)	17 (15)	23 (20.4)	15 (13.3)	18 (15.9)	16 (14.2)	6 (5.3)	3 (2.7)
7	6	3 (2.7)	4 (3.5)	1 (.9)	12 (10.6)	14 (12.4)	18 (15.9)	27 (23.9)	10 (8.8)	15 (13.3)	9 (8)
8	5	2 (1.8)	6 (5.3)	2 (1.8)	6 (5.3)	9 (8)	14 (12.4)	20 (17.7)	38 (33.6)	7 (6.2)	8 (7.1)
9	4	0 (0)	5 (4.4)	2 (1.8)	7 (6.2)	4 (3.5)	10 (8.8)	6 (5.3)	24 (21.2)	45 (39.8)	8 (7.1)
10	3	2 (1.8)	2 (1.8)	2 (1.8)	6 (5.3)	5 (4.4)	3 (2.7)	7 (6.2)	10 (8.8)	19 (16.8)	56 (49.6)
11	2	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (.9)	0 (0)	1 (.9)	2 (1.8)	2 (1.8)
12	1	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (.9)	0 (0)
	Total Score	1200	1048	1104	867	865	813	760	619	577	593
	M (SD)	10.61 (2.05)	9.27 (2.38)	9.76 (1.88)	7.67 (2.22)	7.65 (2.18)	7.19 (2.26)	6.72 (2.16)	5.47 (1.86)	5.10 (2.22)	5.24 (3.03)

Note. ^a N = 113. Ranks were assigned by survey participants. Ranks were converted to scores and then the total scores for each priority were calculated as shown in the table. A ranking of 1 earns 12 points and a ranking of 2 earns 11 points. For example, the topic of Training was ranked 1 by 57 participants and there given 12 x 57 = 684 points. Training was ranked 2 by 21 participants and given 11 x 21 = 231 points, etc. The total points for Training was 1200, an average of 10.61 per participant.

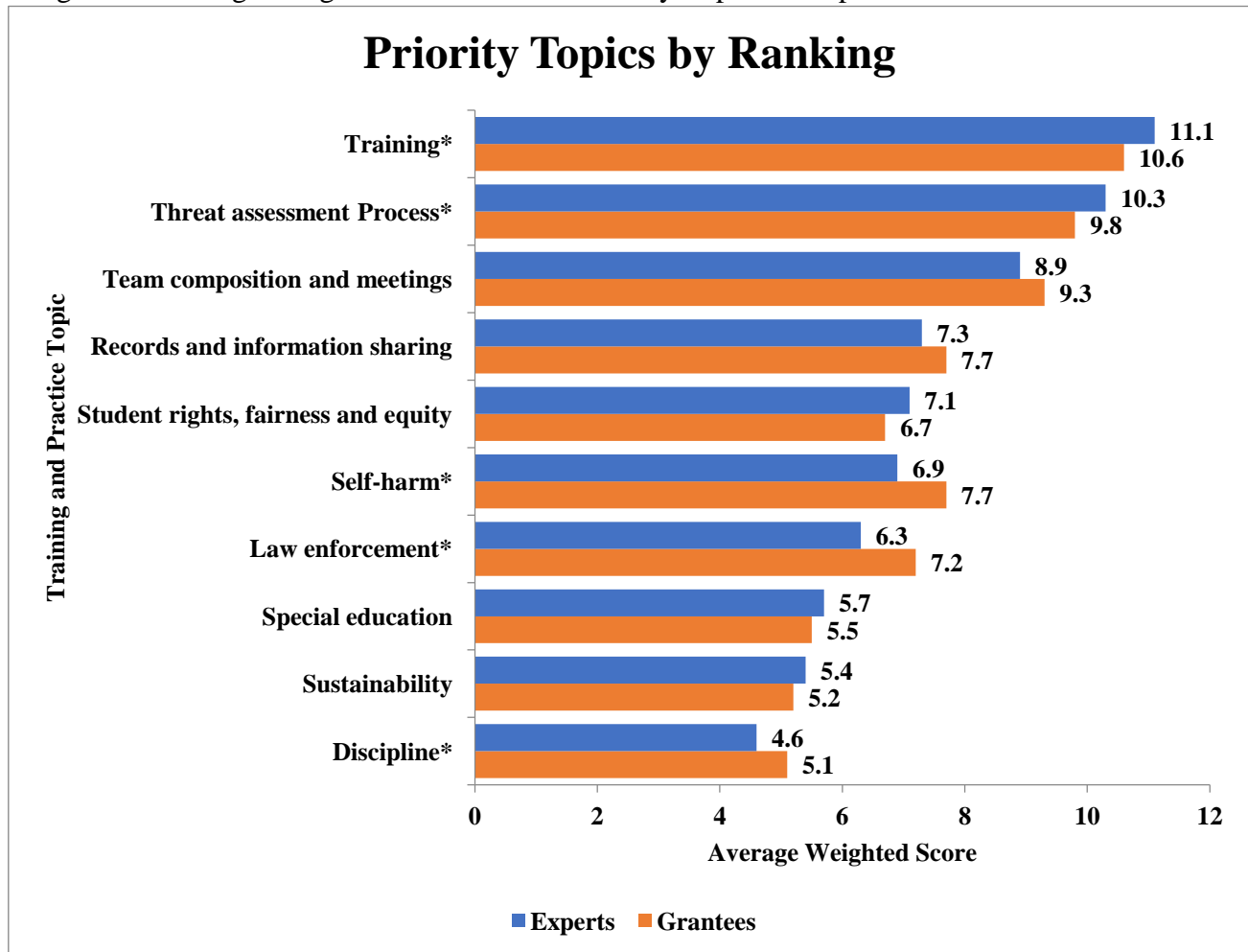
Participants were able to propose additional priority topics. Of the four highly ranked proposed topics, three were recoded into an existing topic.⁶ “Continuum for identifying and referring students at risk” was recoded into the Threat Assessment Process topic, “developing and implementing a threat assessment team” was recoded into the Team Composition and Threat Assessment Process topics and “safety communication” was recoded into the Records and Information Sharing topic. One additional priority topic, “target hardening,” was not recoded.

There was a significant positive correlation between grantees using TA and grantees not using TA ($r = .975, p < .01$) and between the expert panel and grantee rankings ($r = .970, p < .001$) of the most important topics in threat assessment. Although there was overall consistency between experts and grantees, there were some differences in the relative importance of some topics. The t-test results indicate that TA experts emphasized training and TA process as priorities more consistently than did grantees, whereas grantees prioritized self-harm, law enforcement, and discipline higher than TA experts. The grantee findings suggest that some attention to these topics is merited, even if the TA experts did not rank them as among the highest priorities.

	Experts N = 173	All Grantees N = 113		Grantees using TA n = 63	Grantees not using TA n = 50	
Priority Topic	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Welch's t ^a	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Welch's t ^b
Training	11.09 (1.79)	10.61 (2.05)	4.09*	10.88 (1.82)	10.28 (2.28)	2.36
Team composition and meetings	8.91 (2.38)	9.27 (2.38)	1.52	9.66 (2.12)	8.78 (2.6)	3.79
Threat assessment process	10.32 (1.5)	9.76 (1.88)	6.91**	9.74 (1.76)	9.8 (2.03)	.02
Record and information sharing	7.31 (2.12)	7.67 (2.22)	1.79	7.71 (2.09)	7.62 (2.4)	.05
Self-harm	6.85 (2.48)	7.65 (2.18)	8.20**	7.41 (2.2)	7.96 (2.14)	1.77
Law enforcement	6.31 (2.07)	7.19 (2.26)	11.11***	6.92 (2.14)	7.54 (2.38)	2.06
Student rights, fairness, and equity	7.07 (2.54)	6.72 (2.16)	1.55	6.69 (2.09)	6.76 (2.26)	.02
Special education	5.73 (2.03)	5.47 (1.86)	1.20	5.52 (1.94)	5.42 (1.76)	.09
Discipline	4.56 (1.97)	5.10 (2.22)	4.38*	5.06 (2.22)	5.16 (2.24)	.05
Sustainability	5.41 (2.84)	5.24 (3.03)	.21	4.9 (2.97)	5.68 (3.09)	1.81

Note. ^a Based on Welch's t-test (to account for different sample sizes). * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.
^b Based on Welch's t-test (to account for different sample sizes), there was no significant difference in mean scores between grantees using TA and grantees not using TA, all p's > .05.

Figure 2. Average Weighted Score for each Priority Topic for Experts and for Grantees.



*Indicates a statistically significant difference in average weighted scores between all grantees (N=113) and experts (N=173).

¹ We thank Desha Armengol for her contributions to the survey process and preparation of this report.

² This project was supported by Cooperative Agreement No. 2019-YSBX-K001 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

³ Experts may have been contacted through more than one method.

⁴ When a write-in topic was rated as a high priority and recoded into an existing topic, the existing topic rating was rated a high priority.

⁵ This survey was administered to Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence grantees by the University of Michigan School of Public Health in conjunction with the National Center for School Safety, funded through Cooperative Agreement No. 2019-YS- K001 from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. This report analyzes data from the threat assessment portion of the grantee needs assessment survey. Complete survey results can be obtained from the University of Michigan School of Public Health.

⁶ When a write-in topic was rated as a high priority and recoded into an existing topic, the existing topic ratings were adjusted to reflect this.

Appendix 1

National Center for School Safety Threat Assessment Expert Survey 1

Purpose of Survey 1: The purpose of these questions is to allow us to characterize the overall expertise of our experts and to collect their views on priorities in the field. There are 13 questions on this survey. All results will be reported in summary form and in no case will we share information that would identify you.

1. How were you invited to join the expert group?

- ☐ Email solicitation
- ☐ Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) website
- ☐ National Center for School Safety (NCSS) website
- ☐ Colleague referred me
- ☐ Other _____

2. What degrees do you hold? (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Ed.D.
- ☐ J.D.
- ☐ M.A./M.S./M.Ed.
- ☐ M.D.
- ☐ M.S.W.
- ☐ Ph.D.
- ☐ Psy.D.
- ☐ Other _____

3. Occupational Field (Select all that apply.)

- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Criminal Justice/Law Enforcement
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Human Resources
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Psychology
- ☐ Social work
- ☐ Sociology
- ☐ Other _____

4. In the course of your career, approximately how many threat assessment cases have you conducted (individually or as part of a team)? For estimation purposes, enter a single number.

5. How many years have you worked or been engaged in the threat assessment field?

6. Which of the following applies to you? (Choose all that apply.)

- ☐ Conducted workshops or training on threat assessment
- ☐ Conducted research on threat assessment
- ☐ Developed a threat assessment model or procedure
- ☐ Published article(s) or chapter(s) on threat assessment
- ☐ Served as threat assessment team leader or supervisor
- ☐ Testified on threat assessment at legislative hearing
- ☐ Testified on threat assessment at court proceeding
- ☐ Other _____

7. In what setting do you work currently? (Choose all that apply.)

- ☐ College or university
☐ Government agency
☐ Independent consulting
☐ K-12 school
☐ Law enforcement agency
☐ Other _____

8. How many years have you worked in a K-12 school setting over the course of your career?

9. These questions will be used to describe the diversity of our participants.

- ☐ Male
☐ Female
☐ Prefer not to answer
☐ Prefer to self-describe _____

10. Are you of Hispanic ethnicity?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

11. Which best describes your race? (We recognize that these are flawed albeit conventional categories. Choose all that apply.)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African-American
☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
☐ White
☐ Other race _____

Priority Topics for School Threat Assessment Training and Practice

We want our cadre of experts to help build consensus on standards for school threat assessment training and practice. Toward that end, we want to identify high priority topics for attention. We have listed some possible topics for your consideration and welcome additional topics that you believe should have a high priority.

12. Indicate whether you regard each topic below as a high, medium, or low priority for the field of school threat assessment. If you have no "Other Topic", mark this as low priority.

Topic	Priority		
	Low	Med	High
Training. How much training do school-based teams need in order to begin conducting threat assessments and what topics should be covered in training? How should we evaluate the quality of training? Should participants demonstrate some kind of proficiency after training? What kind of ongoing training is needed after initial training to sustain the team and promote continued professional development and high quality work?			
Team Composition and Meetings. Who should be on the school threat assessment team? Should teams be based within a school or outside the school, and should one team cover more than one school? Who should lead the team? How frequently should teams meet? Who should attend meetings?			
Threat Assessment Process. How should teams obtain referrals? How should they determine whether a referral needs an assessment and how comprehensive the assessment should be? How should teams deal with threats by non-students?			
Records and Information Sharing. What should be recorded in a threat assessment, where should records be stored, and who should have access? When and how should information be shared with persons outside the threat assessment team? How should information be obtained and shared with agencies outside of the school?			

Self-harm. How should threat assessment teams handle threats of suicide and self-harm? Since secondary schools tend to have more students identified as threatening to harm self than others, and often have separate procedures for responding to students who are suicidal or have engaged in self-injurious behaviors such as cutting, what role should the threat assessment team play?			
Law Enforcement. What are the roles of law enforcement on threat assessment teams? When should law enforcement be involved? What access should they have to threat assessment information? What information should they provide to threat assessment teams?			
Student Rights, Fairness, and Equity. How should student rights be protected in the threat assessment process? For example, do students (and/or parents) have a right to decline participation in a threat assessment, to have access to threat assessment records and findings, and to challenge threat assessment findings or decisions? How do schools assure the fairness and equity of the threat assessment process and consequences for students? What safeguards are in place to deal with the potential for disproportionate adverse outcomes for students across groups defined by gender, race, ethnicity, or special education status?			
Special Education. How should the threat assessment process differ when a student is receiving special education services? How should teams proceed when a student appears to need special education services? In other words, how do threat assessment teams coordinate their actions with the special education process and the procedures guiding a student's Individualized Education Program?			
Discipline. How does the threat assessment process affect disciplinary decisions? Who makes disciplinary decisions in threat assessment cases?			
Sustainability. What systems arrangements are needed so that schools can implement and sustain high-quality threat assessment programs? How can they be designed to thrive in the education community? How can they be funded?			
Other Topic. Please define an additional topic that you believe should be a priority. Do not include topics that are elaborations on topics already listed.			
Other Topic. Please define an additional topic that you believe should be a priority. Do not include topics that are elaborations on topics already listed.			

13. Rearrange the list of topics so that the highest priority is listed at the top.

- _____ Training
- _____ Team composition and meetings
- _____ Threat assessment process
- _____ Records and information sharing
- _____ Self-harm
- _____ Law enforcement
- _____ Student rights, fairness, and equity
- _____ Special education
- _____ Discipline
- _____ Sustainability
- _____ Other
- _____ Other