

# SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT IN FLORIDA:

## TECHNICAL REPORT OF 2020-2021 CASE DATA

### Executive Summary

This is a preliminary report of case data from an ongoing project, *Statewide Implementation of School Threat Assessment in Florida* (NIJ 2020-RF-CX-002). Additional data collection and analyses are under way.

#### Prevalence of Threat Assessment Cases

- A sample of 21 Florida school districts and 2 lab schools reported case data for 1,102 student threat assessments from the 2020-21 school year across grades pre-K through 12. Most cases (50%) were in grades 5-9.
- Threats were made by students identified as White (59%), Black (25%), Hispanic (10%), and other racial/ethnic groups (6%). Approximately 76% were boys and 44% had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) qualifying them for special education services involving a disability. The sample contained a higher proportion of Black and White students and a lower proportion of Hispanic students than the total enrollment of 579,342 students in these 21 districts and 2 lab schools. Consistent with prior studies in Virginia (e.g., Maeng et al., 2021), the sample had a higher proportion of students with disabilities than the general enrollment.

#### Threat Severity

- School threat assessment teams received 181 referrals (16% of all 1,102 referrals) which they judged not to involve a threat to harm others and were handled in some other manner (e.g., referral for discipline or counseling without a threat assessment needed.)
- Among the 921 cases receiving a threat assessment, the school team resolved 73% (n = 672) as transient (not serious) threats. The Florida rate of 73% transient is similar to the 78% percentage transient found in our previous study of 844 cases in Virginia schools (Burnette et al., 2017).
- Among the 921 cases receiving a threat assessment, the school team classified 19% (n = 176) as serious substantive threats (a threat to hit or fight not involving a weapon) and 8% (n = 73) as very serious substantive threats (a threat to kill, rape, or use a lethal weapon). In the prior Virginia study, there were 17% serious substantive threats and 6% very serious substantive threats (Burnette et al., 2017).
- Many schools did not specifically document whether the threat was carried out in their threat assessment records (we have requested this outcome be added to all records for next year). Consequently, we have data on 621 threats in which the outcome was recorded. In 83% (n = 514) of these cases, there was no known attempt to carry out the threat. There were 69 threats (11%) judged by schools to have been averted when a student attempted to carry it out. There were 38 threats (6%) reported to have been carried out by the student. Only 3 (0.5%) resulted in serious injury. The Florida outcomes are slightly less favorable than the Virginia results of 97% not attempted, 2% averted, and .5% carried out, with no serious injuries.

## Response to Student Threats (n = 1,102)

- Most students receiving a threat assessment were able to return to their original school (89%), with others transferred to an alternative school (7%), placed on homebound instruction (2.4%), or moved to a virtual school setting (4%).
- A guiding principle of threat assessment is that the most effective way to prevent violence is to address the problem or conflict that underlies the threat. In more than 80% of cases, the student received some form of support services. In approximately a third (35%) of cases, the threat was resolved with the student giving an explanation or apology. Students were referred for school-based counseling (44%), conflict resolution/restorative groups (31%), mental health services (26%), hospitalization (.2%), or other services (more than one outcome is possible, numbers do not sum to 100%).
- Schools made limited use of out-of-school suspension (26%), in-school suspension (11%), detention after school (2%), or expulsion (2%).
- Law enforcement is included on the threat assessment team, but law enforcement actions are reserved for the most serious cases. A small percentage of students received a legal action, i.e., were charged with an offense (2%), arrested (.5%), and/or placed in juvenile detention (.5%).

## Comparison of Black, Hispanic, and White Students

- There were no statistically significant differences (Pearson chi-square test) in disciplinary and law enforcement outcomes between Black and White students or between Hispanic and White students, except that Hispanic students were less likely than White students to receive a school transfer. A logistic regression controlling for additional factors found that the best predictors of disciplinary and law enforcement outcomes were student grade and seriousness of the threat.

## Comparison of Students in Special Education and General Education Programs

- There were no statistically significant differences (Pearson chi-square test) in disciplinary and legal outcomes between students with an IEP and students in general education programs.

The results from this preliminary study indicated that threat assessments were carried out in Florida schools with generally positive results. Most threats were readily resolved as transient threats so that teams could concentrate on more serious cases. Most students were able to continue in their school and most received some form of support services. There was limited use of school exclusion and few cases requiring law enforcement action. Approximately 94% of threats did not result in a physical assault. Older students and students who made more serious threats were most likely to receive disciplinary and legal consequences. Race, Hispanic ethnicity, and special education (IEP) status were not associated with disciplinary and legal consequences.

These findings are generally consistent with findings for Virginia public schools after they implemented threat assessment in their public schools (Burnette et al., 2017; Cornell & Maeng, 2020; Cornell et al., 2017; Cornell et al., 2018). Additional data from a larger sample of schools will be collected for 2021-22. A more comprehensive report will be prepared at the conclusion of this project.

## Acknowledgements

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Dewey Cornell discloses that, as the principal developer of the Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG), he has a financial interest in school threat assessment training.

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## Goals and Objectives

In 2020, the University of Virginia was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to examine the implementation of student threat assessment in Florida public schools. This ongoing project examines threat assessment training and implementation, the kinds of threats identified, and whether threats were resolved without violence in Florida public schools. Of special interest is whether threat assessment is conducted without disproportionate negative consequences for students across diverse groups defined by race, ethnicity, and disability status. This mixed methods project has four broad research questions:

1. What are stakeholder reactions to training and implementation of threat assessment in their school?
2. What are the characteristics of threat assessments conducted in Florida public schools?
3. What associations exist with academic, disciplinary, and legal outcomes for students receiving a threat assessment?
4. Are there adverse disparities in student outcomes associated with race, ethnicity, or special education status?

Our previous report addressed research question 1 (Maeng, Cornell, & Warren, 2021). This report is a preliminary analysis concerning research questions 2-4 based on threat assessment case data from the 2020-21 school year. Readers are cautioned that these results are based on a subset of Florida public schools that voluntarily submitted data and may not generalize to all Florida schools. We plan to analyze a larger sample from the 2021-22 school year.

## Methods

### Sample

All school districts in the state were invited by the Florida Department of Education to submit threat case data for the 2020-21 academic year. This was explicitly a voluntary request. Case data could be submitted through an electronic Qualtrics survey, as an emailed data file, or in paper format (Appendix A).

Many districts reported that they did not have sufficient staff or time to submit threat assessment case data on a voluntary basis during a stressful school year. We initially received partial data for 3,013 cases from 26 school districts and 2 lab schools (total enrollment for these schools was 579,342 students). However, several districts submitted incomplete data (e.g., missing one or more of the following: race ( $n = 739$ ), gender ( $n = 51$ ), threat classification ( $n = 214$ ), or school responses ( $n = 1,635$ )). Six cases involved non-students and also were excluded. Districts reported that they submitted incomplete data because demographic information was not recorded or was housed in a different system than threat case data and could not be merged easily. Several districts indicated that they plan to keep more complete records in the future since they now know what will be requested. Multiple districts reported that they will be able to provide data next year.

Therefore, the analytic sample was restricted to 1,102 cases in 21 school districts and 2 lab schools with data on student gender and race, threat classification, and school response.

In instances where schools submitted written descriptions of their actions (e.g., services, disciplinary actions, legal actions), these were reviewed and coded by the research team.

## Results and Interpretation

### RQ 2: What are the characteristics of threat assessments conducted in Florida public schools?

#### Case Demographics

The sample was compared to data from the Florida Department of Education for the general enrollment of the 21 school districts and 2 lab schools. Boys made 76.1% of threats, although they represent 51.4% of the district population. The sample contained a higher proportion of Black and White students and a lower proportion of Hispanic students than the general enrollment. The sample also had a higher proportion of students with disabilities (defined as having an IEP) than the general enrollment. These trends are comparable to results obtained in Virginia schools (Cornell & Maeng, 2020; Cornell et al., 2018), where male students, Black students, and students with disabilities were more likely to be referred for a threat assessment than female students, White students, and students without disabilities, respectively. These trends are observed nationwide in referrals for disciplinary infractions, so a higher rate of referral for threat assessments is not surprising. It may be advantageous for these students to be referred for a threat assessment rather than sent only to the office for disciplinary actions.

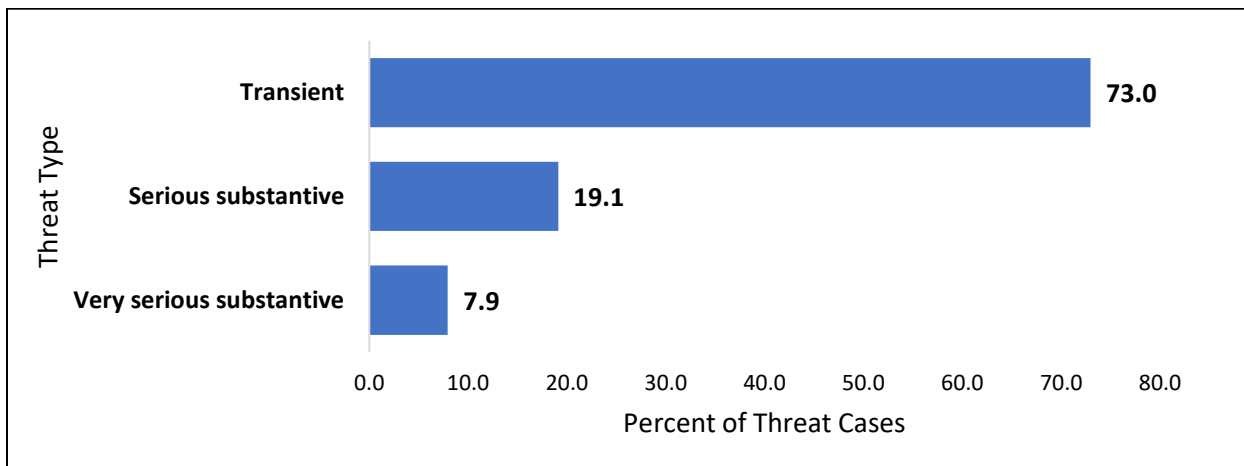
	Sample (1,102 cases)		District enrollment (579,342 students)	
	n	Column %	N	Column %
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	839	76.1%	297,993	51.4%
Female	263	23.9%	281,288	48.6%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
Black	273	24.8%	115,971	20.0%
Hispanic	110	10.0%	175,829	30.3%
White	653	59.3%	239,047	41.3%
<sup>1</sup> Other	66	6.0%	42,930	7.4%
<b>IEP Status</b>				
Has IEP	480	43.6%	78,783	13.6%
Does not have IEP	600	54.4%	-	-
IEP status not reported	22	2.0%		

Note. IEP refers to Individualized Education Program. Other race (sample) = 4% two or more races, 1.8% other race, 0.2% Asian

## Threat Seriousness

Threat Classification by School Team	Description of Threat Classification	N = 1,102
No threat	A potential threat was reported to the threat assessment team and determined not to meet the criteria for a threat	181
Transient threat	The threat is an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be resolved with a clarification and/or apology so that there is no sustained intent to harm someone and no need for further protective action.	672
Serious substantive threat	The threat is to assault, strike, or beat up someone and could not be resolved as a transient threat.	176
Very serious substantive threat	The threat is to kill, rape, or inflict serious injury with a weapon and could not be resolved as a transient threat.	73

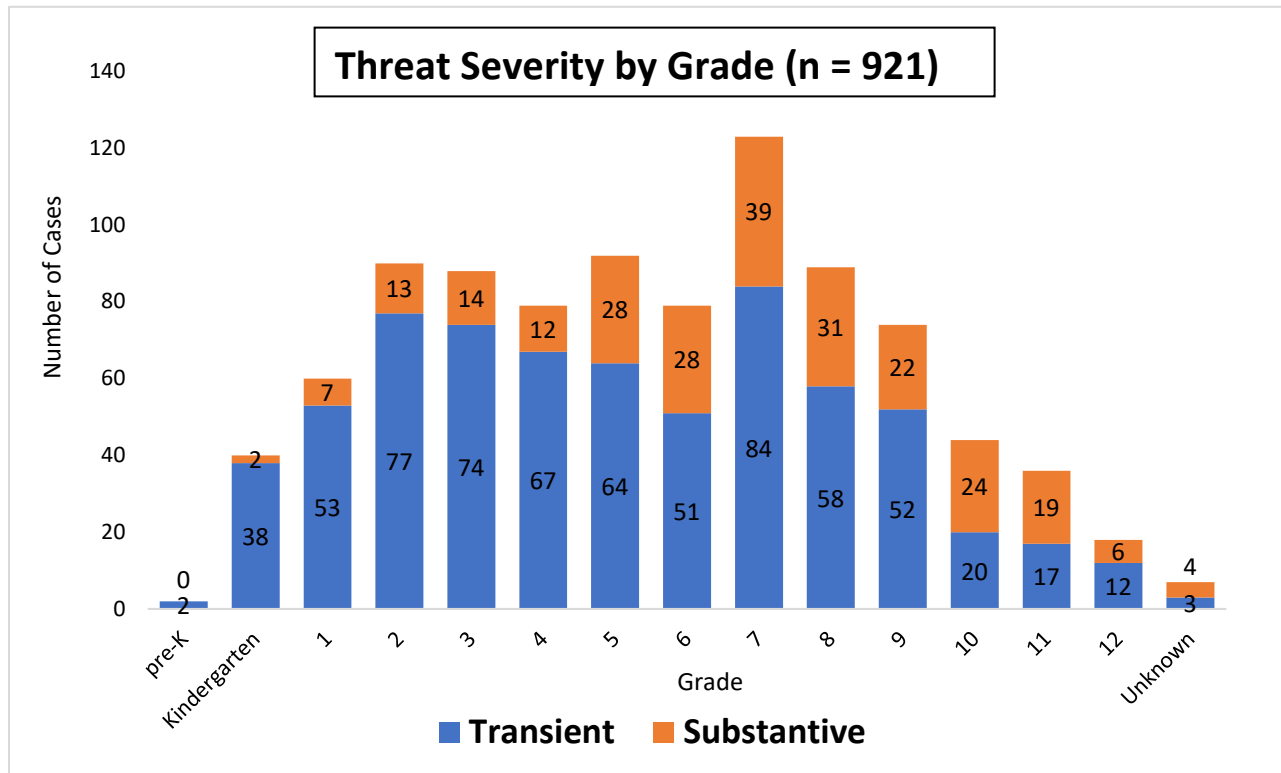
One difference between Virginia and Florida studies is the Virginia schools did not provide records of students referred for a threat assessment who were subsequently judged by the school team not to have made a threat to harm others. One example of these cases would be threats to harm self, but not others. Another example would be a reported rumor of a threat that was not substantiated. In contrast, transient threats are cases in which a threat was identified by the team, but was easily resolved as a threat without serious intent. If a threat cannot be easily resolved, it is treated as a substantive threat.



School teams in Florida classified approximately 73% of threat cases as transient, meaning that the threat was considered not serious and could be easily resolved. This result is comparable to the results for Virginia schools, which found that 78% were classified as transient (Burnette et al., 2017).

## Threat Severity (n = 921)

Students ranged from pre-K to grade 12, although most of the threats were made by students in the middle grades. For each grade level, most of the threats were determined to be transient (not serious, easily resolved). This chart does not include 181 cases identified as no threat by the threat assessment team. The proportion of substantive (serious or very serious) threats was low in the early elementary grades and increased in the higher grades.



## Threat Outcome

Schools recorded whether the threat was carried out for 621 cases. (We have asked that schools include this information in their threat assessment records in the future.) In this subsample, 514 threats were not attempted (82.8%). However, these results do not demonstrate that the threat assessment process prevented the threat from being carried out because there is no control group of threats made without a threat assessment. There is evidence from a survey of high school students that most threats between students are not carried out (Nekvasil & Cornell, 2012).

There were 69 threats (11%) judged by schools to have been averted when a student attempted to carry out a threat and was stopped from doing so. There were 38 threats (6%) judged by schools to have been carried out by the student. More information is needed about these cases. These are threats that potentially represent a failure of the threat assessment process.

	<b>All Schools</b> (621 cases)	
	n	Column %
<b>No attempt</b>	514	82.8%
<b>Averted</b>	69	11.1%
<b>Carried out</b>	38	6.1%

Of threats carried out, the school team had judged that 19 were transient, 11 were serious substantive, and 7 were very serious substantive. Notably, the transient cases should not have been attempted or carried out since the team concluded that they had been resolved as not serious. This represents a false negative rate of 5% (19 errors in 360 transient cases). Of the 19 transient cases, 10 were from the same school district and 5 were from one school and 4 were from another school in that district. Another 4 of these threats were from two different schools in the same district. Students who carried out transient threats were in grades K (n = 2), 2 (n = 4), 4 (n = 1), 6 (n = 1), 7 (n = 4), 8 (n = 5), and 10 (n = 2).

Of these 19 transient threats that were carried out, 4 resulted in no injury and 15 resulted in minor injuries. School responses included: apology (n = 13), conflict/resolution (n = 8), counseling (n = 10). Disciplinary actions included out-of-school suspension (n = 8), in-school suspension (n = 4), and transfer to a different school (n = 5). Five cases resulted in court charges.

Detailed information on these cases is not available. Based on our experiences in a prior study with more detailed case data, one possible scenario is that a student threatened to fight a classmate, and although the team thought the conflict was resolved, a fight later ensued. Another possibility is that the school counted a fight prior to a threat assessment as “carried out” and then deemed the potential for future altercations as low and classified the threat as “transient”. This is an outcome coding error since prior incidents are not considered in determining whether a threat was carried out after a threat assessment. The threat assessment teams in these districts may benefit from more training in classifying threat cases or in implementing conflict resolution interventions.



	<b>No attempt</b>	<b>Averted</b>	<b>Carried out</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Very serious substantive</b>	24 (60%)	9 (22.5%)	7 (17.5%)	40 (100%)
<b>Serious substantive</b>	71 (64%)	29 (26.1%)	11 (9.9%)	111 (100%)
<b>Transient</b>	313 (87%)	28 (7.8%)	19 (5.2%)	360 (100%)
<b>No threat</b>	106 (96%)	3 (2.7%)	1 (0.91%)	110 (100%)

Of the 621 threats for which outcome data were available, three (0.48%) resulted in serious injury. Further information on these injuries was not available. These three threats were made by two 7<sup>th</sup> grade and one 8<sup>th</sup> grade student from three different schools. Two of the students were male and one student was female. One student had an IEP. One student was White, one was Black, and one was Hispanic. Threat assessment teams classified two of these threats as very serious substantive and one was classified as serious substantive. All three students received an out-of-school suspension and one was expelled. Law enforcement was involved in all three cases. One student was arrested, two students were charged, and one student was incarcerated.

**Services Provided**

Threat assessments are intended to produce an intervention designed to reduce the risk of violence by helping the student with the conflict or problem underlying the threat. Therefore, there is no expectation that all schools respond to all threats in the same way, but there are some responses that are commonly used. Future studies will examine what kinds of responses are associated with different kinds of cases, and whether those actions are associated with differential outcomes.

The number of services students received ranged from 0 to 8 with approximately 80% of students receiving at least one kind of service. There were 20% of students receiving no services, 31% receiving 1 service, 17% receiving 2 services, 16% receiving 3 services, 12% receiving 4 services, and 4% receiving 5 or more services.

In almost half of cases, (44%) the student who made the threat received counseling services. In slightly over a third of cases (35%), the student who made the threat apologized for making the threat. The student who made the threat participated in conflict resolution/mediation/restorative circle with the target of their threat in about 30% of cases. In 290 cases (26%) students received mental health services (i.e., MH evaluation, in/out of school, met with a school psychologist or social worker.)

“Other” actions taken by school (4%) included home visits, wellness/welfare checks, contacting Department of Child and Family Services, not allowing the child to have a backpack or requiring a clear backpack, change in lunch seating/silent lunch, teacher monitoring classwork, referral to art therapist, social skills instruction, change in bus seating, loss of privileges, and removal from a sports team.

	<b>All Schools (1,102 cases)</b>	
	n	Column %
Counseling	485	44.0%
Apology	390	35.4%
Conflict resolution	332	30.1%
<sup>1</sup> Mental health services	290	26.3%
Parent meeting/conference	127	11.5%
Increase monitoring of subject student	109	9.9%
Other	47	4.3%
Behavior contract developed or reviewed	46	4.2%
Schedule change of subject student	44	4.0%
Safety plan developed or reviewed	42	3.8%
IEP developed or reviewed	41	3.7%
<sup>2</sup> Contact target	16	1.5%
<sup>2</sup> No contact order	12	1.1%
Restorative circle	8	0.7%
Baker Act	7	0.6%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked. Approximately 80% of students received at least one service. <sup>1</sup> Mental health services include: MH evaluation, MH services in or out of school, met with a school psychologist or social worker. <sup>2</sup> Not included in count of services to student.

## **Discipline Outcomes**

About a third of students (37%) received formal disciplinary consequences, but there was a wide range of actions. Out-of-school suspension was the most common disciplinary response to a student making a threat and occurred in about a quarter of (26%) of the cases. In-school suspension was used in 11% of cases; 1.6% of students were expelled, and detention was used in only 1.5% of cases. A reprimand was reported in only 7% of cases.

	<b>All TA Cases</b> (n = 1,102)	
	n	Column %
Suspension (out of school)	288	26.1%
Suspension (in school)	120	10.9%
Reprimand/Warning	77	7.0%
Expelled	18	1.6%
Detention (including time out/lunch detention)	16	1.5%
Bus Suspension	16	1.5%
Corporal Punishment	3	0.3%
Suspension (unknown whether ISS or OSS)	3	0.3%
None	691	62.7%

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

**Law Enforcement Outcomes**

Law enforcement officers are members of threat assessment teams and available for consultation. They have active involvement in the most serious cases. Only 2.5% (n = 28) cases resulted in legal action (i.e., charge, arrest, placement in juvenile detention). Students were charged in 2.1% of cases, arrested in 6 (0.5%) of cases, and placed in juvenile detention in 6 (0.5%) cases. We recognize that law enforcement may be involved in other actions such as transporting a student for a Baker Act evaluation, and that these actions merit additional study.

	<b>All TA Cases</b> (n = 1,102)	
	n	Column %
Student charged with offense by law enforcement	23	2.1%
Student arrested	6	0.5%
Student incarcerated/placed in juvenile detention	6	0.5%
<sup>1</sup> Other	6	0.5%
None	1069	97%

Note. Column percentages can exceed 100% because more than one category could be checked. <sup>1</sup>In 3 cases, the school indicated a legal action was taken, but did not specify what action. In 3 cases the school indicated “DJJ intervened, probation & mentor”.

## School Placement

Most students (89%) were able to return to their school following a threat assessment, but others (n = 112) were transferred to an alternative school (7%), placed on homebound instruction (2%), or placed in a virtual school setting (4%). Very few students had a change in residence that placed them in a different school (0.4% of students had a parent who withdrew them from school; 0.2% of students were hospitalized resulting in a placement change).

Placement Outcome	All Schools (1,102 cases)	
	n	Column %
No change	990	89.8%
Transferred to alternative school	76	6.9%
Placed on homebound instruction	26	2.4%
Placed in a virtual school setting	39	3.5%
Parent withdrew student from school	4	0.4%
Student was hospitalized	2	0.2%
Other	19	1.9%

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

### RQ 4: Are there adverse disparities in student outcomes associated with race, ethnicity, or special education status?

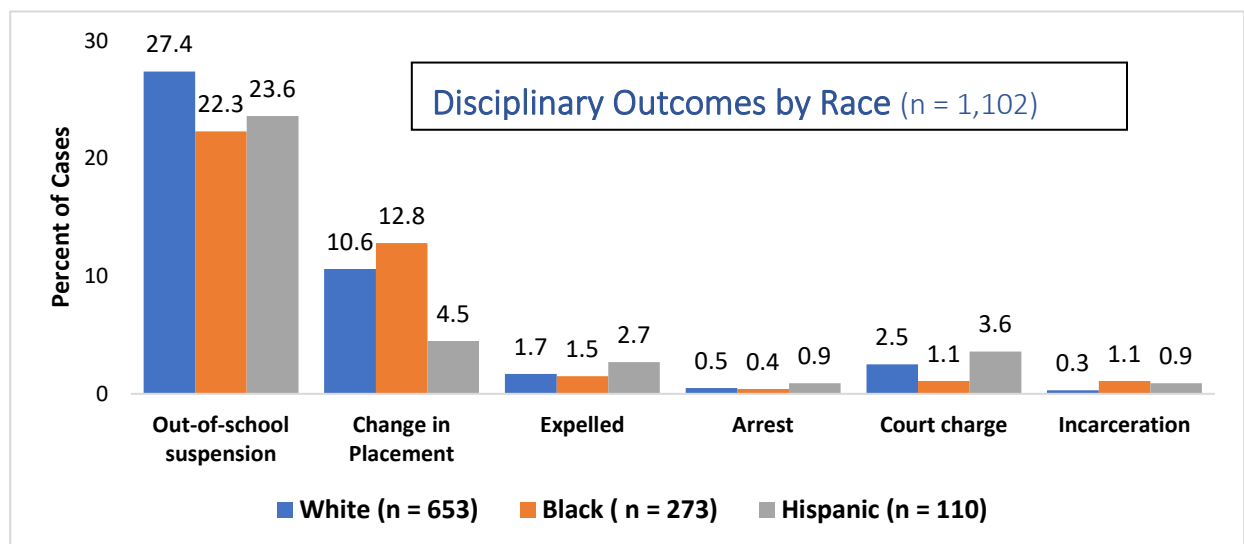
**Race.** To investigate this question, we compared three groups of students: Black, non-Hispanic students (n = 273); Hispanic students, regardless of race (n = 110), and White, non-Hispanic students (n = 653). We conducted two kinds of statistical analyses on these groups. The first set of analyses used Pearson chi-square tests to examine the association between student group and disciplinary and law enforcement outcomes. Of particular interest were comparisons to determine whether Black students received more punitive outcomes (e.g., higher rates of suspension or legal action) than White students and whether Hispanic students received more punitive outcomes than White students.

The second set of analyses used logistic regression to examine the association between student group and disciplinary outcomes, controlling for other potential confounding variables of student grade, gender, threat classification, and special education status. These analyses also accounted for the nesting of students in school districts to control for possible district effects.

There were no statistically significant differences (Pearson chi-square) in disciplinary and law enforcement outcomes by race and ethnicity except that Hispanic students were less likely than White students to receive a placement change. In other words, there was no disparity between Black and White students who received a threat assessment in whether they were suspended, transferred, or expelled from school, or whether they received a law enforcement action. Similarly, there was no disparity between Hispanic and White students in whether they were suspended, expelled from school, or received a law enforcement action. However, White students (11%) were more likely than Hispanic students (5%) to receive a placement change.

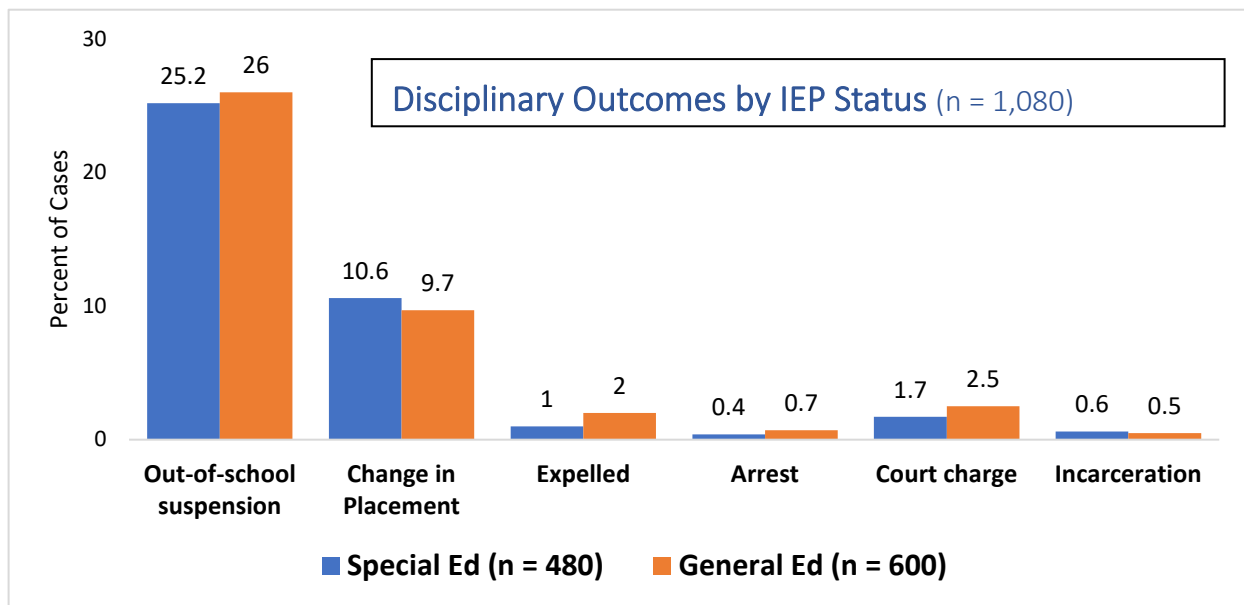
Outcome	Received Consequence?	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	$\chi^2$ Black v White	$\chi^2$ Hispanic v White	$\chi^2$ Other v White
Suspended out of school	Yes	61	26	22	179	2.6	.68	1.0
	No	212	84	44	474			
Transferred out of school	Yes	35	5	3	69	.98	3.9*	2.4
	No	238	105	63	584			
Expelled from school	Yes	4	3	0	11	.06	.14	.29
	No	269	107	66	642			
Arrested	Yes	1	1	1	3	.00	.00	.05
	No	272	109	65	650			
Court charges	Yes	3	4	0	16	1.7	.16	.72
	No	270	106	66	637			
Incarceration	Yes	3	1	0	2	2.3	.87	.00
	No	270	109	66	651			

Note. \* $p < .05$ . Continuity correction reported in comparisons where one or more expected cell count < 5.



**Special Education.** Chi-square analyses showed that there was no disparity between students receiving special education services with an IEP and students receiving general education services in whether they were suspended or expelled, had a change in school placement, or received a legal action. Additional analyses are needed to compare students receiving services through Section 504 plans with students not receiving these services. Students with 504 plans might have diagnoses such as ADHD, anxiety, or depression that do not qualify for an IEP but require accommodations.

Outcome	Received Consequence?	Students with IEP	Students without IEP	$\chi^2$
Suspended out of school	Yes	121	156	.09
	No	359	444	
Transferred out of school	Yes	51	58	.27
	No	429	542	
Expelled from school	Yes	5	12	1.6
	No	475	588	
Arrested	Yes	2	4	.02
	No	478	596	
Court charges	Yes	8	15	.89
	No	472	585	
Incarceration	Yes	3	3	.00
	No	477	597	



In addition to chi-square analyses, we conducted logistic regressions for each disciplinary or legal action using independent variables of student age, gender, seriousness of threat (4-point scale ranging from not a threat to very serious substantive threat), three dichotomous race/ethnicity variables (comparing Black, Hispanic, and Other students to White students), and special education (IEP yes/no). To account for the non-independence of cases within districts, we used the equivalent of group-mean-centered predictors together with cluster robust standard errors (Huang & Li, 2021).

Results of the logistic regression analysis were consistent with the chi-square analyses with some additional findings. Older students and students who made more serious threats were more likely to receive suspension, expulsion, change in placement, and legal action. Male students were more likely to receive an expulsion or legal action than female students. Race was not predictive of most outcomes; however, consistent with the Pearson chi-square results, White students were more likely to have a change in placement than Hispanic students. Also consistent with the Pearson chi-square results, special education status was not associated with disciplinary or law enforcement outcomes.

	Out-of-school suspension		Expulsion		<sup>2</sup> Legal Action		Placement Change	
	O.R.	CR S.E.	O.R.	CR S.E.	O.R.	CR S.E.	O.R.	CR S.E.
Age	1.14*	.04	1.35***	.09	1.22*	.09	1.13*	.05
Has IEP	.78	.16	.56	.49	.64	.70	1.08	.35
Female	.75	.17	.11*	.93	3.4*	.51	.94	.36
Threat Classification	1.92***	.10	3.21***	.35	3.5***	.23	2.26***	.23
<sup>1</sup> Race: Black	.85	.17	1.54	.52	.72	.44	.82	.34
<sup>1</sup> Race: Hispanic	.96	.31	.72	.80	1.99	.50	.35*	.50
<sup>1</sup> Race: Other	1.4	.18	.00***	.75	.75	1.38	.46	.72

Note. O.R. is odds ratio, CR S.E. is cluster robust standard error, \* significant at  $p < .05$ , \*\* significant at  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*significant at  $p < .001$ . <sup>1</sup>White is the reference group. <sup>2</sup>Legal action includes court charge, arrest, incarceration.

In summary, these results found no evidence that students of color or students in special education programs (with IEPs) were treated more punitively than other students in outcomes following a threat assessment. These findings were consistent across two methods of data analysis. The chi-square method considered the simple frequencies of students in each demographic group. The logistic regression analyses controlled for important factors that might have affected the chi-square results, such as the seriousness of the threat and the student’s age and gender. The logistic regression analyses provide further evidence that there were no adverse disparities in the disciplinary and legal outcomes for students as a function of minority race, Hispanic ethnicity, or special education status. It is credible to see that more severe disciplinary and legal outcomes were assigned to students who were older and who made more serious threats.

It is important to recognize that threat assessment teams do not assign disciplinary consequences or take law enforcement actions, but that the results of the threat assessment might inform decisions made by the appropriate authorities, such as the school principal or school resource officer.

#### Threat Classification and Outcomes

	<b>Out-of-school suspension</b>	<b>Expulsion</b>	<b>Placement Change</b>	<b>Arrest</b>	<b>Court Charge</b>	<b>Incarceration</b>
Very serious substantive (n = 73)	28	7	23	3	5	4
Serious substantive (n = 176)	70	5	35	1	9	2
Transient (n = 672)	167	3	43	1	8	0
No threat (n = 181)	23	3	11	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>6</b>

The association of threat classification with outcomes shows that the most serious outcomes (e.g., expulsion, incarceration) were generally reserved for the most serious cases. Few of the transient or no-threat cases received serious consequences. However, there are circumstances where a student making a transient threat might be subject to serious disciplinary consequences and legal actions, such as a student making a false bomb threat (with no serious intent or capability to set off a bomb) that is disruptive to the school. Such circumstances are an exception to the notion that transient threats typically do not merit severe consequences.



## Grade and Outcomes

Grade	Out-of-school suspension	Expulsion	Placement Change	Arrest	Court Charge	Incarceration	Total
preK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
1	11	0	2	0	0	0	13
2	13	0	2	0	0	0	15
3	27	0	7	0	0	0	34
4	20	1	4	0	0	0	25
5	25	1	10	0	0	0	36
6	30	2	11	0	3	0	46
7	41	2	15	2	8	0	68
8	39	3	22	1	7	1	73
9	28	4	9	1	1	2	45
10	24	1	11	1	2	2	41
11	15	3	15	1	1	1	36
12	7	0	3	0	1	0	11
Unknown	3	1	1	0	0	0	5
Total	288	18	112	6	23	6	453

The table for grade and outcomes shows that older students are more likely to receive serious disciplinary and legal consequences. Older students are generally deemed to be more responsible for their behavior and their threats might be more disruptive or concerning than threats by younger students. These trends parallel general practices for disciplining students for all infractions.

## Threat Classification and Demographics

	Male	Female	Has IEP	Race: White	Race: Black	Ethnicity: Hispanic	Race: Other
Very serious substantive (n = 73)	58	15	35	33	26	10	4
Serious substantive (n = 176)	131	45	93	87	57	20	12
Transient (n = 672)	515	157	286	424	140	65	43
No threat (n = 181)	135	46	66	109	50	15	7
Total	839	263	480	653	273	110	66

The table for threat classification and demographics shows that students of all backgrounds (gender, special education status, race, and Hispanic ethnicity) were identified as making each level of threat. For each demographic group, the largest proportion of students were judged to

have made transient threats. These associations were statistically controlled in the logistic regression analyses.

## Next Steps

These preliminary findings are based on 21 of Florida's 67 school districts and 2 of the 6 lab schools who provided data for the 2020-21 school year. We plan to revise the survey used to collect case data so that it is clearer and easier to complete. Revisions will be informed by feedback from stakeholders, our advisory board, and the Florida Department of Education. We recognize that it would be informative to examine additional data on the kinds of mental health services students receive, IEP procedures such as Manifestation Determinations, and practices involving Baker Acts. It would also be useful to consider law enforcement actions in addition to arrests, court charges, and incarceration. Our plan is to examine a larger and more representative sample for the 2021-22 school year.

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## Appendix A: Case Record Survey

### Threat Case Report

For each assessment of a student for a threat of harm to others conducted at your school, report the following information. If more than one person made the threat together, complete a separate form for each individual.

<p><b>School district</b> _____</p> <p><b>School name</b> _____</p> <p><b>School affiliation of person making threat</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p><b>Affiliation status</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Current (student, parent, or staff) or <input type="checkbox"/> Former (not currently a student, parent, or staff)</p>
<p><b>Demographics of person making threat</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p> <p><b>Age</b> _____</p> <p><b>Race (choose all that apply)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Other Race</p> <p><b>Hispanic or Latinx</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Grade (if person making threat is a current student)</b> preK K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 NA</p> <p><b>Individual Educational Program (IEP) ((if person making threat is a current student)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Section 504 Plan (if person making threat is a current student)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><b>Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Meals (if person making threat is a current student)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p><b>Person(s) threatened</b> <input type="checkbox"/> one person threatened <input type="checkbox"/> more than one person threatened</p> <p><b>Who threatened</b> (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> student <input type="checkbox"/> teacher <input type="checkbox"/> school staff member <input type="checkbox"/> other, describe _____</p> <p><b>Threat classification</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No Threat <input type="checkbox"/> Transient <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Substantive <input type="checkbox"/> Very Serious Substantive</p> <p><b>Threat outcome</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Threat not attempted <input type="checkbox"/> Threat attempted but averted (e.g., count as averted if no one assaulted) <input type="checkbox"/> Threat carried out (e.g., count if carried out if anyone is assaulted, regardless of severity)</p> <p><b>Most serious injury to person(s) threatened (only answer when threat carried out):</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> assault with no injury <input type="checkbox"/> minor injury (e.g., bruise, bloody nose) <input type="checkbox"/> serious injury (e.g., broken bone, hospitalization)</p> <p><b>Social-Behavioral Outcomes for person making threat (if person making threat is a current student)</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Person apologized for threat</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Person participated in some form of conflict resolution or mediation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Person participated in counseling or mental health services (beyond conflict resolution or mediation)</p>

**Consequences for person making threat, (if person making threat is a current student) (check all that apply)**

- Referral for counseling, conflict resolution, or mental health services (includes behavior plans or interventions)
- In-school suspension for \_\_\_ days
- Out-of-school suspension for \_\_\_ days
- Transfer to a different school
- In-home instruction, including online program
- Expulsion
- Arrest by law enforcement
- Incarceration (e.g., juvenile detention or jail)
- Charges in juvenile or adult court
- Other, describe \_\_\_\_\_

**End of year academic status (if person making threat is a current student)**

- Student dropped out of school
- Student retained in same grade
- Student failed one or more courses
- Student failed one or more state achievement tests
- Student had a subsequent disciplinary infraction that resulted in out-of-school suspension (of any length)

## Appendix B: Districts in Sample

	Number of Cases	Percent
District 1	119	10.8
District 2	10	.9
District 3	1	.1
District 4	223	20.2
District 5	1	.1
District 6	18	1.6
District 7	10	.9
District 8	24	2.2
District 9	3	.3
District 10	1	.1
District 11	29	2.6
District 12	12	1.1
District 13	86	7.8
District 14	6	.5
District 15	7	.6
District 16	256	23.2
District 17	84	7.6
District 18	49	4.4
District 19	68	6.2
District 20	17	1.5
District 21	1	.1
District 22	28	2.5
District 23	49	4.4
Total	1102	100.0