

The Prevention of Gun Violence in Schools and Communities

**Dewey G. Cornell, Ph.D.
University of Virginia**

Written Statement

for the

Forum on School Safety

Hosted by Committee Democrats and Democratic Leadership

House Committee on Education and the Workforce

March 20, 2018

Good afternoon, Congressman Scott and distinguished Members of the Committee. I am Dr. Dewey Cornell, Professor of Education and a clinical psychologist at the University of Virginia. I want to thank you all for the opportunity to appear before you today. The shooting in Parkland was a terrible tragedy that arouses our deepest concern and sympathy. We must make our schools and communities safer and prevent further shootings.

I have studied youth violence for 34 years and as a forensic psychologist I have worked with many violent youth including several who have committed shootings at school. In 2001, I led the development of a threat assessment program for K-12 schools, the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines (VSTAG). We have conducted a series of controlled studies with hundreds of schools to show our model's effectiveness and it is used in thousands of schools across the U.S. Currently, I direct an NIJ-funded project to study the statewide implementation of threat assessment in nearly 2,000 Virginia public schools.¹

The weekend after the Parkland shooting, an interdisciplinary group of 19 prevention researchers wrote a one-page, eight-point plan for gun violence prevention.² I helped to write this plan and will reference it in my remarks. I should point out that this plan has gained the endorsement of more than 240 organizations at national and state levels representing over 5 million educators, researchers, and mental health professionals.

Decisions about school safety should be based on a rational, factual analysis of the problem guided by evidence from scientific research. The evidence I will summarize today makes three main points.

1. *Violence in schools is just a small part of the larger problem of gun violence in our society.*

It would be a mistake to focus only on schools and miss the bigger picture. Children are exposed to violence in many other settings in their communities. Over the past 20 years, the United States has experienced an average of 22 students murdered at school each year.³ However, outside of schools, 1,480 students are murdered each year.⁴ In other words, students are 67 times more likely to be murdered outside of school than at school.

There is understandable public alarm that there have been approximately 300 school shootings since the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012.⁵ However, CDC reports⁶ tell us that that there have been over 500,000 shootings outside of schools in those 5 years, about 275 shootings⁷ every day resulting in approximately 92 deaths and 183 injuries. From this perspective, our schools are much safer than the surrounding community. We do not have a school violence problem, but a gun violence problem.

I realize that gun safety is not in the purview of this committee, so I will say only briefly that there is a credible body of scientific research that we can reduce gun violence with reasonable gun laws.⁸ The 8-point plan includes 3 gun safety recommendations: (1) a ban on assault-style weapons; (2) universal background checks; and (3) gun violence protection orders.

Schools are one of the safest places in a community. We have approximately 125,000 schools, so the average school can expect a student homicide every six thousand years.⁹ Our study of FBI

data found that homicides are ten times more likely to occur in a restaurant than a school.¹⁰ Anyone who thinks that arming teachers is a good way to protect our children should be advocating that we arm restaurant cooks and servers.

Shootings are far more likely to occur in shopping centers and public parks than in schools, as every member of Congress must know. We cannot make every building, every shopping center, and every public park a fortress. Security is not enough. This leads me to my next point.

2. We need a more balanced approach that places greater emphasis on prevention.

Our response to gun violence is often an emotional reaction of increasing security and preparing for the next shooting, rather than supporting efforts to prevent gun violence. We have already tried security measures and the available research says they are not very effective and that excessive security can be harmful.¹¹ It has been reported that schools spent 5 billion dollars in security measures after the Sandy Hook shooting.¹² Even if we spend 5 billion dollars more and could somehow make every school impregnable, that would only stop a small fraction of the shootings. For every shooting in a school, there are 1,600+ shootings outside of school.¹³ Why would we spend billions to stop one-tenth of one percent and ignore the 99.9% of gun violence?

We need a more balanced approach that includes a real emphasis on prevention. Prevention must start long before there is a gunman in the parking lot. It must start with helping all children to be successful in school.

Comprehensive prevention requires a three-tiered public health approach. For example, we cannot predict who will get cancer, but we know how to prevent cancer with a three-tier approach that includes (1) universal programs to promote health for everyone; (2) second level programs for reducing risk factors; and (3) third level interventions for individuals where illness is imminent.

Violence prevention must use a three-tiered approach, too. The first tier is universal programs for everyone, such as improving school climate so that all children can succeed in school. Many of the mass shootings in schools and communities are committed by individuals who developed anger and resentment because of the bullying, harassment, and discrimination they experienced at school.¹⁴ Schools should routinely measure and improve their school climate. We need school discipline reform so that students are helped to correct their behavior and be successful, rather than being driven out of school as part of the school-to-prison pipeline.

On the second tier, prevention means helping troubled young people who are at risk before they start down the pathway toward violence. Our schools are under-funded and under-staffed when it comes to special education, counseling, and mental health services. Put an armed guard in a school and you might prevent one shooting in one building. Put a counselor or psychologist in a school and you have the potential to help prevent shootings in any building anywhere in your community.

The third tier is to identify and intervene with students who are moving down a pathway toward violence. This brings me to my third and final point:

3. *Threat assessment is a safe and effective way to help students who have threatened violence.*

Threat assessment is a systematic process of evaluation and intervention for persons who have made verbal or behavioral threats of violence against others. Threat assessment was developed by law enforcement to protect public figures.¹⁵ It expanded to business and is widely used by corporations to prevent workplace violence. Twenty years ago, the FBI¹⁶ and Secret Service¹⁷ recommended that threat assessment be used in schools. After participating in the FBI study of school shootings in 1999, I became intrigued by the idea of adapting threat assessment for use in schools. My colleagues and I worked with a group of educators to develop a threat assessment model for schools. Over the past 17 years we have refined our model, published a detailed manual,¹⁸ disseminated it to thousands of schools, and conducted 11 studies of its effects.¹⁹

We learned that threat assessment is a good prevention strategy, but that it must be adapted for schools. The traditional law enforcement approach to threat assessment is focused on assassins and terrorists, but we are working primarily with kids. Kids make threats frequently when they are angry, upset, or just trying to gain some attention. In our first study, we found that the age group that makes the most threats to kill are elementary school students.²⁰ In almost all cases, students need counseling and discipline, not criminal charges. In school threat assessment, you must be careful not to over-react to student threats; the process must be calibrated to deal with kids, not adults.

There are some other important differences, too. In the business world, you fire an unhappy employee, but in schools we don't want to fire our students, we want to educate them and help them become successful adults. We have long-term goals for our students, and none of our students are expendable. We want them all to succeed.

So, school threat assessment is different from other forms of threat assessment. The kind of threat assessment used to protect Members of Congress is not identical to threat assessment in schools. The kinds of threats are different, the environments are different, the goals are different, and the management strategies and interventions that can be undertaken are vastly different.

To be effective, threat assessment teams should use evidence-based practices, which means that they are supported by controlled studies. Controlled studies require the use of control groups and reliable measurement of treatment effects. Teams must be well-trained and they must adhere to high standards of practice. There should be continuous collection of data to measure quality and guide improvement. I will summarize some of our research findings.

In four studies²¹, we have found that fewer than 1% of students seen for a threat assessment carry out their threats. There have been fights, but none of the hundreds of threats to kill, shoot, or seriously injure someone were carried out. Furthermore, three controlled studies found that schools using threat assessment had less student aggression such as bullying and fighting.²²

An important concern is that threat assessment might increase the use exclusionary discipline (such as suspension and expulsion) and might disproportionately affect students of color. Because this is such an important concern, we have systematically and repeatedly examined the impact of threat assessment on the use of exclusionary school discipline and on racial/ethnic

disproportionality. Six controlled studies and two field test studies support the conclusion that schools using threat assessment see a decrease in use of school suspensions and use expulsions or arrests in about 1% of cases.²³ We have also found in three studies that use of threat assessment does not have disproportionate effects on students of color and, to the contrary, reduces disproportionality.²⁴

In conclusion, we believe that prevention is a critically important component of school safety that has been overshadowed by the rush to increase security measures. Prevention should be comprehensive and multi-tiered. In order to reduce gun violence in our communities as well as our schools, we should improve our school climate and make mental health services more readily available to troubled youth. Schools should use a threat assessment approach that is well-designed to work in school settings. Threat assessment is valuable so that students are not stigmatized or punished for minor misbehavior. Threat assessment allows schools to identify students in need of mental health services and other support. In the small number of very serious threats, schools can recognize the danger, collaborate with law enforcement, and keep our schools safe. Let's give prevention a chance.

I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

¹ Dr. Cornell directs a project supported by Grant #NIJ 2014-CK-BX-0004 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The project is conducted in collaboration with the Center for School and Campus Safety at the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of Justice or the Center for School and Campus Safety at the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services.

² Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence (2018). Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America. <https://curry.virginia.edu/prevent-gun-violence>

³ From the CDC's School-Associated Violent Death Study. 502 homicides of students from 1994-95 to 2013-14. Zhang, A., Wang, K., Zhang, J., & Oudekerk, B. A. (2017). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016. NCES 2017-064/NCJ 250650. *National Center for Education Statistics*. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017064.pdf>

⁴ FBI homicide statistics for the most recent 20-year period available (1996-2015) record 27,852 homicides of youth ages 5-18, which is an average of 1,393 per year. Source: Kaplan, Jacob. Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data: Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976-2015. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2017-06-01. <https://doi.org/10.3886/E100699V1>

⁵ Everytown for Gun Safety reports 301 school shootings. <https://everytownresearch.org/school-shootings/5955/> Although critics have contended that 301 is an exaggeration that includes incidents where no one was harmed, even this high figure is a small fraction of the total number of shootings outside of school by any standard.

⁶ There are approximately 33,727 shooting deaths and 66,728 shooting injuries on average per year according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (See Charts at end of this document). This makes an average total of 100,455 shootings in one year, 502,275 in five years. Deaths are recorded here: http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/dataRestriction_inj.html Shooting injuries are recorded here: <http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/nfirates2001.html> These statistics only include shootings that resulted in death or injury that was treated in a hospital. The comparison to school shootings would be even larger if the total number of shootings used the broader definition employed in counts of school shootings.

⁷ 100,455 shootings per year is equivalent to approximately 275 shootings per day.

⁸ For example, see (1) Cook, P. J., & Donohue, J. J. (2017). Saving lives by regulating guns: Evidence for policy. *Science*, 358(6368), 1259-1261. (2) Donohue, J. J. (2017). Laws facilitating gun carrying and homicide. *American Journal of Public Health*, 107(12), 1864-1865. (3) Gius, M. (2018). The effects of state and Federal gun control laws on school shootings. *Applied Economics Letters*, 25(5), 317-320. (4) Webster, D. W., & Wintemute, G. J. (2015). Effects of policies designed to keep firearms from high-risk individuals. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 36, 21-37.

⁹ 125,000 schools divided by 20 is 6,250. This is a conservative estimate, since some of the 20 homicides will occur in the same school. Also, secondary schools will have a higher rate than elementary schools. See Borum, R., Cornell, D., Modzeleski, W., & Jimerson, S.R. (2010). What can be done about school shootings?: A review of the evidence. *Educational Researcher*, 39, 27-37. doi: 10.3102/0013189X09357620

¹⁰ Data from the FBI National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) analyzed in Nekvasil, Cornell, & Huang (2015). Prevalence and offense characteristics of multiple casualty homicides: Are schools at higher risk than other locations? *Psychology of Violence*, 5, 236-245.

¹¹ For example, (1) Cuellar, M. J. (2018). School safety strategies and their effects on the occurrence of school-based violence in US high schools: an exploratory study. *Journal of school violence*, 17(1), 28-45. (2) Jennings, W. G., Khey, D. N., Maskaly, J., & Donner, C. M. (2011). Evaluating the relationship between law enforcement and school security measures and violent crime in schools. *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, 11(2), 109-124. (3) Morgan, E., Salomen, N., Plotkin, M., & Cohen, R. (2014). *The school discipline consensus report: Strategies from the field to keep students engaged in school and out of the juvenile justice system*. New York, NY: The Council of State Governments Justice Center. Retrieved from http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/The_School_Discipline_Consensus_Report.pdf

¹² Linskey, A. (November 14, 2013) Newtown rampage spurs \$5 billion school security spending. *Bloomberg Markets*. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-11-14/schools-boosting-security-spending-after-newtown-massacre>

¹³ Ratio of 301 school shootings to 502,245 shootings outside schools in five years is 1 to 1,668.

¹⁴ Here are some supporting studies: (1) Langman, P. (2015). *School shooters: Understanding high school, college, and adult perpetrators*. Rowman & Littlefield. (2) O'Toole, M. E. (2000). *The school shooter: A threat assessment perspective*. Quantico, VA: National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Retrieved from <http://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/school-shooter> (3) Vossekuil, B., Fein, R., Reddy, M., Borum, R., & Modzeleski, W. (2002). *The final report and findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the prevention of school attacks in the United States*. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education.

¹⁵ Borum, R., Fein, R., Vossekuil, B., & Berglund, J. (1999). Threat assessment: Defining an approach to assessing risk for targeted violence. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 17(3), 323.

¹⁶ O'Toole, M. E. (2000). *The school shooter: A threat assessment perspective*. Quantico, VA: National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

¹⁷ Fein, R., Vossekuil, B., Pollack, W., Borum, R., Modzeleski, W., & Reddy, M. (2002). *Threat assessment in schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates*. Washington, DC: U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education.

¹⁸ Cornell, D. & Sheras, P. (2006). *Guidelines for responding to student threats of violence*. Originally published by Sopris West. Now available through Amazon.com.

¹⁹ Studies available upon request. Email: youthvio@virginia.edu

1. Cornell, D., Sheras, P., Kaplan, S., McConville, D., Douglass, J., Elkon, A., Knight, L., Branson, C., & Cole, J. (2004). Guidelines for student threat assessment: Field-test findings. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 527-546.
2. Kaplan, S., & Cornell, D. (2005). Threats of violence by students in special education. *Behavioral Disorders*, 31, 107-119.
3. Strong, K., & Cornell, D. (2008). Student threat assessment in Memphis City Schools: A descriptive report. *Behavioral Disorders*, 34, 42-54.
4. Allen, K., Cornell, D., Lorek, E., & Sheras, P. (2008). Response of school personnel to student threat assessment training. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 19, 319-332.
5. Cornell, D., Sheras, P., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2009). A retrospective study of school safety conditions in high schools using the Virginia Threat Assessment Guidelines versus alternative approaches. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 24, 119-129.
6. Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2011). Reductions in long-term suspensions following adoption of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines. *Bulletin of the Nat Assoc of Secondary School Principals*, 95, 175-194.
7. Cornell, D., Allen, K., & Fan, X. (2012). A randomized controlled study of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines in grades K-12. *School Psychology Review*, 41, 100-115.
8. JustChildren and Cornell, D. (2013). *Prevention v. punishment: Threat assessment, school suspensions, and racial disparities*. Retrieved from http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/UVA_and_JustChildren_Report_-_Prevention_v._Punishment.pdf

-
9. Cornell, D. & Lovegrove, P. (2015). Student threat assessment as a method for reducing student suspensions. In D. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research for Policymakers* (pp. 180-191). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
 10. Nekvasil, E., Cornell, D. (2015). Student threat assessment associated with positive school climate in middle schools. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 2, 98-113. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tam0000038>
 11. Burnette, A. G., Datta, P. & Cornell, D. G. (2017 online advance publication). The distinction between transient and substantive student threats. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*.
<http://psycnet.apa.org/record/2017-56103-001>
- ²⁰ Cornell, D., Sheras, P. Kaplan, S., McConville, D., Douglass, J., Elkon, A., Knight, L., Branson, C., & Cole, J. (2004). Guidelines for student threat assessment: Field-test findings. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 527-546.
- ²¹ Studies 1-2-3 used the VSTAG model. Study 4 was a statewide sample using both VSTAG and other models.
1. Cornell, D., Sheras, P. Kaplan, S., McConville, D., Douglass, J., Elkon, A., Knight, L., Branson, C., & Cole, J. (2004). Guidelines for student threat assessment: Field-test findings. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 527-546.
 2. Strong, K., & Cornell, D. (2008). Student threat assessment in Memphis City Schools: A descriptive report. *Behavioral Disorders*, 34, 42-54.
 3. Cornell, D., Allen, K., & Fan, X. (2012). A randomized controlled study of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines in grades K-12. *School Psychology Review*, 41, 100-115.
 4. Cornell, D., Maeng, J., Burnette, A.G., Datta, P., Huang, F., & Jia, Y. (2016). *Threat Assessment in Virginia Schools: Technical Report of the Threat Assessment Survey for 2014-2015*. Charlottesville, VA: Curry School of Education, University of Virginia. See also Cornell, D., Maeng, J., Burnette, A.G., Jia, Y., Huang, F., Konold, T., Datta, P., Malone, M., Meyer, P. (2017). Student threat assessment as a standard school safety practice: Results from a statewide implementation study. *School Psychology Quarterly*.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/spq0000220>
- ²² These studies compared schools using VSTAG to schools not using threat assessment or using an alternative model of threat assessment.
1. Cornell, D., Sheras, P., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2009). A retrospective study of school safety conditions in high schools using the Virginia Threat Assessment Guidelines versus alternative approaches. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 24, 119-129.
 2. Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2011). Reductions in long-term suspensions following adoption of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines. *Bulletin of the Nat Assoc of Secondary School Principals*, 95, 175-194.
 3. Nekvasil, E., Cornell, D. (2015). Student threat assessment associated with positive school climate in middle schools. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 2, 98-113. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tam0000038>
- ²³ Studies 1-2 are field test reports and 3-8 are controlled studies.
1. Cornell, D., Sheras, P. Kaplan, S., McConville, D., Douglass, J., Elkon, A., Knight, L., Branson, C., & Cole, J. (2004). Guidelines for student threat assessment: Field-test findings. *School Psychology Review*, 33, 527-546.
 2. Strong, K., & Cornell, D. (2008). Student threat assessment in Memphis City Schools: A descriptive report. *Behavioral Disorders*, 34, 42-54.
 3. Cornell, D., Sheras, P., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2009). A retrospective study of school safety conditions in high schools using the Virginia Threat Assessment Guidelines versus alternative approaches. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 24, 119-129.
 4. Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2011). Reductions in long-term suspensions following adoption of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines. *Bulletin of the Nat Assoc of Secondary School Principals*, 95, 175-194.
 5. Cornell, D., Allen, K., & Fan, X. (2012). A randomized controlled study of the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines in grades K-12. *School Psychology Review*, 41, 100-115.
 6. JustChildren and Cornell, D. (2013). *Prevention v. punishment: Threat assessment, school suspensions, and racial disparities*. Retrieved from
http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/UVA_and_JustChildren_Report_-_Prevention_v._Punishment.pdf
 7. Cornell, D. & Lovegrove, P. (2015). Student threat assessment as a method for reducing student suspensions. In D. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research for Policymakers* (pp. 180-191). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

8. Nekvasil, E., Cornell, D. (2015). Student threat assessment associated with positive school climate in middle schools. *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 2, 98-113. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tam0000038>

²⁴ Studies 1-2 used the VSTAG model study 3 used a statewide sample of Virginia schools that included schools using VSTAG as well as other models.

1. JustChildren and Cornell, D. (2013). *Prevention v. punishment: Threat assessment, school suspensions, and racial disparities*. Retrieved from http://curry.virginia.edu/uploads/resourceLibrary/UVA_and_JustChildren_Report_-_Prevention_v._Punishment.pdf
2. Cornell, D. & Lovegrove, P. (2015). Student threat assessment as a method for reducing student suspensions. In D. Losen (Ed.), *Closing the School Discipline Gap: Research for Policymakers* (pp. 180-191). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
3. Cornell, D., Maeng, J., Huang, F., Shukla, K., & Konold, T. (in press). Racial/ethnic parity in disciplinary consequences using student threat assessment. *School Psychology Review*.

Appendix

Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America

Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence

February 28, 2018

School shootings and widespread community gun violence are far greater in the United States than other nations. America cannot be great and realize its promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness if our children are not safe from gun violence.

Although security measures are important, a focus on simply preparing for shootings is insufficient. We need a change in mindset and policy from reaction to prevention. Prevention entails more than security measures and begins long before a gunman comes to school. We need a comprehensive public health approach to gun violence that is informed by scientific evidence and free from partisan politics.

A public health approach to protecting children as well as adults from gun violence involves three levels of prevention: (1) universal approaches promoting safety and well-being for everyone; (2) practices for reducing risk and promoting protective factors for persons experiencing difficulties; and (3) interventions for individuals where violence is present or appears imminent.

On the first level we need:

1. A national requirement for all schools to assess school climate and maintain physically and emotionally safe conditions and positive school environments that protect all students and adults from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and assault;
2. A ban on assault-style weapons, high-capacity ammunition clips, and products that modify semi-automatic firearms to enable them to function like automatic firearms.

On the second level we need:

3. Adequate staffing (such as counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers) of coordinated school- and community-based mental health services for individuals with risk factors for violence, recognizing that violence is not intrinsically a product of mental illness;
4. Reform of school discipline to reduce exclusionary practices and foster positive social, behavioral, emotional, and academic success for students;
5. Universal background checks to screen out violent offenders, persons who have been hospitalized for violence towards self or others, and persons on no-fly, terrorist watch lists.

On the third level we need:

6. A national program to train and maintain school- and community-based threat assessment teams that include mental health and law enforcement partners. Threat assessment programs should include practical channels of communication for persons to report potential threats as well as interventions to resolve conflicts and assist troubled individuals;
7. Removal of legal barriers to sharing safety-related information among educational, mental health, and law enforcement agencies in cases where a person has threatened violence;
8. Laws establishing Gun Violence Protection Orders that allow courts to issue time-limited restraining orders requiring that firearms be recovered by law enforcement when there is evidence that an individual is planning to carry out acts against others or against themselves.

Congress and the executive branch must remove barriers to gun violence research and institute a program of scientific research on gun violence that encompasses all levels of prevention. We contend that well-executed laws can reduce gun violence while protecting all Constitutional rights.

It's time for federal and state authorities to take immediate action to enact these proposals and provide adequate resources for effective implementation. We call on law enforcement, mental health, and educational agencies to begin actions supporting these prevention efforts. We ask all parents and youth to join efforts advocating for these changes, and we urge voters to elect representatives who will take effective action to prevent gun violence in our nation.

Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence
(in alphabetical order)

Ron Avi Astor, Ph.D., University of Southern California
George G. Bear, Ph.D., University of Delaware
Catherine P. Bradshaw, Ph.D., University of Virginia
Dewey G. Cornell, Ph.D., University of Virginia
Dorothy L. Espelage, Ph.D., University of Florida
Daniel Flannery, Ph.D., Case Western Reserve University
Michael J. Furlong, Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara
Nancy Guerra, Ed.D., University of California, Irvine
Robert Jagers, Ph.D., University of Michigan
Shane R. Jimerson, Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara
Matthew J. Mayer, Ph.D., Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick
Maury Nation, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University
Amanda B. Nickerson, Ph.D., University at Buffalo, State University of New York
Pedro Noguera, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles
David Osher, Ph.D., Takoma Park, MD
Russell Skiba, Ph.D., Indiana University
George Sugai, Ph.D., University of Connecticut
Daniel W. Webster, Sc.D., Johns Hopkins University
Mark D. Weist, Ph.D., University of South Carolina

Charts

CDC data are the most recent available. Over past 10 years, CDC reports an average of 32,575 deaths due to firearms. Breakdown is 62% suicide, 38% homicide, 1% unintentional. For 2013-2015, the average is 33,727.

2007 - 2016, United States
Violence-Related Firearm Deaths and Rates per 100,000
 All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages
 ICD-10 Codes: X72-X74, X93-X95, Y35.0, *U01.4

Year	Number of Deaths	Population***	Crude Rate	Age-Adjusted Rate**
2007	30,335	301,231,207	10.07	9.95
2008	30,728	304,093,966	10.10	9.95
2009	30,561	306,771,529	9.96	9.80
2010	30,814	308,747,508	9.98	9.79
2011	31,512	311,663,358	10.11	9.90
2012	32,759	313,998,379	10.43	10.20
2013	32,849	316,204,908	10.39	10.13
2014	32,858	318,563,456	10.31	10.04
2015	35,476	320,896,618	11.06	10.79
2016	37,863	323,127,513	11.72	11.48
	325,755	3,125,298,442	10.42	

Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC
<https://webappa.cdc.gov/cgi-bin/broker.exe>

Over past 10 years, a total of 603,239 non-fatal injuries due to firearms, yielding an average of 60,324. For the past three years, the average is 66,728.

The sum of 66,728 injuries and 33,727 fatalities is 100,455 per year. Over five years the total is 502,275 shootings. With approximately 301 shootings in schools, the percentage of shootings in schools is $301 \div 502,275 = .000599$, which is less than one tenth of one percent. The ratio of shooting is 1,668 shootings outside of school for every 1 shooting in school.

Violence-Related Firearm Gunshot Nonfatal Injuries and Rates per 100,000

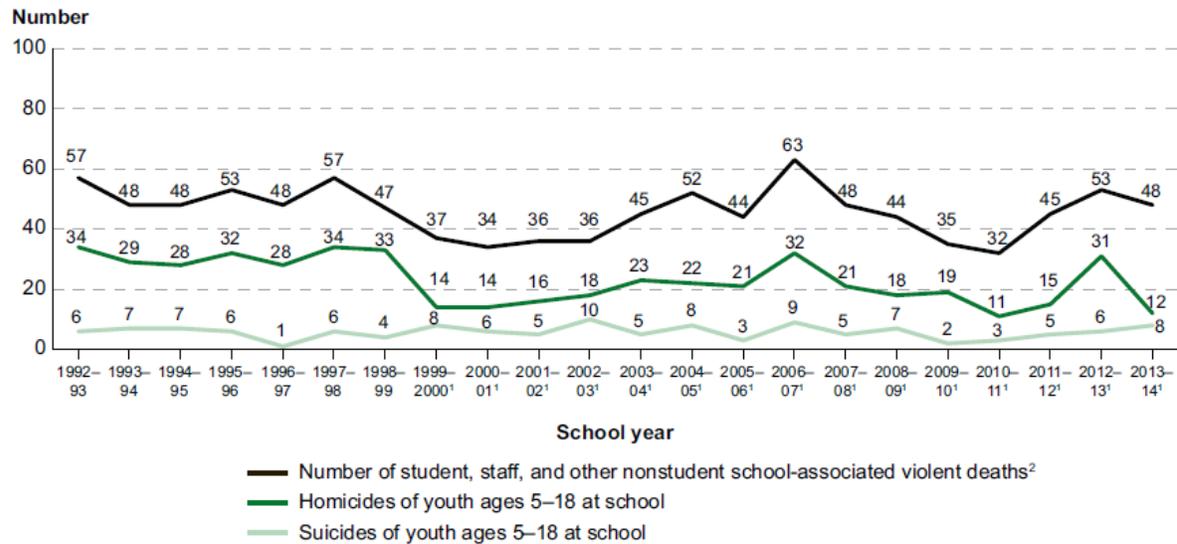
2006 - 2015, United States
All Races, Both Sexes, All Ages
Disposition: All Cases

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of injuries</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Crude Rate</u>	<u>Age-Adjusted Rate**</u>
2006	56,739	298,379,912	19.02	18.74
2007	54,165	301,231,207	17.98	17.91
2008	61,406	304,093,966	20.19	20.11
2009	48,158	306,771,529	15.70	15.68
2010	59,344	308,745,538	19.22	19.35
2011	59,208	311,718,857	18.99	18.97
2012	64,034	314,102,623	20.39	20.40
2013	67,394*	316,427,395	21.30	21.40
2014	65,106*	318,907,401	20.42	20.57
2015	67,685*	321,418,820	21.06	21.25

Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, CDC
<https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/nfirates.html>

Approximately 25 students are victims of homicide each year in the U.S.

Figure 1.1. Number of student, staff, and other nonstudent school-associated violent deaths, and number of homicides and suicides of youth ages 5–18 at school: School years 1992–93 to 2013–14



¹ Data from 1999–2000 onward are subject to change until law enforcement reports have been obtained and interviews with school and law enforcement officials have been completed. The details learned during the interviews can occasionally change the classification of a case. For more information on this survey, please see appendix A.

² A school-associated violent death is defined as “a homicide, suicide, or legal intervention death (involving a law enforcement officer), in which the fatal injury occurred on the campus of a functioning elementary or secondary school in the United States,” while the victim was on the way to or from regular sessions at school, or while the victim was attending or traveling to or from an official school-sponsored event. Victims include students, staff members, and others who are not students or staff members, from July 1, 1992, through June 30, 2014.

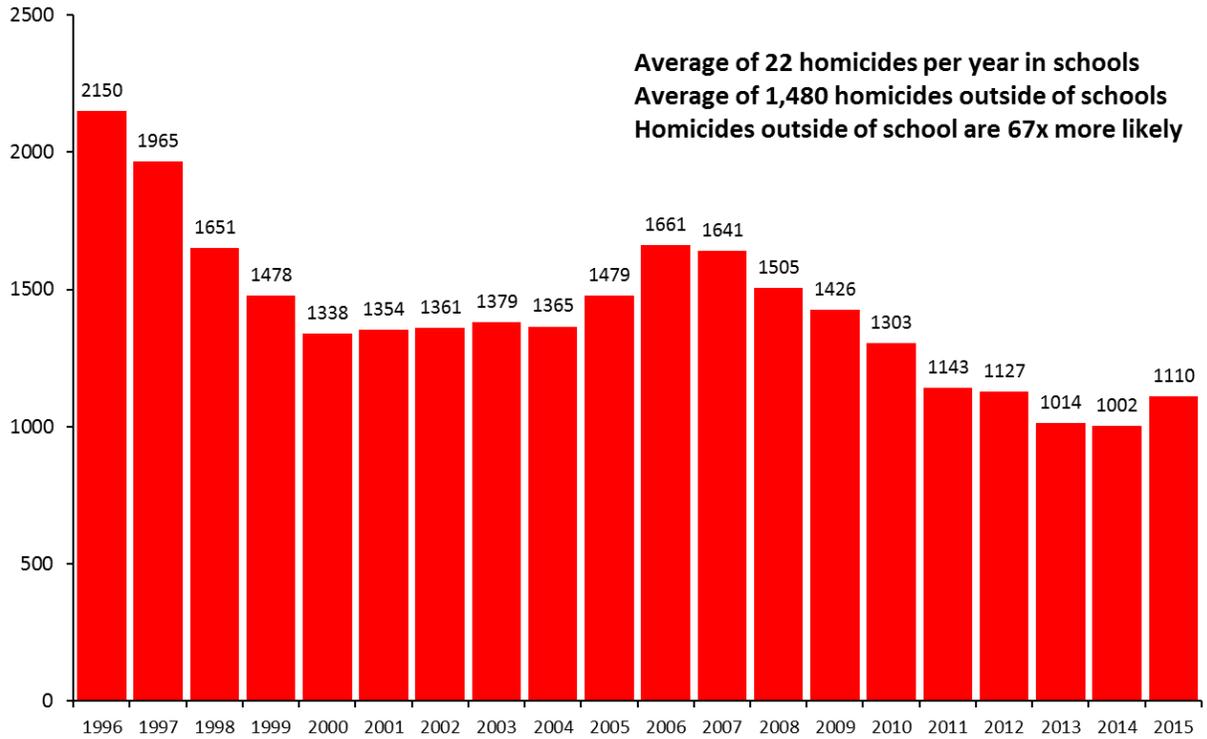
NOTE: “At school” includes on school property, on the way to or from regular sessions at school, and while attending or traveling to or from a school-sponsored event. In this indicator, the term “at school” is comparable in meaning to the term “school-associated.”

SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1992–2014 School-Associated Violent Death Surveillance System (SAVD-SS) (partially funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students), unpublished tabulation (November 2016).

Zhang, A., Wang, K., Zhang, J., & Oudekerk, B. A. (2017). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016. NCES 2017-064/NCJ 250650. *National Center for Education Statistics*. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017064.pdf>

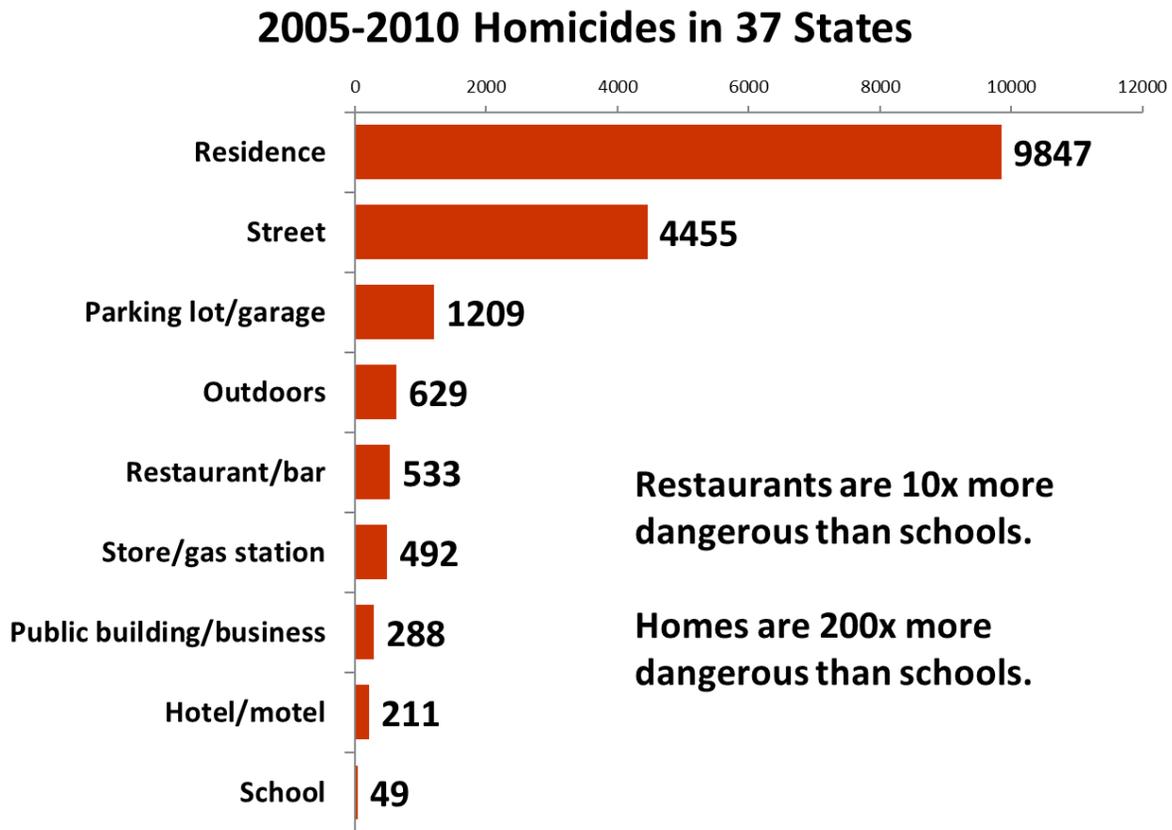
Approximately 1,400 school-age children and youth are victims of homicide each year.

Homicides of School-Aged Youth



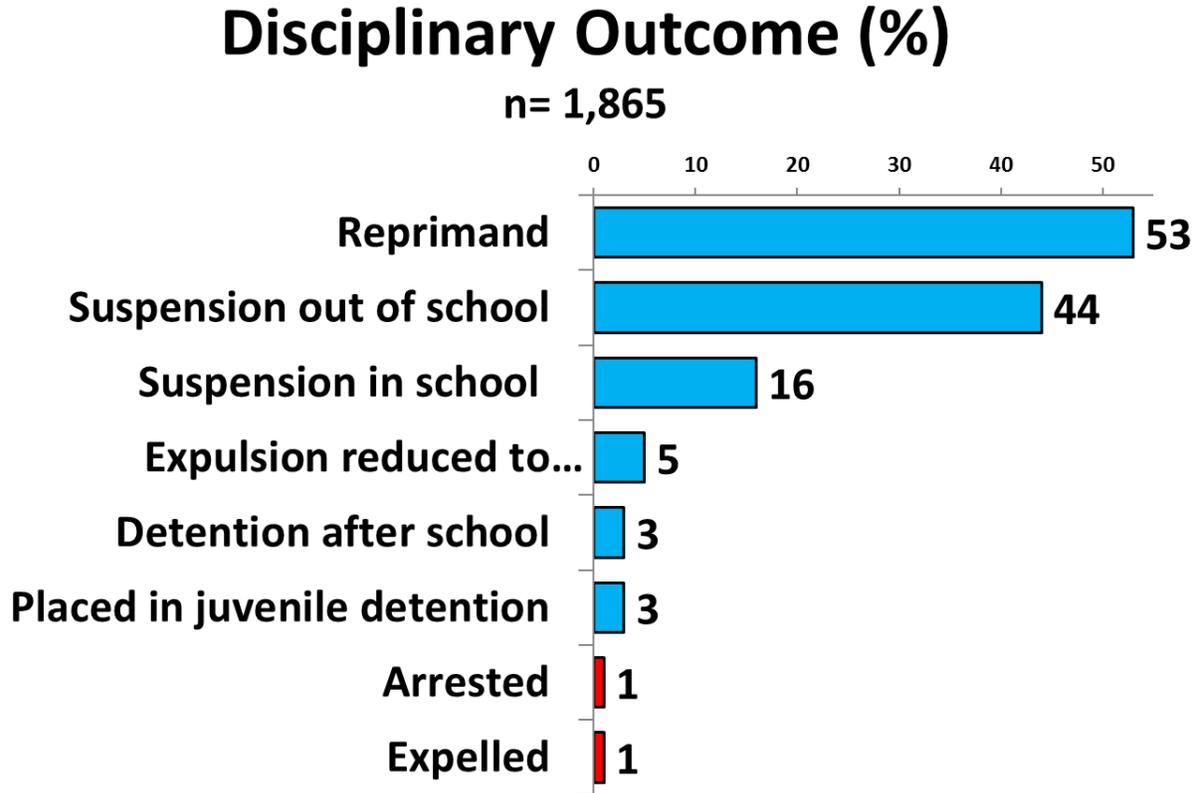
Sources: Kaplan, Jacob. Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data: Supplementary Homicide Reports, 1976-2015. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2017-06-01. <https://doi.org/10.3886/E100699V1>. Data on 22 homicides per year in schools based on years 1994-95 to 2013-14 in Zhang, A., Wang, K., Zhang, J., & Oudekerk, B. A. (2017). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016. NCES 2017-064/NCJ 250650. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017064.pdf>

Schools have far fewer homicides than other locations.



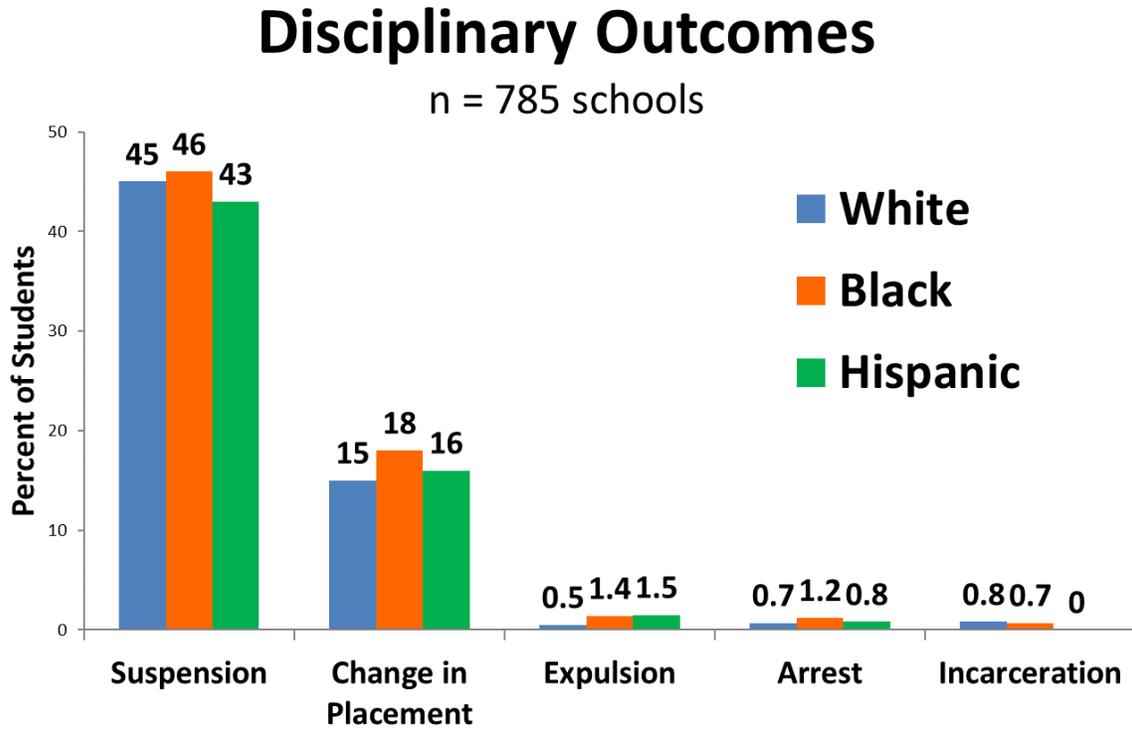
Data obtained from the FBI National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Nekvasil, Cornell, & Huang (2015). Prevalence and offense characteristics of multiple casualty homicides: Are schools at higher risk than other locations? *Psychology of Violence*, 5, 236-245.

Approximately 1% of students receiving a threat assessment in Virginia public schools are arrested or expelled.



Cornell, D., Maeng, J., Burnette, A.G., Datta, P., Huang, F., & Jia, Y. (2016). *Threat Assessment in Virginia Schools: Technical Report of the Threat Assessment Survey for 2014-2015*. Charlottesville, VA: Curry School of Education, University of Virginia. See also Cornell, D., Maeng, J., Burnette, A.G., Jia, Y., Huang, F., Konold, T., Datta, P., Malone, M., Meyer, P. (2017). Student threat assessment as a standard school safety practice: Results from a statewide implementation study. *School Psychology Quarterly*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/spq0000220>

No statistically significant differences in outcomes for Black, Hispanic, or White students receiving a threat assessment in Virginia public schools.



Cornell, D., Maeng, J., Huang, F., Shukla, K., & Konold, T. (in press). Racial/ethnic parity in disciplinary consequences using student threat assessment. *School Psychology Review*.