Information Sharing Between School Districts and Law Enforcement for School and Community Safety: *A Two-Way Street*

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1

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Joseph (Joe) Parks is a Texas lawyer whose solo practice focuses on workplace investigations, training and school safety-related matters. Joe has significant experience in employment law, workplace investigations, school law, open government, commercial litigation and school safety-related matters. He brings a unique perspective and breadth of experience to his law practice, having served more than a decade as the Executive Director of Safety and Security Services for one of Texas' largest school districts, and as an honorably retired command-level peace officer with over 20 years of diverse public safety experience.

Joe is a TEA Registered Provider of continuing education training for school boards, holds an Instructor Certificate from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), and is a Registered Consultant listed in the Texas School Safety & Consultant Registry. He is a regular speaker/presenter on topics involving workplace investigations, HR compliance, organizational policy and procedure, school safety and others.

2

Important:

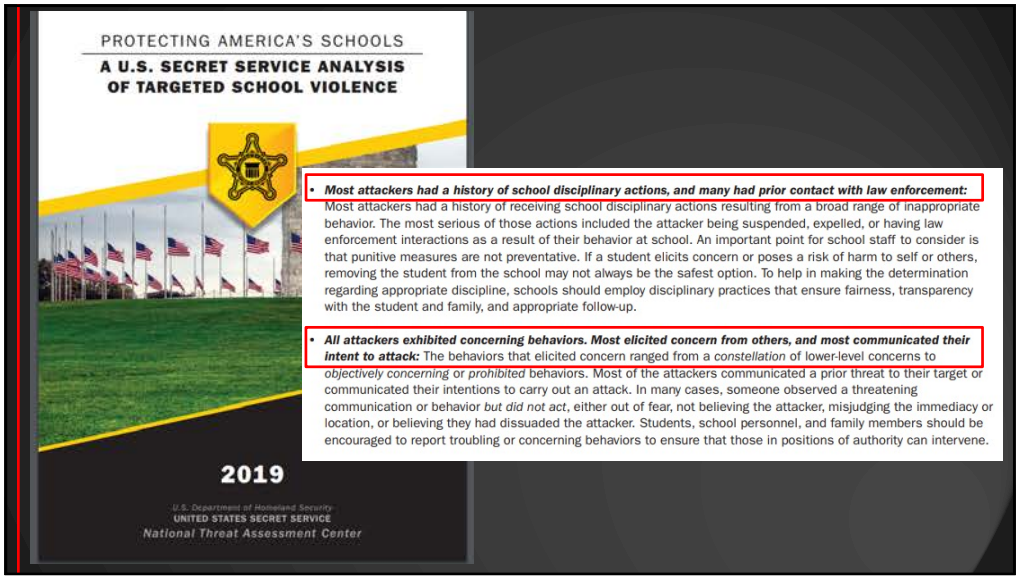
This presentation is provided for general informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice as to any specific matter or situation. You should consult with your legal counsel and organization's leadership prior to taking any action in reliance on the information contained in this presentation and related materials.

3

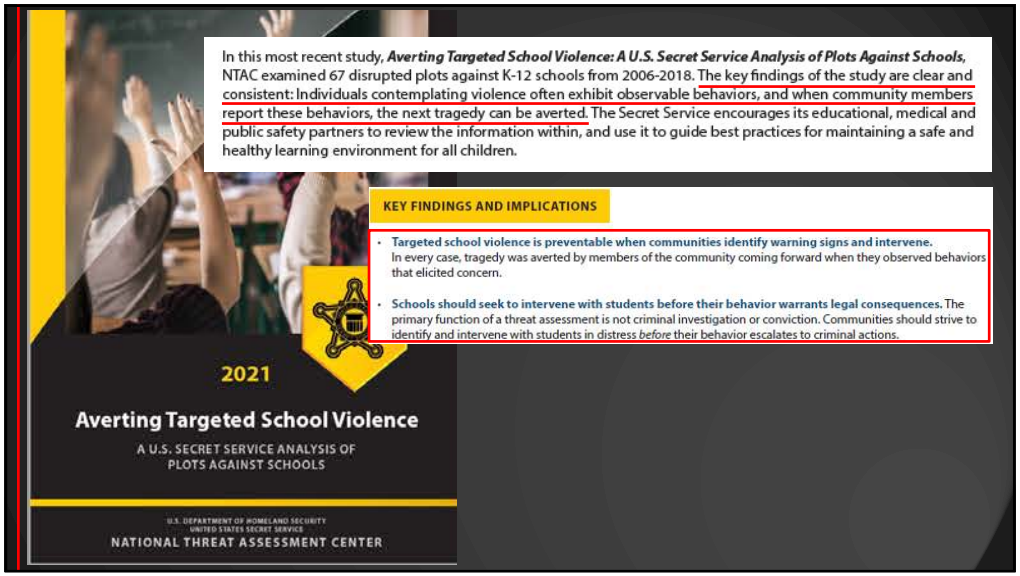
Why Information Sharing Is Critical to Student & Community Safety

"Information Over Fortification"

4


PROTECTING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS
A U.S. SECRET SERVICE ANALYSIS OF TARGETED SCHOOL VIOLENCE
2019
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
National Threat Assessment Center
• Most attackers had a history of school disciplinary actions, and many had prior contact with law enforcement: Most attackers had a history of receiving school disciplinary actions resulting from a broad range of inappropriate behavior. The most serious of those actions included the attacker being suspended, expelled, or having law enforcement interactions as a result of their behavior at school. An important point for school staff to consider is that punitive measures are not preventative. If a student elicits concern or poses a risk of harm to self or others, removing the student from the school may not always be the safest option. To help in making the determination regarding appropriate discipline, schools should employ disciplinary practices that ensure fairness, transparency with the student and family, and appropriate follow-up.
• All attackers exhibited concerning behaviors. Most elicited concern from others, and most communicated their intent to attack: The behaviors that elicited concern ranged from a constellation of lower-level concerns to objectively concerning or prohibited behaviors. Most of the attackers communicated a prior threat to their target or communicated their intentions to carry out an attack. In many cases, someone observed a threatening communication or behavior but did not act, either out of fear, not believing the attacker, misjudging the immediacy or location, or believing they had dissuaded the attacker. Students, school personnel, and family members should be encouraged to report troubling or concerning behaviors to ensure that those in positions of authority can intervene.

5


In this most recent study, Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools, NTAC examined 67 disrupted plots against K-12 schools from 2006-2018. The key findings of the study are clear and consistent: Individuals contemplating violence often exhibit observable behaviors, and when community members report these behaviors, the next tragedy can be averted. The Secret Service encourages its educational, medical and public safety partners to review the information within, and use it to guide best practices for maintaining a safe and healthy learning environment for all children.
KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS
• Targeted school violence is preventable when communities identify warning signs and intervene. In every case, tragedy was averted by members of the community coming forward when they observed behaviors that elicited concern.
• Schools should seek to intervene with students before their behavior warrants legal consequences. The primary function of a threat assessment is not criminal investigation or conviction. Communities should strive to identify and intervene with students in distress before their behavior escalates to criminal actions.
2021
Averting Targeted School Violence
A U.S. SECRET SERVICE ANALYSIS OF PLOTS AGAINST SCHOOLS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE
NATIONAL THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

6

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