Report on the Arapahoe High School Shooting: Lessons Learned on Information Sharing, Threat Assessment, and Systems Integrity[1]

Presented to

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and

Colorado SB 15-214: Committee on School Safety and Youth in Crisis

In compliance with JAG No. 2015-0665A, *In re the arbitration of: Michael and Desiree Davis, Claimants and Littleton Public School District, Respondent*

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Acronyms Glossary

Acronyms used in this report	
ACSO	Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office
AHS	Arapahoe High School
CSPV	Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence
CSSRC	Colorado School Safety Resource Center
FERPA	Family Education Rights and Privacy Act
IEP	Individual Educational Plan
ISST	Interagency Social Support Team
LPS	Littleton Public Schools
MTAT	Multijurisdictional Threat Assessment Team
NREPP	National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices
RRCU	Risk and Resiliency Check Up
SAVRY™	Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth
SIT	Student Intervention Team
SRO	School Resource Officer
V-STAG	Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While proximal error leading to an accident is, in fact, usually a 'human error,' the causes of that error are often well beyond the individual's control. All humans err frequently. Systems that rely on error-free performance are doomed to fail.

Lucian Leape (1994, p. 1852)

To better understand how the December 13, 2013 shooting at Arapahoe High School, in which senior Karl Pierson (hereafter, referred to as KP[3]) shot and killed Claire Davis and then himself, might be prevented, the Arapahoe High School Community Fund Honoring Claire Davis, a donor-advised fund of The Denver Foundation, approached the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) at the University of Colorado Boulder to assist with the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data obtained from an arbitration proceeding in the case. The purpose was to understand the school's threat and risk assessment procedures and responses, and the lessons that might be learned from this incident that could improve youth violence prevention in school settings in Colorado and the U.S. The data for the report came from the Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office's (ACSO) investigation materials, Littleton Public School's (LPS) interrogatory responses, deposition exhibits, and deposition testimony. The principal investigators attended most of the depositions and reviewed all of the documents produced by ACSO and LPS.

The findings revealed three major failures within AHS and LPS in the months and years leading up to the shooting: (1) a failure of information sharing, (2) a failure of threat assessment, and (3) a failure of systems thinking. While not the focus of this report, preliminary evidence indicates that AHS staff and LPS administrators have made several changes in their approach to school safety since 2013, and those changes represent important steps in the right direction

[3] In order to draw more attention to school violence prevention, draw less attention to the individual shooter, and avoid contributing to the "cultural script" on school shootings, this report uses the shooter's initials and not his name (see Gladwell, 2015; Newman, et al., 2004).

and are noted wherever possible. However, a great deal of progress still needs to be made. The findings and recommendations reveal the steps needed to strengthen school safety at AHS and within LPS, but they should also be reviewed and considered by other schools in Colorado. This *Executive Summary* highlights the three major failures and 14 of the 32 recommendations.

Information Sharing

There were many missed opportunities to share information about and intervene with KP prior to the December 13, 2013 shooting at Arapahoe High School (see Appendix 1: Chronological List of KP's Concerning Behaviors and Appendix 5: Timeline of KP's Concerning Behaviors). The three major failures in information sharing included: (1) a failure to use the student information system (e.g., Infinite Campus) to document behavioral and safety concerns (e.g., threat, risk, academic, discipline response), (2) a failure to train students and staff in an anonymous reporting system (e.g., Safe2Tell), and (3) a failure to implement an Interagency Information Sharing Agreement (encouraged by SB 00-133) to exchange vital information about students of concern with law enforcement and other community agencies.

First, information about KP was not consistently maintained in hard-copy files or AHS's Infinite Campus student information database. Not one AHS teacher, administrator or staff person had a complete record of KP's history of concerning behaviors over his more than three years at AHS, making it challenging to adequately assess the threat he presented. If AHS staff had consistently documented his behaviors, a pattern of "boundary testing" would have been more apparent. Consistently using a student information system to document student concerns makes it easier to identify the early warning signs of violence, escalation in anger management issues, and decline in academic performance. In addition, evidence indicates that FERPA was misinterpreted,

leading the school staff to believe that they would be more liable if they had shared information about KP's concerning behaviors, than if they had not.

Second, the Sheriff's Report clearly states that at least ten AHS students had substantive concerns about KP's anger problems and gun ownership prior to the shooting, but only one student reported their concern to a counselor and no students reported their concerns to Safe2Tell (see ACSO Report, pp. 10-11). If just one student or teacher, had called Safe2Tell, this tragedy might have been averted. At the time of the shooting and as of July 2015, LPS and AHS administrators did not have a policy regarding Safe2Tell training and did not require that students or staff receive training on the Safe2Tell system. In fact, the information shared about Safe2Tell at AHS was limited to a sticker on the back of student identification cards, posters displayed in the school hallways, and a PowerPoint slide displayed in the cafeteria.

Third, AHS and LPS failed to implement an Interagency Information Sharing Agreement to facilitate the sharing of vital information about an individual's safety concerns with law enforcement, juvenile justice, and social services agencies, which is recommended by Colorado statute (SB 00-133), the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV), and the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (see the CSSRC's *Essentials of School Threat Assessment: Preventing Targeted School Violence,* LPS 03421–03443).

Threat Assessment

There were two major failures with threat assessment in AHS and LPS: (1) AHS's failure to adequately implement LPS's threat assessment policies and (2) LPS's failure to validate its threat assessment tool and process. First, AHS administrators and counselors failed to implement LPS's prescribed threat assessment policy, including (a) thorough completion of the threat assessment

instrument, (b) staff-wide training on the threat assessment instrument, and (c) adequate follow-up and safety planning.

Completion of the Threat Assessment Process. There was a minimal attempt to proactively obtain information about all of the risk factors during the threat assessment process. As a result, KP was assessed as a "low level" of concern and the district did not review his threat assessment (at the time of the shooting, the district only reviewed threat assessments with "medium" and "high" levels of concern). In addition, the U.S. Secret Service's six principles and 11 questions – which were included in LPS's Threat Assessment Training PowerPoint (see Exhibit 4) – were *inadequately* investigated, and a "skeptical, inquisitive mindset" was not used to evaluate the information in the case.

Training on Threat Assessment. In addition, there was a failure to train the AHS principal, most assistant principals, and all teachers in LPS's threat assessment procedures. In fact, from 2011-12 to 2013-14, only seven AHS staff received threat assessment training (see LPS, p. 00858). According to LPS's records, the principal was never trained and the assistant principal who conducted the threat assessment of KP was never trained. Moreover, LPS's two-hour threat assessment training had no role-playing, one-on-one coaching, and participants did not actually complete a mock threat assessment. Research finds that didactic, reading, and audiovisual presentation methods used by LPS in their threat assessment training typically only yield 20% retention among participants (see Appendix 6: Skills Training with Guided Practice).

Threat Assessment Follow-up and Safety Planning. AHS's threat assessment process did not include adequate follow-up, support, and safety planning for KP. AHS did not create a physical location for the information vortex in the student information system or establish an information vortex coordinator

within the threat assessment team, as recommended by CSSRC (Exhibit 5, LPS 03426) and implied in LPS's Threat Assessment Training PowerPoint (Exhibit 4, LPS 0494). The safety plan was never updated after the threat assessment follow-up meeting on September 26, 2013, in spite of the fact that some AHS staff knew new risk and threat factors in October, November, and December.

The threat assessment performed at AHS and the follow-up safety plan performed on KP, on September 9, 2013 did not follow LPS's Threat Assessment Training or the Secret Service's basic principles of threat assessment (see Fein, et al., 2002). For example, out of 24 possible risk factors on KP's threat assessment (Exhibit 35), only five were checked, and this investigation revealed that seven to nine *additional* risk factors could have been checked. If the threat assessment and follow-up plan had been properly executed, KP's violent plans might have been interrupted. A properly executed threat assessment would have revealed a higher level of concern, and a higher level of concern should have prompted more serious disciplinary action and more thorough monitoring and support planning. If the threat had been taken more seriously and an Interagency Social Support Team (ISST) had been assembled, they could have crafted a support plan for KP. In this case and as is common practice, AHS's threat assessment team (e.g., Multijurisdictional Threat Assessment Team or MTAT) acted as both the threat assessment team and the ISST. In general, the threat assessment team is responsible for the threat assessment and monitoring, and the ISST is responsible for building a support plan.

The second major failure on threat assessment in this case was LPS's failure to validate its threat assessment tool and process. Without a validated threat assessment tool, or a plan to validate the chosen tool, there is no way of knowing if it actually predicted violence. As an analogy, a physician would not give a child a medication that was not tested and proven effective by the

Federal Drug Administration. Similarly, a threat assessment tool that has *not* been tested and proven effective should not be used to evaluate a student's level of concern.

Systems Thinking

High schools include many systems designed to produce graduates with the intellectual and social skills needed to prepare students for the rest of their lives. In *The Logic of Failure,* Dietrich Dörner (1996) argues that systems fail in small incremental steps, not with one catastrophic error. AHS and LPS's system failed at many points to get a handle on KP's problems, in spite of the fact that there were many warning signs and many opportunities. The list on the following page captures the many small errors made prior to the shooting.

Systems Thinking Failures: Decisions Made Prior to the Shooting
Decision to ***not*** build a safety and support action plan for KP after incidents of violence in elementary school, when early violence is clearly a strong risk factor for later violence (see Appendices 1 and 5)
Decision to ignore the possible impact of his parent's divorce
Decision to ***not*** enlist the help of one adult at AHS that KP trusted in his safety and support action plan
Decision to ***not*** have a safety and support action plan (e.g., mental health referrals, follow-up meetings) when KP yelled "fuck" in class and was suspended
Decision to ***not*** follow-up on KP's use of inappropriate "penis" line in debate competition
Decision to ***not*** follow up on KP's claims of being bullied by others and being a bully to others
Decision to ***not*** empirically validate LPS's threat and risk assessment tool
Decision to ***not*** treat KP's violation of the Assistant Principal's request that he not attend speech and debate team practices as evidence of "boundary probing"
Decision to only use two threat assessment team members in the threat assessment process, despite state and federal guidelines
Decision to leave the School Resource Officer out of the threat assessment process
Decision to ***not*** assign a staff member to serve as the "information vortex" for KP during the threat assessment
Decision to ***not*** have a district-level Safe2Tell training policy for high schools
Decision to ***not*** forward KP's threat assessment to the district for review
Decision to ***not*** thoroughly check the facts and collect collateral information on KP in the threat assessment process
Decision to ***not*** tell a student's teachers the reason for a threat assessment, detention, or suspension
Decision to train threat assessment using only didactic and audio visual resources (see Appendix 6)
Decision to ***not*** formally suspend KP for his threat to "kill" Mr. Murphy
Decision to ***not*** formally suspend KP for his outburst in Ms. Lombardi's Spanish class
Decision to ***not*** obtain video surveillance footage of KP making a threat about Mr. Murphy in parking lot
Decision to allow KP to return to school without the threat assessment team obtaining release of records from KP's private therapist
Decision to allow KP to stay in school, when requested release of mental health records was not provided, as requested
Decision to only have one follow-up meeting to discuss KP's progress with the safety and support action plan
Decision to ***not*** recommend a Student Intervention Team (SIT) to support KP when his grades began to decline
Decision to ***not*** inform the threat assessment team about KP's viewing of guns and mass shootings on his laptop
Decision to ***not*** search KP's computer, locker, or possessions for confirmation of his viewing of guns and mass shootings
Decision to ***not*** report KP's purchase of a gun or interests in guns, as well as his anger problems, to Safe2Tell
Decision to ***not*** re-open KP's threat assessment case after being told he had an angry outburst in class and had a gun

Not one of these decisions by themselves caused the shooting, but together they compounded upon each other in a system ill-equipped to prevent them, leaving almost no barriers to KP's plans. In short, AHS and LPS lacked the infrastructure to adequately evaluate, respond to and follow-up on students in crisis. Responsibilities for information sharing, threat assessment, and follow-up were spread across several people within LPS and AHS and not officially assigned to anyone.

The evidence of faulty systems thinking within AHS and LPS included a tendency for groupthink, a reluctance to reflect on and admit failure, and the minimization of sincere concern. These findings represent the most challenging and the most important of the problems to solve, because information sharing and threat assessment *cannot* overcome an unhealthy organizational system. According to research from a wide variety of fields (e.g., the criminal justice system, hospitals, and aerospace engineering), organizational errors do not occur as the result of one *major* mistake or one *bad apple* employee (Dörner, 1996; Doyle, 2010). Instead, organizational errors occur with "a small mistake here, and a small mistake there, and these mistakes add up" (Dörner, 1996, p. 7). With a complex problem like school safety, organizational errors prove difficult to resolve. Costa (2012, p. 179) suggests that, under these conditions, "We need a short term plan to stay alive long enough to have a permanent cure." The findings indicate that, in the short term, schools and districts should implement a continuous improvement model of error review. In the long term, schools and districts should adopt Dörner's five steps for addressing the complex problem of school safety.

Major Recommendations

This section highlights 14 of the 32 recommendations presented in this report. The goals of the arbitration were to provide information on how to identify students in crisis, support students in crisis, and develop protocols for responding to students in crisis. To reach these goals and to help prevent future tragedies, schools and districts must ***first*** build safe school climates (see Fein, et al., 2002). A safe school climate is one where "students view teachers as being fair, the rules are universally enforced and students feel welcome, are engaged in activities and know a teacher they can talk to about a problem" (Elliott, 2009, p. 54). These recommendations seek to promote safety and prevent violence in all school settings (Nekvasil & Cornell, 2015). While the findings come from AHS and LPS, the recommendations may apply to many schools and districts in Colorado.

The institutional barriers within schools, districts, and our culture will need to be dismantled, including the belief that schools are powerless to manage mental health issues. Schools can manage mental health and social support issues. The task is complicated but it is not impossible. The promotion of school safety will require the implementation of multiple mitigations in parallel. Costa (2012) calls this "parallel incrementalism," a mitigation strategy whereby the cumulative effect of several incrementally useful strategies implemented in parallel is exponentially more effective than one strategy implemented at a time. The authors recommend that the following strategies be implemented in parallel:

1. Recommend that principals, assistant principals, teachers, counselors, psychologists, coaches, and School Resource Officers (SROs) consistently use a student information system (e.g., Infinite Campus) to document

matters of a "public safety concern,"[3] including student behavior concerns, conduct violations, interventions, academic concerns, threat assessment results, and safety and support action plans.

2. Recommend that schools and districts promote Safe2Tell in ***formal*** trainings to students and staff each year, using skills practice, one-on-one feedback, and coaching (see www.Safe2Tell.org and Appendix 6: Skills Training with Guided Practice) and emphasizing the three core principles:
    a. No one will know; Safe2Tell is an ***anonymous*** reporting system.
    b. When someone could be hurt or injured, you have a ***duty*** to report the concern to authorities and break the code of silence.
    c. Safe2Tell is not limited to student reporting; the system is available to ***all students, teachers, parents, staff, and community members***, and they also have a duty to report any safety concern to either authorities or Safe2Tell.

3. Recommend that school districts complete an Interagency Information Sharing Agreement with community agencies, including law enforcement agencies, mental health service providers, social services agencies, and the criminal justice system, as recommended by the Columbine Review Commission, stated in C.R.S. § 22-32-109.1(3), and outlined by the Colorado Attorney General's Office. To facilitate this reform, it is recommended that the words "if possible" be removed from C.R.S. § 22-32-109.1(3).

[3] In the Colorado Attorney General's "Juvenile Information Exchange Laws: A Model for Implementation," "Public Safety Concern" Information, HB 00-1119 creates a category of information that is now available to schools (*see § 19-1-303(2)(b)(I) C.R.S).* It is crucial that local jurisdictions adopt a common definition for when information gives rise to a "public safety concern" for two reasons. First, the data that can qualify as a "public safety concern" is at the discretion of the agency. Second, a lot of data can fall within this category, because local standards vary. The following provides a non-exhaustive list of what types of information or incidents local jurisdictions can include in such a definition: any act of violence or intimidation on school grounds or at a school sponsored event; any act that compromises school or community safety (e.g., threats or expressed desires to commit violence at a school); any act or threat that involves risk of injury to multiple people, a student, or a school employee; any act involving a firearm or explosive device; any act involving sexual assault; any act involving arson; any act involving cruelty to animals; any act of violence executed pursuant advance planning; any act involving the distribution of narcotics; information concerning a student's affiliation with a gang; information concerning a student with a history of acts falling within the above categories.

4. Recommend that schools and districts install a validated ***threat*** assessment process, by either using the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines (V-STAG), by using a different validated threat assessment process, or by validating the current threat assessment process with similar outcome measures to V-STAG (see Appendix 8).

5. Recommend that schools and districts install a validated ***risk*** assessment process, such as the Structured Assessment of Violence Risk in Youth (SAVRY™) or the Risk and Resiliency Check Up (RRCU). Use the results from the ***risk*** assessment to build a safety and support plan for any student who has a threat assessment. Risk assessments incorporate both risk and protective factors in the plan for the student.

6. Recommend that, during a threat assessment, the Secret Service's six principles and 11 questions be used to gather and evaluate the early warning signs, threat factors, risk factors, and protective factors. The process should emphasize an "investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset" for each factor until a clear yes or no is found (Fein, et al., 2002, p. 29). All threat assessment team members, and ***if needed*** the ISST members and peers, should be included in the process (see Appendix 3).

7. Recommend that schools and districts train in a validated threat and risk assessment process using a one-on-one cognitive behavioral training standard (see Appendix 6). Adopt a formal training curriculum for threat and risk assessment. Train all teachers and staff in the overall process, and train principals, assistant principals, counselors, and SROs in a minimum of one-day hands-on scenario driven training curriculum.

8. Recommend that an information vortex coordinator (from the threat assessment team) be assigned to every threat assessed student; the

information vortex coordinator should be noted in the student's profile within the student information system so that when a concern arises, all teachers and other staff can easily identify and communicate with the coordinator. In addition, it should be the ***proactive duty*** of the information vortex coordinator to continue to seek out and evaluate information about a threat assessed student and recall the threat assessment team if new risk or threat factors are revealed.

9. Recommend that the Colorado School Safety Resource Center (CSSRC) audit any school or district requesting an audit for proper use of V-STAG (or other validated threat and risk assessment process). Any school or district that has implemented a validated process and receives a "high pass" in an audit of that process could use the results as an affirmative defense in any proceeding under SB 15-213. The audit process and implementation guidelines should be reviewed by CSPV.[4]

10. Recommend that the threat assessment and support teams produce a ***formal*** safety and support plan for every threat assessed student, relying on Individual Educational Plans (IEP) and Student Intervention Teams (SIT) as models. ISSTs build and monitor the plan for threat assessed students and revise the assessment and plan whenever a new threat or risk factor appears (see Appendix 3: Child in Crisis Assessment Recommendation).

11. Recommend that each threat assessed (or red flag) student be paired with an adult in authority, ideally within the school, who can build a trusting and positive relationship with that student.

12. Recommend that the Attorney General annually update the ***Colorado School Violence Prevention and School Discipline Manual*** on school safety

[4] In order to avoid a conflict of interest, the CSSRC should not be receiving significant funding from any school, district, or school-based association.

statutes, FERPA, and their application to school districts. Additionally, recommend that school districts conduct an annual training on all statutes related to school safety and violence prevention and produce an annual compliance report.

13. Recommend that schools and districts conduct an established school climate survey of students and staff every one to two years and when the findings exceed established norms, select and implement experimentally proven interventions, programs, and practices.

14. Recommend that schools and districts create a continuous improvement model of error review committee to promote a culture of safety (and minimize groupthink), whereby staff can report concerns about organizational errors and near misses and staff can openly discuss, reflect upon, and address concerns and mistakes without formal or informal penalty. This committee should help develop short and long term plans for school safety reform. Dörner's (1996) five steps can help with long term planning.

APPENDIX 1: CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF KP'S CONCERNING BEHAVIORS

Sandberg Elementary School		**Brief Description**	**Action Taken**	**Noted In**	**Who Knew**	**Exhibit**
11/24/03	Hit students with lunch box because they weren't fast enough in lunch line; asked to write an apology letter	Hit peers with lunchbox	Required to write apology	IC-BDR	ES	24
12/18/03	Kicked student in stomach and hit another student in head; asked to write an apology letter	Kicked and hit peers	Required to write apology	IC-BDR	ES	24
Arapahoe High School (2011-12) Sophomore Year		**Brief Description**	**Action Taken**	**Noted In**	**Who Knew**	**Exhibit**
11/16/11	Told peer to just "go cut yourself" in Jackie Price's class	Told peer "go cut yourself"	Called father	IC-CL	JP, KT, ES	19
11/28/11	Told Jackie Price "he has always been someone's bitch" and other kids are mean to him; said "why wouldn't I make him my bitch after that has been done to me?"; was "extremely angry" in meeting	"Make him my bitch"	Held meeting; discussed anger management	IC-CL	JP, KT, ES	19
Arapahoe High School (2012-13) Junior Year		**Brief Description**	**Action Taken**	**Noted In**	**Who Knew**	**Exhibit**
3/15/13	Yelled "fuck" in response to C- grade in Dan Swamley's class; said "teachers out to get me" and "my peers have often pushed me. . . one outburst for a decade of hell is unfair"; signed statement "Ides of March"	Yelled "fuck" in math	Met with KK; suspended for one day	Not noted in IC-BDR or IC-CL ; hardcopy	DS, KK	32
Date Unknown	Opened with the statement "I woke up this morning and realized my penis had fallen off" in a debate competition	"Penis" line in speech	None	not noted in IC	TM	34 (p. 4-5)
Arapahoe High School (2013-14) Senior Year		**Brief Description**	**Action Taken**	**Noted In**	**Who Knew**	**Exhibit**
8/11/13	Ran stop sign, hit another car, and totaled car after leaving work angry	Totaled car	Mother reported during threat assessment	Not noted	BP, ES, KK	33
8/21/13	Told another student "that's stupid" and verbally bullied" classmates in Jeff Corson's class; Corson consulted with Murphy about problem	Bullied peers verbally	JC consulted TM; JC enlisted KP as expert	Not noted	JC, TM	13
9/3/13	Removed as captain of the AHS Extemporaneous Team of the Speech and Debate by Murphy during meeting with mother; did not respond well; stared at Murphy with a "haunting" look and was later heard yelling "I'm going to kill that guy [Murphy]" in the parking lot by Mark Loptien	Yelled "going to kill" Murphy	Mother kept home for 3 days; threat assessment scheduled for 9/9/13; no suspension	IC-BDR; TA and Action Plan	TM, ML, DM, KK, ES, JE	19, 35
9/5/15	Documented threat with ACSO	Threat noted in police report	ACSO Report	ACSO Report	TM, ML, DM, KK, ES, JE	18
9/9/13	Assessed for threat by Kevin Kolasa and Esther Song with parents (Mark and Barbara Pierson) present; described as apologetic but not remorseful; labeled a "low risk"; requested to not attend speech and debate meetings for 2-3 weeks	AHS threat assessment performed	Not permitted to attend speech and debate practices	IC-CL; IC-BDR; TA and Action Plan	KK, ES, BP, MP	19, 24, 35
9/9/13	Assessed at Highland Behavioral Health; described as not a threat to self or others	Private mental health assessment performed	None	TA and Action Plan	KK, ES, BP	35
9/10/15	Disregarded Kolasa's request to not attend speech and debate practice; asked to leave practice by Murphy	Boundary probing	Asked to leave	Not noted	TM, KK	Murphy Depo, p. 170-1

9/--/13	Received F on Michelle Crookham's math test and wrote "KMFDM" on top of test, referring to German band "No Pity for the Majority" reported incident to Kolasa	Wrote KMFDM on test	None	Not noted	MC, KK	16
9/17/13	Diary entry: outlined "project Saguntum, a 10 year subconscious project to . . . shoot up my school. . . before year is over . . .I am a psychopath with a superiority complex"	Started diary and planning attack	None	Not noted	No one	14
9/22/13	Diary entry: "I am filled with hate, I love it. . . I feel like a bomb. . . When I do commit my atrocities, I want conversation to be about elementary school teasing. Words hurt, can mold a sociopath, and will lead someone a decade later to kill"	Described self as sociopath	None	Not noted	No one	14
9/26/13	Conducted threat assessment follow-up meeting with Thurneau, Kolasa, Murphy, Karl and parents	AHS conducted threat follow-up	None taken	IC-CL	AT, KK, TM	19
9/30/13	Diary entry: "I feel like a bomb. . . it is important to note I rarely take my meds"	Feel like bomb	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
10/--/13	Observed looking at pictures of guns and mass shootings on computer in cafeteria by Cameron Rust and Christina Kolk, which they reported to Darrell Meredith	Viewed guns/shootings in cafeteria – reported to AP	None taken	Not noted	CK, CR, DM	27
10/1/13	Diary entry: "Saguntum is the project to shoot up (and maybe bomb) Arapahoe High School"	Planned to shoot up AHS	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
10/3/13	Diary entry: "since day 1, my job has been to . . . shoot up the school. . .date is set for mid-November, I need time to build my arsenal"	Set attack date for mid-Nov	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
10/11/13	Diary entry: "had a shrink appointment. . . massive waste of time"	Wasted psych meeting	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
10/15/13	Diary entry: "shooting up [place where I had] psych evaluation. . . lied through my teeth through the test"	Lied in psych evaluation	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
10/26/13	Diary entry: "the 13th of December is a great date, as the 347th . . . date of the year. . . it is a day of gore"	Set attack date for Dec 13th	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
11/1/13	Asked "when can we drink tequila" in Vicki Lombardi's Spanish class; Lombardi emailed mother with concern about behavior and grades	Tequila incident	None taken	Not noted in IC; email	VL, BP	21
11/6/13	Diary entry: "December 13 date I chose is perfect. . . 38 days"	38 days	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
11/24/15	Diary entry: "It's weird going through life knowing that in 19 days, I'm going to be dead"	19 days	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
11/26/13	Diary entry: "I can't believe in a fortnight, I'll be dead. . .I had no friends at Arapahoe, and I was trying to fit in"	No AHS friends	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
12/6/13	Purchased shotgun	Bought gun	None taken	Not noted	6 peers	14
12/11/13	Locked out of Lombardi's classroom by a classmate; banged on door and when asked if he was serious, said "serious as a heart attack"	Banged on classroom door	Sent home; not suspended	IC-BDR	VL, KK	24
12/12/13	Observed pacing near library	Acted suspiciously	None taken	Not noted	Peer	ACSO p.1785
12/12/13	Told peers and teacher about his new shotgun "Kurt Cobain" in hallway; said to peer "Don't make me show	Showed pictures of gun	None taken	Not noted	Peers, BM	ACSO p. 1785

	you Kurt Cobain"; teacher Brad Meyer warned about suspension for threat					
12/12/13	Student reported Karl's possession of a gun to Song	Peer reported gun purchase to counselor	None taken	Not noted	Peer; ES-denied	ACSO p.1784-1785
12/12/13	Purchased shotgun shells and belt at Cabela's	Purchased ammunition	None taken	Not noted	No one	ACSO p.1954
12/13/13	Diary entries end	Last diary entry	None taken	Not noted	No one	14
12/13/13	Shot Claire	Shot Claire				

Initials Glossary: AT: Astrid Thurneau; BM: Brad Meyer; BP: Barbara Pierson; CK: Christina Kolk; CR: Cameron Rust; DM: Darrell Meredith; ES: Esther Song; JC: Jeff Corson; KK: Kevin Kolasa; ML: Mark Loptien; TM: Tracy Murphy; VL: Victoria Lombardi

APPENDIX 3: CHILD IN CRISIS ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATION

Prepared by Dr. Monica Fitzgerald, Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado-Boulder

An analysis of populations of rampage shooters or school shooters in the U.S. indicates that there is substantial heterogeneity in these youth's histories, including their family backgrounds, personalities, and behavior (Langman, 2009). This heterogeneity has led Langman (2009) to identify typologies of school shooters; these typologies can potentially be used with other prominent social factors and trends to develop a threat assessment process (Langman, 2009; O'Toole, 2000; Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000; Gladwell, 2015). Langman's (2009) analysis of ten cases of school shooters led to the identification of three typologies: *traumatized, psychotic*, or *psychopathic*. It is important to note that profiles or typologies should not be used alone to identify students who pose a risk for targeted school violence, given their imprecision and the risk for false negatives. However, these typologies combined with additional information regarding types of student *behaviors and communications* provides valuable threat assessment information (Fein, et al., 2002). What is concerning is that the severity of the escalating psychological and behavioral problems experienced by school shooters in many cases was not identified and their mental health needs went unmet. In many school shooting cases, youth sent clear signals to others regarding their problems and thus were not "invisible" but did not receive an effective response (Fein, et al., 2002).

The limited yet valuable data about youth who engage in targeted violence guides our recommendations for threat assessment in schools. The data suggests that it is important to screen "youth of concern" for: (a) *child abuse and trauma history,* including emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect; (b) *household dysfunction* and *childhood stressors,* such as mental illness in a household member, absence of a parent due to divorce, domestic violence, substance use, and parental criminal history; (c) *psychotic symptoms, traits, and behaviors,* such as auditory or visual hallucinations, bizarre, disturbed thoughts, paranoia, fantasy/delusional thinking, odd social behavior,

verbalizations, and appearance, and other characteristics of schizophrenia-spectrum disorders; and (d) *psychopathic traits and behaviors,* including a lack of empathy, narcissism, sense of superiority and contempt for others, blatant disregard for human life, verbalizations about hurting or killing others, lack of guilt and remorse, and other mean-spirited and sadistic behaviors. Other psychopathic traits and behaviors of concern include blatant violation and rejection of traditional values, laws, social norms, or morality. Other factors such as family structure, peer influence, and role models have been highlighted as important to assess.

The literature highlights the importance of assessing individual psychological factors contributing to engaging in targeted violence, rather than over-focusing on social factors (e.g., media violence). It is strongly recommended to develop a comprehensive, school-wide system for recognizing and promoting youth's social, emotional and behavioral health and development, family background and level of support, as well as peer interaction (Schonfeld, 2015) in order to effectively identify appropriate supports and intervention strategies and prevent future violence. A stepped process is recommended for identifying youth with psychological and behavioral health problems and assessing threat:

1. School staff (e.g., teachers, principal, administrative, lunch servers) receive psychoeducation and training to identify psychological and behavioral health problems as a first step of identifying "youth of concern" and refer to mental health school staff. Students also receive developmentally appropriate psychoeducation about emotional and behavioral signs, communications, and social dynamics of concern in their friends and/or peers, and provide comfortable ways to share this information with adults, and schools share this type of information with parents. This is critical for early identification and prevention because peers knew about the attacker's

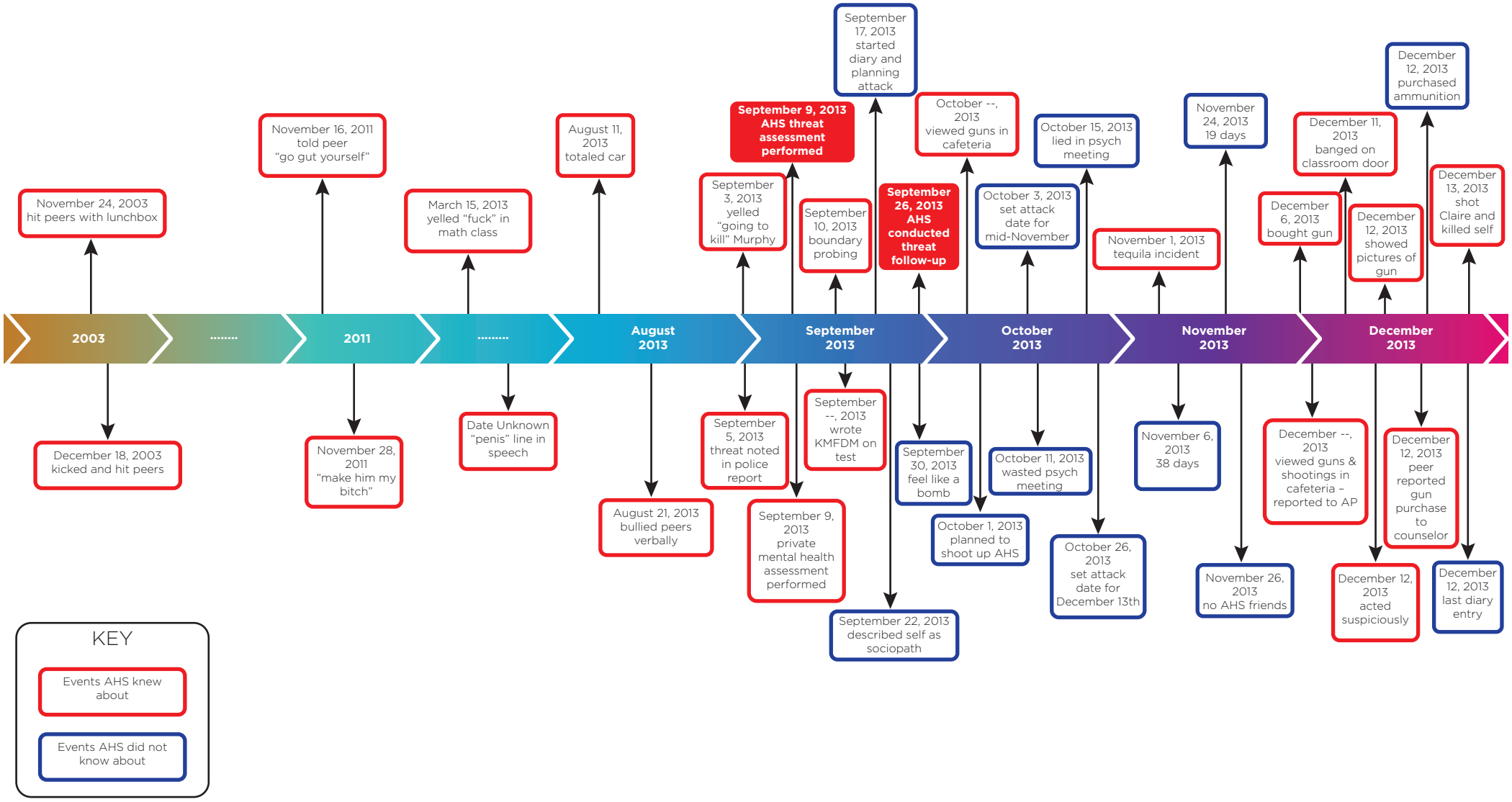
idea and/or plan in most shooting incidents, and rarely did adults receive the threat information (Fein, et al., 2002).

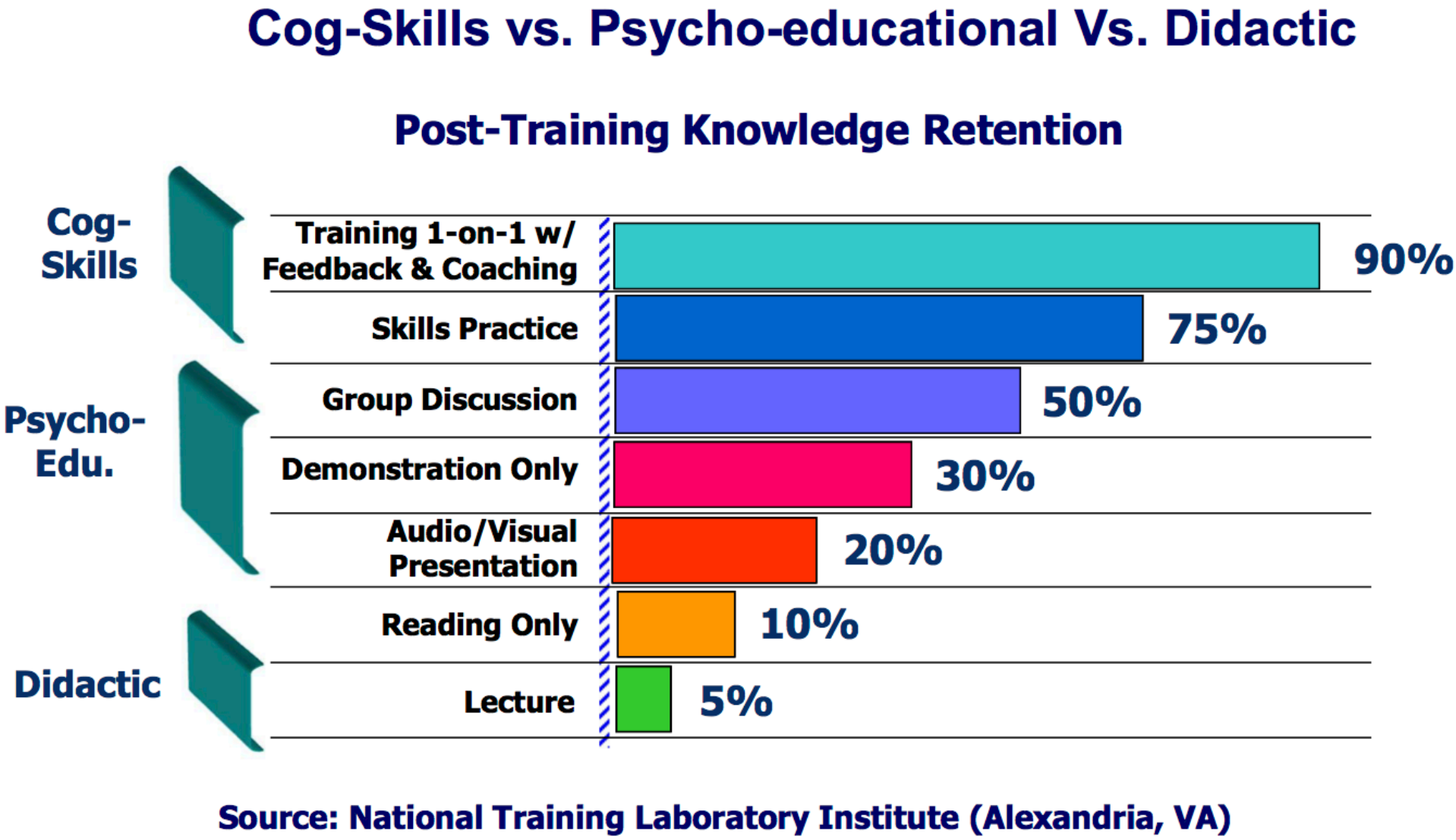
2. When youth are identified as "of concern," mental health school staff administer brief standardized risk and threat assessment screening tools to identify problem areas and risk level.

3. When youth are identified as having emotional and behavioral problems and needs through the initial brief screening, mental health staff administer *comprehensive*, standardized assessment tools and approaches (e.g., structured interviews) to assess psychological and behavioral health needs and violence risk in youth.

4. Mental health staff identify support strategies and interventions to target the youth's identified emotional, social, and behaviors of concern and closely monitor youth receiving those supports/interventions to measure progress and assess violence risk in an ongoing manner.

There are psychometrically strong, well-validated structured tools for assessing violence and trauma history, violence risk, and mental and behavioral health problems in youth that can be incorporated in such a process (e.g., Borum, Bartel, & Forth, 2003; Singh, Grann, & Fazel, 2011; Pynoos & Steinberg, 2013; Kelleher, Harley, Murtagh, & Cannon, 2011; Goodman et al., 1998; Gardner, Lucas, Kolko, & Campo, 2007).


2003
.....
2011
.....
August 2013
September 2013
October 2013
November 2013
December 2013
November 24, 2003 hit peers with lunchbox
December 18, 2003 kicked and hit peers
November 16, 2011 told peer "go gut yourself"
November 28, 2011 "make him my bitch"
March 15, 2013 yelled "fuck" in math class
Date Unknown "penis" line in speech
August 11, 2013 totaled car
August 21, 2013 bullied peers verbally
September 3, 2013 yelled "going to kill" Murphy
September 5, 2013 threat noted in police report
September 9, 2013 AHS threat assessment performed
September 9, 2013 private mental health assessment performed
September 10, 2013 boundary probing
September --, 2013 wrote KMFDM on test
September 17, 2013 started diary and planning attack
September 22, 2013 described self as sociopath
September 26, 2013 AHS conducted threat follow-up
September 30, 2013 feel like a bomb
October --, 2013 viewed guns in cafeteria
October 1, 2013 planned to shoot up AHS
October 3, 2013 set attack date for mid-November
October 11, 2013 wasted psych meeting
October 15, 2013 lied in psych meeting
October 26, 2013 set attack date for December 13th
November 1, 2013 tequila incident
November 6, 2013 38 days
November 24, 2013 19 days
November 26, 2013 no AHS friends
December 6, 2013 bought gun
December --, 2013 viewed guns & shootings in cafeteria – reported to AP
December 11, 2013 banged on classroom door
December 12, 2013 showed pictures of gun
December 12, 2013 acted suspiciously
December 12, 2013 purchased ammunition
December 12, 2013 peer reported gun purchase to counselor
December 13, 2013 shot Claire and killed self
December 12, 2013 last diary entry
KEY
Events AHS knew about
Events AHS did not know about


Cog-Skills vs. Psycho-educational Vs. Didactic
Post-Training Knowledge Retention
Cog-Skills
Psycho-Edu.
Didactic
Training 1-on-1 w/ Feedback & Coaching
90%
Skills Practice
75%
Group Discussion
50%
Demonstration Only
30%
Audio/Visual Presentation
20%
Reading Only
10%
Lecture
5%
Source: National Training Laboratory Institute (Alexandria, VA)

Briefing on the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines

http://curry.virginia.edu/research/projects/threat-assessment

Developed and field-tested in 2002, based on FBI and Secret Service/Dept. of Education reports

- Threat assessment conducted when a student has made a threat or engaged in threatening behavior
- Step-by-step process in manual, *Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence*
- Goal is to prevent violence and return student to school by understanding why student made threat and resolving the conflict or problem that stimulated the threat
- *2013 listed as evidence-based program in the National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)*

Each school establishes a multidisciplinary team based on its existing staff of school administrators, mental health, and law enforcement professionals (Schools may adapt team composition to fit their staffing, draw upon law enforcement officers from other schools or community)

- Follows a 7-step decision tree and triage approach, so that most threats are resolved quickly with only a few team members; only the most serious threats require law enforcement and full team involvement (see Figure 1 on next page)
- Teams trained in one-day workshop (additional review of manual needed)

School systems trained:

- 47 Virginia school divisions encompassing 1,000+ schools
- Schools in Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Wisconsin
- Canada, Germany

Published research findings from 2 field tests, 3 controlled studies, and 1 state implementation study

- School staff have decreased anxiety, increased knowledge in responding to threats
- Students do not carry out their threats
- Reductions of 50% in long-term suspensions
- Reductions in bullying infractions
- Increased use of school counseling, increased parent involvement
- Students report greater willingness to seek help for threats of violence, more positive views of school personnel

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APPENDIX 8: BRIEFING ON VIRGINIA STUDENT THREAT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

Potential Violence Prevented by Threat Assessment

The following cases were reported by school authorities using our threat assessment guidelines (these are brief summaries, not complete accounts of all factors considered):

1. A high school student posted on Facebook that he was considering killing himself and individuals on a list. The threat assessment process revealed that the student was depressed, facing juvenile charges, and was fantasizing about a way out of his troubles. Mental health services were provided and the family was involved in a resolution.

2. A high school student threatened to blow up the school. The threat was investigated and could not be resolved as transient, raising it to the level of a very serious substantive threat. Law enforcement conducted an investigation which determined that the student had constructed a bomb that was found at his home. The student was arrested.

3. A student was reported by friends to be contemplating a shooting at school. Interviews indicated that the threat was imminent and law enforcement was alerted. The student was identified at the time he entered the school and found to have a loaded firearm in his possession. He was arrested and charged with a felony.

4. A student showed some classmates a knife at school. The information was shared with an adult and the threat assessment team began an investigation. The student was called to the office and a search of his book bag revealed a large knife and a loaded revolver. A threat assessment revealed a perception of being bullied and various family issues. Mental health services and a bullying intervention were provided.

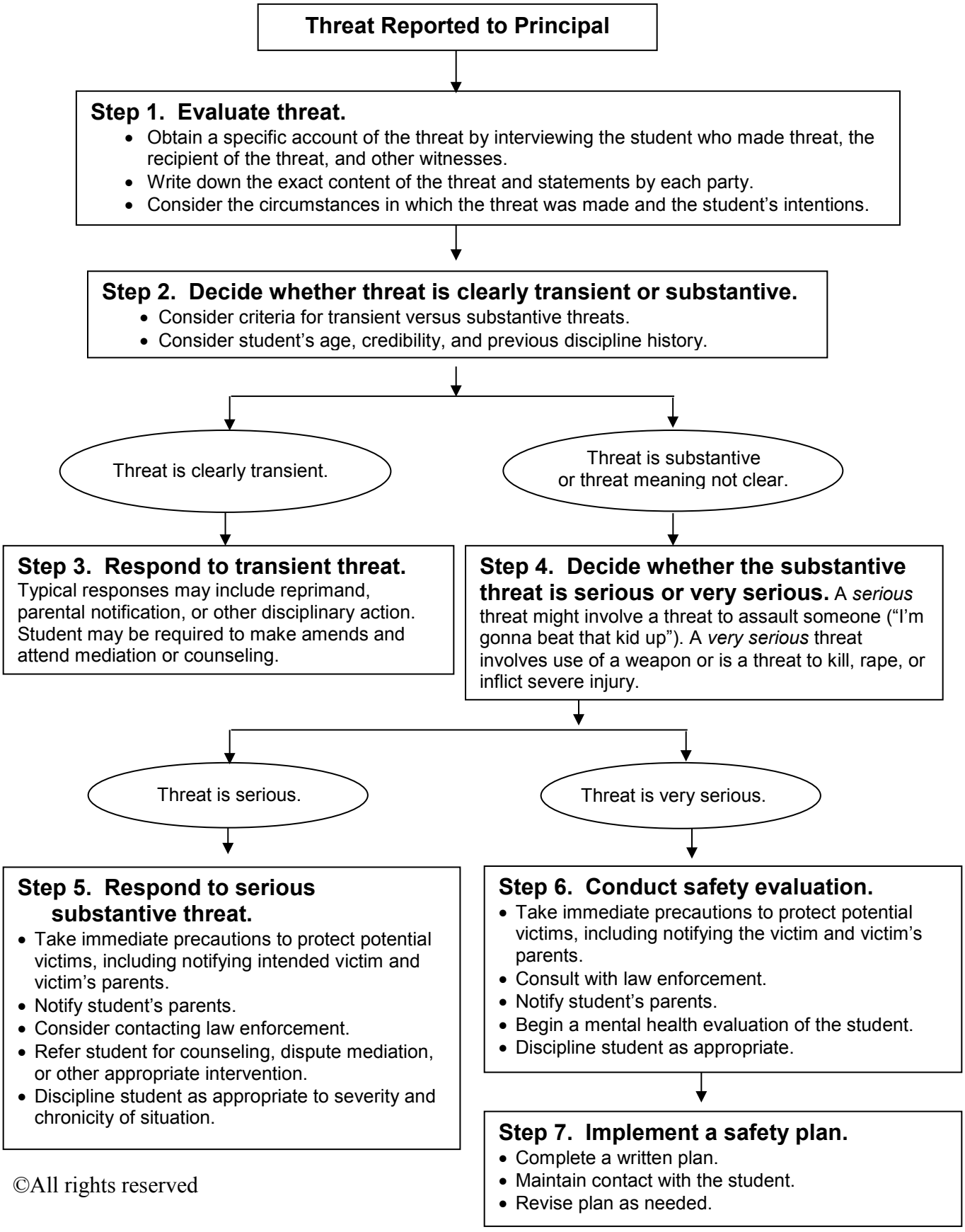
5. A high school student wrote a play that was about shooting students at school due to bullying. The parents found the written play and brought it to the police, who notified school authorities. A threat assessment revealed that the student was depressed and felt that he was being bullied at school. While he did not have access to weapons, appropriate mental health services and referrals were made.

6. Parents took their daughter to an emergency room due to suicidal threats contained in letters found in her room. The threat assessment revealed a plan to commit a mass homicide at school with her boyfriend, and then they would then kill themselves. The girl was afraid that she was pregnant and both students thought that the school environment was hostile. They had attempted to locate firearms, but were unsuccessful. Both students received extensive mental health services.

7. A student made threats to carry out an ethnic cleansing at his school. A threat assessment was conducted that included a search of his home. An unsecured loaded semi-auto pistol was found and confiscated. The child was detained for a mental evaluation. The investigation revealed that he was communicating with an online friend in another state who was considering a similar act. The police in that state were contacted and the individual was arrested.

8. A high school student was disciplined by school administrators for writing a defamatory remark on his ex-girlfriend's locker. Following the discipline meeting, the student posted on Facebook that he was going to kill the principal and assistant principal. This information was brought by students to the attention of the principal who immediately convened a threat assessment. The team judged the threat to be very serious substantive, resulting in the requirement of a mental health evaluation. The evaluation revealed urgent mental health concerns and significant evidence that he planned to carry out acts of homicide. As a result, mental health intervention was court-ordered and a safety plan involving law enforcement was implemented.

APPENDIX 8: BRIEFING ON VIRGINIA STUDENT THREAT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES



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