**Creating Safe and Healthy Schools: Common Myths about Making Schools Safer**  
**And Evidence-Supported Strategies**

**Jeremy Bullock Safe Schools Conference**

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A drawing of a face

Description automatically generated

The Oregon School Safety Survey

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<https://www.pbisapps.org/Applications/Pages/PBIS-Assessment-Surveys.aspx#sss>

Essential Questions for School Safety Planning



Please take a few minutes to complete the attached survey. Please place a check (**X**) next to the item that best reflects your opinion for each question. Your responses will be valuable in determining training and support needs related to school safety and violence prevention.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School Name:** |  |  | **Date:** |  | |  |
| **City, Town, or Community:** |  |  | **State:** |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | |  |
| Your Role |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Administrator |  |  | Related Service Provider |  |  |  |
| Teacher |  |  | Parent |  |  |  |
| Classified |  |  | Student |  |  |  |
| Special Education Teacher |  |  | Other |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section One: Assessment of Risk Factors for School Safety and Violence** | **Rating** | | | | |
| **Indicate the extent to which these factors exist in your school and neighborhood:** | not at all | minimally | moderately | extensively | don’t know |
| 1. Illegal weapons. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Vandalism. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. High student mobility (i.e. frequent changes in school enrollment). |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Graffiti. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Gang activity. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Truancy. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Student suspensions and/or expulsions |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Students adjudicated by the court. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Parents withdrawing students from school because of safety concerns. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Child abuse in the home. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Trespassing on school grounds. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Poverty. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Crimes (e.g. theft, extortion, hazing). |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Illegal drug and alcohol use. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Fights, conflict, and assault. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Incidence of bullying, intimidation, and harassment. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Deteriorating condition of the physical facilities in the school. |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Section Two: Assessment of Response Plans for School Safety and Violence** |  |  | **Rating** |  |  |
| **Indicate the extent to which these factors exist in your school and neighborhood:** | not at all | minimally | moderately | extensively | don’t know |
| 1. Opportunity for extracurricular programs and sports activities. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Professional development and staff training. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Crisis and emergency response plans. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Consistently implemented school-wide discipline plans |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Student support services in school (e.g. counseling, monitoring, support team systems) |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Parent involvement in our school (e.g. efforts to enhance school safety, student support). |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Student preparation for crises and emergencies. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Supervision of students across all settings. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Suicide prevention/response plans. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Student participation and involvement in academic activities. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Positive school climate for learning. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Acceptance of diversity. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Response to conflict and problem solving. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Collaboration with community resources. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. High expectations for student learning and productivity. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Effective student-teacher relationships. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Section Three: Your Comments on School Safety and Violence**

1. What is the most pressing safety need in your school?

2. What school safety activities does your school do best?

3. What topics are most important for training and staff development?

4. What are the biggest barriers to improved school safety measures?

5. What other comments do you have regarding school safety?

6. What other factors not included in this survey do you believe affect school safety?

**11/26/2018 Why security measures won't stop school shootings**

[https://theconversation.com/why-security-measures-wont-stop-school-shootings-90738 1/4](https://theconversation.com/why-security-measures-wont-stop-school-shootings-90738%201/4)

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**Why security measures won’t stop school shootings**

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When deadly school shootings like the one that took place on Valentine’s Day in Broward County,

Florida occur, often they are followed by calls for more stringent security measures.

For instance, after the Jan. 23 case in which a 15-year-old student allegedly shot and killed two

students and wounded 16 others at a small-town high school in Kentucky, some Kentucky lawmakers

called for armed teachers and staff.

If anything, the response of the Kentucky lawmakers represents what has been called the “target hardening”

approach to school shootings. This approach attempts to fortify schools against gun

violence through increased security measures. These measures may include metal detectors, lockdown

policies, “run, hide, fight” training and surveillance cameras.

While some of these measures seem sensible, overall there is little empirical evidence that such

security measures decrease the likelihood of school shootings. Surveillance cameras were powerless to

stop the carnage in Columbine and school lock-down policies did not save the children at Sandy

Hook.

As researchers who have collaboratively written about school shootings, we believe what is missing

from the discussion is the idea of an educational response. Current policy responses do not address

the fundamental question of why so many mass shootings take place in schools. To answer this

question, we need to get to the heart of how students experience school and the meaning that schools

have in American life.

An educational response is important because the “target hardening” approach might actually make

things worse by changing students’ experience of schools in ways that suggest violence rather than

prevent it.

**How security measures can backfire**

Filling schools with metal detectors, surveillance cameras, police officers and gun-wielding teachers

tells students that schools are scary, dangerous and violent places – places where violence is expected

to occur.

The “target hardening” approach also has the potential to change how teachers, students and

administrators see one another. How teachers understand the children and youth they teach has

important educational consequences. Are students budding citizens or future workers? Are they

plants to nourish or clay to mold?

One of the most common recommendations for schools, for example, is that they should be engaged

in threat assessment. Checklists are sometimes suggested to school personnel to determine when

students should be considered as having the potential for harm. While such practices have their place,

as a society we should be aware that these practices change how teachers think of students: not as

budding learners, but potential shooters; not with the potential to grow and flourish, but with the

potential to enact lethal harm.

Of course, society can think of students in different ways at different times. But the more teachers

think of students as threats to be assessed, the less educators will think of students as individuals to

nourish and cultivate.

As researchers, we have read the accounts of dozens of different school shootings, and we think

educators, parents and others should begin to raise the following questions about schools.

**Questions of status**

To what extent does the school – through things like athletics, homecoming royalties, or dances and

so forth – encourage what some political scientists have called the “status tournament of adolescence”

that lurks behind the stories of many school shootings?

As one reads about such shootings, one often senses a feeling of social anxiety and betrayal on the part

of perpetrator. Americans hold high expectations for schools as places of friendship and romance, yet

too often students find alienation, humiliation and isolation. The frustration at these thwarted

expectations at least sometimes seems to turn toward the school itself.

**Force and control issues**

To what extent does the force and coercion employed by many schools contribute to a “might makes

right” mentality and associated violence?

It is true that bullying is part of some of the stories of school shooters. Students who are bullied or

who are bullies themselves will quite naturally think of schools as places appropriate for violence.

There is also sometimes a rage, however, against the day-to-day imposition of school discipline and

punishment. Since schools are experienced as places of force and control, for some students, they also

come to be seen as appropriate places for violence.

**Identity and expression**

In research on American high schools, one finds the idea that American schools are intertwined with

notions of “expressive individualism” – the idea that human beings should find out and be true to who

they really are on the inside. Might this also contribute to school shootings?

Suburban high schools, in particular, are seen by the middle class as places to accomplish expressive

projects. Sociologist Robert Bulman points out, for example, how Hollywood films set in suburban

settings focus on student journeys of self-discovery, while urban school films focus on heroic teachers

and academic achievement. In the same vein, many suburban school shooters see what they are doing

as acts of self-expression.

Reading stories of school shootings, one often finds moments in which the shooters claim that

something inside, whether hatred or frustration, needed to find expression. An example of this is the

manifesto left by Luke Woodham, who shot two students in 1997. “I am not spoiled or lazy,” he wrote,

“for murder is not weak or slow-witted, murder is gutsy and daring.” The school became the place

where Woodham thought he could express the gutsy and daring person he found on the inside.

**What to do**

Of course, it will be difficult to definitively answer the questions we have posed above. And, even if we

are able to find answers, it is not clear what the proper educational response should be.

For example, self-expression might be a valuable task for schools, even if it is found to contribute in

some way to school shootings. Our suggestion is simply that, instead of trying to find solutions to

school shootings in the dubious arms of security technologies, or even solely through more promising

public policy, society should ask deeper questions about the nature of education and schooling in

American society.

It is time to think about school shootings not as a problem of security, but also as a problem of

education.

11/26/2018 Why security measures won't stop school shootings

https://theconversation.com/why-security-measures-wont-stop-school-shootings-90738 4/4

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Walker, H. M., Severson, H. H., & Feil, E. G. (1995). *The Early Screening Project: A proven child-find process*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

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**Universal Screening: Teacher Nomination Form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples of externalizing types of behavior** | **Examples of internalizing types of behavior** |
| Displaying aggression towards objects or persons | Low or restricted activity levels |
| Arguing or defying the teacher | Avoidance of speaking with others |
| Forcing the submission of others | Shy, timid, and/or unassertive behaviors |
| Out of seat behavior | Avoidance or withdrawal from social situations |
| Non-compliance with teacher instructions or requests | A preference to play or spend time alone |
| Tantrums | Acting in a fearful manner |
| Hyperactive Behavior | Avoiding participation in games and activities |
| Disturbing Others | Unresponsive to social interactions by others |
| Stealing | Failure to stand up for oneself |
| Not Following Teacher or School Rules |  |
| **Non-examples of externalizing types of behavior** | **Non-examples of internalizing types of behavior** |
| Cooperating | Initiation of social interactions with peers |
| Sharing | Engagement in conversations with peers |
| Working on assigned tasks | Normal rates or level of social contact with peers |
| Asking for help | Displaying positive social behaviors toward others |
| Listening to teacher | Participating in games and activities |
| Interacting in appropriate manner with peers | Resolving peer conflicts in an appropriate manner |
| Following directions | Joining in with others |
| Attending to task demands |  |
| Complying with teacher requests |  |
| **Student Nomination** | |
| **Externalizing Students** | **Internalizing Students** |
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 5 | 5 |

| ***Walker Survey Instrument: Elementary Student Version*** | |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1=never, 3=Sometimes, 5=frequently) | Enter responses below: | | | |
| ***Item #*** | ***Item*** | ***Value*** | ***School*** | ***Peer*** | ***Teacher*** |
| 1 | **Other children seek child out to involve him/her in activities.** |  |  |  |  |
| 2 | **Uses free time appropriately.** |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | **Shares laughter with peers.** |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | **Has good work habits (e.g., is organized, uses class time well, etc.)** |  |  |  |  |
| 5 | **Compromises with peers when situation calls for it.** |  |  |  |  |
| 6 | **Responds to teasing or name calling by ignoring, changing the subject, or some other constructive means.** |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | **Accepts constructive criticism from peers without becoming angry.** |  |  |  |  |
| 8 | **Plays or talks with peers for extended periods of time.** |  |  |  |  |
| 9 | **Initiates conversation(s) with peers in informal situations.** |  |  |  |  |
| 10 | **Listens carefully to teacher instructions and directions for assignments.** |  |  |  |  |
| 11 | **Displays independent study skills (e.g., can work adequately with minimum teacher support).** |  |  |  |  |
| 12 | **Appropriately copes with aggression from others (e.g., tries to avoid a fight, walks away, seeks assistance, defends self).** |  |  |  |  |
| 13 | **Interacts with a number of different peers.** |  |  |  |  |
| 14 | **Can accept not getting her/his own way.** |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | **Attends to assigned tasks.** |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | **Keeps conversation with peers going.** |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | **Invites peers to play or share activities.** |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | **Does seatwork assignments as directed.** |  |  |  |  |
| 19 | **Produces work of acceptable quality given her/his skill level.** |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Subscale Sores** |  |  |  |
|  |  | **Grand Total** |  |  |  |
|  | **Risk Status (based on Total Score <= 61)** | RISK |  |  |  |

**Walker Survey Instrument: Adolescent Student Version**

Pre \_\_\_ Post \_\_\_

School Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Today’s Date (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Service Start Date (mm/dd/yyyy) \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student ID# \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Form was completed (circle): Before Services During After Services

*Current Grade* (circle one): 7 8 9 10 11 12 12+ *Gender*: \_\_\_ Male \_\_ Female Age: \_\_\_\_

**Items and Ratings**

| **Items** | **Rating**  Never Sometimes Frequently  1 2 3 4 5 | **Subscale**  **SC PR SA Emp** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Does seatwork assignments as directed. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 2. Attends to assigned tasks. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 3. Has good work habits (e.g. is organized, uses class time well, etc.) | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 4. Displays independent study skills (e.g. can work adequately with minimum teacher support). | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 5. Produces work of acceptable quality given his/her skill level. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 6. Is personally well organized. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 7. Listens carefully to teacher instructions and directions for assignments. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 8. Spends free time interacting with peers. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 9. Initiates conversations with peers in informal situations. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 10. Participates or talks with peers for extended periods of time. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 11. Keeps conversation with peers going. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 12. Interacts with several different peers. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 13. Shares laughter with peers. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 14. Makes friends easily with others. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 15. Expresses anger appropriately (e.g. reacts to situation without becoming violent or destructive). | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 16. Controls temper. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 17. Accepts constructive criticism from peers without becoming angry. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 18. Responds to teasing or name calling by ignoring, changing the subject, or some other constructive means. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 19. Appropriately copes with aggression from others (e.g. tries to avoid a fight, walks away, seeks assistance, defends self). | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 20. Shows sympathy for others. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 21. Is sensitive to the needs of others. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 22. Is considerate of the needs of others. | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
| 23. Compliments others regarding personal attributes (e.g. appearance, special skills, etc.). | □ □ □ □ □ |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Grand Totals:** |  |  |  |  |



**Reflection on Bullying and Harassment**

**Jeffrey Sprague, Ph.D. (jeffs@uoregon.edu)**

**Socially Aggressive Behavior and Bullying in Schools**

* Does your school have a school-wide program that teaches pro-social skills to all students, creating a respectful social climate such as PBIS?
* To what extent is socially aggressive behavior, bullying and harassment a problem in our school?
* Does our school or school district have a specific policy about socially aggressive behavior / bullying?
  + If so, what does the policy require us to do?
* What is the proper response if a student reports a socially aggressive behavior or bullying incident to you?
  + What should you say to the student?
  + What information do you need to collect?
  + Who do you report the socially aggressive behavior or bullying to?
* Does our school have a specific plan or program for on socially aggressive behavior or bullying prevention and response?
  + Do students know how to report socially aggressive behavior or bullying properly?
  + Do students know how to respond to a socially aggressive behavior or bullying incident?
    - When they are the victim?
    - When they are “standing by” and watching it happen?
  + How do we respond when the socially aggressive person /bully won’t stop?

**What Can We Do About Aggression and Bullying?**

1. Create a school culture that encourages communication:

* Student to student, student to adult, and adult to student communication
* Respectful communication between all members of the school community
  + Respectful use of electronic devices

1. Create a school culture that encourages trust:

* Promises to follow up are kept
* Students are listened to
* Students are supported and protected

1. Understand the school's anti-bullying policies and procedures:

* Be able to explain them to students, colleagues, and parents
* Follow their proscribed processes
* Commit to them as a vehicle for positive culture change

1. Develop and maintain a safe and inviting system for reporting incidents:

* Encourage reporting by involved parties when they see or experience aggression or bullying, including students, teachers, and parents
* Take all reports of aggressive behavior or bullying seriously
* Respect confidentiality
* Collect evidence
* Respond as soon as possible

**Activity: Planning to Implement Your Bullying Prevention Approach**

Turn back to your reflection earlier in this session to help you identify areas of need among the action steps below. In the notes column you might list: current status, available data, resources (policies, tools, or area experts), completion deadlines, responsible parties, and general ideas for implementation.

| **Action Step** | **Notes about Your Plan** |
| --- | --- |
| Formulate and implement a bullying and harassment policy at the campus-specific or district-based levels |  |
| Assess the nature and extent of the problem through surveys and observations |  |
| Select an appropriate school-wide response such as School Wide PBIS |  |
| Solicit family support and participation |  |
| Train and inform all staff, students, and families |  |
| Promote active supervision of students in common areas (see Chapter 8!) |  |
| Respond to chronic aggression and bullying with increasing supports, sanctions, and proven interventions |  |
| Assist students who are chronically targeted as victims to be more assertive, gain friendship skills, and avoid dangerous situations |  |
| Provide specific instruction on the role of bystanders in preventing socially aggressive behavior or bullying |  |
| Record all instances of socially aggressive and bullying behavior and watching for patterns, so that programmatic changes can be made. |  |