



The 2015 Virginia School Safety Audit Survey Results



JUNE 2016

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly and enacted by former Governor Mark Warner in 2005, designated the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) to prescribe the audit content and reporting process for the School Safety Audit program. Accordingly, the VCSCS and DCJS Research Center conduct an annual on-line school safety survey that allows schools and school divisions to meet the *Code of Virginia* mandate to report safety audit data. Annual reports can be found on the DCJS website at www.dcjs.virginia.gov/vcss/audit/index.cfm. The survey for the 2014–2015 academic school year was conducted in August and September 2015 and covered school safety-related topics such as: assessment, planning and communication, student safety concerns, school security/surveillance, and threat assessment teams. Within these major topics, sub-topics such as crisis management plans/emergency management plans, communication with law enforcement, mental health, safety-related personnel, and safety-related conditions were addressed.

Findings from the 2014–2015 Virginia School Safety Survey

There were 1,960 schools that participated in the 2014–2015 school safety survey. Of these, 56% identified themselves as elementary schools, 17% as middle schools, and 16% as high schools. The other 11% were made up of combined, primary, pre-kindergarten, alternative, technical/vocational, charter, magnet, Governor’s, special education, correctional, adult education, and deaf and blind schools.

Assessment, Planning, and Communication

Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan

Nearly all schools (96%) reported practicing some portion of their Crisis Management Plan (CMP). Almost one-quarter of the schools (23%) responded that they activated their CMP. This rate was slightly higher among high schools (33%) than elementary (19%), middle (26%), and other types of schools (26%).

Communication with Law Enforcement

Overall, 83% of schools reported having formal processes or protocols through which their school routinely receives notification on certain offenses committed by students under certain circumstances as described in *Virginia Code § 22.1-279.3:1 (Paragraph B)*. This rate was highest among high schools (90%) and middle schools (90%).

Training

Schools were also asked about what type of school safety training is most needed. They were asked to select all that apply from a list of training topics. The following is a list of potential responses and the percentage of schools that chose each response:

- Positive behavioral interventions and support (44%)
- Social media (44%)
- Mental health problem awareness and recognition (43%)
- Alternatives to suspension and expulsion (36%)
- Crisis planning, prevention and response (24%)
- Peer relations (22%)
- Threat assessment team training (19%)

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- Violence prevention training (15%)
- Suicide prevention (9%)
- Gangs and human trafficking recognition (8%)
- Search and seizure (7%)
- Drug and alcohol training (6%)

Mental Health

Schools were asked about the mental health services provided at their respective school. More than three-quarters of the schools (77%) reported that they employ a mental health professional whose primary assignment is to provide counseling services. A similar proportion of elementary, middle and high schools (79%, 78% and 76% respectively) responded that they employ an individual such as this.

The 77% of schools that indicated they employ a mental health professional were then asked the number of full-time and part-time mental health professionals that they employ. On average, schools employ two full-time mental health professionals and one part-time mental health professional.

School Security and Surveillance

Security Strategies

Schools were asked a series of questions regarding the security practices at their school. Most schools (88%) reported that all of their exterior entrances are kept locked during school hours, a slight increase from the 86% of schools that reported all exterior entrances are kept locked during school hours in 2013–2014. Nearly all elementary (91%) middle (89%) and high (87%) schools reported having exterior entrances that are kept locked during school hours. Most schools (83%) also reported that the main entrance of their school is secured by a controlled access system during school hours. In terms of specific classrooms, over half of the schools (51%) reported that all of their classrooms can be locked from both the inside and outside of the classroom.

Slightly under half the responding schools (46%) reported that someone is stationed at the front entrance of the school at all times during school hours to ensure that visitors report to the main office for visitor check-in. Only 2% of responding schools reported that none of the listed security strategies were in place during the 2014–2015 year at their school.

Safety Personnel

Overall, nearly two-thirds of schools (1,239, 63%) reported having safety/security personnel working at their school during the 2014–2015 school year. This included 43% of elementary schools, 94% of middle schools, 96% of high schools and 71% of other schools.

Of the 1,239 schools with safety/security personnel, over half (758, 57%) reported that they employed only full-time safety/security personnel, while slightly less (534, 39%) reported employing only part-time safety/security personnel and very few schools (4%) reported employing both full-time and part-time.

Full-time School Resource Officers were reported by 610 schools and part-time SROs were reported by 465 schools.

Safety-Related Conditions

Over half of the schools (59%) responded that administrators are able to communicate with law enforcement/first responders via radio when they are inside the school building.

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More than three-quarters of the schools (79%) reported that first responders had access to their school during a lockdown without having to breach doors or windows. This was highest among middle and high schools (83% and 88% respectively).

Most of the schools (86%) conduct background checks on volunteers who work with their students. High schools reported the highest percentage of background checks on volunteers (94%), followed closely by middle (91%) and elementary (82%) schools.

Threat Assessment

In the 2014–2015 survey, schools were asked a series of questions about threat assessments that occurred during the school year. These questions included dissemination of threat assessment process and policy information, the number and types of threat assessments conducted, the threat assessment model used, and how threat assessments were classified according to the model.

Implementation of Threat Assessment Teams (TATs)

School division superintendents were also surveyed on threat assessment topics. Asked when the use of threat assessment teams began in their divisions, 24% said they have had division-wide use of threat assessment teams for over five years. Just over half (56%) began division-wide use of threat assessment teams during the past two school years.

Threat Assessment Team Coverage

Division superintendents were also asked whether threat assessment teams were used to cover threat assessments in only one school or in multiple schools in their division. Most (82%) have a single TAT for each school in the division.

Awareness of Threat Assessment Processes and Policies

Nearly two-thirds of schools (65%) reported that they provide information about their school's threat assessment processes and policies to students, staff, or parents. Of these schools, the most used mode of dissemination for delivering this information to school staff and students was verbal presentation (48% and 37%, respectively), and for dissemination to parents, brochures or paper documents were most frequently used (29%).

Threat Assessments Conducted

Schools were asked how many assessments were conducted by their threat assessment team during the 2014–2015 school year. Over half of the schools (1,068, 55%) reported conducting one or more threat assessments throughout the year.

Of the 5,694 threat assessments conducted by the 1,068 schools in 2014–2015, nearly all involved students from the school (5,513, 97%).

Schools were asked about the type of threat involved in each of their reported threat assessments. About half (52%) involved threats to harm someone else (not self), followed by threats of suicide (28%), threats of non-suicidal self-harm (16%) and threats to harm others and self (4%).

Threat Assessment Training Issues

When schools were asked what threat assessment training would be most helpful to their school, the most frequently cited were: retraining/follow-up training due to staff turnover or lag in training time (26%), training on

different types of threats/threat assessment/levels/team makeup (25%), generally a need for “more training” (24%), and training on interacting with students (19%).

Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) Offenses

Schools were asked to detail whether they experienced an increase, decrease, or the same amount of various Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) offenses during the 2014–2015 school year when compared with the 2013–2014 school year. Within the specific DCV offense categories, results indicated:

- Approximately one-third of responding schools (31%) indicated that they experienced a decrease in the number of disorderly disruptive behavior incidents, while 52% responded that the number of these offenses stayed about the same, and 17% saw an increase of such instances.
- Similarly, nearly one-third of responding schools (30%) reported that they experienced a decrease in the number of offenses against students. 59% of schools reported that the number of offenses against students at their school stayed the same, and 12% saw an increase of such offenses. In addition, 23% of responding schools reported that they experienced a decrease in the number of offenses against staff, while 68% reported similar amounts of these offenses occurring during the 2014–2015 year, and 9% of responding schools saw a decrease of such offenses.
- Within the category of offenses against persons, almost one-quarter of responding schools (24%) experienced a decrease of these issues, while 70% of schools experienced a similar amount of offenses against persons as the previous year and 6% experienced an increase of these offenses.
- In terms of weapons related offenses, one-fifth of responding schools (20%) experienced a decrease in these offenses, while 71% of schools saw similar amounts as the previous year and 9% experienced an increase of these types of offenses.
- When asked about the number of property offenses, 19% of schools experienced a decrease from the previous year, while 72% experienced a similar amount and 9% saw an increase of property offenses.
- In terms of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug offenses, 19% of schools experienced a decrease of these offenses from the previous year, while 70% experienced approximately the same amount and 11% saw an increase of these offenses.
- Within technology offenses, 18% of schools reported experiencing a decrease of such offenses, while 71% of schools saw the similar amount as the previous year and 11% saw an increase of such offenses.

Disciplinary Infractions and Responses

This analysis links school safety practices and student disciplinary infractions that resulted in suspension from school and was conducted by researchers at University of Virginia, Curry School of Education.

The average rate of unduplicated suspensions (each student was counted only once, even if suspended more than once) showed middle schools experienced more than twice the rate of suspensions for aggression against others (51 per 1,000 students) compared to elementary (12 per 1,000) and high schools (25 per 1,000). High schools experienced a much higher rate of ATOD infractions (18 per 1,000 students) than middle schools (7 per 1,000) or elementary schools (0.4 per 1,000). Infractions related to weapons were less common, but slightly higher in middle schools (3 per 1,000) than in high schools (2 per 1,000) and elementary schools (1 per 1,000).

High schools (96 per 1,000, or about 10 per 100 students) and middle schools (87 per 1,000) had many more short-term suspensions (<10 days) than elementary schools (28 per 1,000). Long-term suspensions (10+ days – 364 days) are less common, but again high schools and middle schools had more long-term suspensions (4 per 1,000) than elementary schools (0.3 per 1,000).

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Race/Ethnic Differences in Disciplinary Responses

The state population of students consisted of 23% Black students, 52% White students, 13% Hispanic/Latino students, and 12% 'Other' students (Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and multiracial students).

Black students were suspended at a higher rate than any other group in elementary school (43 per 1,000 Black students), middle school (149 per 1,000 Black students), and high school (131 per 1,000 Black students). Suspension rates were more similar among White and Hispanic students, ranging from 18 to 20 per 1,000 students in elementary schools, 63 to 77 per 1,000 students in middle schools, and 63 to 71 per 1,000 students in high schools.

There is unlikely to be a simple explanation for the racial disparities in suspension rates. Black students could be engaging in more aggression against others and more disruptive behaviors than students from other race/ethnic groups in some cases, and in other cases Black students could be treated differently for similar misbehavior. Both possible explanations require further study to understand and remedy.

Results from the Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey

The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey (VSSCS) is a survey of students and teachers designed to give secondary schools important information about the quality of their school climate and safety conditions and is conducted by UVA. In 2015, the survey was completed in 415 schools that had grades 7 or 8, including elementary, middle, and high schools. Survey results are based on reports by 56,508 students and 8,535 teachers and other school personnel.

Students consistently reported more teasing and bullying than teachers. Notably, a large majority of students (68%), but only about half of teachers/staff members (51%), agreed that students often got teased about their clothing or physical appearance. Similarly, a majority of students (52%), but a minority of teachers/staff members (31%), agreed that there was a lot of teasing about sexual topics at their school.

Many students (61%) and teachers/staff members (61%) reported being the victim of an insult at least one time in the year. Being the victim of stolen or damaged personal property was also fairly common among both students (40%) and teachers/staff members (24%). About one-third of students (31%) reported being physically attacked and threatened, while few teachers/staff members reported these forms of victimization (11% and 5%, respectively). Finally, 8% of students and 1% of teachers/staff members reported that a student had threatened them with a weapon.

Excerpts from Threat Assessment in Virginia Schools: Technical Report for 2014–2015

This examination used a selected sample of 785 elementary, middle, and high schools that conducted one or more threat assessments for a threat against another person involving a student from their school. Case-specific questions were asked for up to five selected cases per school.

There were 1,865 threat assessment cases reported by 785 Virginia public schools during the 2014–2015 school year.

The grade of the student(s) that made the threat was collected for all cases. The 4th and 5th grades had the highest numbers of cases in the sample, 206 and 204, respectively. The 6th, 7th, and 8th grades were next highest with 189 occurring in the 6th and 7th grades, and 194 occurring in the 8th grade. From there, the numbers declined steadily from the 9th through the 12th grades with only 62 cases reported as involving 12th grade students.

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The most common type of threat was a general unspecified threat to harm (33%) followed by a threat to kill (23%), although it must be emphasized that the content of the threat does not determine its level of seriousness. Threats to kill can be rhetorical statements that are intended to intimidate someone or express strong feelings without representing a genuine intent to commit a homicide. Battery without a weapon (18%), such as hitting or fighting someone, was the third most common threat.

Most threats were communicated directly to the intended target or victim (59%), with a smaller percentage made indirectly (27%) or implicitly (14%).

Threats were directed primarily at other students (68%), but there were substantial numbers directed at faculty (15%) as well as other school staff (4%) and administrators (3%).

A school administrator was involved in almost all (97%) threat assessment cases and a school counselor was involved in the great majority of cases (83%). Other team members involved in fewer than half of the cases were the school resource officer (42%), psychologist (29%), instructional staff or faculty (36%), social worker (20%), and others (9%), such as superintendent, school nurse, or behavior specialists.

In the great majority of cases, the school notified the parents of the student who made the threat (83%) and followed the school's discipline procedures (72%). Typical responses to the student were to caution the student about the consequences of carrying out the threat (70%), increase monitoring of the student (55%), and resolve the threat through an apology or explanation (61%).

Almost all students received disciplinary consequences (<1.0% reported cases with no disciplinary action), but there was a wide range of actions. A reprimand was the most common disciplinary action, occurring in 53% of the cases. Out-of-school suspension was the second most common disciplinary response to a student making a threat, but occurred in less than half (43%) of the cases. In-school suspension was used in only 16% of cases and detention in only 3% of cases. Approximately 1% of students were expelled and 6% of all cases involving a recommendation for expulsion were reduced to out-of-school suspension. Students were charged in 5% of cases and arrested in just 18 (1%) of cases.

The school's responses to the intended target of a threat depend on the nature of the threat and whether this person was a student. In approximately half of the cases (51%) the school notified the parent or guardian of the intended target. Other responses included providing supportive counseling (30%), increasing protective monitoring (34%), advising the intended target or parents of the right to report the threat to law enforcement (16%), informing the intended target or parents of the outcome for the student who made the threat (such as letting them know when the student was returning to school) (13%), and changing the class schedule for a student target (4%).

II. INTRODUCTION

Since 1997, state law has required all public schools to conduct school safety audits (§ 22.1-279.8). The purpose is to assess the safety conditions of schools, identify and develop solutions for physical safety concerns including building security issues, and identify and evaluate patterns of student safety concerns. Responses and solutions based on the audits include recommendations for structural adjustments, changes in school safety procedures, and revisions to school divisions' student code of conduct. Although the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) developed the original safety audit process, the legislature shifted responsibility for the development, standardization and analysis of the responses to the Virginia Center for School Safety (VCSS) at DCJS in 2005. The VCSS was renamed the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) in 2013 to emphasize its role in higher education institution safety, as well as K-12 school safety. The first automated Virginia School Safety Survey was conducted by the VCSCS in 2005 using data gathered from the 2004–2005 school year.

The survey process is updated each year to maintain its effectiveness and relevance. As a result, some topics are identified as requiring further examination each year, while other questions are continued to allow for trend analyses. Recent legislation requires threat assessment teams in public schools, and DCJS has expanded data collection on the threat assessment process as a result. This will allow us to assess how these teams are developing and whether the requirement for them is preventing violence and affecting suspension, expulsions, and discipline infractions in schools. This information will better inform legislators about the impact of this law and its results.

In addition, in 2014 DCJS entered into a partnership with the University of Virginia (UVA) pursuant to a grant award from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) to evaluate the statewide implementation and impact of using threat assessment procedures as a violence prevention strategy in Virginia public schools. This gives us a more in-depth look at threat assessment and at students who may pose a threat to themselves or others, thus providing an opportunity to assist those students and make schools safer.

III. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Virginia School Safety Survey asked about safety-related issues and practices in individual schools. The survey included questions about the school’s crisis management plan, threat assessment team and their classification of threat assessment cases, school climate, safety-related programs, and school security efforts.

Of the 1,960 public schools operating¹ in Virginia in the 2014–2015 school year, all schools completed the survey. They represent all of Virginia’s 132 school divisions, as well as Virginia’s Academic-Year Governor’s Schools, Regional Alternative Education Programs, Regional Career and Technical Programs, and Regional Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind.

School survey findings are organized by the following categories: School Identification and Demographic Information; Assessment, Planning, and Communication; Threat Assessment; Student Safety Concerns; and School Security and Surveillance.

A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix A. Appendix B contains definitions for terms used in the survey.

¹ For purposes of this survey, DCJS defined “school” as any separate physical structure that houses and instructs public school students during school hours.

IV. FINDINGS FROM THE 2014–2015 VIRGINIA SCHOOL SAFETY SURVEY

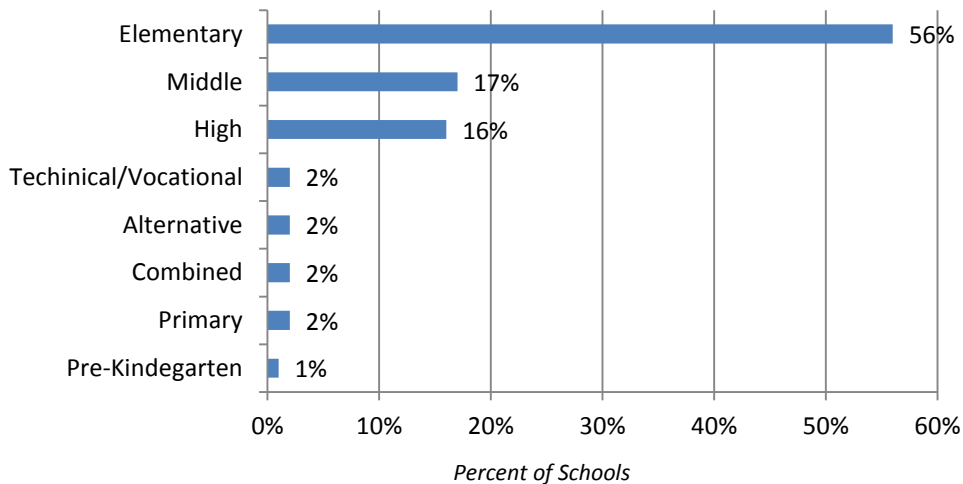
School Identification and Demographic Information

School Types

Schools were asked to select the school type that best describes their school. As shown in Figure 1, elementary schools (56%) made up over half of all Virginia public schools that responded to the survey, while middle and high schools made up 17% and 16%, respectively.

Other types of schools included: alternative, technical/vocational, primary, combined (each represented 2% of the total number of public schools surveyed); pre-kindergarten (represented 1% of schools surveyed); and primary schools, charter schools, magnet schools, Governor’s schools, correctional education, adult education, school for the deaf and blind and other schools (each represented less than 1% of schools).

Figure 1: Types of Public Schools in Virginia, 2014–2015 School Year (N = 1,960)



NOTE: School types that represented less than 1% included: Special Education, Governor’s School, Magnet School, Charter School, and Adult Education

For purposes of more detailed analysis throughout this report, schools were coded as elementary, middle, high, or other. This distinction was based on their grade levels and/or purpose, as follows:

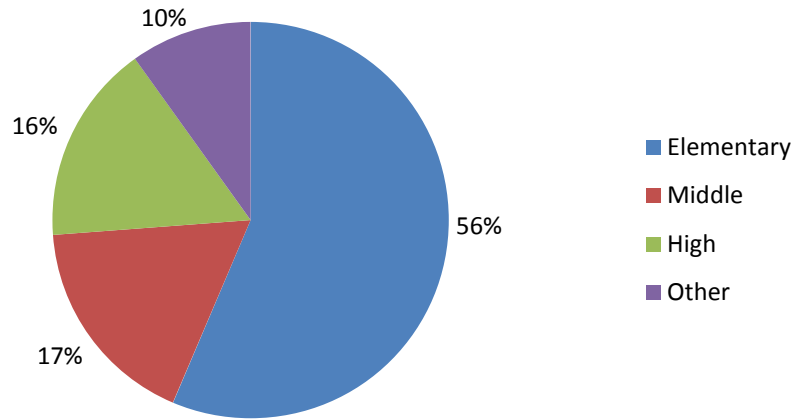
- Elementary** Typically grades K–5 but may include grade 6 (if school has grades K–7, it was coded as “other”). Elementary also includes intermediate schools which are typically grades 3–5 or grades 4–6, and also includes primary schools which are typically grades K–2.
- Middle** Typically grades 6–8 but may include grade 9. A few schools have grades 4–7 and a few have only grades 5 and 6, or only grades 8 and 9.
- High** Typically grades 9–12 but may include grade 8.
- Other** This includes all schools that do not fit into the above categories (such as combined schools) and others that have a specific purpose, such as pre-K, alternative, technical, special education, correctional education, adult education, school for deaf and blind, and other.

NOTE: Governor’s schools, magnet schools, and charter schools were coded according to their grade levels.

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These revised categories result in the following distribution among the 1,960 schools:

Figure 2: Types of Public Schools (N = 1,960)



NOTE: Of the 194 schools in the "Other" category, 22% were technical/vocational, 21% alternative, 17% combined, 14% pre-kindergarten, and 5% special education. Correctional education, adult education, school for deaf and blind, and other made up the remaining 21%.

NOTE: The percentages do not add up to 100% because they were rounded.

Assessment, Planning, and Communication

Crisis Management Plan (CMP)/Emergency Management Plan (EMP)

Virginia Code § 22.1-279.8 describes school crisis and emergency management plans and states that "each school board shall ensure that every school that it supervises shall develop a written school crisis, emergency management, and medical response plan."

Q. Did your school practice any portion of its Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan (CMP/EMP) during the 2014–2015 school year? (Practice does not include an actual emergency)

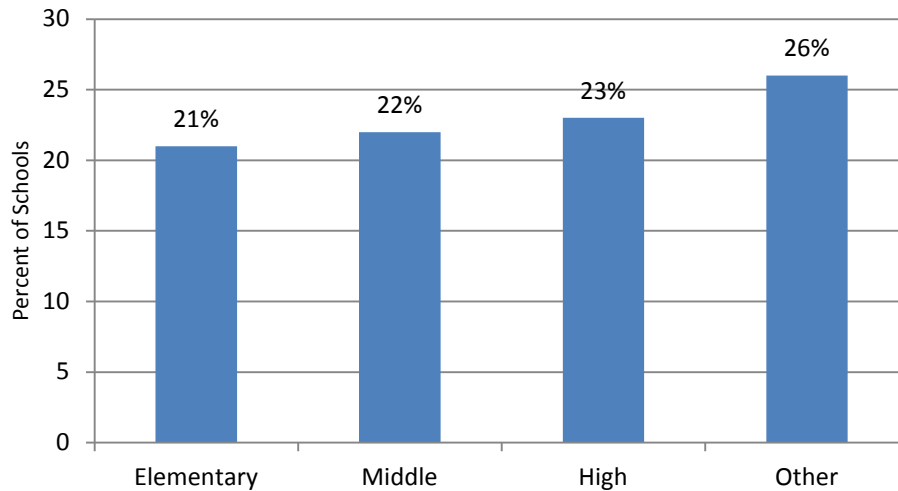
Nearly all schools (1,889, 97%) reported that they practiced some portion of their CMP/EMP during the 2014–2015 school year.

Q. Did you have to activate any portion of your school's crisis management plan during the 2014–2015 school year due to an actual critical event or emergency?

Overall, almost one-quarter of the schools (443, 23%) said they activated their CMP; the percentage was similar among high schools (21%), elementary schools (22%), and middle schools (23%), but slightly higher among other types of schools (26%).

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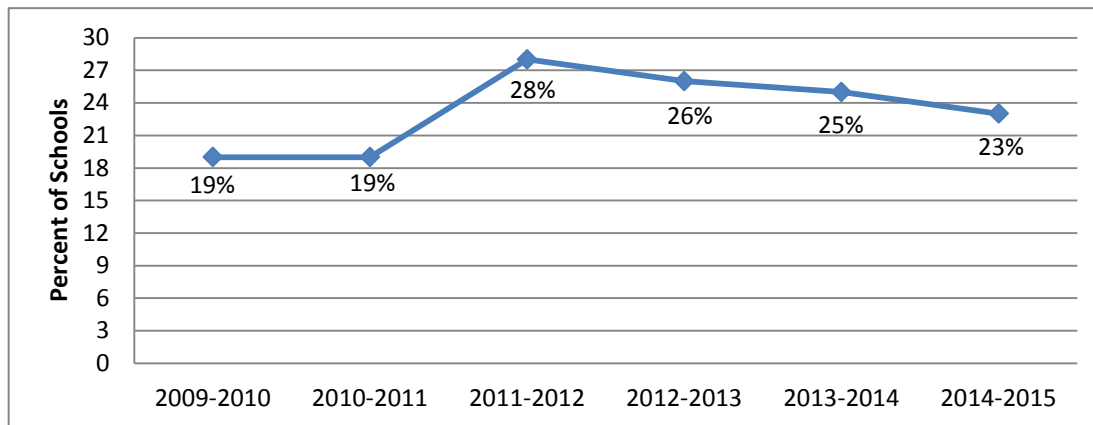
Figure 3: Schools That Activated Their Critical Management Plan (N = 1,959)



NOTE: The percentages are each independent of each other. For example, the 21% represents 21% (246) of the 1,105 elementary schools that completed the survey.

The following figure displays the trend from 2009–2015, in terms of the percent of schools that activated their CMP. In 2009–2010 and 2010–2011, slightly below one-fifth of participating schools (19%) indicated that they activated their CMP. This total spiked in 2011–2012 (28%), but it has been gradually declining each year since, settling in at 23% of schools in 2014–2015.

Figure 4: Percent of Schools that Activated their Critical Management Plan 2009–2015



Communication with Law Enforcement

Virginia Code § 22.1-279.3:1 (Paragraph B) requires local law enforcement to notify schools of certain offenses committed by students under certain circumstances.

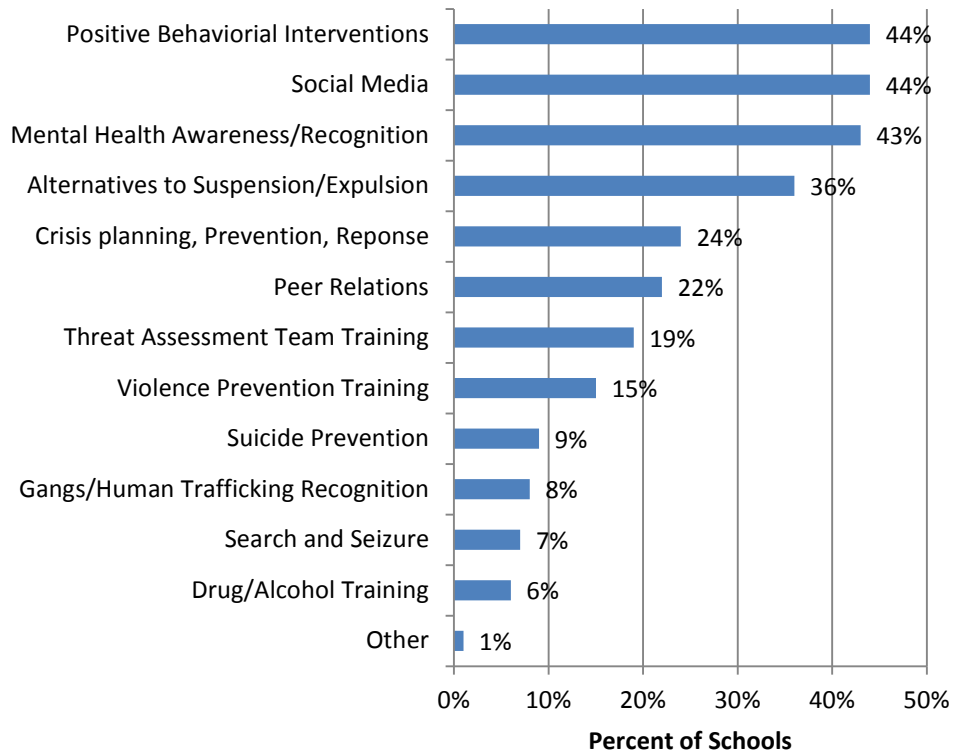
Q. Are there formal processes or protocols in place through which your school routinely receives notification on the Code listed offenses from local law enforcement?

Overall, 83% (1,635) of schools reported that they had such formal processes or protocols in place. The percentage was high with little variance among school types: Other (89%), elementary (85%), middle (79%), and high (79%) schools.

Training

Q. What type of school safety training is most needed by your school’s administration/faculty/staff?

Figure 5: Type of School Safety Training Most Needed (N = 1,960)



NOTE: Schools were allowed to select all the training options that they saw as most needed.

The training options most frequently identified by the schools as most needed include social media (44%), positive behavioral interventions and support (44%), mental health problem awareness (43%), and alternatives to suspension and expulsion (36%).

Mental Health

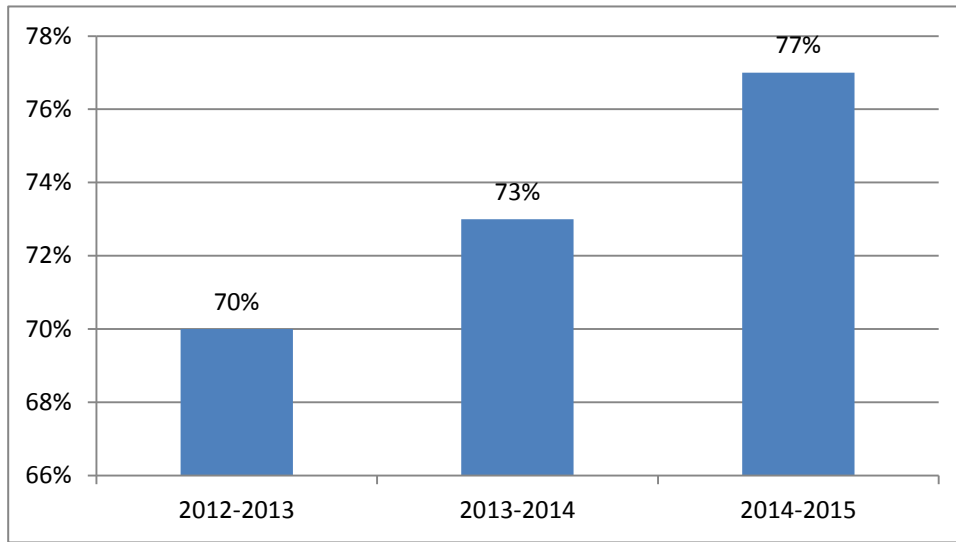
Q. Does your school employ a mental health professional (counselor, psychologist, social worker, substance abuse counselor) whose primary assignment is to provide counseling services to students?

Over three-quarters of the schools (1,508, 77%) reported that they employed a mental health professional whose primary assignment was to provide counseling services. There was only slight variance among the four school categories: elementary schools (79%), middle schools (78%), high schools (76%), and other schools (63%).

As shown in Figure 6, the percentage of schools that reported employing a mental health professional has increased over the last three school years.

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Figure 6: Schools that Employ Mental Health Professionals 2012–2015



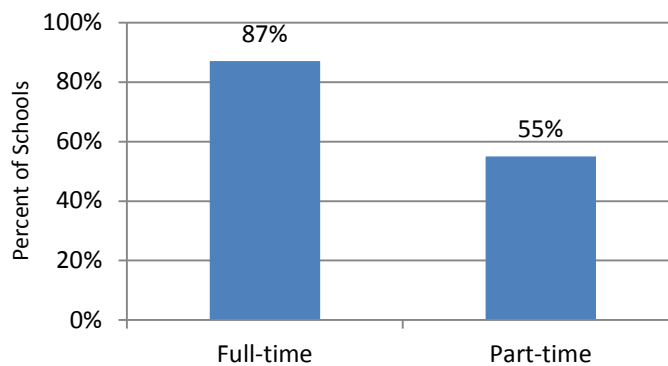
There were a total of 2,772 full-time and 1,338 part-time mental health professionals employed by Virginia schools in the 2014–2015 school year according to survey responses.

On average, individual schools employ nearly two (1.84) mental health professionals full-time, but the median (1) and mode (1) number of full-time mental health employees indicate the potential for outliers skewing this average. On average, individual schools employ nearly 1 (0.89) part-time mental health employees, and the median number of part-time mental health employees for schools is 1, and the mode is 0.

Table 1: Number of Mental Health Professionals Employed in the Schools, Part-time and Full-time (N = 1,506)

Employment Status	Total Number of MHPs Employed	Average Number of MHPs Employed Per School (N = 1,506)
Number of full-time	2,772	1.84
Number of part-time	1,338	0.89

Figure 7: Schools with Mental Health Professionals, Part-time and Full-time (N = 1,506)

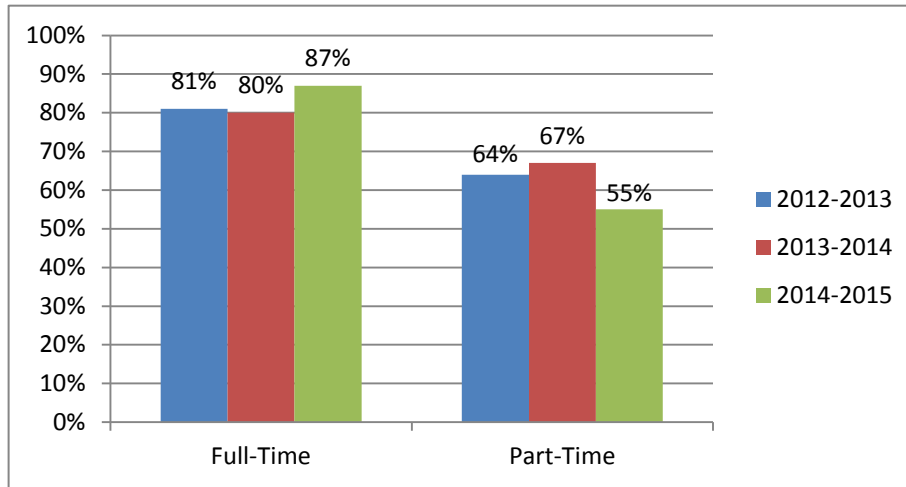


NOTE: Some schools responded having less than one full-time or part-time mental health professional (i.e. 0.5). This was interpreted as having a mental health professional, rather than not having one.

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Figure 8 displays the change in the percentage of schools that employ mental health professionals and in the percentages of those that were employed full-time and part-time over the past three years.

Figure 8: Percent of Schools with Mental Health Professionals, Full-time and Part-time, 2012–2015



NOTE: These percentages represent the percent of schools that employ full-time and part-time mental health professionals within the group of schools that responded they employ a mental health professional. For example, in 2012–2013, 81% of schools that reported they employ a mental health professional also reported they employ this professional(s) full-time.

School Security and Surveillance

NOTE: The questions in this section asked about security practices at the schools. Because the public release of such information might compromise safety and security plans, Virginia Code § 2.2-3705.2 and § 22.1-279.8 allow such information to be protected from release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) for individual schools and will only be reported in the aggregate.

Security Strategies

Schools were asked to review a list of security strategies and indicate which were in place at their school during the 2014–2015 school year.

Table 2: Security Strategies in Schools, by School Type (N = 1,960)

Security Strategies	Elementary N = 1,106	Middle N = 341	High N = 318	Other N = 194	All Schools N = 1,960
All exterior entrances are locked during school hours	89%	90%	87%	81%	88%
School entrance is secured by a controlled access system during school hours	86%	87%	86%	49%	83%
All classrooms can be locked from inside and outside	50%	58%	51%	49%	51%
Someone is stationed at front entrance at all times during school hours	41%	44%	47%	80%	46%
School grounds secured by controlled access system during school hours	31%	28%	37%	26%	31%
None of the above	2%	0.6%	0.9%	0.5%	2%
Other	7%	7%	9%	7%	7%

NOTE: Percentages equal more than 100% because respondents were asked to select all that apply.

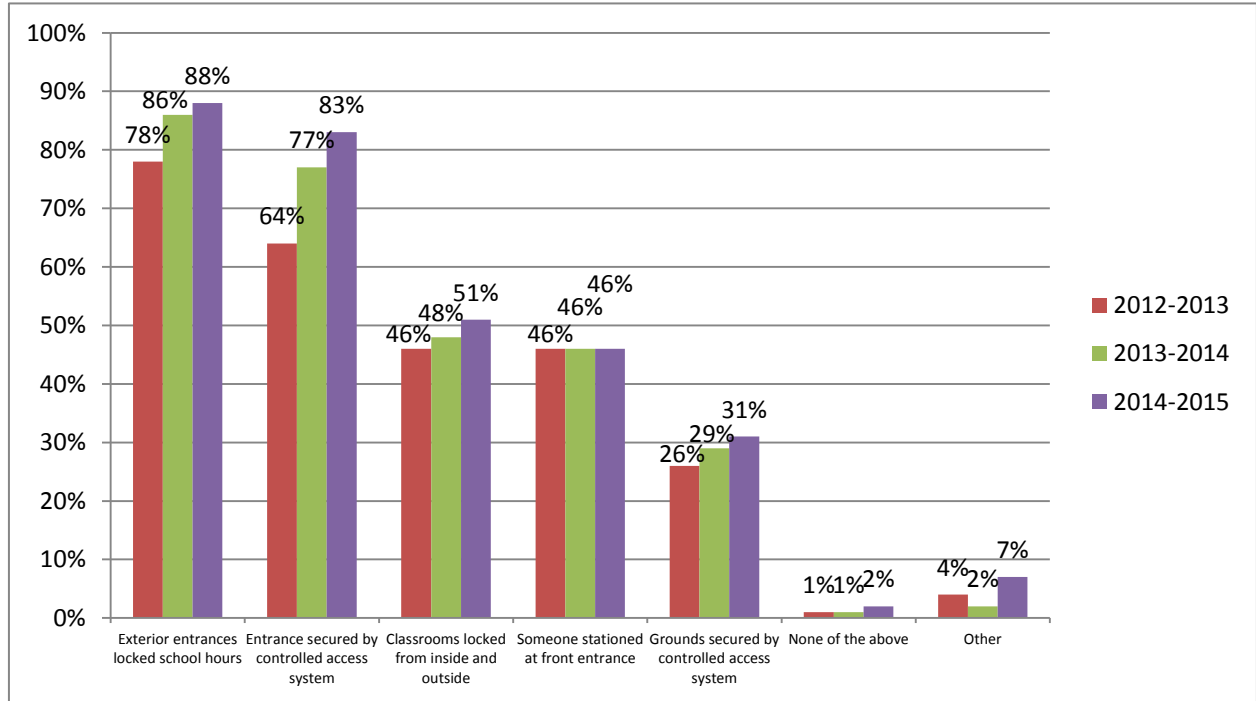
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Most schools (88%) reported that all exterior entrances are kept locked during school hours; this was highest among middle (90%) and elementary schools (89%).

Most schools (83%) also reported that their main entrance of the school building/campus is secured by a controlled access system during school hours. This was fairly even across elementary (86%), middle (87%), and high (86%) schools.

Figure 9 displays security strategies trends from 2011–2012 through 2014–2015 in Virginia schools.

Figure 9: Security Strategies in Schools, 2011–2015



NOTE: In the 2011–2012 survey, schools were not given the option of 'Grounds secured by controlled access system', 'None of the above', or 'Other'.

Within most of the security strategy categories, there has been a gradual increase from 2012–2015 in terms of the number of schools that utilize those strategies. Also, the percent of schools that have someone stationed at their front entrance has remained the same across all three of these school years.

Safety Personnel

Q. Did you have safety/security personnel such as School Resource Officers (SROs), School Security Officers (SSOs), or other types of security personnel working at your school full time or part time during the 2014–2015 school year?

Overall, 63% (1,239) of all Virginia public schools reported that they had safety/security personnel working at their school full-time or part-time during the 2014–2015 school year. When examined by school type, this rate was highest among high schools (96%), followed by middle schools (94%), other schools (70%) and elementary schools (43%).

The 1,239 schools with safety/security personnel were asked to specify if their safety/security personnel was full-time, part-time, or if their school employed both full-time and part-time safety/security personnel. Over half of

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these schools (57%) reported that they employed only full-time safety/security personnel, while slightly less (39%) reported employing only part-time safety/security personnel and very few schools (4%) reported employing both full-time and part-time individuals of this nature.

Schools were then asked what type of safety/security personnel were working either full-time or part-time. The breakdowns of these responses are displayed in the following tables.

Table 3: Percent of Schools with Full-Time Safety/Security Personnel, By School Type

Type of Safety/Security Personnel	Elementary N = 477	Middle N = 320	High N = 305	Other N = 137	All Schools N = 1239
School Resource Officers (SROs)	7%	78%	89%	42%	49%
School Security Officers (SSOs)	13%	30%	46%	28%	27%
Other	5%	3%	4%	7%	4%

*NOTE: These percentages represent the number of schools that responded having only a full-time SRO, SSO or other personnel.
NOTE: N = the number of schools that indicated having safety/security personnel working at their school in 2014–2015*

Table 4: Percent of Schools with Part-Time Safety/Security Personnel, By School Type

Type of Safety/Security Personnel	Elementary N = 477	Middle N = 320	High N = 305	Other N = 137	All Schools N = 1239
School Resource Officers (SROs)	68%	18%	10%	38%	38%
School Security Officers (SSOs)	6%	3%	5%	6%	5%
Other	4%	<1%	1%	0%	2%

*NOTE: These percentages represent the number of schools that responded having only a part-time SRO, SSO or other personnel.
NOTE: N = the number of schools that indicated having safety/security personnel working at their school in 2014–2015*

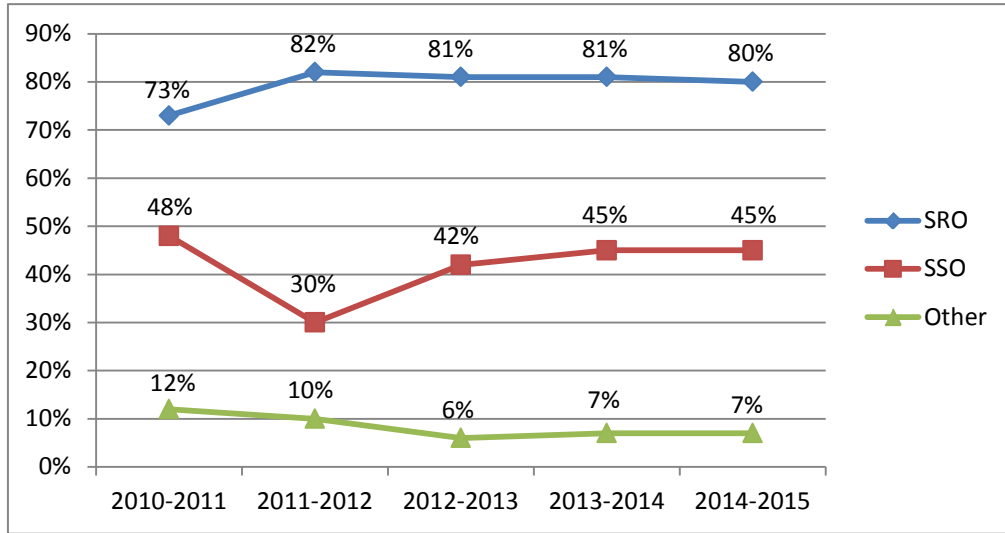
There were 758 schools that indicated they employed safety/security personnel full-time or both full-time and part-time. Of these, 80% reported that they employed a school resource officer (SRO), 45% reported they employed a school security officer (SSO), and 7% reported some other type of safety/security personnel were employed full-time at their school.

Of the 534 schools that indicated they employed safety/security personnel part-time or both full-time and part-time, most (87%) indicated this personnel was an SRO, 12% reported they employed a part-time SSO, and 4% reported some other type of safety/security personnel were employed part-time at their school.

The percent of schools that employ a full-time SRO, SSO, or other type of safety/security personnel has remained relatively stable since the 2010–2011 academic year (see Figure 10). The percent of schools employing a full-time SRO increased from 2010–2012, then held steady and is currently hovering around 80%, while the percent of schools employing a full-time SSO has remained at 45% over the last two academic years. The percent of schools employing some other type of safety/security personnel currently sits at 7%.

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Figure 10: Type of School/Safety Personnel Employed at Schools with Full-Time Safety/Security Personnel



Safety-Related Conditions

Q. Can school administrators communicate with law enforcement/first responders via radio when they are inside the school building?

In the 2014–2015 school year, 60% of schools reported that school administrators can communicate with law enforcement/first responders via radio when they are inside the school building. This is nearly identical to the results from last year’s survey.

When examined by type of school, a slightly higher proportion of middle and high schools (62% and 65%, respectively) reported the capability of radio communication with law enforcement/first responders than did other (60%) and elementary (57%) schools.

Q. Do first responders have access to the school during a lockdown so they do not have to breach doors or windows to gain access?

Over three-quarters of all of the responding schools (1,557, 80%) reported that first responders have access to the school during a lockdown so that they do not have to breach doors or windows to gain access. This was similar to the 2013–2014 year, during which 77% of schools reported that first responders had access to the school during a lockdown.

When broken down by type of school, elementary (82%), middle (85%), and other (80%) types of schools were most likely to respond that first responders have access to the school during a lockdown, as compared to high schools (66%).

Q. Does your school conduct background checks on volunteers who work with your students (not including parents/guardians)?

Over three-quarters of the responding schools (1677, 86%) reported that they conduct background checks on volunteers who work with their students, which represents an increase from 2013–2014 (1,552, 79%).

When broken down by type of school, all types of schools responded at a similar rate that they conduct these background checks: elementary (84%), middle (89%), high (90%), and other (81%) types of schools.

Threat Assessment ²

In 2013, the Governor convened the School and Campus Safety Taskforce, which focused on improving safety in public schools and on college and university campuses throughout the Commonwealth. As a result of the work of this taskforce, the 2013 General Assembly passed HB 2344, which added section § 22.1-79.4 to the *Code of Virginia*. Effective July 1, 2013, local school boards were required to create policies and procedures to establish threat assessment teams. The legislation also required division superintendents to establish a threat assessment team for each school. This section states,

Each team shall (i) provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening or aberrant behavior that may represent a threat to the community, school, or self; (ii) identify members of the school community to whom threatening behavior should be reported; and (iii) implement policies adopted by the local school board pursuant to subsection A.

Additionally, the legislation required DCJS to collect quantitative data on threat assessment teams and threat assessments conducted in Virginia schools. In 2014, to facilitate this requirement, questions regarding threat assessment teams and threat assessments were added to the 2014 School Safety Survey. If a school indicated that a threat assessment was conducted during the 2013–2014 school year, the school received a follow-up survey in January 2015 to provide further details. Preliminary findings of the follow-up survey were included in the 2013–2014 report.

Implementation of Threat Assessment Teams

School division superintendents (or their designees) were surveyed on threat assessment topics generally decided at the division-level. One of these topics included when the use of threat assessment teams began in their divisions, both by an individual school and division-wide.

Q. During which school year did all schools in your division begin using threat assessment teams?

Table 5: Division-wide Use of Threat Assessment Teams by School Year (N = 131)

School Year	Number of Divisions	Percent of Divisions
2009–2010+	31	24%
2010–2011	8	6%
2011–2012	8	6%
2012–2013	10	8%
2013–2014	49	37%
2014–2015	25	19%
Total	131	100%

About a quarter (24%) of the divisions have had division-wide use of threat assessment teams for over 5 years. More than half (56%) began division-wide use of threat assessment teams in 2013–2014 or after.

² For more information about threat assessment teams in Virginia, visit the VCSCS resources page at www.dcjs.virginia.gov/common/links.cfm?code=17&program=VCSS#62.

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Divisions were also asked if any of their schools used threat assessment teams prior to the division-wide implementation.

Q. Prior to the division-wide implementation, did any individual school in the division use threat assessment teams?

Table 6: Individual School Use of Threat Assessment Teams Prior to Division-wide Use (N = 131)

Prior to Division-Wide Implementation	Number of Divisions	Percent of Divisions
No school used threat assessment	50	38%
Most schools used threat assessment	42	32%
Some schools used threat assessment	39	30%
Total	131	100%

The use of threat assessment teams (TATs) by individual schools prior to division-wide implementation was somewhat evenly divided between no schools, some schools and most schools. Slightly more divisions had no schools using TATs prior to all of the schools in the division (38%).

Threat Assessment Team Coverage

Division superintendents were asked about whether threat assessment teams were used to cover threat assessments in only one school or in multiple schools.

Q. For the 2014–2015 school year, was there a single threat assessment team for each school or did a single team cover more than one school?

Table 7: Threat Assessment Teams and Coverage of Division's Schools (N = 131)

Threat Assessment Team Coverage	Number of Divisions	Percent of Divisions
There as a single team for each school in the division	108	82%
One team covered all schools in the division	19	15%
Some teams covered more than one school	4	3%
Total	131	100%

Most divisions (82%) have a single TAT for each school in the division. The 19 school divisions that use one team to cover all schools in the division were typically smaller school divisions with fewer schools.

Awareness of Threat Assessment Processes and Policies

Q. Did your school provide information about your school's threat assessment policies and processes to students, staff, or parents to make them aware of threat assessment policies and processes and not just in response to a specific threat?

Nearly two-thirds of responding schools (1,264, 65%) indicated that they had provided information about their threat assessment policies and processes to students, staff, or parents. Of the remaining respondents, 526 schools

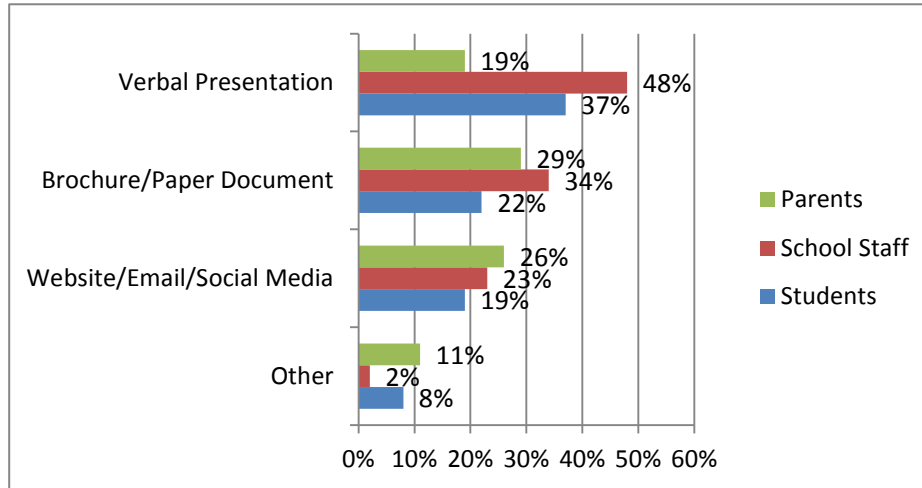
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(25%) indicated that they did not provide this information to students, staff, or parents, and 168 schools (9%) responded that they did not know if they provided this information to students, staff, or parents.

When examined by school types, the results were similar across the various institution types: Elementary (703, 64%), Middle (227, 67%), High (203, 64%), and Other (131, 68%).

Schools were then asked the specific type of informational methods that were used to provide this threat assessment awareness information to students, parents, and staff. Figure 11 displays these findings.

Figure 11: Type of Threat Assessment Informational Methods Provided to Students, Parents, and School Staff (N = 1,960)



Verbal presentation was the most frequently used mode of communication to increase awareness of threat assessment team policies and processes, especially when delivering this information to students and staff. Brochure/paper documents and website/email/social media were utilized by schools at a higher rate to deliver this information to parents, as compared to verbal presentations.

Threat Assessments Conducted

Schools were asked a series of questions regarding the number and type of threat assessments that they conducted during the 2014–2015 school year.

Q What was the total number of threat assessments conducted by your school’s threat assessment team in 2014–2015?

Overall, 1,068 (55%) schools reported conducting one or more threat assessments during 2014–2015; 45% of schools reported not having conducted any threat assessments. The total number of threat assessment cases reported by the 1,068 schools was 5,694 making the mean (average) number of threat assessments among these schools 5.3 and the median 1. In examining the number of threat assessments among all 1,960 schools, the mean (average) number of threat assessments was 2.9 and the median was 1.

There was slight variation among the number of threat assessments conducted when examining the numbers by types of schools. As table 8 shows, approximately half of the high, middle, and other schools surveyed reported not having conducted any threat assessments, whereas 42% of elementary schools reported not having conducted any.

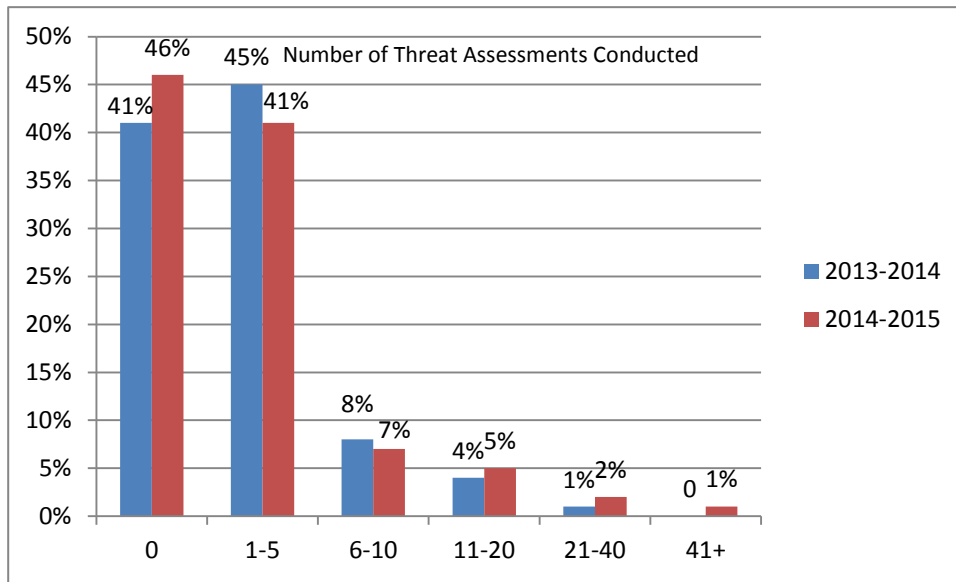
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Table 8: Number of Threat Assessments Conducted According to School Type (N = 1,960)

Number of Threat Assessments Conducted	Elementary N = 1,106	Middle N = 341	High N = 319	Other N = 194	All Schools N =1,960
0	42%	50%	50%	52%	46%
1–5	43%	39%	37%	36%	41%
6–10	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%
11–20	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%
21–40	2%	<1%	<1%	<1%	2%
41–60	<1%	0%	<1%	1.5%	<1%
61+	<1%	0%	0%	0%	<1%

The number of schools that reported conducting one or more threat assessments decreased slightly this year from the previous school year (see Figure 12). In 2013–2014, there were 1,157 schools (59%) that reported conducting one or more threat assessments. The following figure displays the difference in the numbers of threat assessments conducted in the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years. Each column represents the percent of all schools that reported conducting a given amount of threat assessments during the school year. For example, the blue column in the ‘zero’ category represents the percent of schools that conducted zero threat assessments during the 2013–2014 school year.

Figure 12: Number of Threat Assessments Conducted By Schools 2013–2015



A slightly higher percentage of schools conducted zero threat assessments in 2014–2015 as compared to the previous school year.

The 1,068 schools that conducted one or more threat assessments in 2014–2015 were asked to provide detailed information about the cases that occurred at their school. Schools were asked to indicate the number of threat assessments conducted involving persons from specific groups. The following table breaks down the total number of threats according to each group type. There were 5,694 total threats conducted in 2014–2015.

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Table 9: Threat Assessments Involving Persons from Specific Groups (N = 5,694)

Group Type	Number of Threat Assessments
Student from your school	5,513
Student not from your school	22
Student formerly from your school	11
Faculty/staff currently employed by your school	111
Faculty/staff formerly employed by your school	8
Parent/guardian of a student	16
Someone else	13

The vast majority of threat assessments (5,513, 97%) were conducted on students from the responding schools. The next most frequent group of individuals that threat assessments were most frequently conducted on was faculty/staff members currently employed by the responding schools (111), yet this total is far lower than the student total. It is important to note in this faculty/staff category, there were a few outliers, as one school responded that they had conducted 43 such cases, and another had conducted 30 such cases. This led to the large difference between this category and the others that garnered lower totals. There is the possibility that these schools incorrectly input their total threat assessments for this category, and the total number of threat assessments for faculty/staff currently employed by your school is skewed.

Schools were then asked to indicate the types of threat assessments that they handled over the course of the school year. The following table displays that over half of all cases (52%) involved an individual who threatened to harm someone but did not threaten suicide or self-harm. This was followed by individuals that threatened to commit suicide but did not threaten others (28%), individuals that threatened self-harm, but did not threaten others (16%), and individuals that threatened to harm someone and threatened suicide or self-harm (4%). There was little variation among the types of threats when examined by school type.

Table 10: Threat Assessments by Type of Threat (N = 5,522)

Type of Threat	Number of Cases	Percentage of Cases
Threatened to harm someone other than self but did not threaten suicide or self-harm	2,891	52%
Threatened to commit suicide but did not threaten others	1,558	28%
Threatened to self-harm (such as cutting, but not suicide), but did not threaten others	861	16%
Threatened to harm someone other than self and threaten suicide or self-harm	212	4%

Threat Assessment Training Issues

Division superintendents were asked about the type of threat assessment training that their division’s schools had when use of their current threat assessment model began.

Q. At the time when all schools began to use your division’s current threat assessment model, what kind of threat assessment training was provided to schools?

Table 11: Type of Threat Assessment Training Provided to Divisions’ Schools (N = 131)

Type of Threat Assessment Training	Number of Divisions	Percent of Divisions
Training was provided by someone within the school division	62	47%
Training was provided by the UVA	33	25%
Training was provided by DCJS	21	16%
Training was provided by Local Law Enforcement	4	3%
No formal training was provided	8	6%
Training was provided by another source	3	2%
Total	131	100%

Schools were asked what threat assessment training would be most helpful to their school; there were 1,199 schools (61%) that responded to this question. Among the schools that indicated a need for more threat assessment training, there was a wide variety of suggestions. The most prevalent themes included: a need for threat assessment team member retraining or follow up training, training on different types of threats that include case scenarios, training on how to interact with students, training on how to deal with social media threats, teacher training, and case management.

Table 12: Training Needed by Schools for Threat Assessment Teams (N = 1,199)

Training Types	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Retrain/follow-up training due to staff turnover or lag in training time	313	26%
Training on different types of threats/TA/levels/team makeup	295	25%
General “more training”	290	24%
Training about interacting with students	233	19%
Active shooter/intruder drills	59	5%
Dealing with social media threats	53	4%
Training with scenarios/case studies	51	4%
Teacher training	42	4%
Training on documentation/recordkeeping	40	3%
Case management following a threat/assessment	34	3%
Online/video training	28	2%
Condensed “fact sheet”/updated review document	16	1%
Division-wide training	10	1%
Local/regional training	9	1%
Mental health/counselor training	7	1%
Info from DCJS	4	<1%
Connect DCJS and UVA models	4	<1%
Bomb threats	3	<1%

Note: Respondents could mention more than one need.

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Notably, only 2% of survey respondents (typically school administrators) perceived a need for teachers to be trained on threat assessment; however, results of the school climate survey indicated more than half of teachers did not know their school had a threat assessment team. This suggests a need for teacher education and awareness about threat assessment as well as better communication between threat assessment teams and other faculty members at the school.

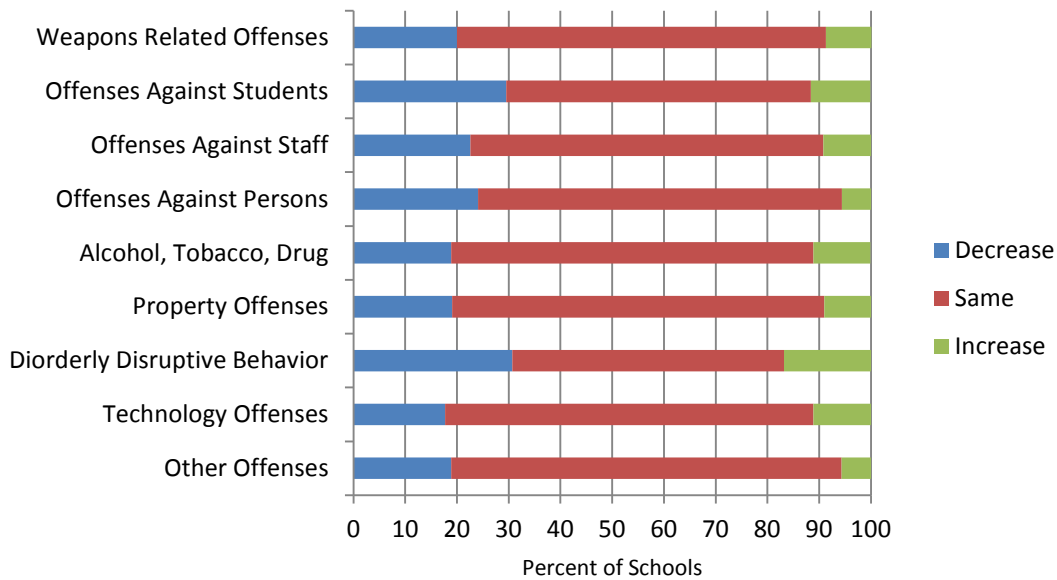
V. STUDENT SAFETY CONCERNS

Discipline, Crime and Violence Offenses

Schools were asked to review the 2014–2015 Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) data submitted by their school to VDOE. Offenses and incident types are grouped into nine offense categories that are aligned according to severity of offense.

Q. For each Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) offenses category listed, indicate whether the number of occurrences at your school increased, decreased, or stayed the same when compared with the previous (2013–2014) school year.

Figure 13: DCV Offenses in the Schools (N = 1,960)



For the most part, schools reported that the number of occurrences of each DCV offense category was largely the same in the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years. The largest increases occurred among disorderly disruptive behaviors (17%), offenses against students (12%), technology offenses (11%), and alcohol/tobacco/other drug offenses (11%). The largest decreases occurred among disorderly disruptive behavior (31%), offenses against students (30%), and offenses against persons (24%). The similar large increase and decrease among disorderly disruptive behavior and offenses against students is indicative of a great deal of change in either direction. There may be underlying factors that lead these types of offenses to being more fluid than others from year-to-year as compared to the other DCV offenses.

Disciplinary Infractions and Responses

This section examines links between school safety practices and student disciplinary infractions that resulted in suspension from school. Disciplinary data were obtained from the Virginia Department of Education and the analysis and reporting in this section was provided by researchers at the University of Virginia, Curry School of Education.

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In Figure 14, student infractions were limited to three broad categories: (1) infractions involving aggressive behavior against others (e.g. fights and assaults); (2) infractions involving alcohol, tobacco, or drug use (ATOD); and (3) infractions involving weapon possession or use (counted separately from the first category).

Figure 14 shows the average rate of unduplicated suspensions (each student was counted only once, even if suspended more than once) for elementary, middle, and high schools. Middle schools experienced more than twice the rate of suspensions for aggression against others (51 per 1,000 students) compared to elementary (12 per 1,000) and high schools (25 per 1,000).

As might be expected, high schools experienced a much higher rate of ATOD infractions (18 per 1,000 students) than middle schools (7 per 1,000) or elementary schools (0.4 per 1,000).

Infractions related to weapons were less common, but slightly higher in middle schools (3 per 1,000) than in high schools (2 per 1,000) and elementary schools (1 per 1,000).

Figure 14: Suspension Rates per 1,000 Students A

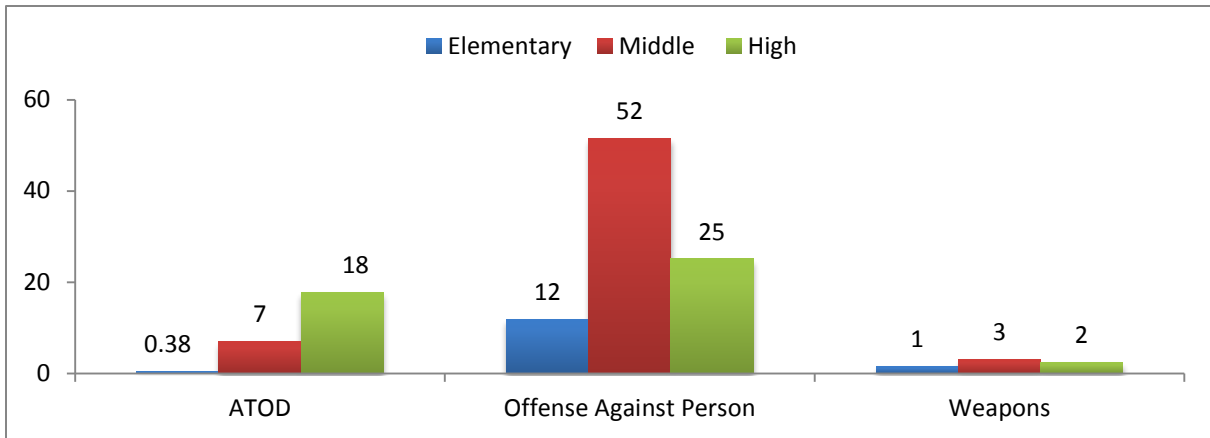
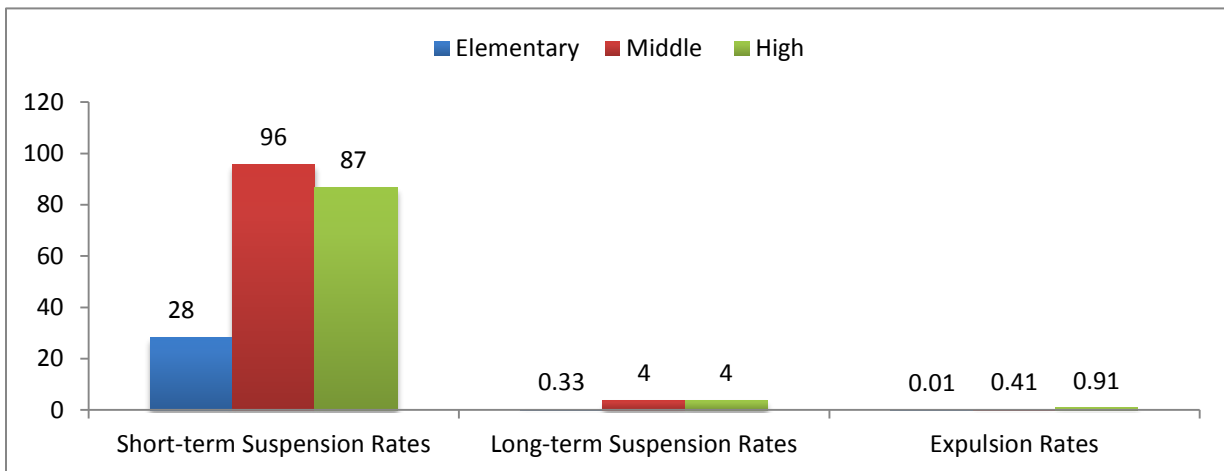


Figure 15 displays short-term suspensions (<10 days), long-term suspensions (10+ days – 364 days), and expulsions (365 days) per 1,000 students. High schools (96 per 1,000, or about 10 per 100 students) and middle schools (87 per 1,000) had many more short-term suspensions than elementary schools (28 per 1,000). Long-term suspensions are less common, but again high schools and middle schools had more long-term suspensions (4 per 1,000) than elementary schools (0.3 per 1,000). It should be noted that Figures 14 and 15 present averages across schools, which masks some substantial differences between schools.

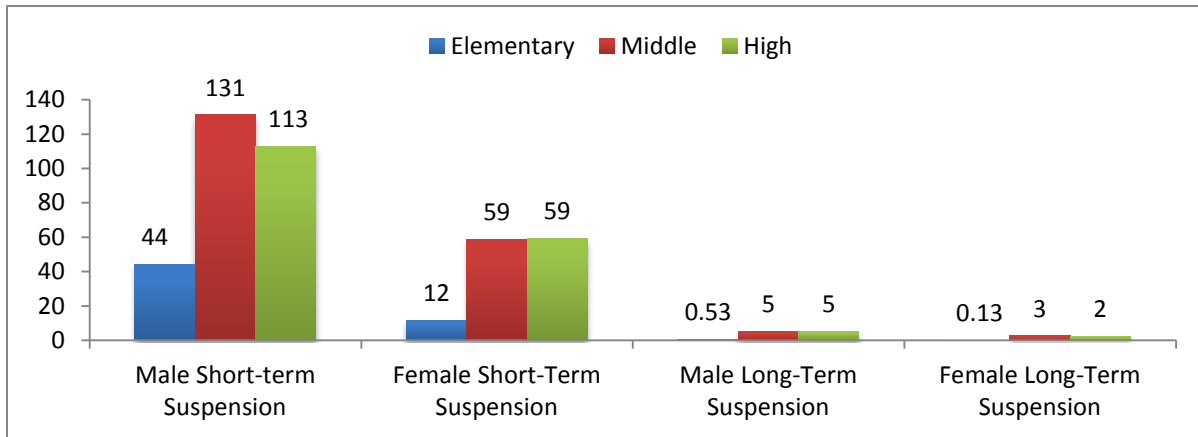
Figure 15: Suspension Rates per 1,000 Students B



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Figure 16 displays short-term and long term suspension rates by gender. Both short-term and long-term suspensions are more common in males than in females across school type. In elementary schools, short-term suspension rates were 44 boys per 1,000 boys as compared to 12 girls per 1,000 girls. Short-term suspension rates were 131 boys and 113 boys per 1,000 boys in middle schools and high schools, respectively; and 59 girls per 1,000 girls in both middle schools and high schools. Long term suspension rates were around 5 boys per 1,000 boys and 2–3 girls per 1,000 girls in middle schools and high schools.

Figure 16: Suspension Rates per 1,000 Students C



Race/Ethnic Differences in Disciplinary Responses

This section examines suspension rates across race/ethnic groups. These analyses show that there are consistent racial disparities in school suspension rates, but these disparities require further investigation. There may be multiple factors that contribute to a correlation between race and suspension rate. The Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education and Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice issued a Dear Colleague letter to all public schools concerning racial disparities in student discipline. (January 8, 2014, www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf). This letter asks all school systems to assess and remedy racial disparities in student discipline.

The state population of students consisted of 23% Black students, 52% White students, 13% Hispanic/Latino students, and 12% 'Other' students. The 'Other' category was made up of Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and multiracial students. Suspension rates were calculated as the number of students suspended within a particular race/ethnic group divided by the total enrollment of that race/ethnic group.

Figure 17 indicates that Black students were suspended at a higher rate than any other group in elementary school (43 per 1,000 Black students), middle school (149 per 1,000 Black students), and high school (131 per 1,000 Black students). Suspension rates were more similar among White and Hispanic students, ranging from 18 to 20 per 1,000 students in elementary schools, 63 to 77 per 1,000 students in middle schools, and 63 to 71 per 1,000 students in high schools.

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Figure 17: Racial Differences in Short-Term Suspension per 1,000 Students A

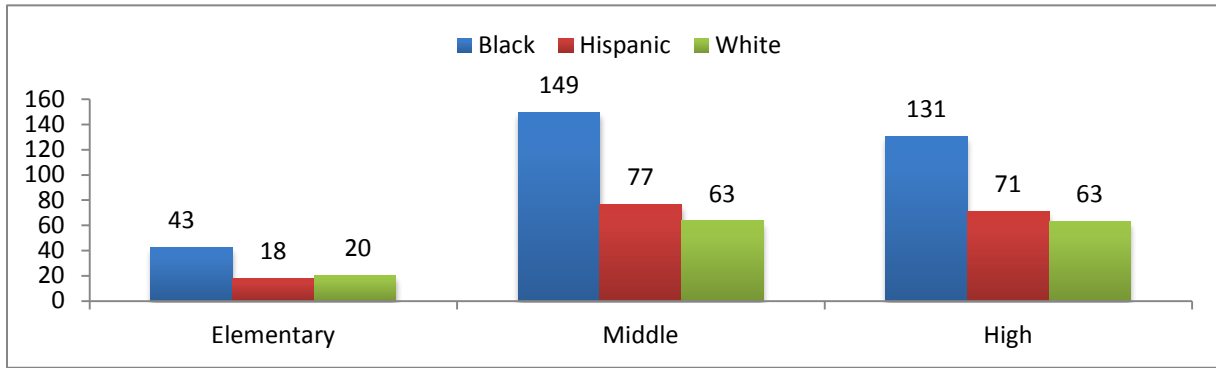
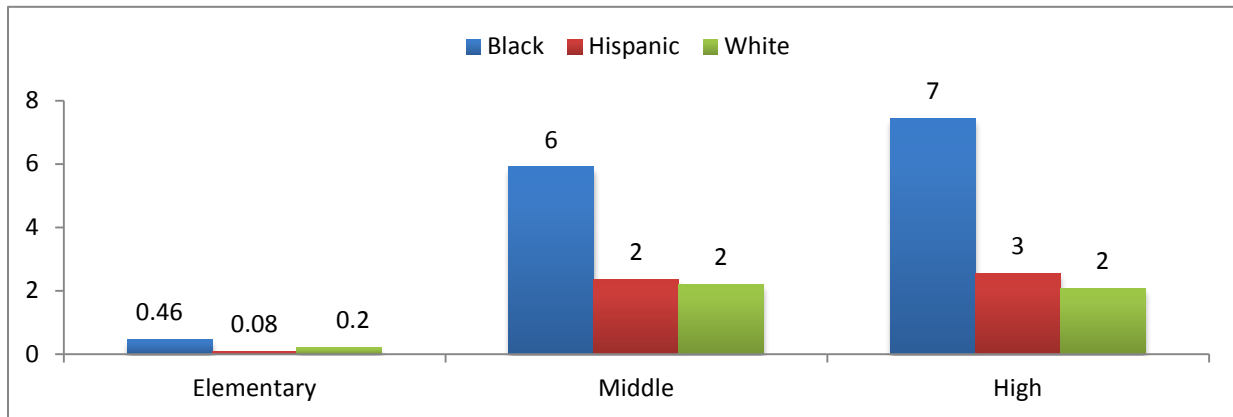


Figure 18 displays the breakdown of long-term suspensions. Consistent with the pattern of short-term suspensions, Black students were suspended at a higher rate than any other group in middle school (6 per 1,000 compared to 2 to 3 per 1,000 in the other groups) and high school (7 per 1,000 compared to 2 to 3 per 1,000 in the other groups). In elementary schools, long-term suspension rates were very low and similar across race/ethnic groups.

Figure 18: Racial Differences in Short-Term Suspension per 1,000 Students B



A second set of analyses investigated what types of infractions were driving the disparities in suspension rates between Black and White students. Figures 19–21 show the rates of different types of infractions by racial/ethnic group for elementary, middle, and high school students. Black students were suspended for aggression against others and disruptive behaviors at much higher rates than the other groups. Overall, Black students were also suspended at slightly higher rates for property and technology infractions, but not for drug or weapons infractions. As shown in Figures 19–21, the rate of suspensions for aggression against others was 7 per 1,000 for White students vs. 19 per 1,000 Black students in elementary, 33 per 1,000 White students vs. 81 per 1,000 Black students in middle schools, and 16 per 1,000 White students vs. 41 per 1,000 Black students in high schools. A similar pattern was found for disruptive behaviors, with 13, 38, and 37 White suspensions per 1,000 students, and 29, 93, and 89 Black suspensions per 1,000 students in elementary, middle, and high schools, respectively.

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Figure 19: Racial Differences in Short-Term Suspension per 1,000 Students C

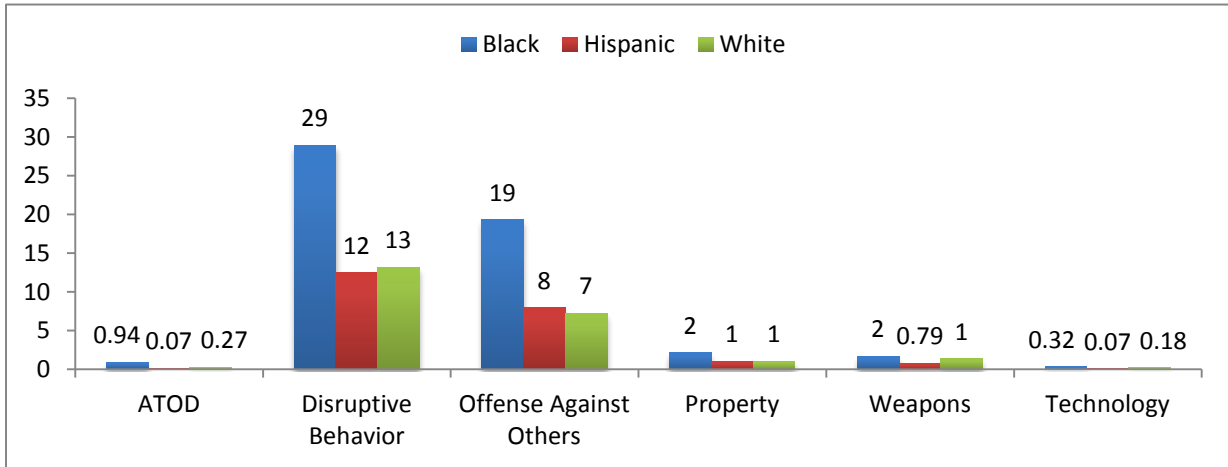


Figure 20: Racial Differences in Short-Term Suspension per 1,000 Students D

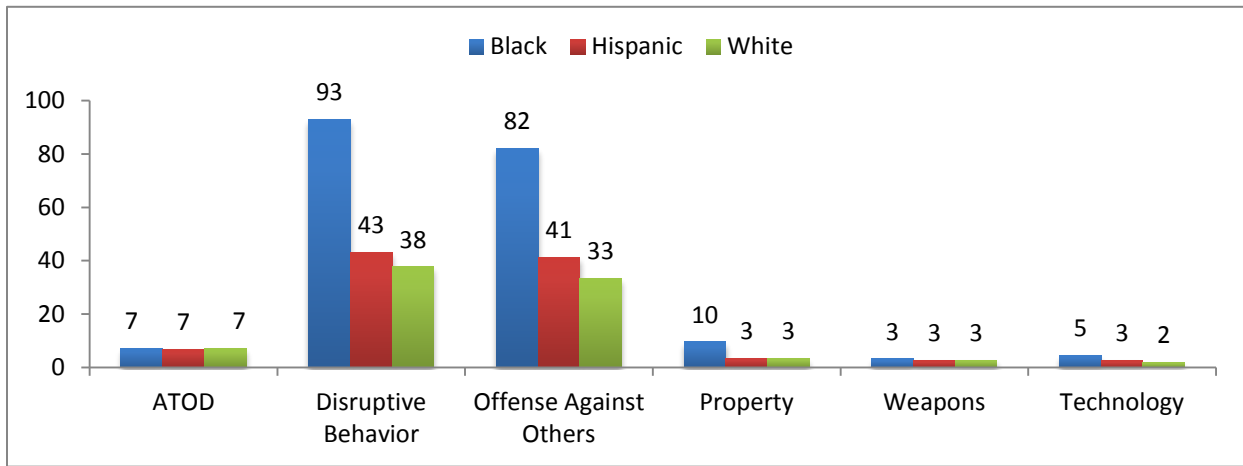
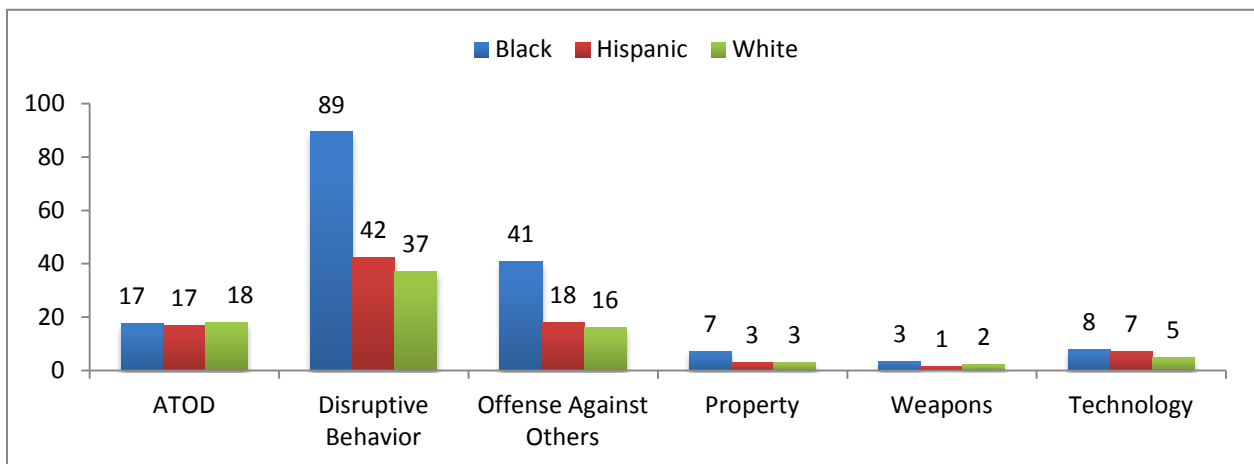


Figure 21: Racial Differences in Short-Term Suspension per 1,000 Students E



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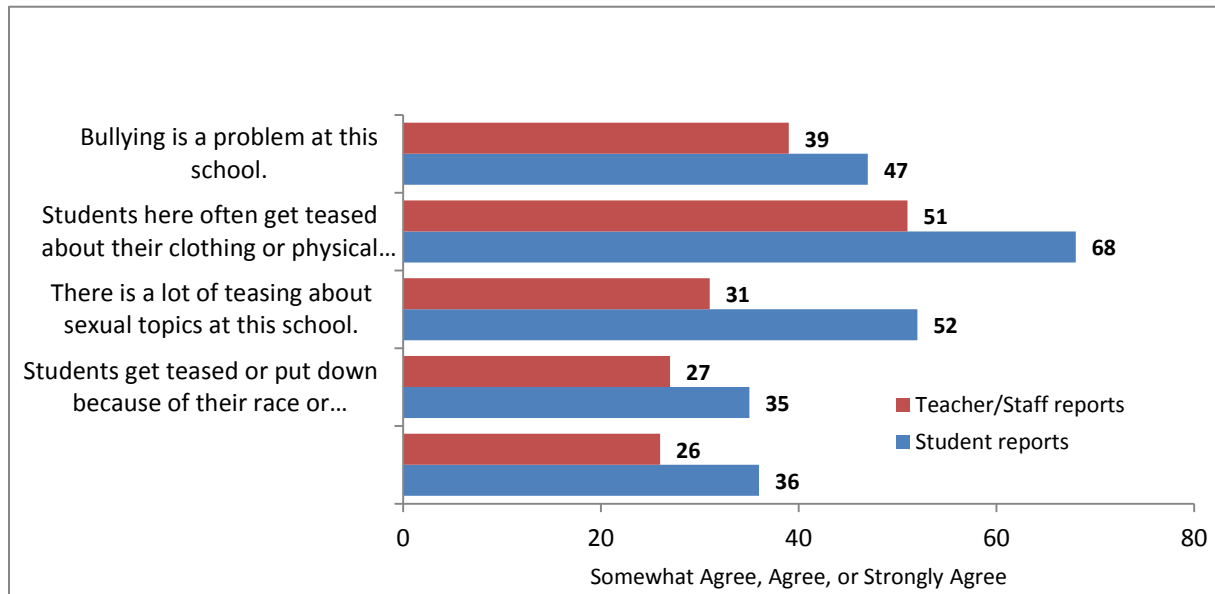
There is unlikely to be a simple explanation for the racial disparities in suspension rates. Black students could be engaging in more aggression against others and disruptive behaviors than students from other race/ethnic groups in some cases, and in other cases Black students could be treated differently for similar misbehavior. Both possible explanations require further study to understand and remedy.

Results from the Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey

The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey (VSSCS) is a survey of students and teachers that is administered as part of the annual School Safety Audit. The survey is designed to give secondary schools important information about the quality of their school climate and safety conditions. In 2014–2015, the survey was completed in 415 schools that had grades 7 or 8, including elementary, middle, and high schools. Survey results are based on reports by 56,508 students and 8,535 teachers and other school personnel.

Figure 22 displays the percentages of students and teachers who reported each type of teasing and bullying at their school. Students consistently reported more teasing and bullying than teachers. Notably, a large majority of students (68%), but only about half of teachers/staff members (51%), agreed that students often got teased about their clothing or physical appearance. Similarly, a majority of students (52%), but a minority of teachers/staff members (31%), agreed that there was a lot of teasing about sexual topics at their school. The percentages of students and teachers/staff members who reported teasing because of race or ethnicity and because of sexual orientation were lower, but again students reported higher rates than teachers/staff members.

Figure 22: Student and Teacher/Staff Reports of Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying at School



As the correlations in Table 13 demonstrate, there is moderate agreement between student and staff reports about the prevalence of teasing and bullying in their school. However, our research has found that both student and teacher perceptions of the prevalence of teasing and bullying are valuable indicators of school conditions. Schools with lower levels of teasing and bullying have higher academic performance on the SOL exams (Lacey, Cornell, & Konold, 2015) and lower dropout rates (Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan, 2013).

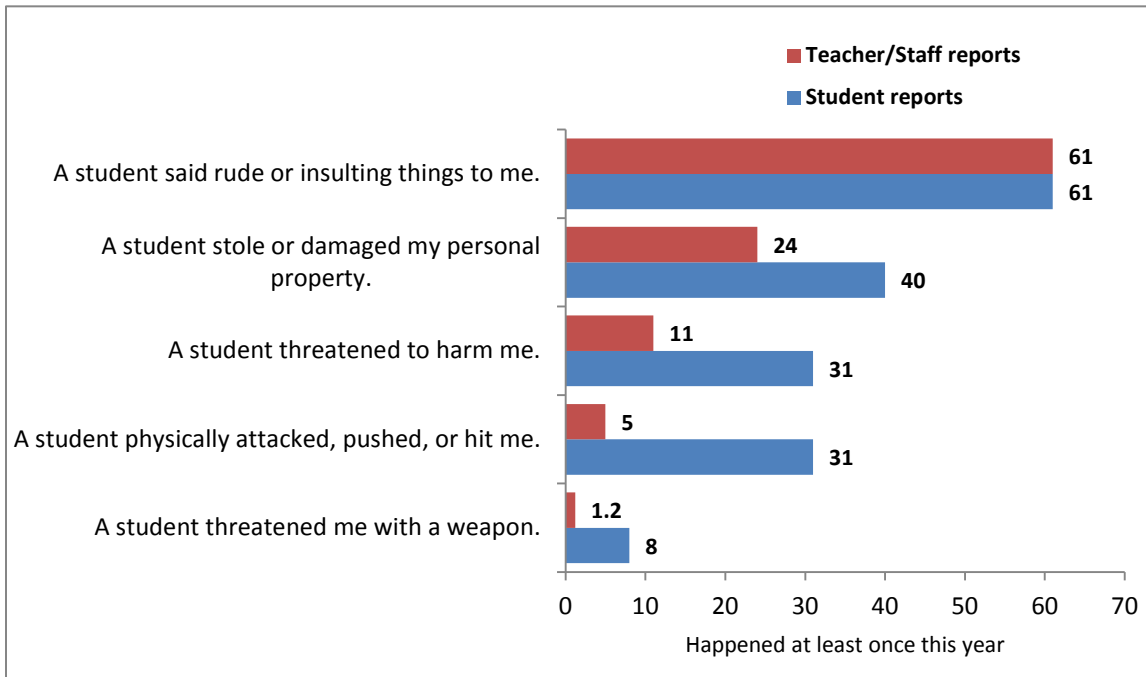
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Table 13: Training Correlations Between Student and Teacher Perceptions of Bullying and Teasing

	Correlation
Bullying is a problem at this school.	0.57
Students here often get teased about their clothing or physical appearance.	0.61
Students get teased or put down because of their race or ethnicity at this school.	0.48
There is a lot of teasing about sexual topics at this school.	0.40
Students here get teased or put down about their perceived sexual orientation	0.52

Students and teachers were also asked about their own experiences as recipients of aggressive behavior from students. Figure 23 displays the percentages of students and teachers/staff members who reported experiencing each form of victimization at least once. Most (61%) students and teachers/staff member teachers reported being the victim of an insult at least one time in the year. Being the victim of stolen or damaged personal property was also fairly common among both students (40%) and teachers/staff members (24%). About one-third of students reported being physically attacked and threatened, while a much smaller percentage of teachers/staff members reported these forms of victimization (11% and 5%, respectively). Finally, 8% of students and 1.1% of teachers/staff members reported that a student had threatened them with a weapon.

Figure 23: Student and Teacher/Staff Reports of Being Victimized at School

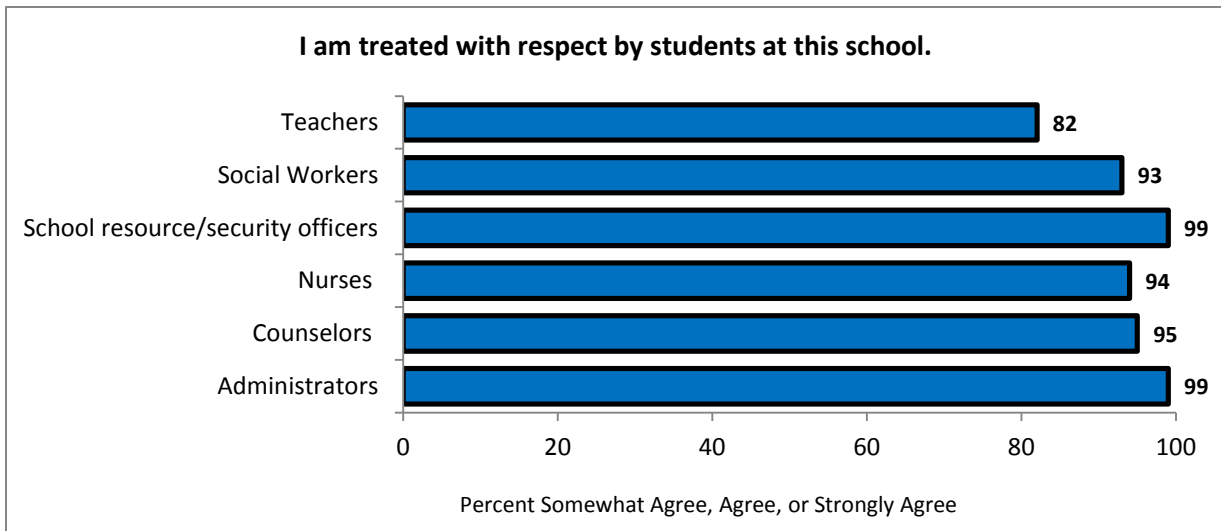


Perceptions of School Personnel

In response to school requests, the school staff version of the school climate survey was expanded this year from a survey of teachers to include other school personnel. The staff survey was completed in 309 schools (in some schools the principal did not encourage teachers and other staff members to complete the survey). Three key questions were selected in order to compare teachers (7,222) with administrators (262), counselors (351), nurses (88), school resource/security officers (78) and social workers (46).

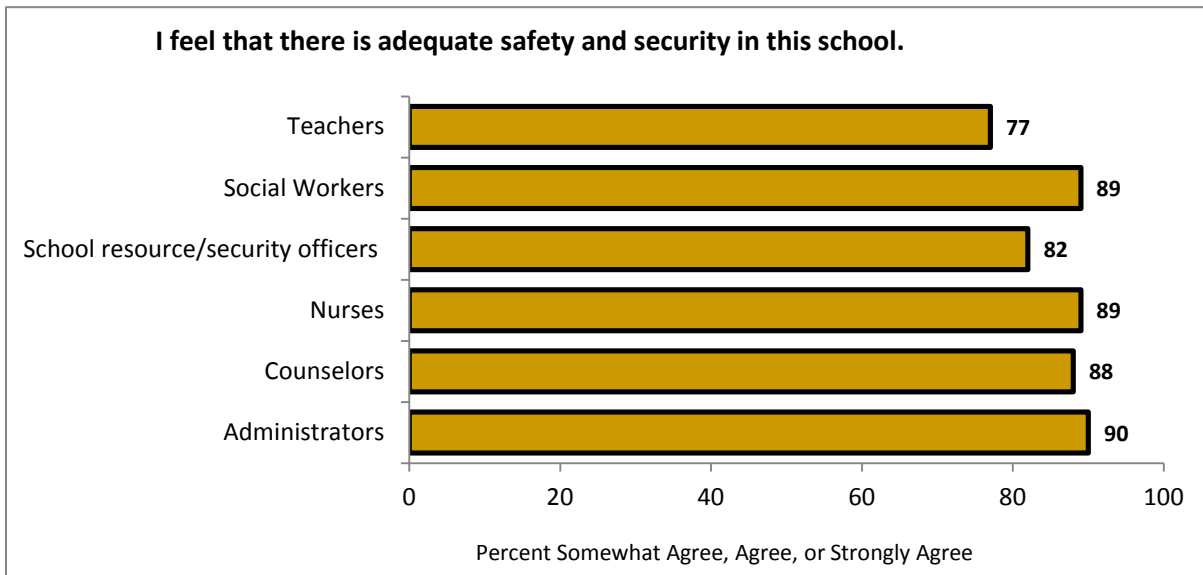
For the question “I am treated with respect by students at this school” the percentage who agreed or strongly agreed was lower for teachers (82%) than for other school staff members (range 93% for social workers to 99% for administrators).

Figure 24: Perceptions of School Personnel



For the question “I feel that there is adequate safety and security in this school,” the percentage who agreed or strongly agreed was lower for teachers (77%) than for other school staff members (range 82 for school resource/security officers to 90% for administrators).

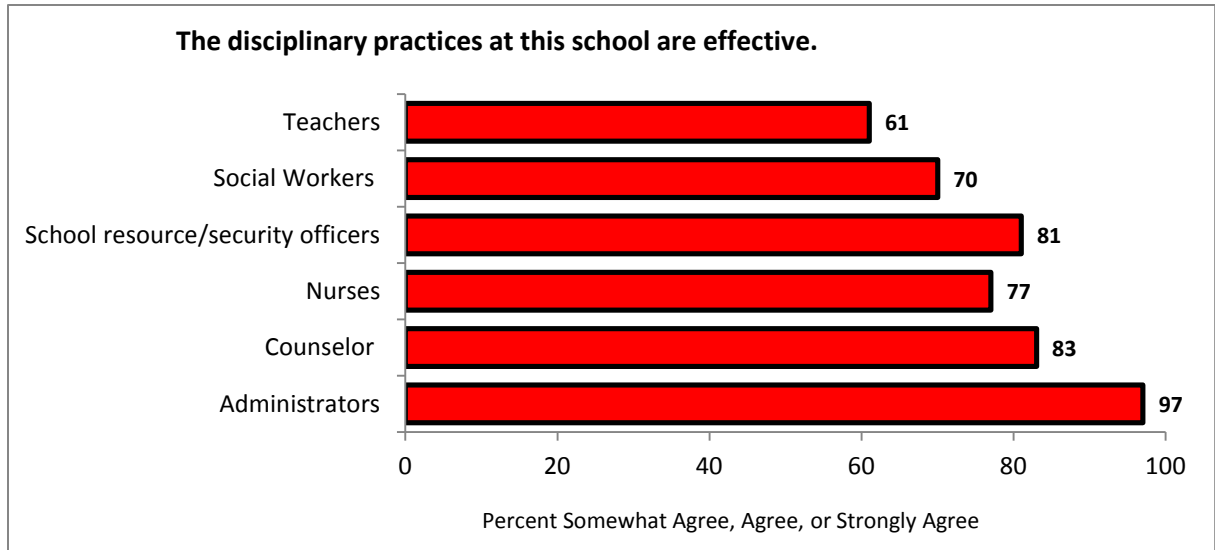
Figure 25: Perceptions of School Personnel Regarding Safety and Security in the School



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For the question “The discipline practices at this school are effective,” the percentage who agreed or strongly agreed was lower for teachers (61%) than for other school staff members (range 70% for social workers to 97% for administrators).

Figure 26: Perceptions of School Personnel Regarding Disciplinary Practices at the School



Technical Notes

The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey was developed by researchers in the Virginia Youth Violence Project in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. The VSSCS was administered to students and staff in schools with grades 7 or 8, including elementary, middle, and high schools. Additional technical information on the charts used in this report is available upon request.

Each school was provided with detailed reports of survey results for students and for teachers. These reports compare student and teacher perceptions of the school with state and regional norms. Reports can be found here www.dcs.virginia.gov/vcss/audit/student/reports. A technical report that includes more information about the survey can be found here: www.dcs.virginia.gov/vcss/audit/student

All teasing and bullying items were answered on a four-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). For charts 11–13 teachers/staff members responded on a six-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree).

The table below describes the specific types of infractions grouped into the categories shown in previous figures.

Infraction Category	Types of Infractions
Aggression against others	Altercation, Battery against staff with/without weapon, Battery against student with/without weapon, Bullying or cyber bullying, Extortion, Fighting w/o injury, Gambling, Harassment, Hazing, Malicious Wounding, Offensive sexual touching staff or student, Robbery using force, Sexual assault student, Sexual battery staff or student, Sexual harassment, Sexual offense without force, Threat of student
Disruptive behavior	Attempting to incite a riot, Inciting a riot, Classroom disruption, Defiance, Disrespect, Disruptive demonstration, Gang activity, Minor insubordination, Obscene/disruptive literature, Obscene language/gestures, Trespassing

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Infraction Category	Types of Infractions
ATOD	Alcohol, Bringing tobacco paraphernalia to school, Over the counter med/use, Possession, use, sale or distribution of schedule I & II drugs, look-alike drugs, over the counter medicine, inhalants, Use, possession, and distribution of drug paraphernalia, Use of inhalants, Schedule I & II drugs, steroid, and marijuana, Synthetic marijuana use/possession/sale/distribution, Theft and attempted theft of prescription drugs, Tobacco products/use/possession/sales/distribution
Weapons	Bomb threat, Possession of a handgun/shotgun or rifle/toy or look-alike gun/BB gun/handgun/weapon that expels projectiles/knife more than three inches/explosive device/stun gun/taser/other weapon/other firearm, School threat
Property	Arson, Burglary, Breaking and entering, Lighted firecrackers, cherry bombs, or stink-bombs, Theft, Theft of motor vehicle, Vandalism
Technology	Causing damage to computer, Cellular phones, Electronic devices, Unauthorized use of technology, Violation of acceptable use/internet policy

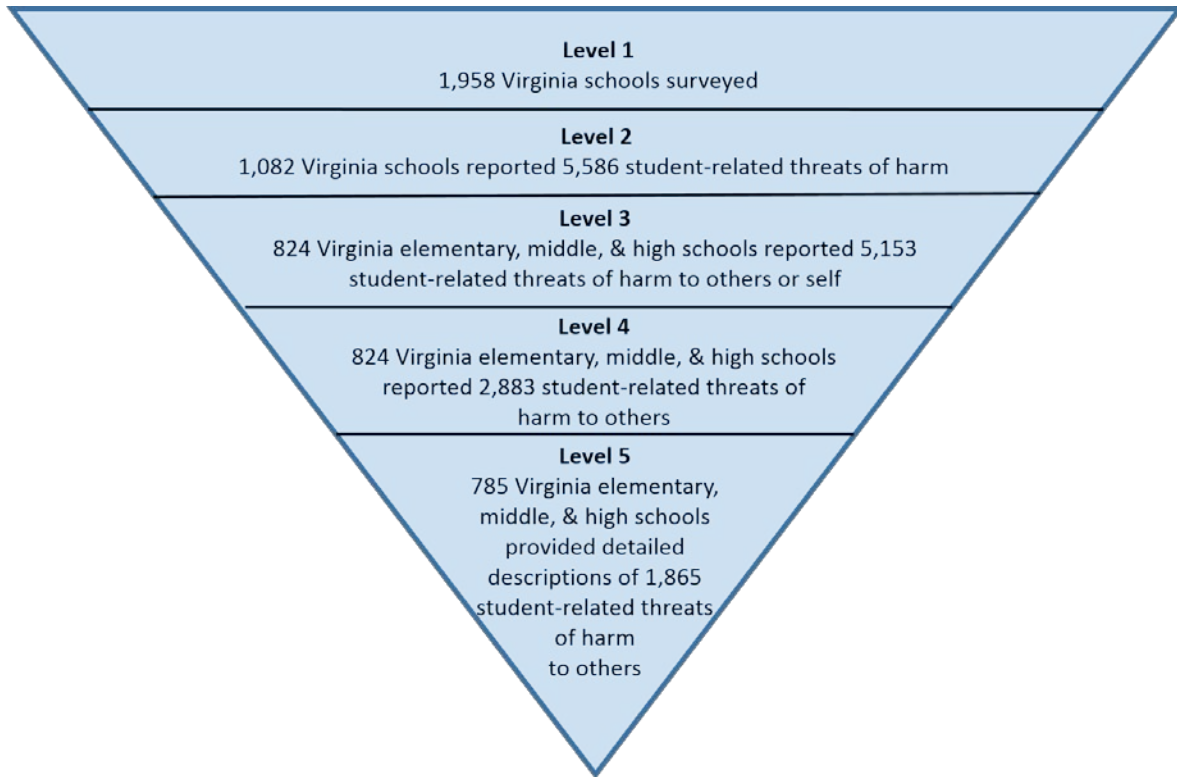
Excerpts from Threat Assessment in Virginia Schools: Technical Report for 2014–2015

In order to meet some specific goals established in NIJ grant application that is being funded under the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative, the school safety survey included a section that gathered specific threat assessment case data. In this section, schools were asked to provide detailed data regarding five specific cases that were handled by their threat assessment team during the 2014–2015 school year. The researchers at the University of Virginia then analyzed this case-level data, and their findings are detailed in the following section.

Sample Description

Figure 27 describes the sample selection process. On the top level, all 1,958 Virginia schools completed the safety survey. At the second level, there were 1,082 schools that reported at least one threat case; 876 schools reported no threat cases. The sample was further reduced at the third level to 824 elementary middle and high schools, omitting 212 schools in other categories (such as special education centers and correctional schools). The fourth level retains the 824 schools with threat cases, but reduces the student sample to 2,883 cases involving threats to others (including threats to harm both self and others), omitting 2,276 cases of threats of suicide or self-injury. Each school was asked to provide detailed information on up to five of its cases. Level five refers to the 785 schools that provided information on 1,865 student threats to harm others.

Figure 27: Sample description



Case Sample

The 824 schools with threat cases were asked detailed questions about each case up to five cases per school. For schools with more than five cases, schools were instructed to select cases as follows: report information about the most serious case during the 2014–2015 school year, report the least serious case, and report up to three most recent unselected cases.³ As a result, the survey collected case information on 2,864 threat cases (Table 14). In order to obtain a better understanding of threats to harm others, 995 cases involving a threat to harm self but not others⁴ were removed, leaving a sample of 1,865 threat assessment cases from 785 schools (405 elementary, 197 middle, and 183 high) for analysis.

³ By limiting the sample to five cases per school, schools with large numbers of cases are not given disproportionate weight. Schools were asked to identify both their most serious and least serious cases, as well as three intermediate cases, in order to obtain a wide range of cases and to avoid potential biases in selecting the most memorable cases. This selection procedure protects against overweighting of schools with larger numbers of cases, but it does not produce a completely unbiased random sample of cases. Random selection of cases would have required a more complex process that was individualized to each school based on the number of cases in each school.

⁴ A number of schools indicated they had threats of self-harm and harm to others but only provided case data for the self-harm cases reducing the overall number of schools for which analyses at the case level was performed. Four cases in which the threat type was not reported and could not be discerned have also been omitted from these analyses.

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Table 14: Detailed Case Sample

Threats	Elementary		Middle		High		Total	
	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
Threats toward others only	803	59%	508	63%	395	57%	1706	60%
Threats toward self and others	81	6%	41	5%	37	5%	159	67%
Threats toward self only	471	35%	262	32%	262	38%	995	35%
Not reported	4	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.1%
Total student cases	1359		811		694		2864	

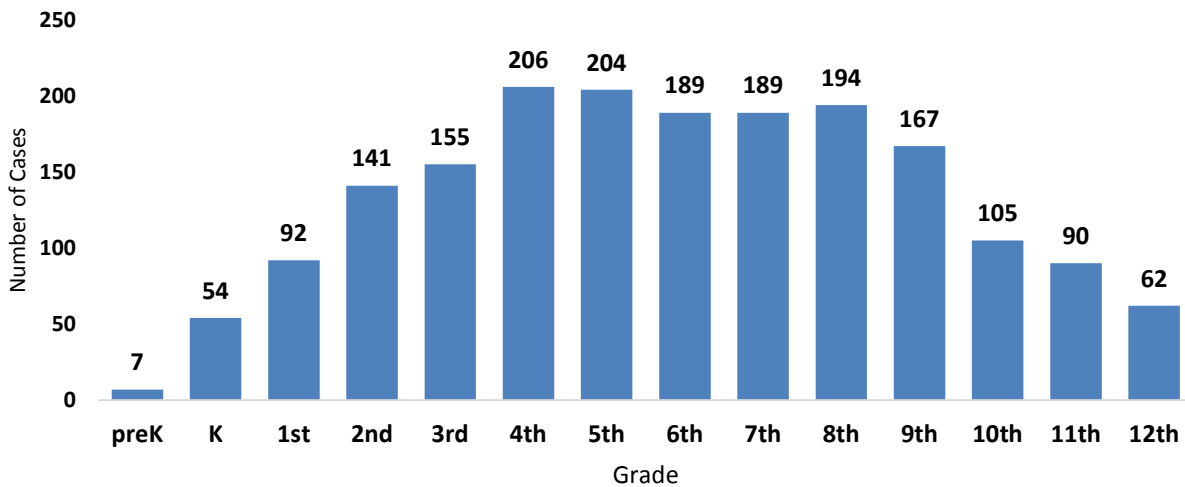
NOTE: This table represents information from 824 schools that provided details about their threat cases.

Readers are reminded that these results are based on a selected sample and may not be as representative as a random sample. Furthermore, prevalence rates and other results obtained from this survey may change in future years as school threat assessment teams refine their procedures and become more experienced.

Threat Assessment Case-Level Data

The following figure displays the total number of threats to harm others made by students according to grade level.

Figure 28: Students Threats to Harm Others According to Grade Level



1865 threat assessment cases reported by 785 Virginia public schools during the 2014–2015 school year

The most threats of these types were made by students in the 4th–5th grade (206, 204), followed by students in the 8th (194) and 6th–7th grades (189). After 8th grade, there was a gradual decrease in the number of threats made by

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students in subsequent grades, with only 62 threats made by 12th graders against others. In fact, only Kindergarten (54) and PreK (7) had less threats than those made than 12th graders.

Q. What kind of threat was made?

The most common threat was a general unspecified threat to harm (33%) followed by a threat to kill (23%), although it must be emphasized that the content of the threat does not determine its level of seriousness. Threats to kill can be rhetorical statements that are intended to intimidate someone or express strong feelings without representing a genuine intent to commit a homicide. Notably, threats to kill represented approximately one-quarter of the threats in elementary and middle schools, and were less common in high schools. Battery without a weapon (18%), such as hitting or fighting someone, was the third most common threat. Battery without a weapon was most common in high school and least common in elementary school. The Other category of threats involved bullying, ethnic/racial harassment, making a hit list, destruction of property, and inappropriate drawings or writings.

Table 15: Type of Threat Made According to School Type

	Elementary (405 schools)	Middle (197 schools)	High (183 schools)	Total (785 schools)
Unspecified threat to harm	36%	28%	34%	33%
Homicide (<i>threat to kill</i>)	23%	27%	16%	23%
Battery without a weapon (<i>hit, fight, strangle, etc.</i>)	14%	22%	23%	18%
^a Use of a weapon	16%	13%	10%	14%
^a Possession of a weapon (<i>no use</i>)	7%	7%	8%	7%
Bomb threat	3%	5%	5%	4%
Other	4%	3%	4%	4%
Sexual (<i>threat to rape, molest</i>)	1%	2%	0%	1%
Explosives (<i>other than a bomb</i>)	1%	1%	1%	1%
Arson	<1%	1%	2%	1%
Bomb threat (<i>had possession</i>)	0%	<1%	0%	<1%

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

^a *These results should be viewed with caution, because some schools included cases that only involved the student mentioning a weapon but not necessarily having the weapon.*

Q. How was the threat communicated?

Most threats were communicated directly to the intended target or victim (59%), with a smaller percentage made indirectly (27%) or implicitly (14%). Of those threats that were directly or indirectly conveyed, most threats were verbal (73%), and only a few were electronic (7%), or written (7%). Very few threats were reported as communicated in other ways such as gestures (<1%) or drawings (<1%). It is important to note that a direct threat is made when the threat is communicated to the intended target; whereas, an indirect threat is made when the

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threat was not communicated to the intended target, but was communicated to a third-party. An implicit threat is made when the threat was not overtly communicated but was implied by behaviors and actions of concerns.

Table 16: Threat Communications According to School Type

	Elementary (405 schools)	Middle (197 schools)	High (183 schools)	Total (785 schools)
Verbal	80%	70%	65%	73%
^a Electronic threat	1%	10%	16%	7%
Written	8%	6%	6%	7%
Gestures only	1%	1%	1%	1%
Telephone	<1%	<1%	1%	<1%
Drawing	1%	0%	0%	<1%
Other	0%	0%	1%	<1%

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

^a *Electronic threats include communication through websites, chat rooms, texts, tweets, emails, etc.*

Q. Who was the intended target?

Most threats were made toward a single individual (71%). Threats were directed primarily at other students (68%), but there were substantial numbers directed at faculty (15%) as well as other school staff (4%) and administrators (3%). High school students were somewhat more likely than younger students to threaten school employees. Other threats were made toward police officers, bus drivers, political leaders, and family members of students or staff.

Table 17: Intended Targets According to School Type

	Elementary (405 schools)	Middle (197 schools)	High (183 schools)	Total (785 schools)
Student(s)	72%	70%	58%	68%
Faculty	14%	14%	16%	15%
General group	9%	12%	16%	11%
Staff	4%	4%	6%	4%
Administrator(s)	5%	3%	2%	3%
Family member	2%	1%	3%	2%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%
No specific victim	1%	1%	2%	1%
Unknown	<1.0%	<1.0%	<1%	<1%

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

School Responses to Student Threats

Q. What threat assessment team members were involved in the assessment?

Membership of the threat assessment team is described in the *Code* (§ 22.1-79.4.) but the law does not require that all team members participate in every threat assessment case. A school administrator was involved in almost all (97%) threat assessment cases and a school counselor was involved in the great majority of cases (83%). Other team members involved in fewer than half of the cases were the school resource officer (42%), psychologist (29%), instructional staff or faculty (36%), social worker (20%), and others (9%), such as superintendent, school nurse, or behavior specialists.

Table 18: Threat Assessment Team Members Involved in Assessment According to School Type

Team Members	Elementary (405 schools)	Middle (197 schools)	High (183 schools)	Total (785 schools)
Administrator	97%	97%	97%	97%
Counselor	87%	81%	76%	83%
^a Law enforcement	21%	56%	66%	42%
^b Instructional staff, faculty	44%	33%	30%	38%
Psychologist	27%	27%	35%	29%
Social worker	16%	20%	28%	20%
Other	5%	3%	6%	5%
Parent	1%	1%	1%	1%
Therapeutic day counselor	2%	1%	1%	1%

^a Law enforcement includes School Resource Officers.

^b Instructional staff faculty includes classroom teacher, SPED case manager, etc.

Q. How did the school respond to the threat?

Threat assessments are intended to produce an individualized plan that depends on the student and the nature of the threat. Therefore, there is no expectation that all schools respond to all threats in the same way, but there are some responses that are commonly used. Future study will examine what kinds of responses are associated with different kinds of cases, and whether those actions are associated with differential outcomes.

In the great majority of cases, the school notified the parents of the student who made the threat (83%) and followed the school’s discipline procedures (72%). Typical responses to the student were to caution the student about the consequences of carrying out the threat (70%), increase monitoring of the student (55%), and resolve the threat through an apology or explanation (61%).

Other responses were carried out in fewer than half of the cases. The less common responses included: consulting with the school resource officer (47%), school-based counseling (32%), notifying the superintendent (31%) protecting and notifying the intended victim (31%), developing a behavior intervention or safety plan (23%), referring the student for mental health evaluation (19%) and providing direct supervision until law enforcement or a parent comes for the student (20%). On relatively few occasions, the school reviewed the student’s

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Individualized Educational Program (21%), altered the student’s schedule (11%), referred the student for special education evaluation (5%), or reviewed the student’s 504 plan (2%). Other responses (3%) included changing transportation privileges, requiring check-in/check-out, attending conflict management or mediation, monitoring restroom use, and contacting Child Protective Services.

Table 19: School Response to Threats According to School Type

	Elementary (405 schools)	Middle (197 schools)	High (183 schools)	Total (785 schools)
Notify subject student’s parents/guardians	84%	80%	80%	82%
Follow discipline procedures	70%	76%	70%	72%
Warn student about the consequences of carrying out the threat	72%	71%	66%	70%
Student provided explanation/ apology	66%	59%	53%	61%
Increase monitoring of student	57%	58%	49%	55%
Consult with Security Specialist and/or SRO	29%	60%	67%	47%
Refer subject student for school-based counseling	37%	27%	29%	32%
Notify superintendent or designee	22%	38%	39%	31%
Protect and notify intended victim(s)	28%	34%	35%	31%
Develop/monitor behavior intervention plan/safety plan	25%	23%	19%	23%
Review of existing IEP	17%	23%	24%	21%
Provide direct supervision of student until custody of law enforcement or parent	14%	24%	27%	20%
Refer subject student for mental health evaluation outside of school system	16%	22%	20%	19%
Mental health referral (outside school system)	12%	14%	17%	14%
Alter subject student’s class schedule	9%	12%	13%	11%
Mental health referral (inside school system)	6%	6%	11%	7%
Referral for special education evaluation	7%	4%	3%	5%
Review of 504 plan	2%	2%	1%	2%
Refer to TDT	1%	<1%	<1%	1%
Other	3%	3%	3%	3%

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

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Q. What disciplinary actions were taken against the students making the threat?

Almost all students received disciplinary consequences (<1.0% reported cases with no disciplinary action), but there was a wide range of actions. A reprimand was the most common disciplinary action, occurring in 53% of the cases. Out-of-school suspension was the second most common disciplinary response to a student making a threat, but occurred in less than half (43%) of the cases. In-school suspension was used in only 16% of cases and detention in only 3% of cases. Approximately 1% of students were expelled and 6% of all cases involving a recommendation for expulsion were reduced to out-of-school suspension. Students were charged in 5% of cases and arrested in just 18 (1%) of cases. Other disciplinary actions (8%) used only in elementary schools included loss of recess or other privileges, time-out in the office, and lunch detention.

Table 20: Disciplinary Actions Taken According to School Type

	Elementary (405 schools)	Middle (197 schools)	High (183 schools)	Total (785 schools)
Reprimand	62%	47%	40%	53%
Suspension (out of school)	35%	52%	50%	43%
Suspension (in school)	17%	17%	11%	16%
Recommended for expulsion that was reduced to out of school suspension	2%	6%	12%	5%
Student charged with offense by law enforcement	1%	6%	11%	5%
Detention	3%	5%	2%	3%
Parent Conference/Call	4%	1%	2%	2%
Expelled	1%	1%	2%	1%
Student arrested	<1%	1%	2%	1%
Bus suspension	1%	1%	<1%	1%
Other	9%	6%	8%	8%
None of above	10%	9%	10%	<1%

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

Q. How did the school respond to the intended target of the threat?

The school's responses to the intended target of a threat depend on the nature of the threat and whether this person was a student. In approximately half of the cases (51%) the school notified the parent or guardian of the intended target. Other responses included providing supportive counseling (30%), increasing protective monitoring (34%), advising the intended target or parents of the right to report the threat to law enforcement (16%), informing the intended target or parents of the outcome for the student who made the threat (such as letting them know when the student was returning to school (13%), and changing the class schedule for a student target (4%).

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Table 21: School Response to Intended Target According to School Type

	Elementary (405 schools)	Middle (197 schools)	High (183 schools)	Total (785 schools)
Notified parents/guardian	53%	3%	43%	51%
Supportive counseling	35%	3%	24%	31%
Increased protective monitoring of student	35%	3%	28%	34%
Advised victim of right to report to law enforcement	8%	3%	23%	16%
Informed victim of outcome for student who made threat (e.g., date and plan for student's return to school)	10%	3%	16%	13%
Altered class schedule	3%	3%	5%	4%
Other	6%	3%	5%	5%
None of Above	16%	3%	15%	14%

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

APPENDIX A:

2014–2015 VIRGINIA SCHOOL SAFETY SURVEY

This is a secure, web-based survey conducted by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS). Submission of this survey partially fulfills the Virginia School Safety Audit requirement. (Virginia Code § 22.1-279.8).

While answering the following survey questions, please base your responses on the conditions in your school during the 2014–2015 school year. You are required to provide a response to each survey question in order to complete the survey.

Should you have any questions or experience technical problems with the survey, contact Jessica Smith at the VCSCS, 804-786-5367 or jessica.smith@dcjs.virginia.gov or Donna Michaelis at 804-371-6506 or donna.michaelis@dcjs.virginia.gov.

Please answer the following questions about your school as accurately as possible.

I. SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. What is the name of your school division? *(select from drop-down list)*
2. What is the *full* name of your school?

IMPORTANT: School name must match our database for you to receive credit for the survey. Please [use this link](#) to find the formal school name, then copy and paste into this box.

3. What is your school's ID number? [3. ID](#)

IMPORTANT: ID number must match your school name for you to receive credit for the survey. Please [use this link](#) to find the 4-digit ID number, then copy and paste into this box.

If we have any questions about your survey responses, we would like to be able to contact you. Please provide us with your contact information:

4. What is your name?
5. What is your title?
6. What is your phone number?
7. What is your email address?
8. Which of the following best describes your school? *(select one)*

Elementary	Charter
Middle	Magnet
High	Governor's
Combined Grades	Special Education
Primary	Correctional Education
Pre-Kindergarten	Adult Education
Alternative	School for the Deaf and Blind
Career/Technical/Vocational	Other (describe):

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9. What grades were taught at your school during 2014-2015? (*select all that apply*)

Pre-Kindergarten
Kindergarten
1st grade
2nd grade
3rd grade
4th grade
5th grade
6th grade

7th grade
8th grade
9th grade
10th grade
11th grade
12th grade
Not applicable

II. ASSESSMENT, PLANNING, AND COMMUNICATION

Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan

[Virginia Code § 22.1-279.8](#) describes school crisis and emergency management plans. It also states that "*each school board shall ensure that every school that it supervises shall develop a written school crisis, emergency management, and medical response plan.*"

10. Did your school practice any portion of its Crisis Management Plan/Emergency Management Plan (CMP/EMP) during the 2014–2015 school year? (*Practice does not include an actual emergency. You will be asked about those events in an upcoming question.*)

Yes
No

11. Did you have to activate any portion of your school's crisis management plan during the 2014–2015 school year due to an *actual* critical event or [emergency](#)?

Yes
No

Communication with Law Enforcement

Question 12 refers to [Virginia Code § 22.1-279.3:1 \(Paragraph B\)](#) which requires local law enforcement to notify schools of certain offenses committed by students under certain circumstances. Please click on the Code cite and review the Code section before answering this question.

12. Are there formal processes or protocols in place through which your school routinely receives notification on the Code listed offenses from local law enforcement?

Yes
No

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III. STUDENT SAFETY CONCERNS

Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) offense and incident types reported in Safe Schools Information Resource (SSIR) (<https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/pti/>) are coded and grouped into nine offense categories that are aligned according to severity of offense.

13. For each Discipline, Crime and Violence (DCV) offenses category listed, indicate whether the number of occurrences at your school increased, decreased, or stayed the same when compared with the previous (2013–2014) school year.

DCV Offense Category	Increased	Decreased	Same
Weapons Related Offenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offenses Against Students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offenses Against Staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offenses Against Persons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Property Offenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disorderly Disruptive Behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology Offenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other Offenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. What type of school safety training is most needed by your school’s administration/faculty/staff? *(select all that apply)*

- Alternatives to suspension and expulsion
- Crisis planning, prevention and response (to include school safety drills, crisis response options, crisis intervention and recovery – all hazards)
- Drug and Alcohol training
- Gangs and Human Trafficking recognition
- Mental Health problem awareness and recognition
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (as it pertains to adults with the students)
- Peer Relations (dating violence, bullying, bystander intervention, conflict mediation, sexual harassment, etc.)
- Search and Seizure (and other legal issues) training
- Social Media
- Suicide prevention
- Threat assessment team training
- Violence Prevention training (including fighting, armed intruder, active shooter, other school violence)
- Other

14a. You indicated there are other types of school safety training that are most needed by your school’s administration/faculty/staff. Briefly describe.

Mental Health

15. Does your school employ a mental health professional (counselor, psychologist, social worker, substance abuse counselor) whose primary assignment is to provide counseling services to students? 15.

- Yes
- No

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(If 15= yes)

15a. How many of the mental health professionals whose primary assignment is to provide counseling services at your school work full-time/part-time?

(enter number of full-time and number of part-time)

Number of full-time

Number of part-time

IV. SCHOOL SECURITY/SURVEILLANCE

The questions in this section of the survey ask about security practices at your school. Because the public release of such information might compromise safety and security plans, Virginia Codes § 2.2-3705.2 and § 22.1-279.8 allow such information to be protected from release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This protection will automatically be given for answers to questions in this section.

Please note, the DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety will report the information in this section in an aggregated format for all schools, but it will not release specific information from identified schools.

16. Review the following list of security strategies and select those that were in place at your school during the 2014–2015 school year (select all that apply)

Someone is stationed at the front entrance of the school at all times during school hours to ensure that visitors report to the main office for visitor check in

Main entrance of the school building or campus is secured by a controlled access system during school hours

School grounds are secured by a controlled access system during school hours

All exterior entrances to the school building or campus are locked during school hours

All classrooms in the school can be locked from both the inside and the outside of the classroom

None of the above

Other

Safety-Related Personnel

17. Did you have safety/security personnel such as School Resource Officers (SROs), School Security Officers (SSOs), or other types of security personnel working at your school during the 2014–2015 school year (include both full time and part time personnel)?

Yes

No

(if 17 = yes)

17a. Was/were the safety/security personnel working at your school full time, part time or did your school employ both full time and part time? (Full time = at your school at all times during each school day; Part time = at your school only part of the school day or some days)

Full time

Part time

Used both full time and part time

(If 17a = FT or both)

17a-1. What type/s of safety/security personnel were working full time at your school?
(select all that apply)

School Resource Officers (SROs)

School Security Officers (SSOs)

Other (describe) _____

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(If 17a = PT or both)

17a-2. What type/s of safety/security personnel were working part time at your school?
(select all that apply)

School Resource Officers (SROs)

School Security Officers (SSOs)

Other (describe) _____

(if 17a-1 and/or 17a-2= SSO)

17a-3. Please provide the name and email address for each SSO currently working at your school.

(if 17a-1 and/or 17a-2= SRO)

17a-4. Please provide the name and email address for each SRO currently working at your school.

Safety-Related Conditions

18. Can school administrators communicate with law enforcement/first responders via radio when they are inside the school building?

Yes

No

Don't know

19. Do first responders have access to the school during a lockdown so they do not have to breach doors or windows to gain access?

Yes

No

Don't know

20. Does your school conduct background checks on volunteers who work with your students (NOT including parents/guardians)?

Yes

No

V. THREAT ASSESSMENT

Virginia Code § 22.1-79.4 states "Each local school board shall adopt policies for the establishment of threat assessment teams, including the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of school staff or students consistent with the model policies developed by the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety..." and "Each division superintendent shall establish, for each school, a threat assessment team that shall include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement." The law also instructs that "Each threat assessment team established pursuant to this section shall report quantitative data on its activities according to guidance developed by the Department of Criminal Justice Services."

Here are some important points to keep in mind in answering the questions in this section.

- 1) These questions should be answered in consultation with a knowledgeable member of your threat assessment team.
- 2) You will need to refer to your threat assessment case records to answer many of these questions.
- 3) A threat assessment is conducted when a person makes a verbal threat or engages in behavior that is perceived as threatening to themselves or others. Threats can be made in any medium, and can be

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oral, written, digital, or behavioral. Threats can be communicated directly toward an intended target, they can be communicated to third parties, or they can be found in writings or behaviors that are discovered but not communicated to anyone intentionally. In ambiguous cases, the decision to conduct a threat assessment can require a judgment by school authorities that a threat assessment is needed.

- 4) For purposes of this report, an inspection of the school building or an evaluation of school security needs is not a threat assessment.
 - 5) The state code includes threats to harm self under the umbrella of threat assessment, but the response to a student who is suicidal or self-injurious differs from the response to a student who threatens to harm others. As a result, schools should maintain records that distinguish between cases involving a threat to others versus a threat to harm self (as well as cases with both kinds of threats).
 - 6) When a student engages in aggressive behavior such as a fight, a threat assessment may be conducted with a focus on whether the student is at-risk for further aggressive behavior. In these cases, questions about whether the student carried out the threat are concerned with actions occurring after the threat assessment and not the aggressive behavior that precipitated the threat assessment.
 - 7) Throughout this section of the survey, when the term “threat” is used it includes threats made directly and threats made implicitly.
 - A direct threat is made when the threat is communicated to the intended target.
 - An indirect threat is made when the threat was not communicated to the intended target, but was communicated to a third-party.
 - An implicit threat is made when the threat was not overtly communicated but was implied by behaviors and actions of concern
21. Please provide the name and contact information for a knowledgeable member of your threat assessment team who can respond to any questions we might have about your survey responses.

Name
Title
Email address

Awareness of Threat Assessment Process and Policies

22. Did your school provide information about your school’s threat assessment policies and processes to students, staff, or parents to make them aware of threat assessment policies and processes and not just in response to a specific threat?

Yes
No
Don’t know

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(if 22 = yes)

22a.. What type(s) of informational methods were used to provide these groups with awareness of your school's threat assessment policies/processes? (Indicate the methods used to inform each of the listed groups. Select all that apply)

	Brochure or other paper document	Website/email and/or social media	Verbal presentation (classroom, assembly or other group meeting)	Other
Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Threat Assessments Conducted in 2014–2015

For the next series of questions, we want to know about the number of threat assessments conducted by your school's threat assessment team. For each question, please report the number of cases regardless of their risk classification.

23. What was the total number of threat assessments conducted by your school's threat assessment team in 2014–2015? _____

(if 23 = 0, will go to 23a)

(if 23 = 1 or > 1, will go to 23b)

23a. You responded that your school's threat assessment team conducted no threat assessments during the 2014–2015 school year. Is this correct?

Yes *(if 23a = Yes, will answer "last question" and then end survey)*

No *(if 23a = No, will go to 23b)*

23b. You reported that your school conducted (#) of threat assessments in 2014–2015. Of these, how many involved threats made by persons from each of the following groups?

(Enter the number of threat assessments conducted on persons from each of the groups listed below. If no threat assessments were conducted on persons from a listed group, enter 0. If the threat was made by two or more individuals, count each individual who was assessed as a separate threat assessment. The sum total of the number of threat assessments conducted for all listed groups should equal the number of all threat assessments that you reported in Q23.)

Number of Threat Assessments

Student from your school

Student not from your school

Student formerly from your school

Faculty/staff currently employed by your school

Faculty/staff formerly employed by your school

Parent/guardian of a student

Someone else

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(if 23b "student from your school" = 0, will answer "last question" and then end survey)

(If 23b "someone else" > 0)

23b-1. You indicated that a threat assessment was conducted on someone else. Please describe this person(s)'s relationship to the school. _____

(At this point in the survey, respondents that did not conduct a threat assessment on a student enrolled in their school in 2014–2015 have been filtered out and have ended the survey. Only schools that did conduct a threat assessment on a student enrolled in their school in 2014–2015 remain.)

The rest of the questions apply only to cases involving a student enrolled in your school for at least one day during the 2014–2015 school year. Please do not include cases of threats made by persons who were not students in your school during 2014–2015.

23b-2. In Question 23b, you reported that your school conducted (#) threat assessments on students from your school in 2014–2015. For each type of threat listed below, indicate the number of threat assessment cases in which a student threatened to act in the manner described.

Type of threat

Number of cases

Threatened to harm someone other than self but did not threaten suicide or self-harm?

Threatened to harm someone other than self AND threaten suicide or self-harm?

Threatened to commit suicide but did not threaten others?

Threatened to self-harm (such as cutting, but not suicide), but did not threaten others?

24. Many threat assessment teams classify cases by the severity of risk/threat. Please review the classification systems below (or use this [link](#)) and select the one that your threat assessment team used in 2014–2015. (select one)

DCJS Threat Assessment in Virginia Public Schools: Model Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

(includes classifications: Imminent Risk, Serious Risk, Moderate Risk, Low Risk)

UVA Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence

(includes classifications: Very Serious Substantive Threat, Serious Substantive Threat, Transient Threat)

Other

25. Please provide the total number of threat assessments that resulted in classifications for each of the listed risk/threat classification levels.
- In Column A (Number of All Cases) provide the number of all student threat assessment cases for each risk/threat classification level.
 - In Column B (Number of Suicide/Self-Harm Only Cases) provide the number of student threat assessment cases that involved suicide or self-harm only and did not involve a threat of harm to others for each risk/classification level.

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(if 24 = DCJS)

Case Risk/Classification Level	Column A	Column B
	Number of All Cases	Number of Suicide/Self-Harm Only Cases
Imminent threat		
High risk threat		
Moderate risk threat		
Low risk threat		

(if 24 = UVA)

Case Risk/Classification Level	Column A	Column B
	Number of All Cases	Number of Suicide/Self-Harm Only Cases
Very serious substantive threat		
Serious substantive threat		
Transient threat		

(if 24 = Other)

You indicated that your school uses a different classification system. Describe each category and the number of cases in the space below.

Case Risk/Classification Level	Column A	Column B
	Number of All Cases	Number of Suicide/Self-Harm Only Cases

APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS

Administration/Faculty/Staff

Some questions on the survey refer to school administration, school faculty and/or school staff. When responding to these questions, respondents were asked to use the following definitions for each group.

Administration: superintendent, principal, assistant principal, office staff/administrative assistant, disciplinary staff

Faculty: teachers, counselor/guidance counselor, substitute teachers, teacher assistants

Staff: bus drivers, food service, janitorial, maintenance, nurse/student health, student activities / athletic, school resource officer (SRO), school security officer (SSO), paid officer from outside private security agency

Bullying

Repeated negative behaviors intended to frighten or cause harm. This may include, but is not limited to, verbal or written threats or physical harm. Another form is cyber bullying, which is using information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, hostile behavior intended to harm others. "Bullying" means any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. "Bullying" includes cyber bullying. "Bullying" does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Controlled Access System

Controlled access entry systems provide a barrier between potential visitors and building interiors that must be actively removed by school personnel, such as one that requires a staff member to "buzz" visitors through a locked door.

Crisis Management

Crisis Management is that part of a school division's approach to school safety which focuses more narrowly on a time-limited, problem-focused intervention to identify, confront and resolve the crisis, restore equilibrium, and support appropriate adaptive responses.

Emergency

An emergency is any event or situation that forces school closure or schedule changes, or that directly threatens the safety or wellbeing of any students, faculty, staff or members of the community and requires immediate action for resolution. Examples include severe weather, loss of utilities, bomb threats or terrorist acts, violent crime, release of hazardous materials, and others and need not occur on school property.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is the statute that provides access to government records (or portions thereof) except to the extent that such records are protected from disclosure by any of the exemptions included in the act. Security plans and specific assessment components of school safety audits may be excluded from FOIA as referenced in § 2.2-3705.2 and as provided in § 22.1-279.8.

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Virginia Code § 2.2-3700.

- A. This chapter may be cited as “The Virginia Freedom of Information Act.”
- B. By enacting this chapter, the General Assembly ensures the people of the Commonwealth ready access to public records in the custody of a public body or its officers and employees, and free entry to meetings of public bodies wherein the business of the people is being conducted. The affairs of government are not intended to be conducted in an atmosphere of secrecy since at all times the public is to be the beneficiary of any action taken at any level of government. Unless a public body or its officers or employees specifically elect to exercise an exemption provided by this chapter or any other statute, every meeting shall be open to the public and all public records shall be available for inspection and copying upon request. All public records and meetings shall be presumed open, unless an exemption is properly invoked. The provisions of this chapter shall be liberally construed to promote an increased awareness by all persons of governmental activities and afford every opportunity to citizens to witness the operations of government. Any exemption from public access to records or meetings shall be narrowly construed and no record shall be withheld or meeting closed to the public unless specifically made exempt pursuant to this chapter or other specific provision of law. This chapter shall not be construed to discourage the free discussion by government officials or employees of public matters with the citizens of the Commonwealth.

All public bodies and their officers and employees shall make reasonable efforts to reach an agreement with a requester concerning the production of the records requested. Any ordinance adopted by a local governing body that conflicts with the provisions of this chapter shall be void.

School

The Virginia Center for School Safety uses a different definition for a “school” than the Virginia Department of Education due to the nature of the school safety audit requirement. For the purposes of a “school safety audit” the VCSS uses the following definition: “A school is any separate physical structure that houses and instructs public school students on a daily basis.” Therefore, regional, alternative, governor’s schools, head start, preschool facilities, and others that are not physically part of another public school building, are required to complete a school safety survey, regardless of where the enrollment of its students is housed.

School Resource Officer (SRO)

A certified law-enforcement officer employed by the local law enforcement agency that provides law-enforcement and security services to a Virginia public school

School Security Officer (SSO)

An individual who is employed by the local school board for the singular purpose of maintaining order and discipline, preventing crime, investigating violations of school board policies, and detaining students violating the law or school board policies on school property or at school-sponsored events and who is responsible solely for ensuring the safety, security, and welfare of all students, faculty, staff and visitors in the assigned school.

Threat Assessment Team

School threat assessment teams shall be headed by the principal or administrative designee and include at least one guidance counselor, a school psychologist and/or school social worker, a law enforcement representative who is typically a school resource officer, and a member with expertise in instruction. Other school staff may serve on the team and/or be consulted during the threat assessment process, as appropriate, or as determined by the

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principal. [Note: § 22.1-79.4.D., *Code of Virginia*, requires school threat assessment teams to include persons with expertise in counseling, instruction, school administration, and law enforcement]

In fulfilling statutory responsibilities, school threat assessment teams shall:

- Conduct the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior may pose a threat to the safety of the school staff or students
- Provide guidance to students, faculty, and staff regarding recognition of threatening behavior that may represent a threat by conducting presentations, broadly disseminating relevant information, and ensuring access to consultation from teams
- Clearly identify the person(s) to whom members of the school community are to report threatening behavior
- Implement school board policies in an effective manner for the assessment of and intervention with students whose behavior poses a threat, including, in appropriate cases, referrals to community services boards or health care providers for evaluation or treatment. (§ 22.1-79.4.C., *Code of Virginia*)



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