



Sample
Checklist
Inside

If Gun Violence Comes to Your School, Will Your Security Plan be Bulletproof?

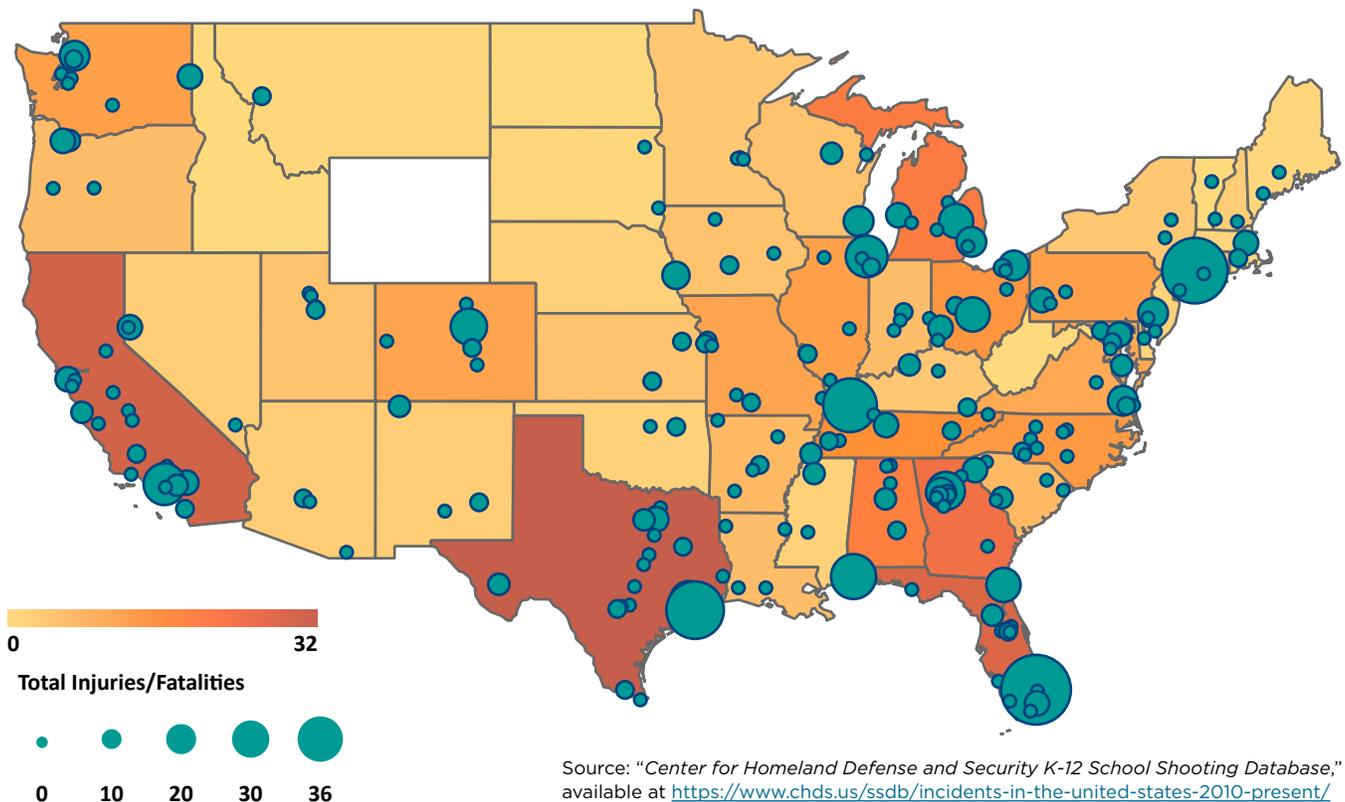
Armored classroom doors, weapons detection systems, door barricades, bulletproof backpacks and whiteboards, lockdown shades, and panic buttons. This is not a list of items for a dystopian future classroom, but a sampling of products currently available for purchase in today's school security equipment and services industry, which is a \$2.7 billion-revenue market.¹ Considering the spate of violence in American schools, the school security industry's meteoric rise is not surprising. Over the past 20 years, Columbine,

Sandy Hook, and Marjory Stoneman Douglas have come into the American vernacular as reminders that gun violence happens in our schools.

Aside from installing expensive electronic security systems and transforming school buildings into fortresses, what can school districts do to ensure students' safety and security? Federal and state laws and regulations do not provide significant guidance to school districts on developing safety and security plans. But school districts can take many pro-active steps to prevent, prepare for, and respond to violent acts or threats. To start, schools that effectively identify threats are able to intervene and prevent violence before it begins, and that process starts with

¹ See "School security systems industry - US market overview," IHS Markit, available at <https://technology.ihs.com/600401/school-security-systems-industry-us-market-overview>. Revenue is based on 2017 data.

Incidents in the United States



an effective threat assessment program. Research indicates that schools that utilized threat assessment programs see as few as 0.5 to 3.5 percent of students attempt to carry out their threats with no threats rising to the level of serious harm.² Additionally, schools that implement these programs also have fewer expulsions, suspensions, and arrests, with no evidence of disproportionate impacts on students of color.

Because student security is paramount, SLRMA has pored through the most current and effective resources and created a new resource for members: *Protecting Students: Safety and Security in Schools Checklist and Best Practices*. This comprehensive checklist is designed to inform school districts on the key aspects of identifying, preparing for, and responding to emergency and security threat situations. Part I of the checklist focuses on the development of threat assessment plans. Part II addresses possible security measures schools

should adopt, including physical mechanisms and accompanying policies. Part III examines emergency response planning and what schools should do in preparation for crises. Part IV focuses on partnerships between school districts and local law enforcement or SROs. Part V discusses other resources within the school community and how policies should be drafted to be both safe and equitable.

Go to SLRMA.org today to download this important resource for your school district today.

“Prevention must start before there is a gunman at the school door.”

*– Professor Dewey Cornell,
University of Virginia, co-developer of the Virginia
Student Threat Assessment Guidelines*

² See “Everytown for Gun Safety, “Keeping Our Schools Safe: A Plan to Stop Mass Shootings and End Gun Violence in American Schools” (February 11, 2019), available at <https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-schools-safe-plan-stop-mass-shootings-end-gun-violence-american-schools>.

Recent Updates from the Newsroom Available on SLRMA.org

U.S. Department of Labor Announces Overtime Final Rule

October 1, 2019

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Wage and Hour Division released a final rule concerning overtime, effective January 1, 2020, that will increase the salary threshold, by approximately 50%, that so-called “white collar” employees must be paid in order to be classified as “exempt” under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Employees who do not meet the new heightened salary threshold of \$684 per week (which equates to \$35,568 per year) will be considered non-exempt and thus eligible for overtime pay. The DOL estimates that this change will impact approximately 1.3 million workers.

Department of Education Issues Findings on Chicago Public Schools

September 13, 2019

The Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) entered into a resolution agreement related to OCR’s investigation into 2,800 student-on-student and 280 adult-on-student sexual harassment complaints over a 4 year period. Among the findings are that CPS failed to respond promptly to complaints, failed to maintain adequate grievance procedures, and failed to appoint a Title IX coordinator.

U.S. Department of Labor Confirms Special Ed Meetings as FMLA Eligible

August 27, 2019

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Wage and Hour, recently opined that parents attending school meetings concerning individualized education programs (IEPs) for children with serious health conditions triggers intermittent FMLA leave protection.

Department of Education to Investigate Transgender Policy Related to Sports

August 15, 2019

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) decided to open an investigation related to a Title IX discrimination complaint brought by three Connecticut female track and field athletes. The complaint challenges the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference’s policy permitting transgender athletes to participate in interscholastic athletics based on their gender identification.

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Top Downloads 2019

- 1) McKinney Vento Act Checklist
- 2) #MeToo Bullying & Harassment Checklist
- 3) Hazing Prevention Checklist
- 4) Bullying & Harassment Checklist

SLRMA UPDATE | October 2019

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The Mission of the School Leaders Risk Management Association (SLRMA) is to assist public school districts (K-12) with supplemental risk management support. We help you accomplish your own mission of risk avoidance in a number of ways.

- We provide pro-active, timely tools to help prevent unwanted and unwarranted school board legal liability claims.
- We keep members informed of the current legal issues that will likely affect your school district through our work with the Federal Legislation Insurance Committee (FLIC).
- We give members access to special reports featured in our Newsroom. The topics are specific to the School Board Legal Liability school boards face today and will in the future.

Members are equipped with an array of self-audits and checklists to help ensure you are in compliance with the latest requirements and guidelines which govern school boards and school districts. We are a not-for-profit and are governed by a Board of Directors. The Board consists of current Executive Directors of State School Boards Associations.

Checkout slrma.org to see all the benefits of membership.

**Protecting Students: Safety and Security in Schools
Checklist and Best Practices for School Districts**

Part I: Threat Assessment Programs

I. Written Threat Assessment Policies

All threats of violence should be handled appropriately by school officials. It is therefore imperative that school districts implement specific policies and procedures for identifying, evaluating, and responding to threats to the school community.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
◆ The District has created a threat assessment team that consists of different types of staff members throughout the school (e.g. administrators, counselors, teachers, SROs).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ The District has written policies for identifying, evaluating, and responding to threats to the school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ The District has trained teachers and staff on the written policy for identifying, evaluating, and responding to threats to the school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
◆ The District has trained students on how to identify threats to the school community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A. Model Threat Assessment Policy (Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
<p>◆ Evaluate the threat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Obtain a detailed account of the threat, usually by interviewing the person who made the threat, the intended victim, and other witnesses. This may include monitoring the social media presence of the student making the threat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note: There are programs that are available for schools to use to help monitor students' social media accounts. ○ Write down the exact content of the threat and key observations by each party. ○ Consider the circumstances in which the threat was made and the student's intentions. Is there communication of intent to harm someone or behavior suggesting intent to harm? <p>If the last answer is yes, move on to the next step.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>◆ Attempt to resolve the threat as transient.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the threat an expression of humor, rhetoric, anger, or frustration that can be easily resolved so that there is no intent to harm? ○ Does the person retract the threat or offer an explanation and/or apology that indicates no future intent to harm anyone? <p>If the answers are no, move on to the next step.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Respond to a substantive threat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take precautions to protect potential victims. ○ Warn intended victim and parents. ○ Look for ways to resolve conflict. ○ Discipline student, when appropriate. ◆ Note: Serious threats are those that threaten to hit, fight, or beat up somebody in the community. Very serious threats are those that threaten to kill, rape, or cause very serious injury with a weapon. <p>If the treat is considered very serious, move on to the next step.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Conduct a safety evaluation for a very serious substantive threat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Screen student for mental health services and counseling; refer as needed ○ Examine social media posts to determine if the student has access to weapons. ○ Initiate law enforcement investigation for evidence of planning and preparation, criminal activity ○ Develop safety plan that reduces risk and addresses student needs. Plan should include review of IEPs if already receiving special education services and further assessment if there is a possible disability. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Implement and monitor the safety plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Document the plan. ○ Maintain contact with the student. ○ Monitor whether the plan is working and revise as needed. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><i>Best Practice:</i> The Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guideline (VSTAG) is the most commonly referenced model for a threat assessment plan. The VSTAG was developed by a professor at the University of Virginia in the early 2000s. The plan was created in consultation with the Secret Service and FBI, borrowing from their investigations of school shootings. Since the VSTAG was published in 2001, it has been tested in a variety of controlled and natural experiments. Findings from these studies include a decreased rate of threats that are acted upon and a decreased rate in suspension of students. These two findings together indicate that the program is successful in acting as an early intervention tool that prevents students from endangering themselves or others. Forms to be used to conduct a threat assessment under the VSTAG plan in conjunction with the VSTAG manual are available for download at https://curry.virginia.edu/faculty-research/centers-labs-projects/research-labs/youth-violence-project/virginia-student-threat.</p>		
<p><i>Best Practice:</i> The Department of Homeland Security, in conjunction with other federal agencies, has released a guide for schools outlining how to create effective threat assessment programs. See United States Secret Service, “Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence” (July 2018), https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18_0711_USSS_NTAC-Enhancing-School-Safety-Guide.pdf. The Department of Homeland Security model follows these steps:</p> <p>Step 1. Establish a multi-disciplinary threat assessment team</p> <p>Step 2. Define concerning and prohibited behaviors</p> <p>Step 3. Create a central reporting mechanism</p> <p>Step 4. Determine the threshold for law enforcement intervention</p> <p>Step 5. Establish assessment procedures</p> <p>Investigative Themes:</p> <p>Motives, Communications, Inappropriate Interests, Weapons Access, Stressors, Emotional and Developmental Issues, Desperation or Despair, Violence as an Option, Concerned Others, Capacity to Carry Out an Attack, Planning, Consistency, and Protective Factors.</p> <p>Step 6. Develop risk management options</p> <p>Step 7. Create and promote safe school climates</p> <p>Step 8. Conduct training for all stakeholders</p> <p>The guide provides further details for schools to help carry out each of these steps effectively.</p>		