School Safety Update

Secret Service study of school shootings focuses on "targeted violence"

Most official statistics show that rates of school violence have steadily decreased since 1993. As reports from the U.S. Department of Education and others have shown, school is one of the safest places for our nation's children. However, several high-profile shootings in schools over the past decade have resulted in increased fear among students, parents and educators. The Secret Service Safe School Initiative focuses on a rare but significant component of the problem of school violence—incidents of targeted violence in school.

"Targeted violence" is a term developed by the Secret Service to refer to any incident of violence where a known (or knowable) attacker selects a particular target prior to the violent attack. The target may be an identified (or identifiable) person, such as a particular classmate or teacher, or it could be a building, such as the school itself.

Other kinds of problems in American schools are far more common than the targeted attacks in schools that have occurred in Jefferson County, CO, Jonesboro, AR, West Paducah, KY, and other communities. Moreover, children and adolescents face many other problems in school and out. However, the tremendous impact of each one of these school shootings—on the school, the surrounding community, and the nation—and the increased fear these events have engendered have made it necessary for school officials, parents, and others to consider steps they can take to prevent incidents of targeted violence in their schools.

The Safe School Initiative was developed and implemented as a partnership with the U.S. Department of Education. In this collaboration, the U.S. Secret Service brought to the problem of school violence its experience in researching, understanding and preventing targeted violence. The goal of the Safe School Initiative is to provide accurate and useful information to school administrators, educators, law enforcement professionals and others who have protective and safety responsibilities in schools, to help prevent incidents of targeted violence in school.

Method

- For this project, personnel from the Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) studied 37 school shootings, involving 41 attackers who were current or recent students at the school, and where the attacker/s chose the school for a particular purpose (and not simply as a site of opportunity). Shootings that were clearly related to gang or drug activity, or to an interpersonal or relationship dispute that just happened to occur at the school, were not included.

- For each incident, researchers reviewed primary source materials, such as investigative, school, court, and mental health records and answered several hundred questions about the case. Teams of investigators and social science researchers coded each of the cases, with at least two raters assigned to each case. Each rater independently answered questions about the incident in a codebook, then discussed their ratings with the other team member and produced a single "reconciled" scoring for the case. Information gathered about each case included facts about the attacker's development of an idea and plan to harm the target, selection of the target, motivation for the incident, communications about their ideas and intent, acquisition of weapons, as well as demographic and background information about each attacker.

- In addition to file reviews for each case, NTAC personnel have conducted supplemental interviews with 10 of the attackers. The purpose of the interviews was to get the attacker's perspective on his decision to engage in a school-based attack. The findings are based primarily on the information obtained from review of available file in each case. The information gleaned from interviews is used in training venues to illustrate particular aspects of the case.

Incident Characteristics

- Contrary to common belief, incidents of targeted violence at school are not a new phenomenon. The earliest case examined occurred in 1974, where a student brought guns and homemade bombs to his school, set off the fire alarm, and shot at janitors and firemen who responded to the alarm.

- Since the first case in 1974, NTAC personnel identified 37 incidents, involving 41 attackers, that meet the study criteria specified above.

- These incidents took place in 26 states, with more than one incident occurring in Arkansas, California, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee.

- All of the incidents were committed by boys or young men.

- Contrary to the impression given form the attack at Columbine High School in Jefferson County, CO, fellow students were not the only targets chosen by the attackers. In over half of the incidents, the attacker had selected at least one school administrator, faculty member, or staff member as a target.

- In more than two-thirds of the incidents, the attacker killed one or more students, faculty, or others at the school. Handguns and rifles/shotguns were the primary weapons used. More than half of the attacks occurred in the middle of the school day.

Preliminary Findings and Implications

1. Incidents of targeted violence at school are rarely impulsive. The attacks are typically the end result of an understandable and often discernible process of thinking and behavior.

- In almost all of the incidents, the attacker developed the idea to harm the target before the attack. Over half of the attackers developed their idea for the incident at least two weeks prior to the attack.
- In well over three-fourths of the incidents, the attacker planned the attack. Although a few attackers developed a plan the same day that they launched an attack, more than half of the attackers developed a plan at least two days prior to the attack.
- More than one-half of the attackers had revenge as a motive, and over two-thirds had multiple reasons for their school-based attacks.
- More than three-fourths of the attackers were known to hold a grievance at the time of the attack. Many attackers communicated with others about these grievances prior to the attack.

Implications: Students who engage in targeted violence in school typically did not just "snap." Because information about these attackers' intent and planning was potentially knowable before the incident, some attacks may be preventable. However, because the time span between the attacker's decision to mount an attack and the actual incident may be short, quick efforts to inquire and intervene are necessary. An inquiry should include investigation of, and attention to, grievances and bad feelings about school or potential targets that a student may be experiencing.

2. Prior to most incidents, the attacker told someone about his idea and/or plan.

- In almost three-fourths of the cases, the attacker told someone before the attack about his interest in mounting an attack at the school. In over half of the incidents, the attacker told more than one person about his ideas/plans. For example, in one case an attacker

made comments to at least 24 friends and classmates about his interest in killing other kids, building bombs, or carrying out an attack at the school. Some peers knew detailed information about the attacker's plans, while others knew "something spectacular" was going to happen in school on a particular date.

- In virtually all of the cases in this study, the person told was a peer — a friend, schoolmate, or sibling. In only two cases did such a peer notify an adult of the idea or plan.
- In fewer than one-quarter of all incidents, the attacker communicated a threat to his target/s prior to the attack.

Implications: In most cases, the attacker told a friend, schoolmate, or sibling about their ideas for a possible attack before it occurred. However, because most attackers did not threaten their target directly, it is important not to rely on the issuance of a direct threat to prompt concern or to initiate an inquiry about a student. It is helpful to distinguish between making a threat (telling people they intended to harm someone) and posing a threat (engaging in behaviors that indicate an intent, planning, or preparation for an attack); adults should attend to concerns that someone poses a threat.

Although many friends, classmates, and siblings knew about the attackers' ideas and plans before the attacks, in almost no case did they bring that information to an adult's attention. As a result, it is important that threat assessment inquiries involve efforts to gather information from anyone who may have contact with the student in question—so that all relevant information may be discovered. It is also important both to decrease barriers in a school environment that may prevent students who have information of concern for coming forward and to have a thoughtful and effective system to handle and analyze information that comes to those in authority.

3. There is no accurate or useful profile of "the school shooter."

- Attacker ages ranged from 11 to 21.
- They came from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds. In nearly one-

quarter of the cases, the attackers were not white.

- They came from a range of family situations, from intact families with numerous ties to the community to foster homes with histories of neglect.
- Their academic performance ranged from excellent to failing. Some attackers were taking advanced placement courses at the time of the incident; others had histories of poor academic performance.
- They had a range of friendship patterns, from socially isolated to popular.
- Their behavioral histories varied, from having no observed behavioral problems to multiple behaviors warranting reprimand and/or discipline.
- Few attackers showed any marked change in academic performance, friendship status, interest in school, or disciplinary problems at school prior to their attack.
- Few of the attackers had been diagnosed with any mental disorder prior to the incident. Additionally fewer than one-third of attackers had histories of drug or alcohol abuse.

Implications: The use of profiles is not effective either for identifying students who may pose a risk for targeted violence at school or—once a student has been identified— for assessing the risk that a particular student may pose for school-base targeted violence. The personality and social characteristics of the shooters varied substantially. Knowing that an individual shares characteristics, features, or traits with prior school shooters does not advance the appraisal of risk. Moreover, the use of profiles carries a risk of over-identification—the great majority of students who fit any given profile will not actually pose a risk of targeted violence. Finally, use of prevails will fail to identify some students who in fact pose a risk of violence—but who share few if any characteristics with prior attackers.

An inquiry should focus instead on a student's behaviors and communications to determine if the student appears to be planning or preparing an attack. A fact-based approach may be more productive in preventing school shootings than a

trait-base approach. The ultimate question to answer is an inquiry is whether a student is on a path toward a violent attack, and if so to determine how fast they are moving and where intervention may be possible.

4. Most attackers had previously used guns and had access to them.

• Over half of attackers had a history of gun use, although most did not necessarily demonstrate a "fascination" with weapons or explosives.

• In nearly two-thirds of the incidents, the attackers got the gun/s used in the attack from their own home or that of a relative. In some cases, the guns had been gifts to the attackers from their parents.

Implications: Access to weapons among students is common, but when the idea of an attack exists any efforts to acquire, prepare, or use a weapons may be a significant move in the attacker's progression from idea to action. An inquiry should include investigation of, and attention to, weapon access and use and to communication about weapons. The large proportion of attackers who acquired their guns from home points to the need to consider issues of safe gun storage.

5. Most shooting incidents were not resolved by law enforcement intervention.

• Over half of the attacks were resolved or ended before law enforcement responded to the scene. In these cases, the attacker was stopped by faculty or fellow students, decided to stop shooting on his own, or killed himself.

• In only three cases did law enforcement personnel discharge any weapons during the incident.

• In contrast with the incident at Columbine High School that lasted more than three hours, one-half of the incidents lasted 20 minutes or less.

Implications: Schools may make the best use of their resources by focusing on prevention, and not by relying exclusively on law enforcement to respond to and resolve school-based attacks.

6. In most cases, other students were involved in some capacity.

• Although the attacker acted alone in at least two-thirds of the cases, in almost one-half the cases the attackers were influenced or encouraged by others. For example, in one case the attacker's idea had been to bring a gun to school to appear tough so that the students who had been harassing him would leave him alone. It was not until he shared this idea with two friends—and they convinced him he had to actually shoot kids at school to get the other students to leave him alone —that he decided to actually attack. Several days later, he brought a shotgun to school, killing two and injuring two.

• In over three-fourths of the incidents, other kids knew about the attack before it occurred. Some knew exactly what the attacker planned to do; others knew something "big" or "bad" was going to happen, and often they knew the time and date it was to occur. In one case, an attacker had planned to shoot students in the lobby of his school prior to the beginning of classes. He told two friends exactly what he had planned and asked three others to go meet him in the mezzanine overlooking the lobby that morning (ostensibly so that they would be out of harm's way). On most mornings, only six students could be found in the mezzanine before classes. The students who knew about the planned attack told so many others that by the time the attacker opened fire in his school lobby, over 24 students were in the mezzanine watching the attack. One who knew about the attack brought a camera so he could record the event —but he got so excited once the attack started that he forgot to take the pictures.

Implications: That other kids often know about these incidents in advance contradicts the assumption that the shooters are "loners" and that they just "snap." An inquiry should include efforts to gather information from a student's friends and schoolmates. An inquiry should also include attention to the influence that a student's friends or peers may be having

on intent, planning and preparations.

7. In a number of cases, having been bullied played a key role in the attack.

• In over two-thirds of the cases, the attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened, attacked, or injured by others prior to the incident.

• A number of attackers had experience bullying and harassment that was long-standing and severe. In those cases, the experience of bullying appeared to play a major role in motivating the attack at school.

Implications: Bullying was not a factor in every case, and clearly not every child who is bullied in school will pose a risk for targeted violence in school. However, in a number of cases, attackers described experiences of being bullied in terms that approached torment. They told of behaviors that, if they occurred in the workplace, would meet the legal definitions of harassment. That bullying played a major role in a number of these school shootings should strongly support ongoing efforts to combat bullying in American schools.

8. Most attackers engaged in some behavior, prior to the incident, that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.

• In almost every incident, the attacker engaged in behavior that caused others (e.g., school officials, police, fellow students) to be concerned about him. In over three-fourths of the incidents, an adult (school administrator, teacher, staff member, or law enforcement professional) had expressed concern about the attacker. In over half of the cases, the attacker had come to the attention of more than one person for some concerning behavior.

• Behaviors that led others to be concerned about the attacker prior to the attack included behaviors related to the attack, such as efforts to get a gun, as well as other disturbing behaviors not related to the subsequent attack. For example, in one case a student wrote several poems for his English class that revolved around themes of homicide and suicide as possible solutions to feelings of helplessness and

desperation. In another case, a student worried his friends by talking about plans to put rat poison in the cheese shakers at a popular pizza restaurant.

- In well over three-fourths of incidents, the attackers had difficulty coping with a major change to a significant relationship or a loss of status (e.g., personal failure) prior to their school attack.
- Prior to the incident, nearly three-fourths of the attackers either threatened to kill themselves, made suicidal gestures, or tried to kill themselves. More than half of the attackers has a history of feeling extremely depressed or desperate.

Implications: A significant problem in preventing targeted violence in schools is determining how best to respond to students who are already known to be in trouble or needing assistance, not only to identify students who are plotting an attack. In cases where there is concern about potential targeted violence, an inquiry should include investigation of, and attention to , a student's difficulty coping with major losses or perceived failure, particularly where it may have led to feelings of desperation and hopelessness.

Next Steps

The Safe Schools Initiative is not yet completed. Over the next weeks and months a number of reports and other products will be developed and disseminated. These will include a threat assessment guide for school and law enforcement professionals with responsibilities for preventing targeted violence in schools; a series of scientific reports; and other products for teachers, principals, and school boards.

Excerpted from **Safe School Initiative: An Interim Report on the Prevention of Targeted Violence in Schools** *published October 2000 by the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education with support from the National Institute of Justice. For a complete copy of the report, visit www.treas.gov/usss/ntac or contact NTAC at 202/406-5470.*

Sample school board policy promotes respect, civility, orderly conduct for adults

The following excerpt from a sample school board policy addresses the conduct of adults on school premises.

The school board recognizes that the education of children is a process that involves a partnership between a child's parents, teachers, school administrators, and other school personnel. Acknowledging that parental participation in the educational process is critical to a child's education success, the school board welcomes and encourages parental participation in the life of their child's school.

However, from time to time parents and other visitors to schools act in a manner that is disruptive of a school and is threatening and/or intimidating to school district employees.

The purpose of this policy is to provide rules of conduct for parents, school visitors, and school district employees that permit and encourage communication concerning students or other matters and encourage participation in school activities. The policy also enables the school board to identify and deal with those behaviors that are inappropriate and disruptive to the operation of a school.

The school board's intent is to promote mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among school district employees, parents, and the public. It is not the in-

tent to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. It is the intent to maintain, to the greatest extent reasonably possible, a safe, harassment-free workplace for teachers, students, administrators, other staff, parents and other members of the community.

1. Expected Level of Behavior
- School district personnel will treat parents and other members of the public with courtesy and respect.
- Parents and other visitors to schools or school district facilities will treat teachers, school administrators, other school staff, and district employees with courtesy and respect.

2. Unacceptable/Disruptive Behavior:
- Disruptive behavior includes, but is not necessarily limited to: behavior which interferes with or threatens with the operation of any school or school district facility.
- Using loud and/or offensive language, swearing, cursing, using profane language, or displaying temper.
- Threatening to do bodily or physical harm to a teacher, school administrator, school employee, or student regardless of whether or not the behavior constitutes or may constitute a criminal violation.
- Damaging or destroying school district

property.
- Any other behavior that disrupts the orderly operation of a school, classroom or other school district facility.
- Making abusive, threatening or obscene e-mail or voice mail messages.

3. Parent Recourse:
Any parent who believes that he or she was subject to unacceptable and/or disruptive behavior on the part of a staff member should bring such behavior to the attention of the staff member's immediate supervisor, appropriate executive director, and/or the school district ombudsman.

The policy continues by explaining the authority of school personnel to direct offendng persons to leave school or district facility premises. The offending visitor shall be calmly and politely warned to communicate and/or act civilly. If the offending behavior continues, the visitor shall be asked to leave the premises by the administrator in charge. If he or she refuses to do so, the administrator shall seek the assistance of law enforcement. If the offender threatens personal harm, an employee may contact law enforcement directly. In addition, school personnel are not obligated to respond to e-mail and/or voice mail messages that are abusive, threatening or obscene.

The National Funding Collaborative on Violence Prevention held a meeting of evaluators, practitioners, policymakers and funders on February 28-29, 2000 to engage in discussion and make recommendations for future violence prevention action. The proceeding of the meeting are summarized in a recent report, **"Linking Practice and Evaluation in Comprehensive Community-Based Violence Prevention Efforts,"** available upon request by calling the Collaborative at 202/393-7731. In the table below, various stakeholders outlined ways they could work together to accomplish comprehensive community-based evaluation.

	What do you want and need from evaluation?	**What role do you and should you play in evaluation?**	**What do you need from each other to be successful?**
Evaluators	The mission of evaluation should be to record the process and to help with intervention— that is, help build community and document process.	Evaluators should be a part of planning (providing information and translation), implementation (providing quality assurance and feedback) and analysis (analysis, interpretation, and presentation).	From practitioners, we need willingness to work together from the beginning of the process. From funders, we need input on measures in RFPs, investment in evaluation and direction. From policymakers, we need support of evaluation in policy and program funding, and that the evaluation information actually be used.
Community Members	Evaluation should help us to understand history and context, help build community and provide access to resources.	Community members should ensure that the community in involved in the evaluation process at all stages.	We need to be allowed to be involved in the process; we need funding and resources and open-minded evaluators willing to engage different ideas and processes.
Policy Makers	Evaluation needs to be done to tell us what does and does not work and what is promising.	Policymakers should ensure that evaluation is required in programs funded by the government, and should help disseminate any information obtained from program evaluation.	We need to get information in a readable form with concise information that includes long-term outcomes. In addition, communities need to be willing to question policies based on their experiences.
Funders	We need to know that an evaluation has been done. We need materials to make recommendations for funding, and information about dynamics around evaluation and programs. It should also be short and understandable.	Funders provide money, technical assistance for grantees, convene meetings and distribute information, and begin to ask better questions, both of grantees and of other funders. In addition, funders should begin to evaluate themselves.	We need more information about evaluation of community building efforts in the literature, and a negotiated and honest process with feedback from communities, practitioners and evaluators.
Practitioners	Evaluation should provide us the ability to build capacity, to understand outcomes and impact of programs, and to negotiate information that is out there.	Practitioners should help to design the evaluation framework to ensure that it is consistent with the principles of practice, to help with data analysis, and to provide feedback on lessons learned.	We need recognition that sometimes the process is more important than the outcomes; honesty; a community development approach; communication across groups that provides a common framework; long-term commitment to change; recognition of the violence perpetrated by institutions; and lessons developed that transcend geography and race.

Risk factor research to support prevention policy and practice

If we could confidently predict which youth would be prone to commit violent acts and at which stage in their development such delinquency was likely to erupt, it would significantly strengthen our efforts to prevent juvenile violence.

Accordingly, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Study Group on Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders devoted two years to analyzing the research on risk and protective factors for serious and violent juvenile offending, including predictors of juvenile violence derived from the findings of long-term studies. The quantitative results of 66 studies were synthesized using meta-analysis procedures. Predictors are arranged in five domains: individual, family, school, peer-related, and community and neighborhood factors.

Individual Medical/Physical Factors

Pregnancy and delivery complications. Prenatal and delivery trauma are somewhat predictive of later violence, although findings vary with the research methods used.

Low resting heart rate. Research indicates that a low resting pulse rate is a weak predictor of violent crime.

The evidence currently does not warrant using either of these predictors—pregnancy and delivery complications or low resting heart rate—to identify youth at risk for violent behavior. More research is needed on these factors and their possible effects on violence.

Individual Psychological Factors

Internalizing disorders (nervousness/ withdrawal, worrying, and anxiety). This category of psychological characteristics has a slight negative correlation with or is unrelated to later violence.

Hyperactivity, concentration problems, restlessness, and risk taking. Evidence from studies in this meta-analysis consistently suggests a correlation between these problems and later violent behavior.

Aggressiveness. Aggressive behavior measured from ages 6 to 13 consistently predicts later violence among males.

Many researchers have noted the continuity in antisocial behavior from early aggression to violent crime. Research results for females are less consistent.

Early initiation of violent behavior. Research has shown that early onset of violence and delinquency is associated with more serious and chronic violence.

Involvement in other forms of antisocial behavior. Involvement in antisocial behaviors (including stealing, destruction of property; self-reported delinquency, smoking, early sexual intercourse, and drug selling) is associated with a greater risk of violence among males.

Beliefs and attitudes favorable to deviant or antisocial behavior. Dishonesty, antisocial beliefs and attitudes, attitudes favorable to violence, and hostility toward police have been found to predict later violence among males.

Family Factors

Parental criminality. Studies have shown conflicting results. Further research is necessary to understand the contribution of parental criminality to child behavior.

Child maltreatment. Studies have examined three forms of child maltreatment: physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Evidence suggests that children who have been physically abused or neglected are more likely than others to commit violent crimes later in life

Poor family management practices. Family management practices such as failure to set clear expectations for children's behavior, poor monitoring and supervision, and severe and inconsistent discipline consistently predict later delinquency and substance abuse. Parental punitiveness or harshness in discipline also predicted later violence.

Low levels of parental involvement. Strong parental involvement can function as a protective factor against violence. Conversely, a lack of parental interaction and involvement with children may increase children's future risk for violence.

Poor family bonding and conflict. Few studies have looked specifically at the relationship between family bonding and

violent behavior. Some research has shown a nonsignificant relationship between poor family bonding and violence Exposure to high levels of marital and family conflict also appears to increase the risk of later violence.

Parental attitudes favorable to substance use and violence. Research indicates that parental attitudes favorable to behaviors such as alcohol use predict use of alcohol and drugs by youth, but little research has examined the impact of parental attitudes to violence on children's behavior.

Residential mobility. Little research has focused on the effect of a family's mobility on youth violence.

Parent-child separation. Evidence indicates that disruptions of parent-child relationships predict later violent behavior in children.

School Factors

Various aspects of school-related experiences, such as low educational achievement, low interest in education, dropping out of school, truancy, and poor-quality schools, have been hypothesized to contribute to criminal and violent behavior.

Academic failure. Poor academic achievement has consistently predicted later delinquency. The relationship between poor academic achievement and later violence has been found to be stronger for females than for males.

Low bonding to school. Research generally supports the hypothesis that bonding to school is a protective factor against crime.

Truancy and dropping out of school. Youth with high truancy rates at ages 12–14 are more likely to engage in violence as adolescents and adults; leaving school before the age of 15 also predicted later violence.

Frequent school transitions. One study found that youth who had changed schools often in the past year at ages 14 and 16 were more violent at age 18 than those who had not. Conclusions must be drawn carefully, however, because school transitions can be related to other factors that predict violence.

High delinquency rate school. One study found that boys who at age 11 attended schools with high delinquency rates reported more violent behavior than other youth.

Peer-Related Factors

Delinquent siblings. Various studies indicate that having delinquent siblings can predict later convictions for violence. One study found that the influence of delinquent siblings was stronger on girls than on boys.

Delinquent peers. Delinquent peers also may have a greater influence on later violence during an individual's adolescence than they do earlier in development. Research has shown that adolescents whose peers disapproved of delinquent behavior were less likely to report having committed delinquent acts, including sexual assaults.

Gang membership. One study showed that being a gang member contributes more to delinquency than does having delinquent peers.

Community/Neighborhood Factors

Community factors, including poverty, low neighborhood attachment and community disorganization, the availability of drugs and firearms, exposure to violence and racial prejudice, laws and norms favorable to violence, and frequent media portrayals of violence, may contribute to crime and violence.

Poverty. Being raised in poverty has been found to contribute to a greater likelihood of involvement in crime and violence. Self-reported felony assault and robbery have been found to be twice as common among youth living in poverty as among middle-class youth. Low family income predicted self-reported teen violence and convictions for violent offenses in several studies.

Community disorganization. Community disorganization (that is, the presence of crime, drug-selling, gangs, and poor housing) was a better predictor of violence than low attachment to a neighborhood.

Availability of drugs and firearms. A prevalence of drugs and firearms in the community was found to predict greater

variety in violent behaviors at age 18.

Neighborhood adults involved in crime. One study found that children who knew many adult criminals were more likely to engage in violent behavior by age 18. More longitudinal studies investigating the influence of this factor on youth violence are needed.

Exposure to violence and racial prejudice. Exposure to violence in the home and elsewhere increases a child's risk for involvement in violent behavior later in life.

Situational Factors

Situational factors are the circumstances that surround a violent event and influence the outcome of that event. These factors may be predictors of violent behavior and may include the presence of a weapon, consumption of alcohol or other drugs by the offender or victim, the behavior of bystanders, the motives of the offender, the relationship of the offender to the victim, and the behavior of the victim. However, the contribution of these factors is difficult to assess because data have not been collected from other situations with similar characteristics in which violence did not occur. Longitudinal studies to investigate these situational triggers are needed.

Multiple predictors

In the Seattle Social Development Project, investigators studied the power of diverse factors seen at ages 10, 14, and 16 to predict violent behavior by the age of 18. More than 17 percent of youth committed a violent act by age 18, and 80 percent of them were expected to do so based on significant predictors seen at age 10. Eighty-four percent were expected to do so based on the significant predictors seen at age 16. The results of the Seattle project are described below:

• Hyperactivity or attention deficits at age 10, 14, or 16 doubled the risk of violent behavior at age 18.

• Sensation seeking and involvement in drug selling at ages 14 and 16 more than tripled the risk of involvement in violence.

• Parental attitudes favorable to violence when subjects were age 10 more

than doubled the risk that subjects would engage in violence at age 18.

• Poor family management practices and family conflict when subjects were age 10 were not significant predictors of later violence. However, poor family management practices when subjects were age 14 doubled the risk for later involvement in violence.

• Parental criminality when subjects were age 14 (not assessed at age 10) more than doubled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

• When subjects were age 16, parental criminality, poor family management, family conflict, and residential mobility at least doubled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

• Low academic performance at ages 10, 14, and 16 predicted an increased risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

• Behavior problems at school (as rated by teachers) when subjects were age 10 significantly predicted involvement in violence at age 18.

• Low commitment to schooling, low educational aspirations, and multiple school transitions at ages 14 and 16 predicted a significantly increased risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

• Having delinquent friends at ages 10, 14, and 16 predicted an increased risk for later involvement in violence.

• Gang membership at age 14 more than tripled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

• Gang membership when subjects were age 16 more than quadrupled the risk for involvement in violence at age 18.

• Community disorganization, the availability of drugs, and knowing adults involved in criminal activities at ages 14 and 16 all were associated with an increased risk for later involvement in violence.

The preceding information was excerpted from the April 2000 **Juvenile Justice Bulletin***, "Predictors of Youth Violence," written by J.D. Hawkins, T.I. Herrenkohl, D.P. Farrington, D. Brewer, R.F. Catalano, T.W. Harachi and L. Cothern. The Bulletin, as well as the complete Study Group Report, may be obtained from OJJDP's Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse at www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org.*

NSSC wishes to acknowledge and applaud the following governors who formally adopted resolutions and proclamations to promote **America's Safe Schools Week 2000** in their states, thus making it possible to enthusiastically work together toward making our nation's schools safe, secure and peaceful places for learning, teaching and working, free of drugs, alcohol, weapons and fear. Our thanks to:

Lincoln Almond, Governor Rhode Island
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Thomas R. Carper, Governor of Delaware
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Gray Davis, Governor of California
M. J. "Mike" Foster Jr., Governor of Louisiana
James S. Gilmore III, Governor of Virginia
Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland
Bill Graves, Governor of Kansas
Jim Hodges, Governor of South Carolina
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Tom Ridge, Governor of Pennsylvania
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Jeanne Shaheen, Governor of New Hampshire
Don Siegelman, Governor of Alabama
Bob Taft, Governor of Ohio
Cecil H. Underwood, Governor of West Virginia
Christine Todd Whitman, Governor of New Jersey

America's Safe Schools Week is sponsored by the National School Safety Center and state governors across the nation each year during the third full week of October, beginning on a Sunday and ending the following Saturday.

America's Safe Schools Week seeks to acknowledge and recognize that:
- schools make substantial contributions to the future of America and to the development of our nation's young people as knowledgeable, responsible and productive citizens;
- excellence in education is dependent on safe, secure and peaceful school settings;
- the safety and well-being of many students, teachers and school staff are unnecessarily jeopardized by crime and violence, such as substance abuse, gangs, bullying, poor discipline, vandalism and absenteeism, in our schools;
- it is the responsibility of all citizens to enhance the learning experiences of young people by helping to ensure fair and effective discipline, promote good citizenship, and generally make school safe and secure; and
- all leaders, especially those in education, law enforcement, government and business, should eagerly collaborate with each other to focus public attention on school safety and identify, develop and promote innovate answers to these critical issues.

America's Safe School Week 2001 will be October 14-20, 2001.