



2021-09

**THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS THE MISSION OF NATIONAL SCHOOL SAFETY GUIDELINES AND RECOGNIZES OUR SCHOOLS AS CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRING THE PROTECTION OF AMERICA'S CLASSROOMS, STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND STAFF**

**WHEREAS** the National Sheriffs' Association acknowledges School Safety as a priority in our nation's counties, parishes, cities, etc., and acknowledges that America's schools are a critical infrastructure and key assets to our communities; and

**WHEREAS** enhancing the physical security of school facilities and improving incident response are priorities while hardening (layered security) and making each classroom and our schools a protected space; and

**WHEREAS** efforts to prioritize and enhance immediate notifications directly to emergency public service access points (E911); and school emergency systems through interoperable video, voice and data communications among schools, first responders and other vested stakeholders; and

**WHEREAS** by implementing these technologies, students are better protected in the event of an active shooter event; and law enforcement response can be greatly enhanced to mitigate serious bodily injuries and loss of life; and

**WHEREAS** the National Sheriffs' Association recognizes intervention and prevention as critical components to enhancing school safety, including the following recommendations as recommended practice toward the prevention and mitigation of school violence:

***Protective Measures** - Provide training for all faculty and staff in the recognition of potential violence indicators, situational awareness, preoperational surveillance, anomalies, baselines, and other protective measures to prevent, recognize, and respond to threats of violence<sup>i</sup>.*

***Behavioral Assessment** - Introduce a select interdisciplinary behavioral assessment team tasked with the assessment and management of internal and observable concerning behavior<sup>ii</sup>.*

***Sustainable Intervention** – Provide training for all faculty and staff in a manageable and deliberate process to facilitate appropriate and effective intervention of current and*

*emerging threats pertaining to individual(s) that are identified and make appropriate referrals.*

***Timely Detection*** - *Provide training to all faculty and staff in the timely detection of specific pre-attack behaviors and the procedures for managing those behaviors<sup>iii</sup>; and*

**WHEREAS** this strategy calls for an increase in the number of highly trained School Resource Officers with a committed purpose to law enforcement and security; and

**WHEREAS** the National Sheriffs' Association believes all school threats and crimes committed on school property should be shared information with all stakeholders; and the National Sheriffs' Association strongly supports the national school safety guidelines and standards that follow recommended practices, as recommended by America's Sheriffs; and the National Sheriffs' Association feels national school safety guidelines will encourage America's schools to make school safety a more uniform system and priority in their communities to include a **School Safety Recognition Initiative (SSRI)** which is a voluntary self-assessment process designed for schools to gain a certificate of recognition from national law enforcement school safety stakeholders<sup>1</sup> for their efforts in prioritizing, implementing and maintaining effective school safety, security and emergency preparedness:

**To strengthen relationships** between law enforcement school safety stakeholders, their federal partners and school leadership.

**To engage collaborative agencies** in sustainment and improvement of effective school safety preparedness.

**To proliferate** proactive and functional community interoperability<sup>2</sup>.

**To incentivize school leadership** to re-engage school safety as a priority in the wake of allocating a majority of resources to address the many challenges of the COVID pandemic.

An online application consisting of a brief set of self-assessment categories is made available to any United States school organization. Once submitted, the information is then reviewed and evaluated. Selected school organizations receive a "Certificate of Recognition" including the logos of all collaborators; and

**WHEREAS** the National Sheriffs' Association also recognizes all communities have different needs in securing their schools;

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<sup>1</sup> Members of the National Law Enforcement School Recognition Initiative Advisory Board to include the National Sheriffs' Association, FLEOA, HAPCOA, IACP, MCSA, NASRO, NAWLEE, NOBLE, WIFLE and others.

<sup>2</sup> Engaging school officials working with local and/or state law enforcement, fire service, emergency management, mental health, court, probation, and public health officials, it is intended to enhance community interoperability and provide presentable evidence that school leadership has carefully re-evaluated prevention and preparedness approaches.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Sheriffs' Association establishes that our schools are a part of our critical infrastructure and should be protected as well as government buildings, thereby securing our most important assets which are "Our Children".

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Sheriffs' Association will create National School Safety Guidelines following recommended practices, as recommended by America's Sheriffs, in creating a layered school safety system that prioritizes making each classroom and each school a protected space.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Sheriffs' Association urges Congress, State Legislatures and County Governments to appropriate funding necessary to allow America's communities to enhance safer schools and follow recommended practices as recommended by the National Sheriffs' Association.

Amended --- June 21, 2021

Phoenix, AZ

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<sup>i</sup> *Source Reference 1:* Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf> "Faculty, staff, and administrators. Every adult at school needs training related to threat assessment and violence prevention, including administrative, maintenance, custodial, and food service staff. Training can include who should be notified when concerning or threatening information is discovered, what information should be brought forward, how school staff might learn about information, and the steps school staff can take to safely intervene with concerning or threatening situations." Section 1. Prevent, Chapter 5. Using Suspicious Activity Reporting and Threat Assessment to Enhance School Safety, Pages 56-57 "Develop risk management options, create and promote a safe school climate and provide training for all stakeholders."

*Source Reference 2:* Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence, US DHS/ US Secret Service/ NTAC July 2018 [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18\\_0711\\_USSS\\_NTAC-Enhancing-School-Safety-Guide.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/18_0711_USSS_NTAC-Enhancing-School-Safety-Guide.pdf) Chapter 8 Conduct Training for all Stakeholders – Page 21, "The final component of a comprehensive targeted violence prevention plan is to identify training needs for all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and administrators." "Anyone who could come forward with concerning information or who might be involved in the assessment process should be provided with training. Effective training addresses the goals and steps of an assessment, the type of information that should be brought forward, and how individuals can report their concerns."

*Source Reference 3:* Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf> "[Develop a comprehensive school safety plan that includes a requirement for] school safety training for all school personnel [...] to prevent, recognize, and respond to threats of violence." Section 2. Protect and Mitigate, Chapter 13. Training School Personnel to Help Ensure Student Safety, Page 106, "Preparedness should include initial and ongoing robust training." Section 2. Protect and Mitigate, Chapter 13. Training School Personnel to Help Ensure Student Safety, Page 107.

*Source Reference 4:* K-12 School Security: A Guide for Preventing and Protecting Against Gun Violence. <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/K12-School-Security-Guide-2nd-Edition-508.pdf>

US Department of Homeland Security, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2018, Pages 15 - 16, Appendix A. Evolving Products and Technologies for Consideration, "There is no quick fix for school violence. No one intervention— technological or otherwise — can fully guarantee the security of schools or resolve the underlying causes of school violence. Instead, a holistic approach to developing a school safety plan seeks to understand and address to the degree possible what leads to school violence to promote "situational awareness" among students, staff, and community members."

<sup>ii</sup> *Source Reference 1:* National Association of School Psychologists 2015 Publication, <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/systems-level-prevention/threat-assessment-at-school/threat-assessment-for-school-administrators-and-crisis-teams> Page 1. Implementing Threat Assessment Procedures in Schools, Section 2. "Create an interdisciplinary assessment team. Effective threat assessment is based on the combined efforts of a school-based team including representatives from administration, school employed mental health professionals, and law enforcement. In unusually complex cases, the team might draw upon professionals in the local community. The interdisciplinary team approach improves the efficiency and scope of the assessment process and reduces the risk of observer bias."

*Source Reference 2.* A study of Pre-attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013 <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/view> US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, June 2018 Publication, Page 22., Section: Concerning Behaviors, "Since the observation of concerning behaviors offers the opportunity for intervention prior to the attack, this study examines not only what was observed, but when the observations were made, who made them, and what if anything the person(s) did with regard to these observations. To better serve [threat] assessment teams, mental health professionals, community resources, and law enforcement officials, the FBI expanded the inquiry to capture behaviors that may have been observed at any point (in many cases beyond one year) before the attack."

<sup>iii</sup> *Source Reference 1.* A study of Pre-attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013 <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/view> US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, June 2018 Publication, Page 27., Section: Conclusion, "The prevention of [these] future attacks will depend on our ability to remain agile and recognize evolving pre-attack behaviors."

*Source Reference 2.* US Department of Homeland Security, Houses of Worship Security Practices Guide May 2013, [https://www2.illinois.gov/ready/plan/documents/dhs\\_houses\\_of\\_worship\\_security\\_practices\\_guide.pdf](https://www2.illinois.gov/ready/plan/documents/dhs_houses_of_worship_security_practices_guide.pdf) Section 3. Prevention, Protection and Mitigation, Page 10.,

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Section 3.2 Potential Attack Indicators, “Attack indicators are observable behaviors that may precede an attack and may be detected as an individual prepares and plans for an attack. Indicators may include but are not limited to the perpetrator conducting surveillance, engaging in training, and/or beginning mobilization activities in advance of an attack. Potential indicators can be grouped into the following categories: individual behavior indicators, surveillance indicators, imminent attack indicators, and surrounding area indicators. Understanding behaviors that are unusual, concerning, or suspicious, as well as behaviors that may be indicative of surveillance or imminent attack are essential in the efforts to protect communities from threats of violence. It is important to note that multiple indicators may not represent suspicious or nefarious activity; context should be considered, but all indicators that are observed should be reported.”

*Source Reference 3.* K-12 School Security: A Guide for Preventing and Protecting Against Gun Violence, <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/K12-School-Security-Guide-2nd-Edition-508.pdf> US Department of Homeland Security, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2018, Page 08, Section 2.7 Social Aspects of Preventing Gun Violence, “The importance of detecting and addressing concerning behavior, thoughts, or statements cannot be overstated. In fact, preventing violence by detecting and addressing these red flags is more effective than any physical security measure.” Page 12, Section 4. Integration Options for Consideration into a Plan of Action, Section 4.1, “This security survey identifies facilities’ vulnerabilities in the areas of physical security, security forces, security management, information sharing, *protective measures, and dependencies related to prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.*” Page 14, Section 5. Conclusion, “Through a collective effort...[school] communities can strengthen [the] protective and preventive measures...by integrating comprehensive security practices with applied programmatic improvements as they relate to preventing and protecting from [school] violence.”

*Source Reference 4.* Early Warning Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED418372.pdf> American Institutes for Research, Washington, DC. Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice. National Association of School Psychologists, Bethesda, MD. Sponsoring Agency: Department of Education, Washington, DC. Publication Date: 1998-08-00 Note 41p. Electronic version: <http://www.naspsweb.org/center.html>, and at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSEERS/OSEP/earlywrm.html>, Contract H237T600005, PUB TYPE Guides Non-Classroom (055) DRS PRICE MF01/PCO2 Plus Postage. DESCRIPTORS \*At Risk Persons; Behavior Problems; \*Crime Prevention; Elementary Secondary Education; Emergency Programs; Problem, Children; Risk Management; \*School Safety; \*Violence. Section 3. Early Warning Signs, Page 6. “Teachers and administrators and other school support staff are not professionally trained to analyze children’s feelings and motives. But they are on the front line when it comes to observing troublesome behavior and making referrals to appropriate professionals, such as school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and nurses. They also play a significant role in responding to diagnostic information provided by specialists. Thus, it is no surprise that effective schools take special care in training the entire school community to understand and identify early warning signs.”

This resolution was adopted by the membership of the National Sheriffs’ Association on June 22, 2021, at the Annual Conference of the National Sheriffs’ Association, in Phoenix, Arizona. The resolution shall remain in effect until June 22, 2025, in accordance with Article XIII, Section 6, of the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Sheriffs’ Association.