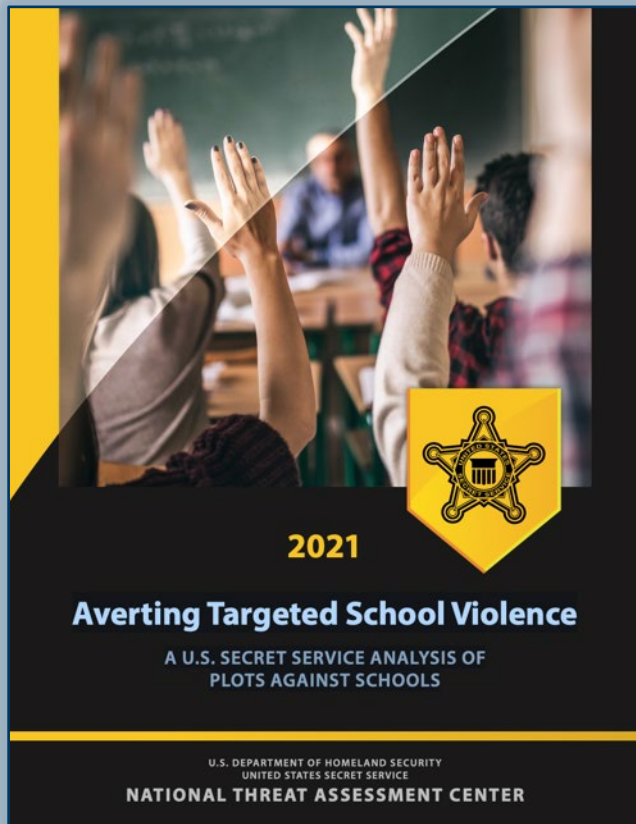


Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots against schools

By The National Threat Assessment Center, 2021



Understanding cases of averted allows officials and researchers the ability to study where violence reduction principals worked and stopped an attack from moving from idea to action. This study included 67 averted attacks occurring from 2006 to 2018. The report stresses the importance of identifying risk factors like bullying, access to a firearms, and grievances prior to criminal action.

KEY FINDINGS



Preventing attacks depends on those seeing warning signs coming forward and sharing their concerns prior to behaviors that cross over into criminal actions.



Students are often in the best position to identify concerns with their peers. There should be focused efforts on encouraging sharing of concerns and reducing the stigma behind reporting.



Many of the attackers had unrestricted access to firearms, particularly within their home. Even when secured, attackers pried open gun safes, found the key or stole them when left out.



PLANNING THE ATTACK

PLANNING BEHAVIORS		
	<i>n</i> = 67	%
1. Weapons-related planning	57	85%
2. Planned the execution of the attack	49	73%
3. Documented plans	38	57%
4. Researched prior attacks	21	31%
5. Attempted to recruit others	11	16%
6. Chose clothing and/or music	8	12%
7. Surveilled target and researched security measures	6	9%
8. Researched other relevant topics	5	7%
9. Acquired gear and other items	5	7%
10. Played video games for training and skill learning	4	6%
11. Prepped a bag	3	4%



HAVE AN ACTION PLAN

ENHANCING SCHOOL SAFETY USING A THREAT ASSESSMENT MODEL

An Operational Guide for
Preventing Targeted School Violence



U.S. Department of
Homeland Security
United States
Secret Service

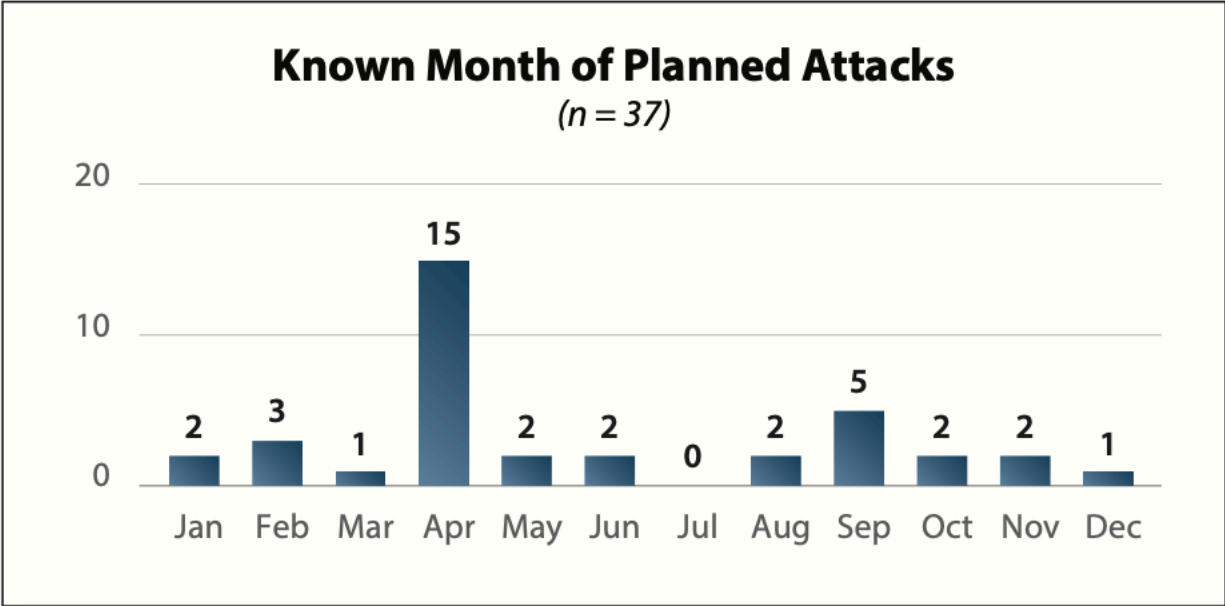
National Threat Assessment Center
July 2018

Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model (2018)

- STEP 1:** Establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team
- STEP 2:** Define prohibited and concerning behaviors
- STEP 3:** Establish and provide training on a central reporting system
- STEP 4:** Determine the threshold for law enforcement intervention
- STEP 5:** Establish assessment procedures
- STEP 6:** Develop risk management options
- STEP 7:** Create and promote a safe school climate
- STEP 8:** Provide training for all stakeholders



TIME OF YEAR



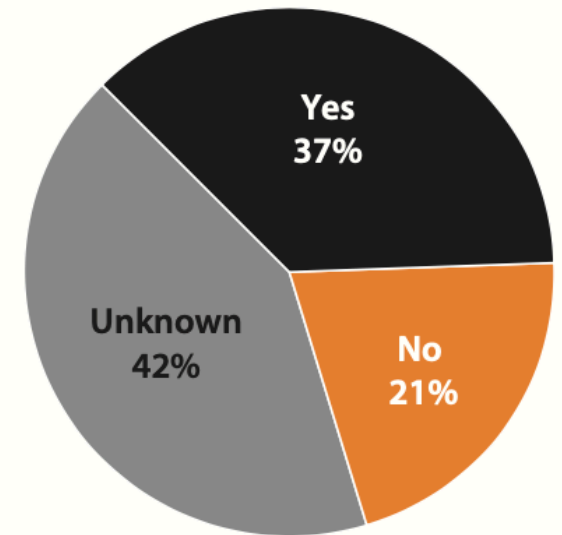
DATE SELECTION

In nearly two-thirds ($n = 43, 64\%$) of the cases, the plotters selected or considered a date for their planned attack. In 33 cases, plotters selected or discussed specific days for conducting their attacks, while in 4 cases, only a month was identified. No information on date selection was available for the six remaining cases. For one of those cases, the plotter noted during the investigation that a shooter would never reveal the date and time of a planned mass shooting.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLOTTERS

- **Threatening/Violent Behavior:** Threatening the school or teachers, punching a locker, fighting with or assaulting a classmate, and brandishing a knife on a classmate. One plotter was disciplined after he dangled a student outside of a school window.
- **Banned Substances:** Possessing, selling, or distributing marijuana, and possessing anabolic steroids.
- **Classroom Misconduct:** Defiance, disruption, and talking too loudly.
- **Other Actions:** Using profanity or swearing at school staff, name-calling, truancy, burglary, and dress code infractions.

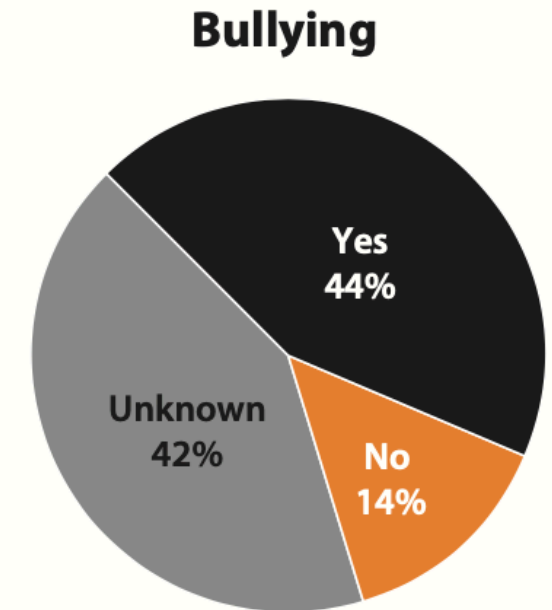
Disciplinary History



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLOTTERS

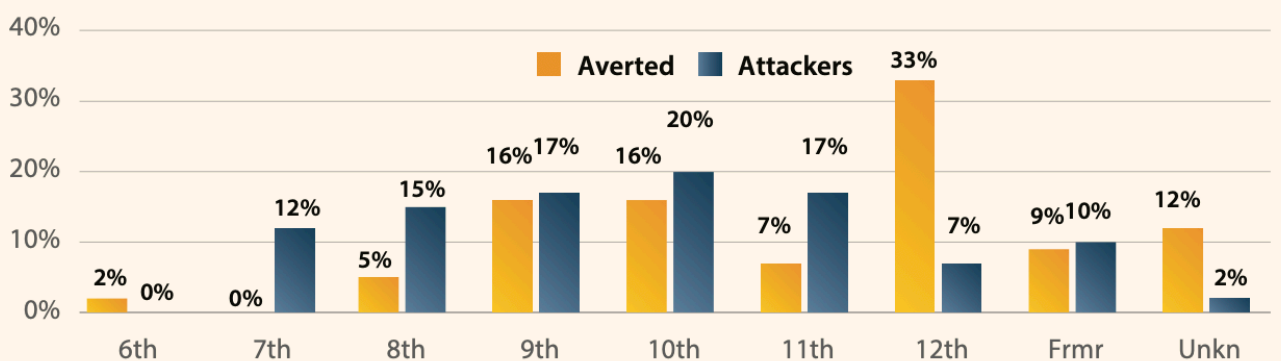
Nearly one-half ($n = 19, 44\%$) of the plotters in this analysis were bullied by their classmates. The types of bullying they experienced included:

- **Verbal:** Spoken forms of aggression, including shaming, name-calling, chastising, taunting, harassing, and suggestions that they kill themselves.
- **Physical:** Physical aggression, including knocking down, pushing, punching, or being jumped.
- **Social:** Words or actions designed to harm the victim's reputation or social standing, including being publicly embarrassed or having rumors spread about them.



For half of the plotters ($n = 21$, 49%), these communications illustrated their fascination with violent acts, homicide, weapons, and ideologies and beliefs that are often associated with violence.



OVERVIEW	AVERTED ATTACKS <i>Averting Targeted School Violence</i>	COMPLETED ATTACKS <i>Protecting America's Schools (PAS)</i>																														
Intended Suicide^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37% intended to commit suicide or accepted they would die in the attack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22% committed suicide or killed by law enforcement 																														
Schools^a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% high schools • 67% SRO (part-time or full-time) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73% high schools • 66% SRO (part-time or full-time) 																														
Perpetrators^b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95% were current students • 5% female • 43 lone plotters, 24 groups • Age: 11-19, 16 avg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% were current students • 17% female • All lone attackers • Age: 12-18, 15 avg 																														
Grade Levels^c	<p style="text-align: center;">43 Plotters and 41 Attackers by Grade Level</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <caption>43 Plotters and 41 Attackers by Grade Level</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade Level</th> <th>Averted (%)</th> <th>Attackers (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6th</td> <td>2%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7th</td> <td>0%</td> <td>12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8th</td> <td>5%</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9th</td> <td>16%</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10th</td> <td>16%</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11th</td> <td>7%</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12th</td> <td>33%</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Frmr</td> <td>9%</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unkn</td> <td>12%</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Grade Level	Averted (%)	Attackers (%)	6th	2%	0%	7th	0%	12%	8th	5%	15%	9th	16%	17%	10th	16%	20%	11th	7%	17%	12th	33%	7%	Frmr	9%	10%	Unkn	12%	2%
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<p><i>Communications About Intent^d</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% communicated with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77% communicated with others
<p><i>Interest in Violence^d</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67% interest in violent themes • 21% interest in white supremacy, Nazism, or related topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% interest in violent themes • 20% interest in white supremacy, Nazism, or related topics
<p><i>Stressors^d</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91% experienced stressors within 5 yrs • Top categories: #1 family, #2 social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% experienced stressors within 5 yrs • Top categories: #1 social, #2 family

FIREARMS ACCESS	43 plotters who planned to use firearms and had potential access	25 attackers who used firearms
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63% had unimpeded access as they purchased, owned, or their parents allowed access to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32% acquired their weapon on the day of the attack, 20% on the day prior, and 16% within 2-7 days
Firearms in the Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% had access to a family member's firearm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76% acquired the firearm used from their homes
Firearms Not Secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23% lived in, or had access to, a home where at least one firearm was not secured in a meaningful way²³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 48% lived in a home where at least one firearm was either readily available or not secured in a meaningful way
Gained Access to Secured Firearms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seven gained access by prying open a safe, finding the key, finding the firearms left out, or being allowed regular access; two more claimed they knew the combination or where to find the key One tried to get into the safe but failed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four gained access as they knew or guessed the combination or password, or they knew the location of the key
Purchased Firearms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four purchased their firearms themselves; two from individuals and two from retailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three purchased firearms themselves from an acquaintance, gun show, or a retailer

