A retrospective study on rampage school shootings: considerations for school-based threat assessment teams

Seth H. Chapman

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ABSTRACT

A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY ON RAMPAGE SCHOOL SHOOTINGS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS

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Northern Illinois University, 2017
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Since the mid-1990s, the incidence of rampage school shootings reached unprecedented levels and resulted in hundreds of deaths. Rampage shootings are both essentially random and defined by acts involving an attack on multiple parties. The purpose of the current study was to apply prior research to analyze previous multiple victim K-12 public school shooting incidents, specifically rampage school shootings occurring over the past two decades in the United States.

This study is intended to help identify best practices for developing and conducting threat assessments in K-12 public schools by assessing the validity of Newman’s (2004) five-prong model. Newman et al. (2004, p. 229) identified five “necessary but not sufficient” conditions needed in order for rampage school shootings to occur.

This study utilized a historical case study methodology. In total, twelve rampage shooting incidents from 1996-2013 matched the criteria identified in Chapter 3.

The overall results, represented in Table 4.4, provide support for the efficacy of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework. Behavioral threat assessment teams are likely the best method for prevention. While no process will completely eliminate risk, an assessment team utilizing
Newman et al.’s (2004) framework as described in this study may be the best investment of time and resources a school district has to protect the safety of its students.
A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY ON RAMPAGE SCHOOL SHOOTINGS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOL-BASED THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS

BY

SETH H. CHAPMAN
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERHIP, EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY, AND FOUNDATIONS

Doctoral Director:
Kelly H. Summers
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research and this process would not have been possible without the help and support of many individuals. I want to first acknowledge the support of my dissertation committee, Dr. Kelly Summers, Dr. Jon Crawford, Dr. Brad Hawk, and Dr. Carolyn Pluim. While the process wasn’t always easy, I am no doubt a better writer, a better researcher, and better educator through working on this study under your guidance. I specifically need to acknowledge the contributions of Gail Jacky at the NIU writing center for going above and beyond with providing outstanding feedback on my writing. Your quick responses and encouraging words made all the difference!

To my colleague and now fellow “doctor,” Dean Romano. Thanks for being a sounding board. It’s an honor to have published our dissertations within months of each other. Now we can get back to our “real jobs” and more importantly our families.

A special thanks goes out to my colleagues for putting up with me over the years as I attempted to balance work and study. I have been privileged to serve for three wonderful mentors as Superintendents in my career. Each of you encouraged me to pursue this and believed in my ability to accomplish it. A special thanks to my current Superintendent, Dr. Donald Schlomann, for his extra efforts to help me see this through. My ability to learn and grow during this process are a reflection of your leadership. Additionally, I’ve been blessed to know my good friend and colleague John Baird, who personifies what it means to keep schools safe. His mentorship and willingness to
include me with the exceptional work being done with St. Charles area community police and fire departments provided real examples to aid the research included in my study.

To my family, I owe you more than the words on this paper can express. To my mother, Sheryl, who always believed her son could do anything and for the countless hours of watching her grandkids to provide time for me to write. To my father, Randy, for teaching me what hard work is and for teaching me that writing is an essential tool that has the ability to touch readers lives. Lastly, for patiently reading several of my drafts and giving me his famous “cheap Chapman advice”, which is always priceless. To my sister, Allison. I’m fortunate to have a sibling with similar ambition and high standards to reinforce excellence is attainable.

To my second parents, Jim and Cheryl Wadas for their selfless giving of their time. I married into a wonderful family. Regrettably, Cheryl did not get to see me complete this study, but her battle through cancer to see her grandson’s birth was an inspiration.

To my children, Elizabeth, Charlotte, and Nathaniel. You are far too young to know what you missed out on by me dedicating time to write this. I’ve spent most of your lives working on what I’ve called “the longest homework assignment ever”. I spent time in the hospital writing while two of you came into this world. My time is now and forever more, YOURS. You are my greatest life’s achievement and I look forward to watching you grow and to coaching your teams without worry of an evening and weekend commitment of writing.

Lastly, to my beautiful, intelligent and supportive wife, Megan. WE did it! It wasn’t always easy, but your sacrifice over the past several years in allowing me to
pursue this endeavor was significant. I look forward to spending time with you on date nights rather than alone at a Starbucks or a library pounding on a keyboard. Thank you for always being there for me. You keep me grounded. You remind me of my faith and my priorities in life. You are my rock!
DEDICATION

To those who have been touched by the tragedies of incidents included in this study and countless others, I pray that sharing lessons learned from prior incidents provide comfort. I hope research included in this study can be built upon by future researchers and eventually leads to action to prevent senseless deaths. No parent should send their kids to school and have to worry about whether or not he or she will come home later that day.

Additionally, I dedicate this study to confused and troubled adolescents who consider seeking violence to resolve their problems. May school and community resources be there for you when you need it most. May we as educators seek out these children and show them that we care and that they belong.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

While mass campus school shootings often are considered a recent phenomenon, such attacks actually occurred during the early 20th century. For example, in 1927, Andrew Kehoe murdered his wife and then bombed a school in Bath, Michigan. Kehoe killed forty-five people and, another fifty-eight were wounded (Brezina, 2008; Kleck, 2009 as cited in Rocque, 2012). To date, the Bath, Michigan incident represents the deadliest attack on an American public school. Despite sporadic school-related attacks throughout the 20th century, such incidents did not occur with alarming frequency until the mid-1990s when students began attacking their own schools (Langman, 2009b; Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). Since the mid-1990s, the incidence of rampage school shootings reached unprecedented levels and resulted in hundreds of deaths (Rocque, 2012). These school shootings initiated a sequence of horrendous events in the United States (Rocque).

Statistically rampage school shootings are infrequent occurrences. Generally initiated by a small number of people, rampage school shootings dramatically affect our nation (Newman, Fox, Harding, Mehta & Roth, 2004). Newman et al. (2004) and Rocque (2012) define rampage shootings as symbolic, random violent acts carried out in an effort to make a broader statement against society (Newman et al.; Rocque, 2012). Typically, targeted schools are the center of suburban and small town community life (Newman et al.). While a school shooter may have sought an initial target, his or her attack often expands in a haphazard or sporadic manner with the shooter becoming unaware of their targets (Newman et al.).
Because of the increased frequency of school shootings, some authors suggest Americans have come to believe schools are places for potential violence (Kohut, 2000; Midlarsky & Klain, 2005). However, empirical data shows, compared to home and community environments, schools rank among the safest places for youth (Muschert, 2007). Less than two percent of school age youth homicides occur at school (Muschert). Specifically, approximately one student in two million dies at school each year as a result of either homicide or suicide (Muschert).

Despite the low frequency of total deaths in a school environment, the rate of violent school-based incidents that previously decreased in 2007 have risen to the levels of the late 1990s (Muschert, 2007). A 2014 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) survey of 84,110 public schools, collected data on 757,000 incidents; 25,740 of these incidents were classified as violent. Violent incidents involve either making a threat or carrying out a physical attack. Of the public schools included in the NCES survey 65% reported at least one violent attack. This represented 15.8 violent attacks per 1,000 students. In 2007, NCES reported four violent attacks per 1,000 students (Rocque, 2012). Additionally, the 2014 NCES survey noted serious violent incidents differ from violent incidents because they either involve the use of a weapon or result in serious injury. The survey reported serious violent incidents had occurred in 13% of the surveyed schools. This equated to .5 attacks per 1,000 students. Approximately nine percent of the surveyed schools or .3 per 1,000 students reported threats of a physical attack with a weapon. In the surveyed schools two percent or .1 per 1000, students of the physical attacks were carried out with a weapon. While serious violent student attacks remain infrequent, the data suggests school officials should prepare for identifying and preventing these incidents.

Muschert (2007) suggested the attention on school shootings was greater than expected given the frequency of occurrence of other school violent attacks and victimizations. Other
research showed school shootings were exaggerated and fueled by sensationalized media coverage (Burns & Crawford, 1999; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009 as cited in Muschert, 2007). It has been suggested the media legitimizes violence, thereby providing a role model for murder (Rocque, 2012). Additionally, while television and movies generally portray violence as a way to gain status, it is difficult to determine how much impact the media has had upon rampage school shootings. Although most students who play violent video games or watch violent movies do not kill, some research suggests many school shooters tend to obsessively view violent mass media content (Langman, 2009b).

Challenges in attaining consistent and reliable data on school shootings exist. In 2015, Ken Trump, President of National School Safety and Security Services, indicated he was not aware of either a widespread definition or an authoritative data source on school shootings (Ye Hee Lee, 2015). Trump argued the extent of school crime and violence has been overstated by the public’s perception, while federal and state statistics typically underestimate the issue (Ye Hee Lee). Trump suggested reality exists somewhere in between and in order to define the severity of the problem it is essential to know the actual numbers (Ye Hee Lee).

Theoretical Framework

Newman et al. (2004, p. 229) identified five “necessary but not sufficient” conditions needed in order for rampage school shootings to occur. These conditions included

1. A marginalization of the school shooter in social worlds important to him or her;
2. The presence of either a diagnosed or an undiagnosed psychological issue;
3. Either cultural scripts or a template for how the school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack;
4. A failure of school surveillance systems to prevent the attack: and
5. The school shooter having access to guns or other weapons.

Newman et al.’s (2004) study used two specific rampage shooting incidents: Heath, Kentucky in 1997 and Westside, Arkansas in 1998 to analyze possible reasons for rampage school shooting occurrences. Newman offered a variety of explanations for why school shootings occur and analyzed the validity of each explanation. These explanations included mental illness, “he just snapped,” family problems, bullying behaviors, peer support, changing communities, violent culture, access to guns, violent media, and the copycat effect. Newman’s theory (based on research from the Heath and Westside school shootings) suggested a single behavior or incident was not sufficient to indicate the likelihood of a potential attack. As a result, Newman theorized a combination of factors needed to be present in order for a school shooting to occur.

Newman et al.’s framework provides one method for assessing the efficacy of threat assessment models for school districts across the nation. Additionally, the five factors outlined in Newman’s research align with other research conducted subsequent to their 2004 study (e.g., Langman 2009; Levin & Madfis, 2009; Muschert 2007; Rocque 2012). Newman et al.’s (2004) theoretical framework, having support from multiple researchers over the past decade, supports this researcher’s basis for use to guide the current study.

Approach of Study

The current study examines 12 school shooting incidents through the lens of Newman et al.’s framework of five essential factors. Each of the 12 school shooting incidents used the same
format to ensure consistency in analyzing the five factors. The case studies are set forth in chronological order. The information will be organized and categorized as noted below.

1. Overview of Incident
2. School and Community Profile
3. Profile of the Shooter
4. Mental Health or Social Disorder Implications,
5. Access to / Experience with Firearms,
6. Family Environment

The researcher selected school shooting incidents from a literature review on threat assessments and rampage school shootings. As the researcher discovered cases or incidents, key indicators were documented and details were cross-referenced.

The research showed the increase in rampage school shooting events began in 1996 (Rocque, 2012). Thus, 1996 became the starting point for the sample selection. Since the facts of each school shooting incident often are not fully understood until several years later (Rocque, 2012), 2013 was designated as the end date for the study. The researcher designed the timeframe to ensure access to sufficient factual information. Langman (2009b) noted mass media coverage immediately following rampage school shooting events is often inaccurate and by the time accurate information has been released, most media outlets have moved on to other stories. As a result, reliable information regarding school shooting incidents often does not reach the general public (Langman, 2009b).

Because the researcher designed the current study to assist United States primary and secondary school officials in effectively identifying potential threats, shooting incidents occurring at universities and in foreign countries were not examined. Additionally, the
researcher only included cases where the school shooter was a currently enrolled student or attended the victimized school within one year of the shooting incident. This is primarily because Newman’s (2004) fourth indicator, surveillance of students, would be difficult to conduct if the potential shooter was a non-student.

Finally, because the researcher determined the eligible sample of cases was too large to reasonably be addressed in sufficient detail, only the most significant rampage school shooting incidents were selected for detailed examination. To be included in the current study school shooting incidents had to result in at least one fatality and also include multiple victims. Using these criteria, the researcher identified twelve cases for inclusion in the current study.

Problem Statement

Although research shows rampage school shootings increased during the 1990’s and 2000’s, such incidents remained relatively infrequent (Rocque, 2012). Notwithstanding this low frequency, rampage school shootings are characterized by unique factors, such as the shooter’s demographic information, attack location, and the lack of a specific target (DeJong et al., 2003; Fox et al., 2003; Harding et al., 2003; Newman et al., 2004). As such, these unique characteristics present a challenge to school officials in effectively identifying potential threats.

During the 2013-2014 school year 88% of U.S. public schools reported having a written plan for responding to an active shooter, and 70% of schools conducted drills using these plans. This compares to 94% of schools having a plan for natural disasters, 83% of whom practice for such events (USDOE, 2014).

Unfortunately, teacher classroom training to recognize and respond to threats of violence is conducted less often than other forms of training. While 95% of teachers and aides received
training on safety procedures, just 67% were trained on how to respond to violent incidents (USDOE, 2014). K-12 public schools during the 2013-14 school year reported crisis prevention and intervention training conducted in 74% of the schools (USDOE). Training on recognizing the warning signs of violent attacks were also conducted less frequently (USDOE). Instructional staff training to recognize early warning signs for potentially violent students occurred at only 48% of primary and secondary public schools, and just 34% received training to recognize student alcohol or drug use (USDOE).

The paucity of systematic data on averted school shootings is a significant challenge for school officials attempting to formulate specific interventions (Rocque, 2012). Because the overarching goal is mitigating the risk of future violent school attacks, one of the goals of the current study is to address this need. Rocque (2012, p. 311) noted:

Future theorizing should seek to incorporate the phenomenological elements of school rampage shootings. Such work may help reveal the internal or emotional appeal of these acts, perhaps leading to a better understanding of why they occur. The data that exists is suggestive that school rampage shootings arise due to a complex interplay of individual and community level factors. Policies that intend to make schools safer must equally attend to all of these factors.

All types of threats that may occur within a public K-12 school environment should not be treated the same (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). The process of evaluating a child for a routine behavioral issue or for minor crimes, such as stealing, have not proven to be an effective indicator for evaluating threats of a more serious and potentially deadly nature, such as rampage school shootings (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999; Newman et al., 2004; Verlinden et al.). A successful threat assessment relies upon communication between teachers and students to create an environment where threats of violence are routinely reported, investigated, and addressed and the contributing underlying factors receive appropriate attention (Collins, 2007).
According to researchers at the University of Virginia, this type of crisis management plan remains largely underutilized by K-12 public school officials and uninvestigated by policy researchers (Cornell & Williams, 2006). By analyzing Newman’s (2004) five-prong model, the current study is designed to distinguish between the unique characteristics of rampage school shooters in order to help resolve potential identification issues in the K-12 school setting.

Additional challenges for school administrators exist in consideration of the role of school districts in the mental health process. Recent changes to federal regulations through the Every Student Succeeds Act, may provide new opportunities for schools to support mental health for their students (Rossen & Cowan, 2016). Rossen & Cowan note that schools can assist in lowering barriers to seeking mental health care by “reducing the stigma, providing services at no additional cost, reducing scheduling conflicts and eliminating transportation challenges” (p. 30). They suggest mental health challenges should be considered similar to vision impairment issues. Left unaddressed, consequences to student success would be detrimental. Even though schools are not in the optometry business, legislation has long obligated schools to provide vision screenings and intervention efforts (Rossen & Cowan).

Significance of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to apply prior research to analyze previous multiple victim K-12 public school shooting incidents, specifically rampage school shootings occurring over the past two decades in the United States. This analysis is intended to help identify best practices for developing and conducting threat assessments in K-12 public schools by assessing the validity of Newman’s (2004) five-prong model. Principals and members of school threat assessment teams are the intended audience for this study. However, Superintendents and other
key leadership positions in school districts may also benefit from the results and implications of the study.

Due to the complexity of school shootings, it is unrealistic to completely eliminate the possibility of future school shooting incidents (Muschert, 2007). However, in light of the inability to eradicate the occurrence of future school shootings, school leaders must focus attention on reducing the risk of violent attacks on school property. Little is known about the reasons surrounding school shooting attacks and the potential options for mitigating the risk of such events (Rocque, 2012). Newman et al.’s (2004) framework is a potential tool to evaluate prior rampage school shooting incidents. The current study is designed to determine if any prevention procedures exist for K-12 public school officials to utilize in better informing the threat assessment process and evaluating potential rampage shooting threats.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study on rampage school shootings;

1. By examining past school rampage shootings, does Newman et al.’s (2004) framework provide a viable lens for analyzing and evaluating the potential for lethal student attacks within the public school K-12 environment?


3. What components of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework should public K-12 school officials include in their threat assessment or evaluation process to identify potential school shooters?
Definition of Terms

The following definitions will be utilized throughout the study:

**Bullying** is characterized by the bully having more power than the victim. Additionally, bullying represents a pattern of incidents (rather than a single incident) that results in threats of physical abuse or intimidation (Langman, 2009b).

**Classroom Avenger**: A depressed and suicidal, usually Caucasian, adolescent male from a rural, suburban, or small community who perpetrates a non-traditional multi-victim homicide in a school or classroom setting (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999).

**Cultural scripts** provide a model for solving problems through violence. These models may be real or fictional depictions demonstrated through movies, music, video games, a close friend or family member, or even another perpetrator of violence (Newman et al., 2004).

**Government attacks** typically include a government agent responding with violence to student protests or rioting. The Kent State University shootings are an example. Four people were killed in the 1970 incident when students protested the U.S. invasion of Cambodia during the Vietnam War (Caputo, 2005 as cited in Muschert, 2007).

**Marginalization** of a social group that matters to a person may occur in many forms. School climate, bullying, social exclusion, rejection of a love interest, and low status in a pecking order are all examples of how someone may feel marginalized (Newman et al., 2004).

**Mass murders** target either categories of individuals or the school in general (Muschert, 2007). Despite not being a shooting per se, the best example of a mass murder incident occurred in 1927 in Bath, Michigan, when a farmer killed 45 people when he blew up a school building. The attack was apparently retribution for a newly levied school tax (Ellsworth, 1927).
Psychopaths are narcissistic (which includes egocentrism), lack empathy and morals, and have anger management issues. Psychopaths tend to make favorable impressions but are typically sadistic and receive a thrill or satisfaction from making others suffer (Langman, 2009b).

Psychotic individuals are, at least partially disconnected from reality. Psychosis generally takes place in the form of delusions (false beliefs) or hallucinations (e.g., hearing voices) and includes schizophrenia-spectrum disorders (Langman, 2009b). Symptoms likely include a struggle with creating and maintaining relationships and a lack of emotional expressions. Psychotic shooters tend to be adept at disguising their symptoms (Langman).

Rampage shootings are both essentially random and defined by acts involving an attack on multiple parties. While shooters may have an initial target, they may also expand their range of targets in an arbitrary or erratic way, suggesting they may be unaware of their targets until the incident is over (Newman et al., 2004).

Serious violent incidents include rape or attempted rape, sexual battery other than rape, robbery, physical attack with a weapon, and threat of physical attack with a weapon. Serious violent incidents are differentiated from violent incidents only by the use of a weapon in the threat of or action of a physical attack (USDOE, 2014).

Targeted attacks are not meant to be against the school but rather target a specific individual. Gang related incidents or a student who shoots a teacher or administrator the shooter perceived had wronged them are examples of this type of shooting (Muschert, 2007).

Threat assessments are a set of operational activities that combine an investigative process and information gathering strategies with target-violence relevant questions (Reddy et al., 2001)

Terrorist attacks target either a school or students in a politically motivated assault (Muschert, 2007). The 2004 Beslan, Russia, attack where terrorists took 1,200 people hostage and three
days later killed 344 people, 186 of whom were children, represented the deadliest recorded school-related terrorist attack (Dunlop, 2006, as cited in Muschert, 2007).

Traumatized individuals are often detached from others and have a reduced ability for feeling emotions. Feelings of persistent threats from others and minor symptoms of paranoia are common. Typically, self-mutilation, self-destruction, substance abuse and even suicidal urges will be present. Occasionally violent behavior toward others will occur (Langman, 2009b).
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Violence in America

Despite the frequency of mass shooting incidents, the United States violent crime rate has moved in a downward trajectory over the past two decades. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) 2014 statistics show violent crime incidents dropped by thirty-five percent (FBI, 2015).

Violence in Public Places

While the violent crime rate has dropped over the past two decades, incidents of public violence such as rampage shootings have occurred at an accelerated rate. From 1966 to 2012, there were ninety U.S. public mass shootings. This represented thirty-one percent of the world’s total public mass shootings (Mascia, 2015). Only four countries had more than ten incidents, with the Philippines having the second most – eighteen (Mascia). Of the U.S. public mass shootings, sixty-two percent occurred in either schools or the workplace (Mascia). Other U.S. locations included businesses, restaurants, and movie theaters. Lankford (2015) suggests success associated social pressures when coupled with symptoms of mental illness may manifest as the aggression a shooter directs toward academic and professional institutions (Mascia).
According to Fox and Levin (1998), the motives for mass murder coalesce around five principal themes. These themes may appear either independently or in combination. The five themes include 1) Revenge (e.g., a resentful person seeks retribution for some type of individual failures); 2) Power (e.g., a rampage style massacre created by a marginalized individual instigating a personal battle against society); 3) Loyalty (e.g., a devoted family man/woman murders his entire family and commits suicide believing the act will avoid a miserable earthly life and reunite them in the afterlife); 4) Terror (e.g., a political rebel targets a government asset, with numerous innocent victims killed to send an emphatic message to those in power); and 5) Profit (e.g., to avoid having witnesses an assailant executes customers and workers at a retail store while committing a robbery) (Fox & DeLateur, 2013). Revenge motivation is the most common theme. Mass murderers who are motivated by revenge view themselves as victims and seek retribution for perceived unfair treatment (Fox & DeLateur).

Regardless of the theme, co-workers and/or family are most often the primary targets in mass shooting incidents. In some cases, a place such as a company or school is the primary target. The killing of victims who are not primary targets in mass shooting incidents has been termed “murder by proxy” (Frazier, 1975, as cited in Fox & DeLateur, 2013, p. 3). While victims may be chosen randomly, the setting of the incident may not be. Rampage shooting perpetrators frequently seek more than inflicting physical harm on their victims (Newman et al., 2004). In most cases, schools are symbols of society, structure, and class systems the shooter is attempting to destroy (Newman et al.). A completely random attack is rare (Fox & DeLateur). Random attacks generally occur when a shooter believes the whole world is unfair and corrupt. The shooter may show signs of paranoia to the point of psychosis. These apparently senseless
random killings tend to be most frightening and, while being the least frequent, generate the most mass media attention (Fox & DeLateur).

Types of Threats

In its simplest form, a threat is defined as a statement of intent to inflict harm (Fast, 2008). There are many types of threats that may occur in a school setting, and it is important for school staff to understand the nuances of each type so they can utilize the appropriate strategy to mitigate a potential risk (Fast). Fast, defined direct threats as specific acts focused on specific targets in a manner leaving no doubt as to the intention. In contrast, indirect threats are vague or ambiguous. Veiled threats imply an action but do not overtly threaten harm. A conditional threat, e.g., kidnappings or extortion, state harm may be inflicted if a request is denied.

Additionally, threats may be classified as either transient or substantive. Transient threats do not evince a premeditated intent to harm (Fast, 2008). Transient threats are often a reaction, such as a loss of temper. Substantive threats demonstrate sufficient evidence of a sustained intent to cause harm (Fast).

According to Fast (2008), additional factors should be considered when evaluating a threat. First, the threats level of detail and specificity often reveal the level of attention demanded by the threat. Second, the threat’s plausibility is important. Third, it should be determined whether the person making the threat has experienced a stress inducing personal or family incident. When evaluating a student threat, a recent loss or personal rejection in the student’s life may warrant an elevated risk level. Finally, the character of the person making the threat should be considered. Knowing the baseline behavior of the person making the threat may be important when assessing the threat.
Reddy et al. (2001) noted little or no existing empirical guidance on how to best assess risk for targeted violence in schools. Because different violent behaviors have different precursors, alternative intervention approaches are required. Students may not demonstrate some of the “traditional risk factors” connected with general violence and youth delinquency (p. 160). Studies of youth homicide suggest children who commit murder manifest counterintuitive characteristics when compared to adolescents who participate in non-violent delinquency (Cornell, 1990; Reddy et al.). For example, Cornell (1990) found juveniles who were referred for school evaluations were less likely to have prior mental histories such as prior arrests, placement in a juvenile facility, problems with school adjustment, and/or a history of prior violent behavior than juveniles who committed larceny (Reddy et al.). Among juveniles who commit murder, there may be significant behavioral variance based on the type of homicide committed (Reddy et al.). School officials’ ability to prevent targeted violence is challenging due to the need to know the appropriate risk factors of each type of behavior being assessed.

Reddy et al. (2001) analyzed three assessment approaches: profiling, guided professional judgment, and automated decision making. Recently, profiling, i.e., developing a demographic or behavioral list to identify the likelihood of a potential risk, has become a familiar term.

Profiling

A profile is a template based on the known characteristics of previous perpetrators. This template is utilized to compare and assess a suspected or potential perpetrator. When assessing a risk, profiles often consider demographic data or physical appearances. However, there are no
data demonstrating the validity or effectiveness of prospective profiling (Reddy et al., 2001). In addition, concerns exist with respect to using a profile to predict violent school behavior. These concerns include the profile’s accuracy and the risk of identifying a false positive (Sewell & Mendelsohn, 2000). Additionally, attempting to label student behavior increases the opportunity for judgmental bias or using an inappropriate risk factor to assume a potential risk of violence (Reddy et al.). The risk of stigmatizing children and depriving them of civil liberties may also exist (Sewell & Mendelsohn).

Research following the Columbine High School shooting incident observed the characteristics associated with assailants are often too broad and represent too large a population of students who fit the profile (Brickman et al., 2004 as cited in Collins, 2007; see also Cornell & Williams, 2006). As a result, over-profiling may create a risk of school officials becoming overwhelmed and failing to act. Cornell (2004) suggested a more specific list of violence indicators would produce a more useful description of potential perpetrators.

Guided Professional Judgment

Guided professional judgment, also known as structured clinical assessment, is an approach involving an interview and evaluation. This approach uses an instrument or checklist to guide the collection and analysis of information (Reddy et al., 2001). Typically, the evaluator is a mental health professional, but in a school setting, this may not be possible (Reddy et al.). Structured assessments, requiring defined answers (e.g., yes/no), are generally more accurate than unstructured assessments or assessments allowing for open-ended responses (Dempster, 1998; Hanson, 1998; Kropp, Hart, Webster, & Eaves, 1999 as cited in Reddy et al.).
The guided professional judgment evaluator assesses baseline risk factors of the probability of violence among people in relevant populations and then uses information gathered through an interview using a factor checklist (Reddy et al., 2001). The evaluator adjusts each risk factor’s probability, either up or down, to formulate a research based risk appraisal (Reddy et al.).

When sample sizes are larger, the guided professional judgment approach has credibility with mental health professionals. However, limitations exist regarding the usefulness of this approach in a school setting (Reddy et al., 2001). For example, targeted school violence is a rare occurrence. Therefore, a base rate is difficult to accurately establish (Sewell & Mendelsohn, 2000). Additionally, empirical evidence for identifying the risk factors associated with targeted school violence is currently unavailable. Overall, the guided professional judgment approach lacks evidence to support application in the school environment (Reddy et al.).

Automated Decision-Making

Automated decision-making is a threat assessment encompassing actuarial formulas and relates to other forms of artificial intelligence or computer generated decision-making methods (Reddy et al., 2001). These approaches produce the decision rather than allowing the assessor to decide (Reddy et al.). Actuarial tools, such as weighted risk factors, combine to produce the likelihood of a potential outcome (Reddy et al.). Actuarial tools are based on empirical research on a topic (such as violence) and are normally standardized for specific subcategories (e.g., murder) (Reddy et al.). Actuarial models are most effective with topics that can be standardized and validated. Expert systems and artificial intelligence are computer-based or automated applications designed to provide an instant solution (Reddy et al.). Expertise on a topic is
presented in the form of an algorithm or computer-generated parameters. Specific case problems are compared to the computer program to generate a conclusion (Reddy et al.). Automation eliminates the human error or bias that may occur with other approaches. Both actuarial and expert system approaches are limited by the scope of current knowledge about a given topic (Reddy et al.).

Using automated decisions to assess targeted school violence may not be effective due to the lack of appropriate actuarial equations and valid risk factors (Reddy et al., 2001). Additionally, concerns exist about using statistical equations to determine the likelihood of targeted violence attacks due to their infrequent occurrence (Reddy et al.). Equations are not able to minimize the false negatives or false positives typically identified in assessing targeted school violence (Sewell & Mendelsohn, 2000). Reddy also noted the use of an equation or computer model may discount a person’s knowledge of additional factors regarding the specific incident being assessed.

Reddy (2001) concluded each of the approaches analyzed in her study were either inductive or relied on factual information derived from prior events. Given the low frequency of targeted school violence, the deductive examination of the specific facts of each unique case is generally a more effective approach (Reddy et al.). Similar to empirical research on attacks of public officials (e.g., Borum et al., 1999; Fein & Vossekuiil, 1998, 1999; Fein et al., 1995), Reddy et al. contended that the development of a risk assessment framework holds promising potential for use in schools.

Reddy et al. (2001) identified three guiding principles integral to the assessment approach. First, no homogenous characteristics or profile are shared by the perpetrators of targeted school violence (Reddy et al.; Fein & Vossekuiil, 1998, 1999). Second, in some cases a
direct threat will be made without a subsequent attack, while in other cases no threat precedes an
attack. Third, targeted school violence is not characterized by randomness or generally the
product of someone who “just snapped” (Reddy et al., p. 168)

Threat Assessment Approach

The threat assessment approach requires an individual to gather information and to
answer questions to determine whether the evidence suggests an attack may occur (Reddy et al.,
2001). The development of an effective assessment approach and accompanying policy may be
the first steps in identifying behaviors or potential outcomes (Chavez, 1999; Furlong &
Morrison, 2000 as cited in Reddy et al.).

Reddy (2001) identified questions to guide the threat assessment process. These questions
address the potential perpetrator’s 1) motivation for the threat, 2) communication about the
threat, 3) atypical interest in targeted violence, 4) planning and/or attack related behaviors, 5)
mental state, 6) cognitive ability to develop and execute an attack, 7) recent loss (including
status), 8) relationship between the potential perpetrator’s communication regarding the event
and corresponding behavior, 9) capacity for inflicting harm, and 10) individual and/or
environmental factors influencing the likelihood of an attack. Answers to these questions
indicate whether the student poses a potential risk for engaging in future violent behavior. For
students identified as potential risks, school officials may mitigate the risk by implementing a
risk management plan or referrals to counselors, social workers, psychologists, or other mental
health related services (Reddy et al).

“School safety is not just a funding issue. It is largely a leadership issue” (Trump, 2010,
p. 20). School leaders are accountable for both internal and external threats. A threat may occur
by a student or staff member within the school or may come from outside of the school environment (Trump, 2010). Threats coming from outside of the school environment may include fleeing bank robber, a terrorist attack, or in some cases a hazardous material spill.

School officials should formulate school security and emergency preparedness plans (Trump, 2010). Trump (2010) recommended utilizing the U.S. Department of Education’s Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools program. This program includes five phases:

1. Prevention: the capability to avoid, deter, or stop an imminent crime or threatened or actual mass casualty incident. Prevention is the action school officials take to prevent a threatened incident from occurring;

2. Protection: the capability to secure schools against acts of violence and manmade or natural disasters. Protection focuses on ongoing actions to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, networks, and property from a threat or hazard;

3. Mitigation: the capability to eliminate or reduce the loss of life and property damage by lessening the impact of an event or emergency. Mitigation also means reducing the likelihood either threats or hazards will occur;

4. Response: the capability to stabilize an emergency once it either occurs or is certain to occur in an unpreventable way; establish a safe and secure environment; save lives and property; and facilitate the transition to recovery; and

5. Recovery: the capability to assist schools affected by an event or emergency in restoring the learning environment. (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, p. 2)

Good communication between teachers and students is essential to ensure threats of violence are both reported and investigated (Cornell & Williams, 2006). School-based violence prevention programs serve the functions of threat prevention, maintenance of a positive school climate, and threat intervention (Cornell et al., 2004).

Threat Assessment Studies

In the late 1990s, several agencies published checklists, or profiles, delineating warning
signs for the risk of adolescent violent behavior (Verlinden, Hersen & Thomas, 2000). For example, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP, 1999) published *Early Warning, Timely Response*; the American Psychological Association (APA, 1999) produced *Warning Signs*; the National School Safety Center (NSSC, 1999) published the *Checklist of Characteristics of Youth Who Have Caused School-Related Violent Deaths*, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI, 1999) produced *Lessons Learned: An FBI Perspective* for its School Violence Summit. These checklists/profiles contained overlapping items and were not completely aligned (Verlinden et al., 2000). Each profile provided a broad perspective on youth violence. However, Verlinden et al. contend that to limit misidentification and labeling of students, the characteristics of youth who commit violent crimes are better studied as distinct subcategories.

As national associations and federal agencies researched and published guides for addressing violent school attacks, academic research has also identified methods for assessing student threats. Examples of this research are discussed later in this chapter where previous studies are reviewed.

**Leakage**

Students often tell someone before they carry out a substantive threat. Vossekuil et al. (2002) found eighty-one percent of the students in their study shared their planned attack with at least one other person and almost sixty percent told two or more individuals. Additionally, ninety-three percent of the time the person with whom the plan was shared was a friend, schoolmate, or sibling. The FBI refers to students communicating their intentions to others in advance of a violent act as “leakage” (Fast, 2008 p. 238). Leakage may occur in the form of
drawings, journals, videos or verbal statements. Leakage may also occur when a perpetrator attempts to recruit others to participate in carrying out the threat (Fast). The peers of a student who intends do harm are often put in the position of deciding if it is appropriate to tell an adult and, thereby, placing themselves at risk of being considered a snitch (Fast). According to the Secret Services National Threat Assessment Center, monitoring leakage is an effective way to avert school shootings (Fast).

Leakage may occur in a variety of ways. It may be in the form of threats that are not taken seriously. For example, Mitchell Johnson in Westside, Arkansas, told peers, “Tomorrow you will find out if you live or die” (Langman, 2015 p. 185). In other cases a friend may be asked to help in some way, such as when Andrew Wurst of Edinboro, Pennsylvania, attempted to recruit a partner in the attack (Langman). Michael Carneal told some of his friends to stay away from school on the Monday after Thanksgiving (Langman). These examples suggest that if a school official or the police had been alerted to the threat, the attack may have been prevented.

Leakage may also be communicated to school staff. For example, classroom assignments are a way for a prospective rampage school shooter to foreshadow violence by expressing their intentions in writing (Langman, 2015). Eric Harris of Columbine wrote an essay on school shootings. Kip Kinkel of Springfield, Oregon, gave an oral presentation on how to make bombs and told peers he wanted to become the next Unabomber (Langman). Kinkel was also asked to write an essay on love at first sight. His essay included disturbing portions unrelated to the topic of love, including “that is why you go to a pawn shop and buy an AR-15 because you are going to execute every last mother fucking one of you” (Langman, p. 186). While threats are not necessarily an indication of an impending attack or a prediction of violence, they do provide a warning signal that an investigation is warranted (Langman).
School Climate

School climate may also be a factor in determining whether bystanders will communicate a potential threat to school staff. Bystanders who did not report suspicion of a potential attack reported believing a negative reaction would occur and the possibility of the bystander getting into trouble were deterrents (Pollack, Modzeleski & Rooney, 2008). Pollack et al. advised school officials to ensure the school climate provides a welcoming environment for sharing information regarding potentially threatening situations. Pollack et al. further observed “simple and genuine measures, such as regularly greeting students, talking to students, and addressing students by name, help to make students feel connected and part of the school” (p. 8).

Bystanders sometimes indicated they did not believe an attack would actually occur. Reasons for disbelief included the threat having been made over an extended time period and appearing to be an attention-seeking gesture (Pollack et al., 2008). Bystanders also reported they believed the attack would not take place as soon as it did. They believed they had more time to come forward and, therefore, did not communicate the plan to an adult (Pollack et al.). Parental influence also appeared to play a role. Some bystanders who came forward indicated their parents reassured them it was the right thing to do (Pollack et al.). In contrast, bystanders who did not come forward reported they felt influenced by parental advice to avoid involvement.

Pollack et al. (2008) recommended school officials develop policies addressing the reporting of a threat. Such a policy should include school officials’ role in receiving information about a potential threat. School staff should be properly trained about how to respond to information regarding a potential threat as well as how to appropriately deal with an active threat. Staff should also be encouraged to be vigilant in listening to and being aware of student
conversations containing clues about a potential threat. Any information about a threat heard directly or reported by another party should be taken seriously and investigated to determine its validity.

Langman (2015) noted a common misconception about school shooters is that they are retaliating for acts of bullying. His study found only forty percent of school shooters were harassed and under three percent targeted a bully in their attack. School personnel were targeted far more often than any other type of victim. Langman (2015) suggests the shooter’s rage is generally driven by school related failures or conflicts. At least ninety-two percent of school shooters had some type of negative academic experience (e.g., failing classes, repeating grades, not graduating, detention, expulsion, suspension, etc.). These experiences often influenced the shooter’s selection of an intended target.

What does a safe school climate look like? The U.S. Department of Education’s and the U.S. Department of Justice’s (1998) joint publication, “Early Warning Timely Response: A Guide to Safe Schools,” presented a list of safe school climate characteristics. According to Dwyer, Osher, and Warger, a safe school climate exhibits the following:

- A focus on academics – an environment in which academic achievement is valued and all students are capable of achieving good academic outcomes. It will engage in bonds between the family and community – showing a strong link between families and community based organizations such as churches, police and mental health agencies. Demonstrates an emphasis on social inclusion of all children – where teachers promote positive relationships and mentoring programs utilize outside volunteers to increase opportunities to bond students with adults. Low violence schools tend to promote equal treatment for all students – favoritism for athletes or other social classes does not occur. Open communication about safety issues – identifying the dangers of weapons and consequences for bringing them to school. Additionally, students should be educated on anger management techniques and proper conflict resolution skills. Low violence schools encourage a climate where students can share concerns with adults - having confidence they will be taken serious and without concern of retribution. Low violence schools tend to support extended day programs – including tutoring, mentoring, community service or other clubs or activities that allow youth a continuation of a
positive learning environment. Finally, schools with less violence likely assist students in transitioning from the school to adult life and the workplace – including apprenticeships, vocational skills, internships etc. that provide opportunities for students to find their niche in society. (Dwyer et al. as cited in Fast, 2008, pp. 241-242)

Additional guidance for creating a safe and connected school environment was jointly provided by the United States Secret Service and United States Department of Education. Threat Assessments in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates contained the following recommendations (Fein et al., 2002):

An assessment of the school’s emotional climate should be performed. There should be an emphasis on the importance of listening in schools. An adoption of a strong yet caring stance against the code of silence. Prevention of and interventions in bullying conducted. An inclusive school community approach towards planning, creating and sustaining a school culture of safety and respect. Ensure development of trusting relationships between at least one adult and student. Lastly, a creation of mechanisms for developing and sustaining safe school climates. (p. 13)

School safety and security are dependent on two conditions: a predictable and orderly environment characterized by school staff establishing consistent, dependable supervision and disciplinary procedures and the climate being rooted in students feeling they are connected to the school and supported by their teachers and support staff (Cornell, 2006).

Crisis Plans

In the late 1990s, school officials/administrators expanded their school safety resources to include crisis management techniques similar to those utilized by big business. Brinkman’s (2003) practical guide for school safety encouraged teachers, students, and administrators to use threat assessment as a preventive measure for predicting targeted violence (Brickman et al., 2004 as cited in Reddy, 2001).
According to Seeger and his colleagues (2001), insufficient pre-crisis communication results in the possibility of a surprise event, inadequate precautions and serious harm occurring within an institution (Collins, 2007). They recommended an organization should investigate, develop, and institute a crisis management plan to ameliorate these problems. Seeger et al. (2001) identified three important phases of an effective crisis management plan: 1) determining the composition and structure of the crisis management team; 2) formulation of checklists, decision-making guides, procedures for mitigating harm; and 3) ongoing maintenance of the crisis management plan. Maintenance of the plan was the most often ignored phase. Seeger et al. (2001) found the lack of preparedness was sometimes the result of an organization failing to develop a crisis plan (Collins, 2007). However, more often organizations failed to keep crisis plans updated. During the 2013-14 school year, eighty-eight percent of public schools reported having written procedures for responding to shootings/active shooters (USDOE, 2014).

Crisis planning team membership should not be restricted to only school staff. Daniels (2007) recommended community and religious leaders also be included (see also Barton, 2000; Brock et al., 2001; D’Andrea, 2004; Daniels, 2007). Plans should also include crisis counseling and referral resources for both students and staff. Daniels (2007) also recommended school officials should develop and annually update a list of local qualified psychologists.

Crisis Planning/Training

Penrose (2000) noted the importance of training staff to view a crisis as an opportunity by reframing a potential negative incident. Penrose suggested the greater the autonomy provided to an organization’s lower levels, the more responsive the organization will be should a crisis occur. Penrose’s quantitative study of perception’s effect on crisis management planning found viewing
a crisis as an opportunity induced greater proactive institutional crisis planning efforts (Penrose, 2000 as cited in Collins, 2007). Penrose explained, “A crisis management plan is…of limited use if it does not coincide with an organization’s philosophies, values, attitudes, assumptions, and norms” (as cited in Collins, 2007, p. 160). During the 2013-14 school year, seventy-four percent of public schools trained their employees on crisis prevention and intervention (USDOE, 2014). Looking at student preparedness, seventy percent of public schools drilled students on the use of a written procedural plan for shootings/active shooters (USDOE).

The Virginia Model for Student Threat Assessment was developed as part of the Youth Violence Project of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia (Cornell, 2006). This project involved a group of educators studying how school principals handled threats and identifying procedures consistent with FBI and Secret Service recommendations. As a result of this study, a seven-step decision-making model was developed.

Step 1 of the model was an evaluation of the threat. At this step interviews using a standard set of questions take place with the individual who made the threat, the recipient of the threat, and any relevant witnesses (Cornell, 2006). At this stage, the threat’s context is as important as what the person who made the threat either said or did.

Step 2 involves determining whether a threat is transient or substantive (Cornell, 2006). O’Toole (2000) and the FBI developed several characteristics of substantive threats to help school staff make this determination. Threats that are specific or repeated multiple times tend to be substantive (Cornell). Transient threats, e.g., an outburst of anger or frustration, are of less concern but may require parental notification and/or disciplinary action (Cornell).

Step 3 addresses transient threat. Transient threats are usually handled quicker and do not necessitate convening the full assessment team (Cornell, 2006). When the threat is substantive,
or unconfirmed as a transient threat, step four becomes necessary and step three is omitted. Step 4 entails assessing the severity or seriousness of the threat. A serious threat predicts either an assault or physical violence without the use of a weapon. A very serious threat may include the use of weapon or a threat of death or rape (Cornell).

Step 5 occurs if the threat is less severe (Cornell, 2006). Step five involves implementation of precautions to protect potential victims, notifying the offending student’s parents, disciplining the student who made the threat, referring the student who made the threat to counseling and/or other appropriate interventions, and, if necessary, contacting a law enforcement agency (Cornell). Notification of the intended victim of the threat should also take place (Cornell).

Step 6 includes use with more severe or very serious substantive threats (Cornell, 2006). In these cases, the team omits step 5 and conducts a safety evaluation. In addition to the precautions suggested in step five for a less serious substantive threat, law enforcement should be contacted, and a mental health evaluation of the student making the threat should also be conducted (Cornell). Administration should suspend the student from school pending a complete investigation and assessment (Cornell).

Step 7 involves implementation of a safety plan designed to protect potential victims and a determination of how the educational needs of the student who made the threat will be met (Cornell, 2006). The building principal should decide if, and when, the student who made the threat may return to school or if an alternative educational placement is necessary. In either case, school should implement potential supports or conditions to monitor the student (Cornell). In a field test of the Virginia Model for Student Threat Assessment, the threat assessment process yielded positive outcomes (Cornell).
Crisis/Threat Assessment Teams

Langman (2015) stated, “The best way for schools to prevent rampage attacks is to have threat assessment teams to evaluate and respond to potential threats of violence” (p. 183). The threat assessment team’s role is to differentiate between credible student threats and false alarms by examining the student who made the threat from multiple perspectives (Langman). Assessment teams are responsible for investigating information about the student’s past academic, legal, and social histories; determining whether the student has access to weapons; and assessing the student’s interactions with fellow students and school staff (Langman).

O’Toole’s (2000) report noted that the FBI had recommended school officials should establish multidisciplinary teams to manage student threats of violence (O’Toole as cited in Cornell, 2004). O’Toole recommended, at minimum, the inclusion of a mental health professional and law enforcement expert, but specific backgrounds of other team members were not prescribed. The Department of Justice (2002) recommended the principal or assistant principal direct the assessment team’s activities, and a school resource officer (SRO) would assume the role of a legal or law enforcement expert on the team. The school psychologist or mental health professional should act as a consultant to the principal for determining whether the threat should be treated as either a transient or a substantive threat (Cole, 2003; Furlong, Morrison, & Pavelski, 2000 as cited in Cornell et al., 2004). Additionally, the mental health professional should aid in determining if the student may have a mental health issue requiring treatment (Barnhill, 2003; Sandoval & Brock, 1996). The FBI recommended that because of their primary instructional role classroom teachers should not be included on the assessment team. Further, while the threat assessment team’s size and composition are limited, all school
staff need to be trained to identify potential warning signs that may lead to violence and know how to notify the assessment team of the threat (Langman, 2015). Langman noted office workers, cafeteria staff, and maintenance workers are often on the “front line of violence prevention,” so training for all staff is necessary (p. 184).

As part of the Virginia Threat Assessment Study, a decision tree model was developed to guide efficient and practical decision-making (Cornell, 2004). In the decision tree model the Principal gathers information about the threat and either resolves the issue or determines further research and intervention are required (Cornell). This is a key decision. Schools should call the crisis team into action if further research is required. Principals should utilize student interviews, including witnesses of the threat, to corroborate the story. Principals should have a high degree of autonomy in the process, not unlike their role in responding to student behavioral issues (Cornell, 2004).

Chronology of Prior School Shooting Prevention Studies

The following delineate the primary studies related to rampage school shooting research. The researcher organized the studies listed below in chronological order with the exception of the Newman et al. (2004) study that will be utilized as the current study’s theoretical framework. Newman et al.’s study is presented last as a transition to the case studies and methodology section.

Classroom Avenger

McGee and DeBernardo (1999) were among the early researchers who attempted to provide a profile of school shooters. Until their research, other than basic profiling techniques,
school officials had limited resources to employ in responding to threats. McGee and DeBernardo defined the Classroom Avenger as “a depressed and suicidal, usually Caucasian, adolescent male from a rural, suburban or small community who perpetrate[d] a non-traditional multi-victim homicide in a school or classroom setting” (p. 1). Their study noted Classroom Avengers seek notoriety or personal vengeance through violence. Studies included in their meta-analysis did not involve drug or gang related incidents. McGee and DeBernardo developed specific characteristic categories for school shooters by examining fourteen youth mass murderers who had planned school/classroom shooting incidents between 1993 and 2001. They used individual psychological evaluations to create a sample profile. McGee and DeBernardo’s study created a Classroom Avenger profile that examined the perpetrator using the following: demographic and dispositional factors, historical factors, clinical features, and contextual variables. Their study utilized tables to delineate characteristics as either exclusionary criteria or inclusionary criteria. Each list included over thirty characteristics representing a broad array of personality traits. The study concluded the examined school shooting incidents “revealed an evolutionary pattern with these crimes developing in the direction of greater complexity and sophistication over time” (p. 14). This conclusion suggested simple profiling may not be sufficient and a more specific assessment technique was needed.

While McGee and DeBernardo (1999) were doing their research, an alternative study focused on assessing violent school threats was conducted.

**Four Prong Threat Assessment**

In 2000, the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime developed a four-pronged approach for assessing a potentially violent school threat. This study was a more sophisticated
framework than previous research in the field as it was the first study to identify groupings and
establish a holistic approach to identifying characteristics of potential threats that extended
beyond the personality and appearance of the perpetrator. The study included fourteen school
shooting cases as well as four averted shooting incidents. The four-pronged approach identified
several common characteristics among the shooters, including narcissism, bigotry, alienation,
poor anger management, and fascination with violence, low self-esteem, and lack of empathy
(O’Toole, 2000). These characteristics yielded an initial threat assessment framework for school
officials to use in identifying a potential threat in a school setting. Four prongs emerged from this
study. The four prongs included the student’s personality, family dynamics, school dynamics,
and social dynamics.

Prong One: The Student’s Personality

O’Toole’s (2000) first prong considers both nature and nurture, i.e., the combination of
inherited characteristics along with influences from one’s environment. O’Toole notes it is
important to be aware that adolescent personalities are dynamic and are still developing.
O’Toole noted by observing the student their personality might also be understood. These
observations include how the student copes with challenges, failures, rejection or other stressors;
how they exhibit expressions of disappointment, anger, embarrassment, frustration, or similar
feelings; how they use resilience or the lack of resilience after a loss, failure or other negative
experience; how they demonstrate self-perception (i.e., how they feel they are perceived by
others); how they respond to authority figures, rules, or directions; how they demonstrate
desire/need for control, respect, attention and other needs; how they show or fail to show
empathy for others; and how they demonstrate a particular attitude toward others (O’Toole).
O’Toole (2000) posits that in general people do not snap or move instantly toward violence when they have previously not shown a propensity for such behavior. Violent behavior generally evolves over time with observable warning signs. For example, these observable signals may include verbal comments evincing frustration, destruction, or an intent to get back at someone. Precursors to violent behavior may also appear in the form of writings or drawings.

**Prong Two: Family Dynamics**

The ability to understand the student’s family dynamics is important. Knowing a family’s structure, values and behavior patterns provides valuable context when assessing a threat (O’Toole, 2000). Examined areas related to family dynamics include turbulent parent-child relationships, acceptance of a child’s pathological behavior(s), parental apathy to behavior typical parents would find disturbing, access to weapons in home, lack of intimacy, the child rules the roost, the family structure lacks limits or discipline, and lack of parental monitoring of the child’s use of media and communication devices such as television and the Internet.

Trump (2010) suggests parental characteristics may increase the likelihood their offspring may pose a threat to other students. First, a parental focus on material items may yield a child who seeks a high level of money and lacks discipline. A family’s increased mobility may also create opportunities for the child to engage in inappropriate or dangerous behavior. Additionally, parents who substitute time with or affection toward their children by providing material items (e.g., toys, video games, etc.) may have children who demonstrate a higher level of risk inappropriate behavior (Trump). Second, parental denial or neglect of potential early warning signs of youth behavioral issues may result in the child engaging in high-risk behaviors. Parental neglect may also manifest itself in the family failing to utilize available resources such
as mental health or counseling services. Third, parents who do not allow their children to fail or to learn from their mistakes may limit a child’s opportunity to develop coping skills for use in challenging situations. Finally, overscheduling their children, thereby limiting opportunities for children to have unstructured time and enjoy family time, may place children at greater risk for anti-social behavior (Trump). Trump also points out many of these potential parental tendencies are more prevalent in white urban communities.

Prong Three: School Dynamics and the Student’s Role in those Dynamics

Prong three examines the school’s culture, values, beliefs, and structure and the daily roles students play within the learning environment. It is important to know how potential school shooters may perceive themselves or how they are portrayed among other students and/or staff within the school culture. It is important to recognize students, teachers, and administrators may all have different perceptions of a school’s dynamics. These variances are important. School dynamics include student attachment to the school; staff tolerance for disrespectful behavior; application of inequitable disciplinary consequences; inflexible school culture; the presence of a pecking order among students; a code of silence among students; and unsupervised student access to and use of computers (O'Toole, 2000).

Prong Four: Social Dynamics

This prong looks beyond family and school boundaries to examine the broader community as a whole. Considerations include the community’s roles, beliefs, and values. Also important is the context of how potential school shooters perceive themselves with friends and what activities they participate in, such as what entertainment they consume and how they view
weapons and drugs (O’Toole, 2000). Areas examined under this prong include media, entertainment, technology, peer groups, drugs and alcohol, outside interests, and the copycat effect. O’Toole (2000) notes the community’s significance. “School shootings and other forms of school violence are not just a school’s problem or a law enforcement problem. They involve schools, families and the communities” (p. 4). When a student demonstrates the potential for violent behavior, community institutions (including schools) have both the ability and responsibility to assist in preventing that possibility from becoming a reality.

O’Toole (2000) acknowledged many characteristics associated with potential student violence but stressed evaluating a long-term baseline view of student behavior was a better predictor than one bad day. O’Toole’s study concluded school shooters manifest significant psychopathic and narcissistic traits. O’Toole developed a list of twenty-eight traits and behaviors often associated with violence, as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Trait / Behavior potentially associated with violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Leakage-revealing clues or intentions. Possibly recruiting others to help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Low tolerance for frustration. Student is easily hurt or insulted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Poor coping skills. Struggles to deal with criticism or failures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lack of resiliency. Setbacks are not handled well, student does not bounce back quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Failed love relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Injustice collector. Does not forget or forgive the wrongs. May keep a hit list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Signs of depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Narcissism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Alienation. Feeling of isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dehumanizes others. Views people as objects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table continued on next page
Verlinden et al. (2000) examined nine school shooting incidents that occurred in American schools from 1996-1999. Similar to O’Toole (2000), this study analyzed several domains, including individual, school/peers, family and societal factors.

Verlinden et al. (2000) found the most predictive characteristic of violent behavior to be an early pattern of aggressive behavior occurring between the ages of six to thirteen. “Schools are highly vulnerable to interpersonal violence” (Verlinden et al., p.13). Unsafe schools were characterized by subpar supervision, student alienation, overcrowding, strict disciplinary procedures lacking in compassion, student alienation and anger, rejection of at-risk students by peers and teachers, and insensitivity to multiethnic factors (Walker, Irvin, & Sprague 1997, as
cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). From a societal perspective, access to guns was identified as the most important factor (Verlinden et al.), and exposure to violence in the the form of media, games, or online content was described as being dependent on the state of mind and perspective of the individual experiencing the content. Verlinden et al. (2000) noted that in about half the studied shooting cases a significant decline in the shooter’s functioning (e.g., mood, academics, behavior at home or school) occurred during the weeks or days preceding the violent attack. Verlinden et al. (2000) concluded the key indicators of potential school shooters included anger issues, depression and suicidal ideation, aggression, history of discipline, and feelings of rejection/isolation. Additionally, the study affirmed the notion that school shooting incidents contain a unique set of risk factors.

Typology Studies

Muschert’s (2007) and Langman’s (2009a) research on school shootings focused on typology studies, which identify a category of behavior or characteristics. Muschert was among the first to examine school shootings using a typological approach. He endeavored to understand what he could learn about school shooters to prevent future incidents. Muschert (2007) examined five categories of school shootings: rampages, mass murders, terrorist attacks, targeted attacks, and government shootings (defined as being politically motivated). Muschert’s research indicated a variety of factors, rather than a single factor, contribute to school shootings. The study discussed several causes of school shootings, including mental illness, identity of shooters (e.g., gender, race, etc.), peer relationships (e.g., bullying, romantic rejection, etc.), family neglect or abuse, community context, social and cultural context, and access to guns. Muschert
found access to guns was a key antecedent for a school shooting to occur but acknowledged other factors could also contribute.

Unlike Muschert (2007), Langman (2009a) focused his typology research on rampage school shootings. Langman’s background in psychology provided a lens for categorizing rampage shooters. His primary goal was to identify a better mental health assessment technique to prevent future incidents. Langman categorized incidents by diagnosing perpetrators as a traumatized, psychotic, or psychopathic shooter and noted identifying factors for each type. The researcher has compiled specific definitions of the diagnoses under definition of terms found in Chapter 1.

Sequential Model

Levin and Madfis (2009) utilized existing criminology theories to formulate a sequential model theorizing the events or factors combining in a cumulative manner to precipitate a school massacre. These stages, also known as “cumulative strain”, include chronic strain, uncontrolled strain, acute strain, the planning stage, and massacre at school (p. 1229).

According to Levin and Madfis (2009), school shootings may be culminating result of a series of events. Their rampage school shooting research found that frequently the incident was a result of years of incremental setbacks that built up as opposed to a brief period of depression or struggle. Additionally, Levin and Madfis noted a lack of recognition from staff and peers could lead to increased frustration and further struggle. The absence of a supportive adult or peer may also lead to violence.
Newman et al. (2004) described rampage shootings as being both essentially random and involving an attack on multiple parties. While shooters may have an initial target, they may also expand their range of targets in an arbitrary or erratic way, suggesting they may often be unaware of their targets until the incident is over. Newman et al.’s (2004) study used two specific incidents: Heath, Kentucky, (1997) and Westside, Arkansas, (1998) to analyze possible reasons for rampage school shootings. Newman et al. presented a variety of explanations for why school shootings occur and analyzed the validity of each explanation. The explanations included mental illness, “he just snapped”, family problems, bullying, peer support, changing communities, a culture of violence, gun availability, violent media, and the copycat effect. Newman et al.’s theory asserted a single behavior or incident was never sufficient to indicate the likelihood of a potential attack. Rather they found a combination of indicators are present when violent rampages occur. The study proposed five “necessary but not sufficient” indicators were needed for the occurrence of a rampage school shooting (p. 229).

**Indicator One**

The first required indicator is the shooter maintains a perception of himself as being extremely marginalized within the social worlds that matter to him. For example, the shooter could have been the target of bullying, considered to be a social outcast, or have a low level of connectedness with the school community (Newman et al. 2004). Newman et al. point out that, especially in tight knit, homogenous communities where anonymity is scarce, individual differences often get pushed to the community’s fringe. This poses a greater risk under indicator one.
Few rampage shooters are loners. Newman et al. (2004) found many rampage shooters had a small number of friends who also typically held affiliations with outcast cliques. Four out of five shooters in Newman’s study experienced some degree of marginalization. Using CDC data, Newman et al. compared suicide-only incidents occurring at schools to multiple-victim incidents. They found approximately twenty-five percent of students who committed suicide were at the top of the school’s social hierarchy, whereas only five percent of those who harmed others at school came from this social class. Newman et al. cautioned the sample size was small, but nonetheless, the data demonstrated a sizable difference.

Bullying, harassment, and attacks on masculinity are often associated feelings of marginalization (Newman et al., 2004). Newman et al. noted three out of five cases in the study indicated there had been attacks on the shooter’s masculinity, such as being referred to as either gay or as a faggot. It is common for an adolescent who has been subjected to attacks on their masculinity to have projected the impression of being unaffected by the comments; however, internally they feel distraught (Newman et al.). While rampage school shooters were not usually loners and had not been bullied, they usually had experienced social isolation or marginalization.

**Indicator Two**

The shooter’s feelings of marginalization are often magnified by the presence of a psychological problem, including depression, anxiety, or more serious mental health issues such as trauma, psychotic behavior, and psychopathological behavior (Newman et al., 2004). Newman et al. noted while school shooters may have appeared to be accepted, they often felt alone, isolated, and rejected.
Rampage school shooters often have some form of mental illness. Newman et al.’s (2004) study did not include an independent analysis of the presence of mental illness. Assessments of mental health in the study were reliant on one or more of the following: 1) news coverage that referenced court testimony from psychiatrists, 2) commentary from judges and/or defense attorney’s, and 3) in some cases a plea of insanity. Due to the lack of reliable information, Newman et al. could not conclusively determine how pervasive mental health issues were. The U.S. Secret Service reported one-third of school shooters had received a mental health evaluation but less than one-fifth received a diagnosis with mental health issues before the shooting incidents (Newman et al.). Media accounts indicate over half of the school shooters suffered from a serious mental illness at the time of the shooting. In many of the cases both testimony and media claims that prosecution challenged the school shooters suffered from mental illness. Newman et al.’s study did not attempt to determine whether the school shooters were criminally insane, but the majority of the school shooters Newman et al. (2004) studied had a history of severe depression and suicidal impulses. The CDC found twenty percent of all adolescents seriously consider suicide and eight percent actually attempt suicide (as cited in Newman et al., 2004). Of the school shooters in Newman et al.’s study, nearly four out of five school shooters either had suicidal ideations or had attempted suicide, but most had never been diagnosed or evaluated (Newman et al.).

In some cases, family problems magnify the issues of socially marginalized youth and increase the severity of whatever struggles the youth may be encountering outside the home. Two-thirds of the school shooters Newman studied lived in two-parent households. Newman et al. (2004) pointed out this was counter to the predictions of most. Newman et al. suggested the quality of family life may be a better indicator than the family structure. The CDC noted one in
five school shooters came from homes with suspected family problems. However, media accounts indicate fifty percent of the school shooters came from homes with suspected family problems. Eighty-five percent of the school shooters in Newman et al.’s study indicated issues with home life, suicide, depression, or mental health. These are key Indicator Two markers. School shooting cases studied after 1990 indicate that one hundred percent of the school shooters suffered from at least one of Indicator Two’s key markers (Newman et al., 2004).

**Indicator Three**

Newman et al. (2004) noted the importance of having an example or plan for how violent behavior can resolve a child’s problems. Newman et al. contend cultural scripts, defined as a prescription for behavior, must be in place to show a template for what the shooter can be or can accomplish through the violent act. The school shooter must believe carrying out an attack will resolve his problems. Newman et al. recommend examining violent television, movies and violent video games as well as how media coverage may provoke copycat. The media provide the general population a template for what a masculine man should be. Pressures to live up to a media image of a strong, capable male may lead a school shooter to direct his anger or dissatisfaction outward toward the society the perpetrator feels failed him. However, while Newman et al. contend that influences may be drawn from movies, lyrics, and/or books, such sources cannot be blamed for school shooting incidents. “Watching and listening to violent media does not brainwash otherwise happy and healthy teenagers so they murder teachers and peers. That is why millions of youth ingest countless hours of bloody films and come out none worse for wear” (p. 252-253).
Newman et al. (2004) note that “if marginalization and individual vulnerability motivate the shooters, cultural scripts delimit the options for reactions” (p. 245). They argue that prior to 1990; a cultural script for a rampage school shooting had not been presented to the troubled, angry, and desperate youth who sought to resolve their feelings of oppression. While Newman et al. assert the importance of cultural scripts, they also note this is the “hardest element to ‘test’ because a shooter’s thought process and motivation are difficult to recover” (p. 246). Often school shooters either commit suicide or are inaccessible due to incarceration. Therefore, researchers must rely on qualitative media accounts to formulate a blueprint for school shooting incidents.

Rampage school shooters often attempt to insulate themselves from teasing and public ridicule by developing an alternative identity. The school shooters examined in the current study – Kip Kinkel (Springfield, Oregon), Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris (Columbine, CO), and Michael Carneal (Heath, Kentucky) – did not possess the social skills required for them to be able to adapt and rise above the taunting (Newman et al., 2004). Because our society tells young males it is not masculine to seek adult help, fearing they may be called a “wimp,” it is common for school shooters to attempt to live with teasing and public ridicule (p. 247). A rampage shooting is often not a school shooter’s first attempt to resolve problems, but it is usually the last. In an effort to achieve a masculine escape from despair, a troubled youth may perceive a rampage school shooting as a viable option for reclaiming his standing among his most important social groups.

A rampage school shooter’s intent is to send a final message, not just to the victims, but to a society believed by the shooter to have excluded him (Newman et al., 2004). School shooters have learned from the media that violent acts yield fame and notoriety. Additionally,
shooters tend to feel they are forced to follow through with their plans since, in some cases, they have alerted peers of their plans are challenged to carry out the attack. This type of peer response often causes the shooters to believe they have reached a point of no return. From a school shooter’s perspective, failure to follow through with the threat could be considered a weakness, and for many shooters this would be too much additional humiliation to endure.

Indicator Four

The fourth essential factor is a failure of surveillance systems to identify troubled youth. This area considers more than technology hardware such as video surveillance. This factor includes school climate, staff training, the use of student resource officers (police) and a school crisis team (Newman et al., 2004). Often the most vulnerable students function below the radar.

Newman et al. (2004) noted that in many cases, the warning signals were weak and school officials may have dismissed these cues due to the shooter’s contradictory behavior such as good behavior and apologies. School officials may not have proper surveillance systems put in place to handle the complex responsibility of understanding the subtle messages communicated to them (Newman et al.). For example, Evan Ramsey (Bethel, Alaska) encountered numerous setbacks throughout his youth. However, Bethel High School officials observed a decrease in Evan’s disciplinary infractions during the year of the shooting. Evan’s behavioral upswing and school officials’ lack of information about Evan’s personal challenges produced mixed signals (Newman et al.).

When compared to disciplinary infraction history of prior rampage school shooters, Ramsey’s case was not consistent with the prior history. The Secret Service reported two-thirds of school shooters had limited school disciplinary records (Newman et al., 2004). Newman et
al.’s dataset showed only fifteen percent of school shooters had extensive school disciplinary records.

One might anticipate school shooters would have histories of poor academic grades. However, the Secret Service, reported five percent of school shooters had received failing grades and the majority were doing well academically at the time of the attack; some were even on their school’s academic honor roll (Newman et al., 2004). Downward spirals in academic performance seldom occurred prior to the shooting incidents, and in some cases, academic improvement occurred (Newman et al.). Additionally, school counselors were generally unaware of issues taking place in school shooters’ lives. CDC data indicated only approximately twenty-five percent of school shooters were receiving school-based psychological services (Newman et al.).

Additionally, most school shooters had no prior record of criminal behavior. In some cases, criminal issues never surfaced due to the criminal conduct either taking place out of state or the shooter successfully completing a diversion program with an accompanying record expungement (Newman et al., 2004).

In more than four out of five cases in Newman et al.’s (2004) study, the school shooter revealed his violent intentions in advance, but Newman et al. indicated that despite at least one other person having knowledge, this information seldom went further than the shooter’s peers. In some of Newman et al.’s cases, the shooter’s peers were so concerned about the seriousness of the shooter’s threat, they either stayed home from school or intentionally avoided the area in which the shooter indicated the shooting would take place. Additionally, nine out of ten parents in Newman’s study claimed they had concerns about the shooter’s behavior prior to the shooting incident (Newman et al.). In some cases, school shooters revealed their violent thoughts through
school writing assignments. Newman noted approximately forty percent of the shooters had written violent essays prior to the attack.

**Indicator Five**

Newman et al.’s (2004) final indicator considers the potential shooter’s ability to access guns and/or other weapons. The researcher examined the impacts of parental, peer and community involvement. Newman et al. discussed whether the gun was accessed from a relative and the extent of the shooter’s experience using guns prior to the shooting incident.

Newman et al.’s Approach

In testing the viability of the approach of their framework, Newman et al. (2004) relied on several data sources: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Safe School Initiative report by the U.S. Secret Service, and the U.S. Department of Education. Newman et al. also created a dataset based on prior case studies and media accounts of rampage school shootings. Newman et al. acknowledged media reports often proved to be unreliable and incomplete sources of information, which led the team to confirm information from additional sources such as school, court, law enforcement, and mental health records.

By applying the model to rampage school shootings that occurred from 1974-2002, Newman et al. (2004) concluded the five indicators were reliable in testing the validity of the theory. Fellow researchers (Langman 2009; Levin & Madfis, 2009; Muschert 2007; Rocque 2012) have cited the resulting framework as a reliable theory in evaluating the risk of potential rampage school shootings. Newman et al.’s model is also straight forward and direct, pointing
out the factors school officials and their assessment teams should consider when evaluating threats school violence.

Case Studies

A comprehensive analysis of every school shooting incident occurring over the past century would necessitate a considerable allocation of both time and resources. Additionally, the type of school shooting and each incident’s contextual place in time could produce varying implications for school officials to consider. Therefore, this study focused solely on rampage school shootings occurring in U.S. K-12 schools.

The shooting incidents reviewed in this study constitute the most serious incidents that have occurred within the last two decades. The shooting incidents selected for review had to have resulted in multiple victims and at least one death. All cases had to meet the same level of standards to ensure results were consistent.

The study grouped incident information into sections to delineate the critical facts of each shooting incident in a manner designed to allow the reader to follow without advanced understanding of the incident(s). The following subheadings are used within each section and will be used to code information based on Newman et al.’s (2004) framework;

1. Overview of Incident
2. School and Community Profile
3. Profile of Shooter
4. Mental Health or Social Disorder Implications
5. Access to / Experience with Firearms
6. Family Environment
Later in this study, the researcher analyzed each shooting incident meeting the criteria established in the methodology section. In total, twelve shooting incidents matched the criteria and yielded a manageable and useful sample size. The researcher provided an expanded explanation of the process used to select the twelve shooting incidents in Chapter 3.

Incident #1 Barry Loukaitis: Moses Lake, Washington (February 2, 1996)

Overview of Incident

On Friday morning, February 2, 1996, Barry Loukaitis did not attend school. Just before 2:00 p.m., he walked to Frontier Middle School wearing a wild-west outfit that included a black trench coat (Fitten & Santana, 1997). Loukaitis entered the school through a side door carrying a rifle and two handguns (Tizon, 1997). He entered his algebra classroom and shot and killed fellow student Manuel Vela, his apparent primary target (Tizon). Two other classmates, Arnold Fritz and Natalie Hintz, also were shot, along with algebra teacher, Leona Caires. Fritz was shot in the chest and later died, while Hintz survived. The teacher, Caires, was shot in the back while attempting to stop Loukaitis and eventually died as a result of her gunshot wounds. Classmates implored Loukaitis to allow the wounded victims to receive medical attention. However, Loukaitis was determined to take hostages and exit the building (Tizon).

Jon Lane, a physical education teacher, was two rooms away and heard loud noises. He went to the algebra classroom to investigate and dove behind the teacher’s desk when he saw Loukaitis holding the rifle (Tizon). Loukaitis directed Lane to stand up, but Lane said he was too frightened. After convincing Loukaitis to point the rifle toward the ceiling, Lane stood up (Tizon) and persuaded Loukaitis to take him as his hostage instead of a student. Loukaitis
agreed to depart the school with Lane as his hostage. Subsequently, Lane was able to subdue Loukaitis by pinning him on the ground until police arrived (Tizon).

**School and Community Profile**

Moses Lake, Washington, located 179 miles east of Seattle, is a small town with a population of approximately 16,000 (Tizon, 1997). According to the 2000 census, the median household income was $36,467 and the violent crime rate was 3.9 incidents per 1,000 residents in the community (United States Census Bureau, 2014). In the decade prior to the shooting, the community’s violent crime rate had increased substantially. Two violent crimes were reported in 1987, but by 1996, 289 violent crimes were reported. During this time, the community’s economy also worsened, creating a new class of working poor (Tizon).

School data from 1996 are unavailable. Therefore, data from the earliest available school year, 1999-2000, were used. In 1999, Frontier Middle School enrolled 650 students. The Moses Lake School District student population was comprised of 65.6% White, 30.1% Hispanic/Latino, and all other students (Black/African American, Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native) accounted for less than 6% of the total student enrollment (Superintendent, Washington State, 1999-00). Male and female students comprised 48% and 52% of the population, respectively (Superintendent). Approximately 46.1% of the Frontier Middle School students were eligible for free and reduced lunch, and 11.3% were eligible for special education services (Superintendent). Historic academic data were also difficult to access, especially at the individual school level. According to seventh grade test results, 27.6% of Frontier Middle School students met the state’s reading, math, and writing performance standards (Superintendent).
Profile of Shooter

Barry Loukaitis, a fourteen-year old Caucasian male, was an only child. His family moved to the community prior to Loukaitis’s fifth grade year (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Previously the family had lived in Iowa and Minnesota. Research did not indicate why the family moved to Moses Lake, but it was not until moving to Moses Lake that signs of Loukaitis’ social issues, such as withdrawing from peers, began to emerge (Verlinden et al.).

Loukaitis was an honor student who excelled in math. His peers described him as a shy nerd who was bullied and teased (Kimmel & Matthew, 2003). Before the shooting, Loukaitis submitted a poem for his English class about murdering classmates. Loukaitis also remarked to a friend it would be “pretty cool” to carry out a killing spree similar to the one depicted in the movie Natural Born Killers (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999 p.2).

Loukaitis’ apparent target, Manual Vela, reportedly had repeatedly teased him (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). However, during a police interview, Loukaitis said although he intentionally killed Vela, he denied having been a target of Vela’s teasing. According to a classmate, Loukaitis was bullied at school, but it was unclear whether Vela was one of the students who bullied Loukaitis (Tizon, 1997). Loukaitis’ trial testimony indicated he had only targeted Vela and the other deaths were accidental (Associated Press, 1996). A psychiatrist’s trial testimony suggested Vela was a gang member. However, there was no evidence supporting this claim. Loukaitis stated he thought Vela had nothing to live for and, therefore, he had nothing to lose if he was killed (Associated Press).
Verlinden et al. (2000) noted that Loukaitis became isolated and increasingly withdrawn prior to the shooting. Two years before the shooting incident, Loukaitis began exhibiting psychiatric symptoms, such as frequently pacing and showering multiple times daily. Occasionally he fell asleep in the shower. During the trial, psychiatrists suggested Loukaitis may have been suffering from an undiagnosed bipolar disorder (Wold, 1997, as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000).

Access to / Experience with Firearms

There were firearms in the home during Loukaitis’ childhood (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). At the time of the shootings, Loukaitis was carrying 78 rounds of ammunition and three types of firearms: a .30-30 caliber rifle; a 357-caliber pistol; and a .25 caliber pistol. All firearms belonged to family members and were kept in the home (Fitten & Santana, 1997). Specifics about the storage of guns was not available.

Family Environment

Terry and Joann Loukaitis owned and managed an ice cream and sandwich shop. During the trial, it was noted the family had experienced financial stress, but it was unclear the impact this stress had on the family’s stability (Fitten & Santana, 1997). No other information regarding the careers of Loukaitis’ parents was available.

The Loukaitis family reportedly experienced parental conflict prior to the shooting incident (Fitten & Santana, 1997). After moving to Moses Lake, his parents regularly had loud
arguments in front of Loukaitis. These parental disputes often included cursing and physical contact (Fitten & Santana, 1997). In the year prior to the shooting, Loukaitis’ parents separated after his mother discovered her husband was having an affair. She filed for divorce in January 1996 (Andersen, 1997). Mrs. Loukaitis testified she had told her son about her plan to confront her husband and his lover, tie them up, force them to listen to how much pain they had caused her, and then kill herself in front of them. Loukaitis made attempts to talk his mother out of this plan. She never followed through with her threats to take her own life, but her threats led to Loukaitis becoming sad and withdrawn in the days following her disclosure (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).

**Incident #2: Evan Ramsey: Bethel, Alaska (February 19, 1997)**

**Overview of Incident**

On February 19, 1997, just minutes before morning classes began, Evan Ramsey entered the Bethel Regional High School lobby carrying a concealed 12-gauge shotgun (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Ramsey chased students through the halls, eventually stopping in the commons area where he shot and killed fellow student Josh Palacios and wounded two other students. A teacher unsuccessfully attempted to convince Ramsey to surrender. Ramsey left the commons area and entered the main lobby, where he shot and killed Principal Ron Edward. When Ramsey returned to the commons area police had arrived. Ramsey fired one shot at the police before holding the shotgun under his chin, suggesting his intent to commit suicide. However, he did not pull the trigger. Instead, he dropped the gun and surrendered (Langman, 2009b).
School and Community Profile

Bethel, the main port for the Kuskokwim River, is located approximately 400 miles west of Anchorage, Alaska. Based on the 2000 U.S. Census data, the population was 5,471 compared to the 1990 population of 4,674 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). Bethel is accessible only by air or water. It is a rural community with only one paved road (Tizon, 2007). In 2000, the median household income was $57,321, compared to the national average of $41,994. Bethel’s 1997 violent crime rates were not available, but in 2001, the violent crime rate was 1.5 incidents per 1,000 residents (City-Data, 2014).

Bethel Regional High School was the largest high school in the Lower Kuskokwim School District. According to the State of Alaska Department of Education, on October 1, 1997, the high school enrolled 446 students, and the Lower Kuskokwim School District’s total student population was 3,662 (State of Alaska, 2010).

The 1997-98 Alaska School Ethnicity Report showed 73% of the high school students were Alaska Native/American Indian, 23.7% were White, and the remaining students were either Black, Hispanic/Latino, or other (State of Alaska, 2010). During the 2009-2010 school year (earliest available data), Bethel Regional High School male and female student enrollments were listed at 54.5% and 45.5%, respectively (State of Alaska, 2010).

Profile of Shooter

Evan Ramsey, a 16-year old white male, was the second of three boys in his family. When Ramsey was seven years old, his childhood became traumatic because he and his brothers were shuffled in and out of a series of foster homes (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).
According to a psychiatrist hired by Ramsey’s defense attorneys, Ramsey felt humiliated and abused as a consequence of living in foster homes (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Described as an outsider, Ramsey was unpopular among his peers. His glasses and acne made him a target of ridicule (Fainaru, 1998). When insulted, Ramsey often responded with racial slurs. One of these encounters involved the student Ramsey later killed (Toomey, 1998b as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). Ramsey had an active social life that included a girlfriend. However, prior to the shooting, the girlfriend broke up with Ramsey and her family moved out of the community (Langman, 2009b). Ramsey’s small group of friends encouraged his antisocial behavior toward other classmates. In fact, they helped Ramsey plan the school attack and were later convicted as accomplices (Verlinden et al.).

A couple of years before the shooting incident, Ramsey was beaten up by a fellow student, Josh Palacios, who was shot and killed during shooting incident. After Palacios beat up Ramsey, his temper emerged as an issue (Langman, 2009b). For example, Ramsey once punched a hole in the wall of his foster home. During fits of rage at school, he threw garbage cans and pushed adults (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). During the 1995-1996 school year, he was responsible for approximately a dozen disciplinary infractions (Langman). The week prior to the shooting, the Dean of Students confiscated Ramsey’s CD player (Langman). Notwithstanding this disciplinary history, Ramsey was an honor student.

Ramsey’s attack was partially related to retribution against his principal for previously imposed disciplinary consequences on Ramsey. Ramsey murdered a popular student athlete who had reportedly teased and picked on him (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). Ramsey had initially planned to commit suicide, but the suicide did not come to fruition (Fainaru, 1998). Ramsey alerted friends of his intent to kill himself at school. Upon hearing about Ramsey’s plan, two
friends encouraged him to kill others. One of Ramsey’s friends showed him how to use a shotgun and along with other peers identified the people Ramsey should shoot (Langman, 2009b). Langman suggested Ramsey’s friends encouraged this shooting incident by telling him the attack would make him famous. This goading may have triggered a murder that otherwise would not have occurred (Langman, 2009b). Langman described this incident as “the intersection of two issues: anger at mistreatment and envy regarding differential status” (Langman, 2009b, p. 117).

**Mental Health or Social Disorder Implications**

From a young age, both Ramsey’s physical and emotional health were concerns. Because of the poor care provided by both his mother and foster parents, Langman (2009b) considered Ramsey traumatized (Langman, 2009b). This exploitation included the foster parents’ biological son physically and sexually abusing both Ramsey and his younger brother. This abuse included urinating in their mouths (Langman).

Although acknowledging preadolescent suicide was rare, Langman (2009b) reported that when Ramsey was ten years old, he attempted to drown himself by walking into the ocean. It is unknown whether Ramsey changed his mind or if the attempted suicide was thwarted by a third party (Langman, 2009b). There is no indication Ramsey suffered from either psychopathy or psychosis. Ramsey was a traumatized child who had planned to kill himself and was encouraged and influenced by classmates to commit murder (Langman, 2009b).
Access to / Experience with Firearms

The 12-gauge shotgun Ramsey used during the school shooting was kept in an unlocked area near the front door of his foster home (Fainaru, 1998). Five days before the shooting, Ramsey had unsuccessfully attempted to fire the shotgun. Thereafter, James Randall, one of the classmates who had encouraged Ramsey to carry out the shooting, taught him how to shoot a shotgun (Langman, 2009b). Even though Ramsey may not have fired a weapon until just prior to the incident, he witnessed firearms at a young age, as evidenced by his father’s assault on the local newspaper office. Mr. Ramsey’s inappropriate modeling likely provided a script for how a gun could resolve disputes (Langman, 2009b).

Family Environment

Ramsey’s father was convicted on violent assault charges and sentenced to prison when he was seven years old (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Until this time, Ramsey lived with both parents and his two brothers. After Ramsey’s father began serving his prison sentence, his mother had a series of violent domestic partners. One winter evening during this time, Ramsey and his brother escaped the home and school officials later found them sleeping in the entryway of another home (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas). Thereafter, Ramsey and his brothers separated from one another, and were placed in foster care. At the time of the shooting, Ramsey’s foster care home reportedly lacked both supervision and family support (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas).
Limited information is available regarding the biological parents’ occupations and family income. Due to Ramsey and his brothers often living in foster care, Ramsey likely experienced low socio-economic living conditions.

When Ramsey was about five years old, there was a fire in the family’s apartment. Ramsey’s father believed local politicians had been responsible for the fire (Langman, 2009b). After the fire, Ramsey’s father submitted a letter to the editor of the Anchorage Times, but the paper refused to print the letter. Enraged by the refusal, Mr. Ramsey went to the newspaper office armed with guns. Mr. Ramsey chained the newspaper building doors shut, ignited smoke grenades, fired his weapons, and took the newspaper publisher hostage. The incident resulted in Mr. Ramsey receiving a ten-year prison sentence (Langman, 2009b).

The father’s incarceration exacerbated the mother’s alcoholism. In 1995, the mother was cited for being drunk on a roadway. She was charged with public intoxication the following year (Langman, 2009b). Subsequently, she lived with a series of abusive and harmful men. Because of this disruptive home situation, Ramsey and his brothers were removed from the home. Over the next two years, Ramsey was placed in ten different foster homes. One placement reportedly led to at least one incident of physical and sexual abuse (Langman, 2009b).

Ramsey’s life prior to the incident was unstable (Fainaru, 1998). About a week before the shootings, Mr. Ramsey telephoned his son and told him he would soon be released from prison. Police arrested Ramsey’s older brother for armed robbery just prior to the attack. (Langman, 2010a).
Incident #3: Luke Woodham: Pearl, Mississippi (October 1, 1997)

Overview of Incident

Wednesday morning, October 1, 1997, after using a knife to murder his sleeping mother, 16-year old Luke Woodham drove his mother’s car to Pearl High School. Upon entering the school, Woodham opened fire with a hunting rifle, killing two female students, including his ex-girlfriend, and wounding seven other students (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). After the shootings, Woodham tried to escape by returning to his mother’s car, but the road was blocked and his attempt to drive across an open field resulted in the car becoming stuck in the mud (Langman, 2010b). The shooting rampage ended when an assistant principal retrieved a pistol from his own car and subdued Woodham (McGee & DeBernardo).

School and Community Profile

Pearl, Mississippi, is located in Rankin County, just outside Jackson, Mississippi. Pearl’s population was 21,961 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). The median household income was $37,617, below the national average of $41,994. According to the 2000 U.S. census, the community’s violent crime rate was 9.25 incidents per 1,000 residents.

Pearl High School is Pearl Public School District’s only high school. According to the 2003-2004 Mississippi Department of Education State Report (oldest available data), Pearl High School enrolled 975 students. The 9th grade enrollment (280) was substantially higher than the 12th grade enrollment (190), suggesting the total high school student enrollment was slightly lower at the time of the shooting (State of Mississippi, 2014).
Ethnicity data for the 2003-2004 school year indicated that 74% of the students were white, 23% were Hispanic/Latino, and the remaining 1% were Black/African American (State of Mississippi, 2014). Male and female students were listed at 50.1% and 49.9%, respectively, for Pearl High School (State of Mississippi, 2014).

Profile of Shooter

Luke Woodham struggled to fit in with a peer group and had difficulty interacting with girls. His brief relationship with Christy Menefee, one of the shooting victims, reflected his controlling and intrusive behavior (Langman, 2010b). Several of Woodham’s friends reported his behavior was unusual and he was sometimes hard to understand (Fast, 2008).

As a sophomore at Pearl High School, Woodham was an honors student (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). Woodham’s teachers described him as being both odd and disagreeable, and a few indicated they feared him (Langman, 2010b).

Woodham’s apparent motive for the shooting was the product of two factors. First, the date of the shooting marked the one-year anniversary of Woodham’s girlfriend breaking up with him. This chronology led to a presumption the shooting had been premeditated (Langman, 2010b). Second, Woodham reported his fellow classmates frequently picked on him (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). The cult Woodham belonged to, The Kroth, allegedly played a major role in encouraging him to follow through with his plan. At his trial, Woodham testified on the day before the shooting, Grant Boyette, a fellow cult member, had spent hours on the telephone using insults and name calling to encourage Woodham to follow through with the attack (CNN, 1998). The attack had reportedly been under discussion since the beginning of the school year (Hewitt,
1997). Because of their roles in planning the shooting incident, several classmates were later charged with conspiracy to commit murder planning the shooting incident.

Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications

According to Langman (2010), Woodham was not traumatized. Although he felt he was picked on, he did not experience either physical or sexual abuse, as is often the case with other school shooting perpetrators. Existing evidence suggests Woodham exaggerated his sense of victimization (Langman, 2010b). During his childhood Woodham reportedly killed his dog by beating her, putting her in a garbage bag, setting the bag on fire, and tossing the bag into a pond (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). While this incident could be described as psychopathic behavior, Langman (2010b) suggested the abuse of the dog occurred under the guidance and influence of Woodham’s friend, Grant Boyette. Reportedly, Woodham had never harmed a pet nor demonstrated a pattern of criminal or violent behavior earlier during his adolescence. This led Langman to conclude Woodham should not be classified as a psychopath (Langman).

Though inconclusive, Langman’s research (2010) suggested Woodham should be characterized as either psychotic or a schizotypal personality. Woodham claiming he heard voices and saw demons made it challenging to confirm a diagnosis. Schizotypal personality disorder involves serious interpersonal difficulties, including superstition and a self-perception the individual has powers over others (Fast, 2008). The individual may also be preoccupied with paranormal phenomena (Fast, 2008). Langman’s suggested psychotic diagnosis was questioned because after the murders, Woodham did not indicate demons or voices had motivated his actions. Rather he referenced being picked on and frustrated over his ex-girlfriend (Fast, 2008). Nevertheless, Woodham’s interpersonal struggles combined with his belief he possessed magical
powers and his perception of being influenced by demons are recognized indicators of a psychosis (Langman, 2010b).

**Access to / Experience with Firearms**

Luke Woodham and his peer group bragged about having access to assault weapons, but it is unknown whether Woodham had access to weapons in his home (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Woodham was interested in both weapons and war tactics and discussed these topics with his friends (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Woodham also had a map on a wall in his house with the caption “One Nation Under My Gun” (Cloud/Springfield, 2001 para. 9).

**Family Environment**

It was unclear whether Woodham’s older brother, age 24, was living in the household at the time of the shooting incident (Cloud/Springfield, 2001). Woodham’s parents had divorced five years prior to the incident. Woodham lived with his mother, Mary Ann, who was 50 years old. According to Langman (2010), information about Woodham’s family life is contradictory, especially with respect to Woodham’s relationship with his mother. Some evidence suggests his mother was uninvolved in his life, to the point of being neglectful. On the other hand, she has been characterized as being overbearing and intrusive with respect to Woodham’s personal life (Langman, 2010b). Woodham, however, felt isolated from his family. In his confession after the shootings, Woodham said his mother frequently said he would not amount to anything and called him stupid, fat and lazy. Police believed Woodham’s characterization of his mother exaggerated the abuse she inflicted on him (Cloud/Springfield, 2001).
Woodham’s father refused to speak to police and reporters about either his son or the shooting incident (Cloud/Springfield, 2001). Woodham appeared to have a poor relationship with his older brother and indicated he had beaten and picked on him (Cloud/Springfield, 2001).

Limited information was available about the Woodham family’s socioeconomic status. However, McGee and DeBernardo (1999) reported the Woodham family was middle-class. Mary Ann Woodham worked as a receptionist at a food company (Hewitt, 1997).

**Incident #4: Michael Carneal: Heath, Kentucky (December 1, 1997)**

**Overview of Incident**

On December 1, 1997, the Monday following Thanksgiving, freshman Michael Carneal entered the Heath High School lobby at 7:42 a.m. and opened fire with a .22 caliber pistol on a student prayer group (Moore, 2003). Earlier that morning, Michael Carneal had wrapped two shotguns and two .22 caliber pistols in a blanket and told his family they were props for an English project (Moore, 2003). Michael’s sister, Kelly Carneal, drove him to school. Carneal entered the school through the back door. A teacher asked him what he was carrying and Carneal again indicated they were props for an English project (Moore).

Carneal arrived in the lobby and walked through the prayer group consisting of 25-30 students. The prayer group assembled each morning in the lobby before classes. The group’s membership included a cross-section of students, including athletes and band members (Moore, 2003). Carneal placed both the bundle and his backpack on the floor, put in earplugs, and withdrew the pistol from his backpack just as the prayer group’s session was concluding (Moore). Carneal began by slowly firing three shots and then rapidly fired five additional shots
in an arc around the lobby, each shot hit a student (Moore). Carneal stopped shooting when he noticed a female student on the floor covered in blood (Moore). He dropped the gun and the student leader of the prayer group angrily approached him. Carneal pleaded for the student leader to kill him. The principal rushed to separate the two students and took Carneal to his office and waited for the police to arrive (Moore).

School and Community Profile

Heath, home to approximately 25,000 people, is located in McCracken County, just outside of Paducah, Kentucky (Moore, 2003). Heath is located between the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers and serves as a transportation hub (Moore). Heath is a small, tightly knit community where people know each other by name (Moore). The median household income, according to the 2000 census report, was $33,865, below the national average of $41,994. The census reported the 2000 violent crime rate to be approximately 12.8 incidents per 1,000 residents (United States Census Bureau, 2014).

Heath High School was considered the community hub where residents and past graduates regularly attended extracurricular activities (Moore, 2003). With approximately 550 students, Heath was the smallest of three county high schools. The Heath High School student body represented diverse economic backgrounds, with students on the lower end of the economic continuum living in trailer parks and wealthy students living in million-dollar homes (Moore).

The Heath High School student body was ninety percent Caucasian, with Black, Asian, Indians and Hispanics making up the remaining student population (Moore, 2003). Data from 2002 (earliest available) indicated male and female students were listed at 53% and 47%, respectively (City-Data, 2014).
Discipline issues at Heath High School were minimal, with tardiness, unexcused absences, and classroom disruptions being the most commonly reported student transgressions (Moore, 2003). According to the principal, school safety was not an issue. The school had an emergency plan in place for firearms, but the plan was not designed to prevent a shooting by a student (Moore).

Profile of Shooter

Michael Carneal was a 14-year old freshman. Although not a loner, Carneal was on the fringe of many groups and did not have one identified peer group (Moore, 2003). While he had friends, he lacked close friendships. This might explain his attempts to steal material items, such as compact discs, in an effort to make friends with a group known as the Goths (Moore). The Goths wore long black jackets and were described by Carneal’s sister as being purposefully antisocial (Moore). The Goths rejected the high school’s recognized social order and exhibited disdain for the school’s social norms. Heath High School administrators were concerned about the Goths (Moore).

Carneal did not have difficulty talking to female students and, as such, was an anomaly among freshmen boys. He had a girlfriend with whom he broke up after he became interested in Nicole Hadley, one of the shooting victims (Moore, 2003). Apparently, female classmates’ interest in Carneal was primarily motivated by their desire to convert him to God. However, Carneal had no interest in being converted (Moore).

Within his home setting and around his family, Carneal appeared like any other high school freshman. While interacting in both the high school and other social circles he generally
appeared anxious and self-conscious and often sought approval and respect from both peers and adults (Moore, 2003).

Prior to the shooting Carneal had attended Heath High School for less than a semester. Carneal’s small stature made him a target for bullying and teasing (Moore, 2003). However, Carneal was not just a victim; he teased other students and was known as a prankster who sought attention to win friends (Moore). Carneal stole items, sometimes from his family, and gave them away in an effort to garner approval from classmates. Carneal also accessed and printed both pornography and pages from the Anarchist Cookbook (Moore).

Teachers described Carneal as intelligent, forgetful, restless, compliant to authority, and lacking in social skills. However, they acknowledged he did have a few friends (Moore, 2003). Despite Carneal’s intelligence (i.e., an IQ of 120), during eighth grade Carneal received poor grades, but his academic performance improved in the fall of his freshman year when he received A’s and B’s (Moore, 2003). Notwithstanding this improvement, Carneal’s parents did not believe his academic performance was commensurate with his intellectual potential (Moore).

During Carneal’s 71 days of attendance at Heath High School, he was involved in five minor discipline infractions (Moore, 2003). Carneal used a school computer to access Playboy magazine; chipped paint from a wall; scratched another student on the neck while they were marking each other with pens; stole a can of food from the life skills classroom; and was found in possession of a pair of plastic numchucks. Middle school administrators indicated Carneal did not experience behavioral problems and were surprised to learn he was the perpetrator of a school shooting (Moore).

Outside school, Carneal spent late night hours on the internet where he played video games and participated in chat rooms (Moore, 2003). After the shooting incident, police seized
Carneal’s home computer and found he had frequently visited pornographic websites (Moore). Carneal exhibited an interest in violence. This interest included conducting research on how to make weapons (Moore).

Carneal warned friends to stay away from the prayer group the day of the shooting, indicating “something big” was going to happen (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999 p. 3).

Additionally, Carneal had casually discussed with his classmates how he planned to take over the school and kill others (McGee & DeBernardo). Carneal referenced a scene from the movie *The Basketball Diaries*, in which the main character used a shotgun to fire at students in a school classroom (McGee & DeBernardo). Carneal brought a .38 special pistol to school a few weeks before the shooting, and days before the shooting he brought a .22 pistol to school in an attempt to impress his friends (Moore, 2003). His classmates apparently were not impressed because they told him the gun was too small. These students later reported they did not tell school officials about the gun because they neither believed Carneal had ammunition nor thought he would use the gun (Moore, 2003).

It is believed that Carneal’s motives were connected to his inability to live up to his sister’s reputation for academic excellence, lack of acceptance by the Goth group, unreturned romantic interest, and exclusion from the marching band all contributed to Carneal’s lack of connection to the social worlds that mattered most to him (Moore). Carneal had experienced teasing and bullying, especially after rumors suggested he had a romantic interest in another boy in the school. The mistreatment by his peers, while hurtful to Carneal, was not considered the true motive for the shooting incident (Moore). The shooting itself was not designed to target the students or the social groups they represented. Instead, Carneal believed publicly asserting power might engender respect from the various groups from which he felt marginalized (Moore).
Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications

Prior to the shooting, Carneal’s mental illness was undiagnosed. Discovered after the shooting incident, a history of mental illness existed on his father’s side of the family (Moore, 2003). The prosecution’s psychologists indicated Carneal was not mentally ill at the time of the shootings; however, multiple psychologists retained by Carneal’s defense team testified Carneal had a schizotypal personality and suffered from depression (Moore). Carneal also exhibited paranoid behavior. He often covered the air vents with towels when he showered, believing he was being watched (Moore). Carneal also leaped on his bedroom furniture to avoid touching the floor because he believed assailants were hiding under the floor and would harm him (Moore). At school, Carneal believed student prayer group members frequently talked about him and indicated he sometimes heard imaginary voices calling him stupid (Moore).

After the shooting and Carneal’s incarceration, his treating psychologist stated Carneal’s mental illness had developed into full-blown paranoid schizophrenia (Moore, 2003). The psychologist also reported that after the Columbine shooting, Carneal had blamed himself for that incident. The Columbine shooting caused Carneal to fall into a deep psychosis, and during this period, he attempted suicide twice (Moore). The psychologist opined the Heath shootings were partially a product of Carneal’s undiagnosed mental illness (Moore).

Access to / Experience with Firearms

Carneal became fascinated with firearms after he first learned to shoot a gun at summer camp (Moore, 2003). His parents kept a gun in the home, and a few weeks prior to the shooting, Carneal stole his father’s .38 caliber pistol from a locked box in his parent’s bedroom (Moore).
Carneal reported prior the shooting he had considered using the pistol to kill himself but did not want to harm his family (Moore). Instead, Carneal showed his classmates the gun and attempted to sell it while at school. An upperclassman heard Carneal had the gun and threatened to tell the police if he did not give it to him. Carneal gave the student the pistol, and although the student told Carneal he would pay him for the pistol, the payment was never provided (Moore). Within the Heath community access to guns was common. Carneal amassed an arsenal of nine weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition by stealing them from his father’s bedroom and a neighbor’s garage (Moore).

Family Environment

The Carneal family appeared to be typical within the Heath community. Considered genuine and giving people, Carneal’s parents frequently opened their home to their children’s friends for meals and after-school activities (Moore, 2003).

Carneal’s older sister, Kelly, participated in several school activities. She was a member of the choir, the marching band, and the school newspaper. Additionally, she was an outstanding student and earned recognition as class valedictorian (Moore, 2003). As a result of Kelly’s activities, Carneal’s parents were well-known and active within both the school and community. Carneal’s family was very involved at their church and viewed religion as being highly valued (Moore).

Carneal’s mother was a homemaker, and his father made a living as an unemployment compensation lawyer (Moore, 2003). The Heath community generally held the professions in high regard. Mr. Carneal’s law firm was not generally perceived to be one of the community’s
Incident #5: Johnson & Golden: Westside, Arkansas (March 24, 1998)

Overview of Incident

On March 24, 1998, 11-year old Andrew Golden dressed in camouflage and pulled the Westside Middle School fire alarm at 12:35pm, just minutes into the fifth period (Moore, 2003). Despite at least two students telling their teachers what Golden had done, students exited the building using their assigned emergency exits (Moore). Both Golden and 13-year old Mitchell Johnson were hiding in a wooded location near the school. The pair fired approximately 30 rounds at nine teachers and 87 students as they exited the school wounding ten and killing four female students and a teacher (Newman et al., 2004). It was unclear why Golden and Mitchell stopped shooting and fled the scene (Moore). Within minutes of the shooting, police apprehended them coming out of the woods (Moore).

Earlier that morning, both Golden and Johnson were absent from school (Moore, 2003). Johnson told his mother that his step-father had promised him a ride to school, but his step-father had already left for work. Golden’s parents, who had left for work, assumed Golden would catch the bus on his own, as was his routine (Moore). Instead, Johnson drove a van and picked up Golden. They parked the van on a cul-de-sac one half-mile from the school and walked to the wooded area near the school property (Moore). It is believed the boys had planned to do the shooting during lunch recess, but rain during the previous night resulted in the cancellation of...
outdoor recess. This cancellation prompted Golden to enter the school and pull the fire alarm (Moore).

School and Community Profile

Westside, with a population of 55,000, is located near Jonesboro in the northeast part of Arkansas (Moore, 2003). Situated 130 miles from Little Rock, Westside is located in the Bible belt, and the community is proud of its religious roots (Moore). The area has a thriving economy with rich farmland, diverse manufacturing, and quality service and retail sectors (Moore). People generally believed Jonesboro was a great place to live (Moore).

According to the 2000, U. S. Census Report the median household income was $32,896, below the $41,994 national average. As of the 2000 census, the violent crime rate was listed at approximately 3.73 incidents per 1,000 residents.

Formed in the late 1960s, Westside School District included the consolidation of the Bono, Cash, and Egypt communities. The elementary, middle and high school buildings are located on one large property (Moore, 2003). Westside Middle School had approximately 250 students during the 1997-98 school year when the shooting occurred. The total school district student enrollment was 1,600 students (Moore). The school district student population was comprised primarily of Caucasian students, most of whom were middle-class and Christian. Approximately 33% of the student population qualified for free or reduced school lunch (Moore).
Profile of Shooters

Mitchell Johnson was reportedly not popular among his peers, but he did have friends and was very close to his younger brother (Moore, 2003). Often teased about being overweight, Johnson was sensitive about his appearance (Moore). Johnson bullied others, frequently picked fights and was often beaten up by his peers for talking too tough (Booth, Schwartz, & Mencimer, 1998). He bragged about smoking marijuana and being part of a gang (Jeter, 1998). Johnson talked about bringing a gun to school, but it is unknown if he ever brought a gun to school prior to the shooting incident. He once threatened another student with a knife (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). However, Johnson had an interest in the Bible and regularly attended Central Baptist Church in Jonesboro (Moore, 2003). He enjoyed music, including singing in the church choir on the weekends (Moore). He also participated in athletics, including baseball, basketball, and football (Moore).

According to Westside teachers, Johnson was an above-average student who earned A and B grades (Moore, 2003). Many Westside employees described Johnson as a charming, polite and respectful student who received commendations for his good behavior and had earned a reputation as a real pleaser (Moore).

Conversely, Johnson was described by one of his teachers as sneaky and manipulative (Heard, 1998a as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000). Johnson’s record of prior school behavior incidents included fighting with peers, angry outbursts, threatening others, and arguing with teachers. Johnson expressed high levels of anger when receiving school discipline. The teacher who was killed in the shooting had placed him in school suspension just prior to the incident.
Johnson was suspended a total of three times during the school year prior to the shooting (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).

Angered over a recent school suspension, Johnson wrote an essay about shooting squirrels. In retrospect, the essay could have been interpreted as a veiled threat to his peers (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). At that time, Johnson’s girlfriend rejected him and ended their brief relationship. The day before the shooting, he had openly discussed shooting her and killing everyone else in the school building (Associated Press, 1998c as cited in Verlinden, Hersen & Thomas, 2000). Many of his peers heard these threats but did not take them seriously (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). In hindsight there were signs indicating Johnson was angry, sad, and feeling desperate; however, he lacked someone either at home or at school to notice and respond to these warning signs (Moore, 2003).

Andrew Golden had a short temper and a vulgar mouth (Jeter, 1998). Golden typically wore camouflage outfits and had a hunting knife strapped on his leg. At school, he once shot another student in the eye with a popgun loaded with sand (Harris, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). During the trial neighbors reported Golden had sometimes struck little girls and used obscene language when interacting with both children and adults. Golden often threatened his peers at school (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).

Although Golden had friends, he was not considered popular at school. He was an average student, described as being apathetic about his grades (Moore, 2003). Golden often earned A’s and B’s but also had been placed in remedial math and reading classes while in elementary school (Moore).

Golden did not receive a suspension and school discipline was not a problem (Moore, 2003). Similar to his father, Golden had a reputation as a class clown (Moore). Overall, Golden
blended into the middle school scene and was known for being polite and often having a smile on his face (Moore).

   A potential warning sign occurred in October 1997 when a student reported he had told his father about Golden’s threat to bring guns to school to kill people (Moore, 2003). This student and his father both indicated they informed a Westside school counselor about Golden’s threat. School officials stated the only reported threat did not involve killing others, but rather the possibility of Golden harming himself (Moore). When the counselor asked Golden about his reported comments, he stated he was only kidding. Golden’s mother told school officials she would discuss the matter with her husband and said they kept all guns in the house locked up (Moore). No further action was taken and school officials denied a threat was reported to them involving either Johnson or Golden (Moore).

Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications

   Mitchell Johnson had talked about killing himself since he was ten years old. About a year before the shooting incident, Johnson had received psychiatric counseling (Moore, 2003). When he was in elementary school, he reportedly was sexually abused by an older neighborhood boy (Moore). At the time of the shooting, charges of sexually molesting a two-year old girl were pending against Johnson (Moore). Johnson was classified as a traumatized youth and Golden was considered to be psychopathic (Langman, 2009b). During the trial, attorneys did not raise concerns of mental illness for Golden or Johnson (Moore). Psychological evaluations were performed while the trial was in progress; however, evaluation findings were not released (Moore).
Johnson’s and his father continued their troubled relationship after he moved to the Jonesboro area (Moore, 2003). Trips to Minnesota to see his father at Christmas and during the summer created a substantial amount of anxiety for both Johnson and his brother. Most of these visits did not go well, with his father often threatening to send him home early (Moore). During one trip, Johnson and his younger brother became stranded in a Chicago bus terminal due to weather issues. Two days passed before anyone realized where the boys were (Moore). One month prior to the shooting, Johnson’s father caught him charging hundreds of dollars on his father’s credit card for call sex-talk lines. His father was furious and threatened to move Johnson back to Minnesota (Moore). After this incident Johnson spiraled downward emotionally and reportedly felt hopeless, stating there was no point in living any longer (Moore).

There is not sufficient information to suggest why Golden participated in the shooting (Moore, 2003). Golden had a reputation as a menace who was cruel to animals in his neighborhood. Peers may have teased Golden at school, but nothing indicated severe bullying or harassment during his time at Westside (Moore).

Access to / Experience with Firearms

Both Golden and Johnson had access to firearms and both were fascinated with weapons and violence (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Golden began using handguns and rifles at the age of six and his father trained him to shoot moving targets (Harris, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). A photograph of Golden as a toddler shows him dressed in camouflage and posing with a rifle. Members of the Golden family were gun enthusiasts and their home served as the Jonesboro Practical Pistol Shooters Association’s office (Moore, 2003).
Just prior to the shooting, Johnson and Golden broke into Golden’s grandfather’s house and stole three rifles and four handguns from a wall gun rack. The boys used cable cutters to access the guns (Moore, 2003). They also took three other unsecured guns from Golden’s father (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999).

Family Environment

Johnson was born in Minnesota and lived for a short time in Kentucky prior to moving to Bono in 1995 (Newman et al., 2004). While in Minnesota, Johnson’s parents worked long hours, resulting in Johnson’s grandmother often watching him and his younger brother. While in the care of his grandmother, an older boy in the neighborhood reportedly repeatedly sexually assaulted Johnson (Moore, 2003). Johnson never told anyone because the attacker threatened to kill his grandmother. However, he felt shame as a result of this abuse and feared that if his father found out, he would be angry (Moore). Johnson’s father was known to have an explosive temper. He had frequent fits of rage and punched holes in the walls of his home. However, he reportedly did not physically abuse his sons (Moore).

Golden was born in Jonesboro and had lived with both of his parents since birth (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). His father, Dennis, had lived his entire life in Jonesboro as well and had gone to school with many of Andrew’s teachers (Moore, 2003). Golden’s parents both worked as postmasters in a nearby town and were perceived by others in the community as hard-working (Moore). Neighbors reported Golden’s parents often left him home alone due to working long hours (BBC News, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). Golden was his parents’ only biological child. However, he had two half-siblings from his mother’s previous marriage. The Golden’s were avid hunters, and Andrew learned how to shoot before
turning six years old (Moore). No additional information could be found regarding the Golden family’s socioeconomic status.

Johnson’s biological father, Scott, worked long hours in a meat packing plant in Minnesota (Moore, 2003). His father held an irregular work pattern and had been convicted for theft. Two years prior to the shooting, Johnson lived in Westside with his mother Gretchen and her new husband, Terry Woodard, who worked at a heavy equipment hauling company (Moore). Terry earned enough money so Johnson’s mother, a former prison guard while in Minnesota, could stay home and raise Johnson and his younger half-sister (Moore). Their home and earnings were modest but sufficient (Moore).

Johnson’s parents separated when he was eight years old due to escalating conflict in the household. A year later they divorced (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Johnson and his younger brother dealt with substantial disagreement among their parents over where the boys should live (Verlinden et al.). At one point during the divorce, both boys lived with their grandmother for a few months. During this time, they slept on either a couch or the floor (Booth, Schwartz, & Mencimer, 1998). Following the divorce, Johnson’s mother moved and began working long hours as a federal prison corrections officer. She eventually met and married one of the prison inmates (Associated Press, 1998b, as cited by Verlinden et al. 2000). Johnson’s family life consisted of conflict, inconsistent guidance and supervision, and parental antisocial conduct (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Being his parents’ only biological child, Golden was the center of their world (Moore, 2003). Prior to the shooting Golden’s half-siblings left the home to live with other relatives (Moore).

Although Johnson and Golden’s family backgrounds were quite different, the two shared the characteristics of a Jekyll and Hyde personality (Moore, 2003).
Incident #6: Andrew Wurst: Edinboro, PA (April 24, 1998)

Overview of Incident

On April 24, 1998, Andrew Wurst attended a school dinner-dance with approximately 240 other students at a banquet hall located just south of his middle school (Moore, 2003). Prior to leaving his home, he wrote a suicide note and departed with his father’s pistol (Langman, 2009b). Approximately 20 minutes before the end of the dance, science teacher John Gillette asked Wurst and several other students to come inside from the banquet hall’s patio area. As Gillette walked inside, Wurst fired the pistol twice (Moore). The first shot hit Gillette in the face, and the second shot hit the teacher in the back. Gillette died (Moore).

One of Wurst’s friends was standing nearby. Wurst reportedly told him not to worry and assured him he would not be shot (Moore, 2003). Wurst proceeded into the banquet hall calling out for a student named Eric Wozniak. The school principal told Wurst, Eric was not present. Wurst threatened to shoot the principal, but instead he approached the dance floor (Moore).

Frightened classmates yelled and scurried to take cover. Wurst warned his classmates to keep quiet or someone else would die (Moore, 2003). Wurst fired two more shots hitting a teacher and a student and then approached a student named Justin Fletcher who was known to be one of the toughest students in the eighth grade (Moore). Fletcher told Wurst if he was going to shoot anyone else, he should shoot only him and leave everyone else alone (Moore). Wurst fired a shot and the bullet grazed Fletcher’s shirtsleeve before hitting another classmate in the foot. Wurst fled on foot with the banquet hall owner in pursuit with a shotgun. The owner subdued Wurst and held him until the police arrived (Moore).
Edinboro is located 18 miles south of Erie, Pennsylvania, and was home to just under 7,000 people (United States Census Bureau, 2014). Edinboro is a middle to upper middle class community with a relatively large percentage of professionals compared to the surrounding rural area (Moore, 2003). Edinboro is known to be a good place to raise a family and is generally considered classic small town America (Moore, 2003). Edinboro is also home to Edinboro University, with an enrollment of approximately 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students (Moore).

The median household income according to the 2000 census report was $26,652, below the national average of $41,994 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). The cost of living was considered both low and affordable (Moore, 2003).

The 2000 census reported the community’s violent crime rate to be 1.7 incident per 1,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). According to the Edinboro Police Department, there had been a large increase in drug violations between 1994 and 1998 (Moore, 2003); however, a survey indicated Wurst’s school, Parker Middle School, had fewer drug violations than the national average (Moore).

Parker Middle School is within the General McLane School District. The school district served the borough of McKean, Franklin Township, McKean Township and Washington Township and had a reputation for academic excellence (Moore, 2003). In October 2000, Parenting Magazine ranked the General McLane School District as one of the nation’s top 100 school districts (Moore). The school district’s math and writing scores exceeded those of Pennsylvania schools within the same socioeconomic grouping (Moore). According to the
Pennsylvania Department of Education during the 1998-99 school year, Parker Middle School served approximately 900 students in fifth through eighth grades (Moore, 2003). Class sizes were lower than the state average, and attendance rates were above the state average (Moore).

Prior to the shooting incident Parker Middle School had not experienced major student disciplinary problems. Student cliques existed within the school, but no more than typically found in other middle schools (Moore, 2003). The General McLane School District was among nine area school districts that shared a single resource officer assigned by the Pennsylvania State Police (Moore). In 1998, the McLane School District did not receive a visit from the State trooper (Moore).

Approximately five years prior to the shooting incident, the fifth grade assimilated into Parker Middle School. Parent interviews reported a decreased level of contact and interaction at Parker than had previously occurred at the elementary school level (Moore, 2003). Wurst’s eighth grade class contained approximately 50 more students than the other grade levels at Parker Middle School (Moore).

Profile of Shooter

Andrew Wurst was average size for an eighth grade male student. He had worn glasses since the second grade and had talked about getting contact lenses (Moore, 2003). He liked sports but was not athletic and wished he was stronger so he could help his dad by working in his father’s landscaping company (Moore). His grades slipped as he entered the eighth grade when he received mostly D and F grades (Moore).
Wurst enjoyed reading Stephen King novels, watching television, playing computer games, and listening to heavy metal music. Marilyn Manson and Nine Inch Nails were among his favorite bands (Moore, 2003).

The Wurst family was Catholic; Andrew Wurst attended religious classes at his church but did not go to services. After the shooting incident, Wurst told a psychiatrist he did not believe in either God or Satan (Moore, 2003). Wurst dated a classmate until about three months before the shooting when she broke up with him (Moore). He had long telephone conversations with her after school that resulted in high phone bills. Wurst indicated the break up only slightly bothered him (Moore). Wurst admitted he regularly drank alcohol but stated he did not become drunk. He reported occasional marijuana use starting during eighth grade (Moore).

Wurst received poor grades and showed a lack of interest in school (Salters, 1998 as cited in Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Wurst did not fit in among his peers because his dark interests and threats of violence isolated him from his classmates (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Notwithstanding his social and academic problems, Wurst did not have a disciplinary record and there was no indication he was bullied (Moore, 2003). His science teacher described Wurst as reserved but indicated he was not a loner. Overall, prior to the shooting Wurst was not a student who raised concerns among his teachers (Moore).

Wurst did not have a history of violence or bullying, nor did he display outbursts of anger. His grades were poor, but he did not have school disciplinary problems. Wurst’s behavioral changes prior to the incident did not raise concerns with either his parents or school staff. Wurst reportedly argued with his parents over his grades during the week prior to the shooting and told his parents the teacher he eventually killed had embarrassed him at school (Hays, 1999a as cited in Moore, 2003).
The timing of the incident followed the national news media’s coverage of a succession of similar school shooting incidents. Wurst was familiar with these incidents and talked regularly with his friends specifically about the Westside, Arkansas, shooting incident suggesting someday he might be responsible for a similar school shooting (Moore, 2003). The Westside incident may have provided the script Wurst employed for carrying out his attack (Moore).

In the year preceding the shooting, Wurst formed a new group of friends and began using the nickname of Satan. Some of Wurst’s friends refuted this portrayal saying Wurst was not a loner and recalled they called him “Brown Bag” referring to the reusable bag he brought for lunch (Moore, 2003 p. 86).

Prior to the attack, Wurst made multiple references to the possibility of a shooting at the upcoming dance. Most students interviewed indicated Wurst’s sick sense of humor was the reason they failed to notify either their parents or school officials of Wurst’s remarks (Moore, 2003 p. 82). Preceding the shooting Wurst’s classmates had opportunities to intervene. Wurst bragged to the student that he was carrying a gun. While in the bathroom at the dance, a fellow classmate declined Wurst’s invitation to feel under his shirt where the weapon was concealed (Moore). Additionally, several of Wurst’s friends showed concern about his erratic behavior and surrounded him on the patio just prior to the shooting (Moore). However, none of these students notified a chaperone or a school official (Moore).

**Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications**

Prior to the incident, Wurst did not take any medications and was not receiving treatment from a physician (Moore, 2003). Robert L. Sadoff, a well-known forensic psychiatrist, examined Wurst after the shooting incident and concluded he suffered from “a major mental illness with
psychotic thinking and delusions of persecution and grandeur” (Moore, pp. 74-75). Dr. Sadoff indicated these conditions necessitated both medication and long-term inpatient treatment (Moore).

Wurst reported he regularly took an hour or two to fall asleep and at times had nightmares of monsters chasing him (Moore, 2003). Wurst’s mother confirmed most nights she left a light on in his bedroom and looked in the closet and checked under his bed to help her son fall asleep (Moore). Additionally, until he was nine years old Wurst’s brothers teased him for frequent bed-wetting (Moore).

Wurst indicated he had suicidal ideations when he was ten years old, often thinking about hanging or shooting himself, but he was never able to follow through with these ideations (Moore, 2003). On the night preceding the shooting incident, Wurst reportedly planned to kill himself. During an interview with the forensic psychiatrist, Wurst indicated he had no reason to kill Mr. Gillette, and he shot at Justin Fletcher only because he had been staring at him. Wurst stated he had no issues with Eric Wozniak and his motivation for calling out his name was a backup plan anticipating Wozniak would kill him if he did not kill himself with a single bullet shot (Moore). Following the incident, Wurst told the psychiatrist he had feared being shot but not killed and did not want to be in a coma (Moore).

Wurst reported prior to the shooting he often heard voices. He believed people were like robots, programmed to have different personalities and levels of intelligence (Moore, 2003). Wurst had delusions and felt that people were only real in his presence. When people physically left his location, Wurst believed they ceased to exist (Moore). For example, Wurst stated killing Mr. Gillette was not wrong because he was “already dead or unreal” (Moore, p. 77). Wurst recalled he began first having these thoughts when he was eight years old following an incident
when he became caught between two swings and lost consciousness. Wurst also told his psychiatrist he had returned from the future with a mission to prevent something terrible from happening (Moore).

Dr. Sadoff’s post-incident psychiatric evaluation noted Wurst was too young to be labeled a schizophrenic, but he manifested pre-schizophrenic ideations. Dr. Sadoff also opined Wurst was psychotic at the time of the shooting and neither understood nor appreciated the wrongfulness of his behaviors.

Two months after Dr. Sadoff’s examination, John S. O’Brien, Erie County prosecutor, stated Wurst did not manifest symptoms of any major psychiatric illness or possess delusional disorders (Moore, 2003). O’Brien further suggested that while Wurst’s history of emotional distress indicated “depressed moods with aggressive and suicidal ideation,” Wurst was competent to stand trial (Moore, p. 79). Moore noted the conflicting opinions in cases such as Wurst’s were not uncommon. Moore explained, psychiatrists observing individuals possessing delusional characteristics often noted the individual being observed at times demonstrated normal behaviors but would reveal their true selves to those who were not likely to show disapproval. This may account for Wurst having shared his perspective in one manner with Dr. Sadoff and in a different manner with O’Brien (Moore). While there are varying expert opinions regarding whether Wurst was legally insane, Moore (2003) observed “there is little doubt that Andrew Wurst was mentally ill” (p. 97).

Wurst’s parents indicated they were not aware of their son’s suicidal thoughts prior to the shooting, but following the shooting, they noted his behavior had changed in the months leading up to the incident (Moore, 2003). Mrs. Wurst reported her son lost his enthusiasm and appeared
emotionally flat. Mr. Wurst said he had never seen his son angry, but before the shooting, he had a dark look and appeared to be daydreaming (Moore).

A history of depression was reported on both sides of the Wurst family (Moore, 2003). Additionally, Mr. Wurst’s sister had been previously placed in a psychiatric hospital in nearby Warren (Moore).

Access to / Experience with Firearms

Wurst was reportedly fascinated with guns and death. He was a fan of music with lyrics about killing and death (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). The gun used in the shooting attack belonged to Wurst’s father who kept the pistol and a box of bullets in his unlocked dresser drawer. Wurst seemingly discovered the pistol one afternoon while his parents were at work (Moore, 2003).

Family Environment

Wurst had two older brothers, ages 19 and 16. Both were from Mr. Wurst’s previous marriage and neither of these siblings were actively involved in Wurst’s life. Mr. Wurst owned and operated his own landscaping business and typically worked long hours seven days a week (Moore, 2003). Mr. Wurst was considered a strict disciplinarian, but no evidence of abuse or neglect existed (Moore). Wurst’s mother was twenty years younger than her husband. She was described as a typical mother who was very involved in her children’s lives (Moore). As the children became older, she returned to working at the nursery in the afternoons. This resulted in Wurst regularly spending time alone after school (Moore).
At the time of the shooting, tension existed within the Wurst household. This tension was evidenced by Mr. and Mrs. Wurst’s frequent fights in front of the children (Moore, 2003). The parents moved into separate bedrooms three years prior to the shooting (Moore). Wurst’s friends were aware of his unhappiness about his parent’s issues (Moore). Apparently, Wurst was the focal point of the parents’ frequent arguments. The father did not believe Wurst worked as hard as his other sons (Moore). Mrs. Wurst defended her son and this caused conflict with her husband. Mr. and Mrs. Wurst often disagreed over disciplinary consequences for Wurst (Moore). Confirming her previously held suspicion, Wurst’s mother caught him drinking whiskey in the home with friends (Moore, 2003). One of Wurst’s brothers reportedly caught him smoking marijuana in the home and beat him up but did not tell the parents (Moore).

**Incident #7: Kip Kinkel: Springfield, Oregon (May 21, 1998)**

**Overview of Incident**

On Monday, May 21, 1998, just prior to the start of the school day 16-year old Kipland “Kip” Kinkel opened fire on his classmates in the Thurston High School cafeteria (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). The attack killed two students and left 25 others injured. After Kinkel’s arrest, police discovered his parents had been murdered the previous day (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas).

The day before the shooting, Kip Kinkel purchased a stolen gun from another student. The stolen gun had been reported to the police, and a detective came to the school to question students (PBS, 2000). Other students named Kinkel and when questioned by the detective he admitted the gun was in his locker. Both Kinkel and the student who sold him the gun were
escorted off the premises in handcuffs, arrested and suspended from school pending an expulsion hearing (PBS).

Kinkel received a stolen weapon felony charge. Detective Al Warthen questioned Kinkel, who was reportedly scared and worried about what his parents would think (PBS, 2000). Kinkel’s father picked him up at the police station at around 11:30am. Kinkel’s confession revealed that after arriving home from the police station at approximately 3:00pm he secured a .22 rifle from his room, took ammunition from his parents’ room, went down stairs to the kitchen and shot his father in the back of the head (PBS). Kinkel’s mother arrived home at approximately 6:30pm. Kinkel recounted he had met his mother in the garage. After telling her he loved her, Kinkel shot her twice in the back of the head, three times in the face and once in the heart (PBS).

Kinkel left his house the next day at 7:30 a.m. dressed in a trench coat and armed with a backpack full of ammunition, three guns, and a hunting knife taped to his leg (PBS, 2000). He drove his mother’s Ford Explorer, parked one block from the school, walked on a dirt path to the back school parking lot, and entered the building at 7:55 in the morning (PBS).

Kinkel walked to the cafeteria where he shot two students, emptied the remainder of a 50 round clip of a .22 caliber semi-automatic rifle, and fired one shot with a 9mm Glock handgun before being wrestled to the ground by five students (PBS, 2000). Officers arrived shortly after 8:00 a.m., and the police took Kinkel to the Springfield police station. While locked in an interview room, Kinkel accessed the knife he had previously taped to his leg and when a detective entered the room, he rushed at him with the knife shouting for the detective to shoot and kill him (PBS). The detective backed out of the room and closed the door. Kinkel sat down
and attempted to use the knife to cut his wrists. At that point, the detective entered the room with another detective and subdued Kinkel with pepper spray (PBS).

School and Community Profile

Springfield, Oregon, is located in Lane County five miles outside of Eugene, Oregon. The 2000 census reported Springfield’s population to be 52,800 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). The median household income was $33,031, below the national average of $41,994. The 2000 census reported the violent crime rate was 12.9 per 1,000 (United States Census Bureau).

Data from the 1999-2000 school year was used to gather demographic information about the school district. Springfield School District 19 included 26 schools and had a total student enrollment of 11,062 in kindergarten through 12th grade (Oregon Department of Education, 1999-00) Thurston High School served 1,465 of those students. Thurston High School’s enrollment consisted of 5.3% minority students compared to the School District’s 10.3% overall minority enrollment and the State’s 18.1% minority student population (Oregon Department of Education, 1999-00).

Approximately 16.4% of Thurston High School students were eligible for free and reduced lunch. Springfield School District and State of Oregon free and reduced lunch eligible percentages were more than double Thurston’s rate at 39.9% and 34.2%, respectively (Oregon Department of Education, 1999-00).

Student performance data were available for Thurston High School 10th grade students in reading, writing, math, and math problem solving categories. Thurston High School students scored slightly below the State in reading and writing assessments and slightly above the State in math categories (Oregon Department of Education, 1999-2000).
Profile of Shooter

Kinkel was a member of the football team but rarely played as a result of his poor attitude that was manifested by Kinkel cursing at his coaches (Dodge, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). Kinkel was suspended from school multiple times as a consequence of behaviors such as kicking a student in the head, throwing a pencil at a classmate, and bringing a gun to school (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Prior to the shooting incident Kinkel’s parents told their friends he had recently started hanging out with the wrong crowd at school (Dodge, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000).

Kinkel was also upset with his parents because they planned to send him to a residential facility for students with conduct disorders (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Kinkel’s declining grades also compounded tension in the Kinkel household prior to the shooting (Dodge, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). Kinkel’s interest in violence and weapons coupled with communications about his violent intentions should have alerted others that his threats should have been taken seriously (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). However, Kinkel’s lack of positive relationships with peers decreased opportunities for others to attempt to prevent the shooting (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).

In English class, Kinkel routinely read from his journal about his plans to kill his fellow classmates (Green & Filips, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000). Although he shared details of his plan to kill people, fellow students did not take him seriously because they had become accustomed to this type of talk (Green & Filips, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000). On the day of the shooting Kinkel was upset and embarrassed over being suspended the previous day,
and some classmates believed Kinkel was angry and might do something stupid (Verlinden et al, 2000).

Neighborhood children reported Kinkel bragged about killing and torturing animals. For example, he talked about beheading cats and displaying the heads on sticks and using explosives to blow up a cow (Green 1998, as cited in Verliden et al, 2000). Kinkel engaged in activities such as covering neighborhood houses with toilet paper, throwing rocks at cars from an overpass, and giving a friend a tool to break into cars (Channel 6000, 1998a). Additionally, Kinkel enjoyed music and videos portraying graphic violence (Green & Filips, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000).

**Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications**

Middle school classmates once voted Kinkel “Most Likely to Start World War III” (Kaiser & Haynes, 1998) His coping and social skills were subpar, and his peers noted Kinkel’s bad temper and odd sense of humor (Channel 6000, 1998a). Kinkel had a reputation for alternating between being a class clown and being socially withdrawn (Brandon, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000).

Kinkel resisted authority and was frequently involved in fights with other students (Brandon, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al. 2000). He was an oppositional child who struggled socially from an early age (Brandon, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al. 2000). Kinkel’s history of angry outbursts dated back to age five. As an adolescent, doctors diagnosed him with depression and prescribed Prozac (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).
Kinkel stopped taking Prozac eight months before the attack because his parent believed his behavior had improved (Langman, 2009b). Kinkel described the summer he was on Prozac as the best summer he ever had (2009b).

Access to / Experience with Firearms

Firearms and explosives were easily accessible to Kinkel within his home. His parents had full knowledge of their son’s firearms and even bought some of the guns for him as gifts (King & Murr, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000). Peers were aware of Kinkel’s fascination with guns because he had previously talked about suicide, and on one occasion, he gave a class presentation about how to build a bomb (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).

Family Environment

Kinkel was the youngest child of Bill and Faith Kinkel. Kinkel had one older sister who excelled both academically and socially. Both parents were teachers who worked to provide structure and educational enrichment opportunities at home but struggled with their son’s behavioral issues (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Kinkel’s sister told friends her parents had given up attempting to discipline her brother.

Kinkel’s behavior wore his parents down (Barnard, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). The parents attempted to channel Kinkel’s fascination with explosives and weapons by buying him guns and training him how to shoot properly (Brandon, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). While abuse was not a problem in the Kinkel household, the large number of weapons and bombs he accumulated and dispersed around the home should have been cause for concern (Channel 6000, 1998b). At the time of the shooting, Kinkel was angry because his father
had confiscated some of his guns. However, the father relented and gave one of the guns back to his son so he could shoot bats in the attic (Kaiser & Haynes, 1998). Kinkel’s father told others he had never been able to get close to his son. Kinkel did not believe his parents were supportive. However, community members generally viewed the parents as being conscientious and concerned (Brandon, 1998, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000).

Incident #8: Eric Harris & Dylan Klebold: Columbine, CO (April 20, 1999)

Overview of Incident

On April 20, 1999, 17-year old Dylan Klebold and 18-year old Eric Harris carried out an attack on Columbine High School. Harris and Klebold had planned the attack during the previous year (Salvatore, 1999). On the morning of the attack, Harris and Klebold used large duffel bags to bring two bombs into the school and placed the bombs near tables in the cafeteria where the school’s athletes usually sat. The twenty-gallon propane tank bombs were attached to a detonator and set to ignite at 11:17 a.m. Harris and Klebold assembled the bombs the day before the attack (Larkin, 2007). Both boys parked their cars in the school parking lot. Harris parked in the junior student parking lot, and Klebold situated himself in the senior lot. These positions were both located at forty-five degree angles from the building’s south entrance and were selected because both locations allowed Harris and Klebold to shoot fleeing students without either of them being at risk of being shot in the anticipated cross-fire (Larkin). Both students’ cars were also set to explode later in the day at a time when it was anticipated emergency responders would be in the parking lot (Larkin).
Harris and Klebold both wore combat boots and black trench coats to conceal the numerous weapons they carried (Larkin, 2007). Klebold wore a black t-shirt inscribed with the word “Wrath” and was armed with an Intratec TEC-DC-9, a 9-mm semiautomatic handgun, slung over his shoulder and concealed under his trench coat (Larkin). In his cargo pants, Klebold, carried a partially concealed cut down Stephens 12-gauge double-barreled shotgun (Larkin). Harris’s t-shirt read “Natural Selection.” Strapped under Harris’ coat was a cut down Hi-Point 9-mm carbine rifle (Larkin). He also carried a duffel bag containing a Savage Springfield 12-gauge pump shotgun, ammunition, and a variety of explosive devices (Larkin). Both students carried multiple knives, including a nine-inch kitchen knife, a dagger, and two combat knives (Larkin).

At 11:19 a.m., the bombs had not yet detonated. As a result, Harris and Klebold revised their attack plan and met at the stairs leading to the west entrance of the school. One of the boys yelled “Go, go!” (Larkin, 2007 p. 3). This triggered the shooting attack. When two students exited the building to eat lunch on the lawn, Harris and Klebold opened fire killing one of the students and seriously injuring the other. Harris and Klebold continued to shoot students outside the school who had gathered in the “smoker’s pit” and on a nearby grassy incline (p. 3). A police officer was dispatched at 11:22 a.m. and pulled into the south parking lot. Upon seeing the officer, Harris opened fire. The officer returned fire and Harris and Klebold both fled inside the school where they wandered the halls haphazardly firing at students and staff (Larkin, 2007). At 11:29 a.m. the pair stopped at the library entry doors. A library staff member told the students who were in the library to hide under the desks as she called 911 (Larkin). Harris and Klebold shouted for the athletes to stand up telling them, “Today is your day to die” (p. 6). When no one stood up, Harris said, “Fine then I’ll just start shooting” and fired his shotgun across the counter.
Klebold shot and killed a student at close range. Harris and Klebold then shot at fleeing students and the police through the library window. When police returned gunfire, Harris and Klebold backed away from the window and began shooting people who were inside the building (Larkin).

Over the next seven or eight minutes, ten students were killed and twelve were injured (Larkin, 2007). Shortly after 11:35 a.m. Harris and Klebold left the library and began randomly firing into empty classrooms. However, at times they did nothing when they saw students hiding (Larkin). They walked to the cafeteria and attempted to ignite the propane bombs they had left in the duffle bags. After failing to detonate the bombs, they returned to the library at approximately noon. In the library both Harris and Klebold committed suicide, shooting themselves in the head. Their suicides ended the shooting rampage after approximately forty-five minutes (Larkin). However, the police were unaware Harris and Klebold were dead and did not secure the building and grounds until nearly five hours later. Overall 12 students, one teacher, and both Klebold and Harris died, while 24 other students suffered life-threatening wounds (Cullen, 2003). The Columbine rampage is not only the deadliest attack included in this study; it also lasted significantly longer than any of the other researched rampage school shootings.

School and Community Profile

Columbine, Colorado, is located in Jefferson County, 11 miles outside of Denver. In 2000, Columbine had a population of 24,000 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). The median household income was $71,319, above the national average of $41,994 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). The violent crime rate was 4.2 per 1,000.
Columbine was unincorporated and, according to Larkin (2007), had no collective identity. Media reports often incorrectly referred to the location of the shooting as Littleton since it was a nearby town. Columbine High School was the community’s unifying force (Larkin).

Columbine was described as “God’s country” and was considered openly and aggressively religious (Larkin, 2007 p. 17). Columbine was a relatively new community, being the product of urban sprawl that began in the 1970s (Cullen, 2003). At the time of the shooting, over 90 percent of the community was white, five percent was Hispanic and the remaining residents were classified as Asian, black, or other (Larkin).

Columbine High School was part of the Jefferson County School District that included 148 schools in Jefferson County and portions of the County of Broomfield. During the 1999-2000 school year, Columbine High School served approximately 1,900 students in grades 9-12 (Colorado Department of Education, 2015). The high school boasted high performing academic programs, but the school’s visibility derived primarily from its athletic programs, particularly football (Larkin).

Profile of Shooters

Harris was small as a child; born with physical defects, a doctor treated him for leg issues more than a dozen times prior to his second birthday. According to Langman (2009b), these medical problems at a young age impacted Harris’ identity and resulted in him having feelings of shame and inadequacy. Harris also had a sunken chest that required surgery when he was twelve years old (Langman, 2009b). To attempt to resolve the depressed appearance of Harris’ chest, a steel piece was inserted for six months. The results of this procedure were not entirely
successful. Langman indicated the chest appearance was a significant issue for Harris because he believed this part of his body was an indicator of manliness.

Notwithstanding these physical issues, Harris had multiple groups of friends during both middle and high school (Langman, 2009b). He enjoyed an active social life and both boys and girls liked him. Less than two weeks before the attack a group of Harris’ friends had taken him out to celebrate his eighteenth birthday (Langman).

Harris was a bright student who took pride in the recognition he received from his teachers (Langman, 2009b). However, Harris had poor spelling skills. This deficiency caused him to be self-conscious. His image of himself as an individual with a superior intellect who could not spell evoked feelings of insecurity and vulnerability. As a result, he rejected the importance of spelling, describing this skill as “stupid” (Langman, 2009b, p. 27).

In contrast to Harris, Klebold was tall and thin and considered to be shy (Langman, 2009b). As a youth, Klebold lived in a home located in a canyon with few neighbors in the area. As a result, Klebold was physically isolated from other children. Play dates had to be scheduled for Klebold to have opportunities to socialize with other children (Larkin, 2007). In third grade, Klebold entered into a gifted program. This placement further distanced him from other students. While Klebold had friends and participated in recreational sports such as baseball and soccer, he struggled to make new friends (Larkin). The middle school Klebold attended drew its students from several district elementary schools. As a result, Klebold’s transition to middle school required adjustment to an altered set of peer groups. His shy and immature nature made it difficult for Klebold to adapt (Larkin). Klebold participated in recreation league sports that were considered secondary to the Columbine Sports Association. His participation in recreation
league sports likely partially contributed to his perceived low status in the middle school (Larkin).

As a result of being the child of a religiously mixed marriage, Klebold struggled with his identity. Harris idolized Hitler and was not aware of Klebold’s Jewish heritage until just weeks before the shooting incident (Larkin, 2007). This seemingly did not impact on the boys’ relationship and did not change Klebold’s behavior as he embraced Harris’s anti-Semitic beliefs. For example, during a bowling class Klebold shouted, “Heil Hitler” when he bowled a strike (Larkin).

Klebold’s teachers described him as being easily agitated and prone to overreacting to small irritations. One teacher recalled Klebold transformed from being a shy and intelligent ninth grader into a “repugnant character” and a “slacker” (Larkin, 2007, p. 141). Klebold wrote about violence in assignments for English class. Klebold’s writings were influenced by his fascination with Charles Manson and his belief that oppressed students needed to revolt against bullies (Larkin). Klebold perceived his peers rejected him. As a result, he evolved from having no reputation among his peers to being a person fellow students viewed negatively (Larkin). In school social interactions, Klebold generally responded negatively to his peers. For example, if he was bumped into or jostled in the hallway, he threatened to kill others (Wilgoren & Johnson, 1999 as cited in Verlinden et al. 2000). Peers considered Klebold to be a clumsy, oafish, immature nerd, who was “less than a nobody” (Larkin, p. 144).
According to Langman (2009b), Harris was a psychopath. Harris’ paranoia was characterized by an “intense fear of losing identity and, more importantly, powers of self-determination” (p. 34). Harris was preoccupied with status and hated people he felt had any degree of control over him. At the time of the shooting, a doctor diagnosed Harris with depression and prescribed him Luvox. However, planning for the attack pre-dated the Luvox prescription (Langman). Harris stopped taking Luvox shortly before the shooting. Harris also drank bourbon whiskey. Whiskey consumed with Luvox creates a risk of severe agitation (Briggs & Blevins, 1999, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). Harris was known for his short temper and threats to kill others. He had narcissistic and sadistic traits that supported Langman classifying him as a psychopath.

While others did not like Klebold, he likely did not like himself either (Larkin, 2007). Langman (2009b) believed Klebold had a schizophrenia-spectrum disorder characterized by psychotic symptoms ranging from strange thoughts and abnormal obsessions to delusions and hallucinations. Langman (2009b) explained that the symptoms of schizophrenia-spectrum disorder could include a lack of emotional expression and often resulted in feelings of isolation and a lack of intimate relationships. Langman further suggested Klebold had an avoidant personality disorder, a socially debilitating and exaggerated form of shyness characterized by fear of rejection, inadequacy and social anxiety (Langman). Klebold sought peer acceptance but never felt like he achieved it (Langman). He felt lonely and depressed and was preoccupied with finding love (Langman). Langman noted Klebold’s “extreme insecurity” was noticeable because
he was not isolated (p. 53); to the contrary, many boys and girls liked him and he experienced an active social life.

Klebold’s social anxiety and loneliness led to deep depression and suicidal ideation. He self-mutilated, also known as cutting (Langman, 2009b). Klebold believed others’ achievements were things he could never do, and he believed God had persecuted him. Klebold’s detachment from reality culminated with his poor self-perception and feelings of pre-destined doom (Langman). In his journal, Klebold described himself as a devalued human form who also had a separate form that was more God like (Langman). Langman described Klebold as “an enigmatic killer” (p. 50).

Klebold first met Harris in middle school when Harris’ family moved to the area from out of state. The friendship apparently evolved as a result of their mutual lack of status among their peers (Larkin). Others described Klebold and Harris as “outsiders who were pushed to the fringe of high school society” (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000, p. 40). Klebold and Harris regularly endured taunts and slurs from the popular students. Columbine administrators were aware of the taunting directed at the so-called “trench coat mafia,” a group to which Klebold and Harris were thought to be members (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, p. 40). The trench coat mafia was considered to be a small antisocial group that held pro-gun views and was against religion, society, and minorities (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas). Klebold and Harris both wanted to be part of this group and had friends who were members, but characterizations of their affiliation were inaccurate and were due to the fact they dressed similarly to members of the Trench Coat Mafia (Cullen, 1999). Regardless of Klebold and Harris’ actual social affiliations within Columbine High School, school officials took no action to mitigate the bullying (Collins, 2007).
Both Harris and Klebold felt rejected and persecuted by their peers and, as a result, sought refuge with others who shared similar feelings. They played the video game Doom, a game where a lone marine’s objective was to save the human race by eliminating subhuman monsters (Larkin, 2007). They may have viewed themselves in a role similar to the lone marine and believed vanquishing their classmates was a mission to save the human race (Larkin).

Harris aspired to become a Marine. In fact, a recruiter interviewed Harris the week prior to the shooting. However, Harris’ parents informed the recruiter their son was taking Luvox. The parental disclosure created a discrepancy in Harris’ application resulting in the Marine Corp rejecting him (Achenbach & Russakoff, 1999 as cited in Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). The rejection devastated Harris (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).

Klebold and Harris had prior incidents with the law. A year before the attack, Klebold and Harris were arrested for breaking into a car and placed into a youth diversion program (Cullen, 2009). The police also received reports on Klebold and Harris for igniting pipe bombs. Additionally, a complaint was filed with the local sheriff against Harris because of internet postings threatening a classmate with death.

Klebold and Harris were frequently in trouble at school as well. Klebold received a suspension for hacking into the school’s computer system and defacing a student’s locker (Langman, 2009b). On another occasion, Klebold and Harris vandalized the school and stole computer equipment (Langman). Additionally, both Harris and Klebold worked on a school film production portraying themselves shooting down athletes in the school hallways (Wilgoren & Johnson, 1999, as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). Klebold and Harris warned classmates they would no longer tolerate being harassed and threatened, “We are going to shoot you” (Verlinden,
Although their peers believed Klebold and Harris were capable of a violent attack, they did not know Klebold and Harris planned to go through with their threats.

Harris’ diary indicated he and Klebold had begun planning the attack a year in advance. An extensive planning process was believed to have occurred as a map of the school with notes on lighting conditions and potential hiding places was found (Verlinden et al., 2000). Klebold and Harris observed the school lunchrooms to determine the time when the greatest number of students occupied the cafeterias.

Together, Harris and Klebold formed a personality capable of violence (Larkin, 2007). Harris was bright, social, articulate and attractive. Klebold believed he had a swagger and felt tough when he was around Harris. Harris enjoyed that Klebold acted like his disciple. Klebold validated Harris’ anger and hatred and reciprocated these feelings (Larkin). According to several FBI profilers, neither Harris nor Klebold could have acted alone to carry out the shooting; each needed the other’s reinforcement (Larkin). Together they created an alternative world, a contradiction to reality, in which they were god-like avengers of social injustice (Larkin). Larkin (2007 p. 63) summarized Klebold and Harris’ motives by stating, “Even though Eric drew up a hit list, their primary target was the peer structure, the secondary target was the community at large, and the tertiary target was American society.”

Access to / Experience with Firearms

Harris and Klebold loved rock music that glorified killing and death, and both were fascinated with violent video games, war, and military paraphernalia (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Harris and Klebold were fascinated by weapons and spent a significant amount of the time preceding the attack practicing with weapons (Larkin, 2007).
One of Harris’ friends provided the duo access to firearms (Verlinden et al., 2000). Harris and Klebold acquired their weapons at a local gun show (Cullen, 2009). Their initial attempt to buy guns was unsuccessful because they did not have valid identification to make the purchase. Thereafter, Harris sought out Robyn Anderson, a classmate who was reportedly infatuated with Klebold to purchase the guns on their behalf (Cullen). She bought three guns. In December, Klebold and Harris sawed the barrels off the shotguns and used them for target practice. Mark Manes, a drug dealer who ran a gun business on the side, also purchased a gun for Harris and Klebold in January (Cullen). A couple of months later Manes bought 100 rounds of ammunition for them at Kmart. Manes was later sentenced to six months in prison for his role in the incident (Larkin, 2007).

Because Harris and Klebold were able to amass and store a large amount of weaponry in both of their bedrooms, parental supervision of their activities was presumed to be lacking (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Since the attack was planned to include a large scale bombing rather than simply a shooting, the pair spent time familiarizing themselves with explosives. Harris posted pipe bomb making instructions on the Internet and kept bomb making components in his bedroom (Verlinden et al., 2000).

Family Environment

Harris’ parents appeared to have a good life. The family of four included Harris’ older brother, who was three years older. Both brothers were bright and successful in school (Langman, 2009b). The Harris’ were a middle-class family with no known incidents of violence, child abuse, or parental alcoholism (Langman).
Wayne Harris, a military man, moved his family several times. This may have been a stressor in Harris’ childhood. Harris complained about being pulled away from friends and indicated how difficult it was for him to start over in new communities (Langman, 2009b). Prior to relocating to Jefferson County, Colorado, in 1993, Harris’ father was stationed at eight different bases in Kansas, Ohio, Michigan, and New York. In Colorado Harris’ father obtained a job with the Flight Safety Services Corporation in nearby Englewood (Larkin, 2007). Harris’ mother was employed as a part-time caterer, but when her children were young she was a stay-at-home mom. Both of Harris’ parents had been raised in the area, so for the parents Jefferson County was a return to a familiar place (Larkin). The Harris family was described as a loving family and considered to be good neighbors (Larkin).

Klebold was also the second son in a family of four children. Like the Harris family, the Klebold’s first son was three years older than Dylan Klebold (Larkin, 2007). Mr. and Mrs. Klebold were originally from Ohio but moved to Englewood, Colorado, before the boys were born (Larkin). Unlike Harris, Klebold spent his entire life in Southern Jefferson County.

The Klebold’s marriage was not without problems. Mr. Klebold came from a Protestant background, and Mrs. Klebold was Jewish (Larkin, 2007). As a result, the family celebrated both Jewish and Christian holidays (Culver, 1999 as cited in Larkin, 2007). During a post-shooting interview Mr. Klebold stated he was not in favor of celebrating Jewish holidays, but he acquiesced because his wife insisted (Larkin). Mr. Klebold apparently had a problem with organized religion, and the family had not attended church in the five or six years prior to the shooting (Larkin).

Mr. Klebold worked from home and enjoyed spending time with his children. However, the relationships within the family were not nurturing (Larkin, 2007). Klebold and his brother
fought regularly. His parents lacked warmth and were not expressive with their feelings for their children (Larkin). Klebold’s choice in friends, clothing, interests, and rebellious behavior created conflict between him and his parents (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). Although conflict was frequent in the Klebold home, the parents were not physically violent (Larkin). Despite the reports of frequent conflict in the household, post-shooting testimony described the parents as a stable, loving couple (Langman, 2009b).

Incident #9: Charles Andrew Williams: Santee, California (March 5, 2001)

Overview of Incident

On March 5, 2001, freshman Charles “Andy” Williams entered Santana High School in Santee, California. At around 9:20 a.m. Williams joined friends and other students arriving for a late start of their school day in the Santana High School quad, a campus gathering spot (Gold & McDermott, 2001). Williams entered a bathroom stall (just off the quad) with a yellow backpack containing a .22 caliber pistol (Dickey, 2013). After loading the pistol, Williams opened the bathroom stall door. He recognized two students at the urinals and shut the stall door. He re-opened the stall door and once again closed the door. After a few seconds, Williams opened the stall door and fired at 14-year-old freshman Bryan Zukor and 17 year-old junior Trevor Edwards. Next, he wounded student teacher, Tim Estes, while others in the bathroom fled (Dickey). A school security officer entered the restroom to investigate and Williams shot him three times. Williams reportedly reloaded the pistol, left the bathroom and fired at groups of students outside the restroom (Dickey). He reloaded the pistol four times, firing 40 rounds of ammunition. In
approximately six minutes, Williams killed two students and wounded 13 other individuals before surrendering to police (Dickey).

**School and Community Profile**

Santee, California, is located in San Diego County, 10 miles outside of San Diego. Santee was home to approximately 52,000 people as of the 2000 US census. The median household income, according to the 2000 census report, was $53,624, above the national average of $41,994. As of the 2000 census, the violent crime rate in the community was listed at 2.4 per 1,000.

Santana High School was part of the Grossmont Union High School District in San Diego County and served approximately 1,900 students in grades 9-12. At the time of the shooting Santana High School comprised one of 12 schools in the Grossmont Union High School District (Grossmont Union School District, 2015).

Santana High School served primarily Caucasian students, as 84.0% of the students identified their race as White, 9.2% as Hispanic, and 2.0% Asian, 1.3% Black, and the remainder were identified as either Filipino, American Indian, Pacific Islander, or no response/multiple ethnicities (Ed-Data, 2000-01).

**Profile of Shooter**

Williams grew up in Brunswick, Maryland, home to approximately 5,700 residents (Langman, 2014a). His parents divorced when he was four years old, and Williams remained in Brunswick with his father. After the divorce, Williams’ older brother lived with his mother.
However, at the time of the shooting, his brother lived in Georgia, while his mother lived in South Carolina (Langman).

According to his brother, other kids picked on Williams in Maryland. However, most accounts indicated peers and adults liked Williams (Langman, 2014a). Williams had a reputation as a class clown, an athlete, and an honor roll student. His former guidance counselor described him as a typical adolescent (Langman). However, away from school, Williams had a reputation as a “mischievous prankster” (p. 4). He reportedly jumped off roofs, acted as a daredevil and experimented with drugs, including cocaine. Williams and a friend reportedly set fire to a wooded area, which required a fire department response. As a result of this behavior, at least one mother prohibited her son from playing with Williams.

In December 1999, Williams moved with his father from Maryland to Twentynine Palms, California (Langman, 2014a). The transition apparently went well, and both his peers and school officials embraced Williams’ funny and sarcastic attention-seeking personality (Langman). However, less than two years later Williams and his father moved to Santee, California. The move to Santee occurred just months prior to the shooting (Langman).

Upon moving to Santee, Williams’ behavior changed as he became acquainted with a group of troublemakers (Langman, 2014a). Years after the shooting, a reporter followed up with Williams’s Santee friends and found two of his closest friends were serving time in prison (one for unknown reasons and the other for murder) and a third had died at age 23 while on parole.

Williams was short, skinny, and pale. Williams claimed others tormented and bullied him during his time at Santee. Classmates reportedly called him “anorexic” and “albino” (Langman, 2014a p. 7). Classmates indicated peers called Williams a faggot and burned him with cigarette lighters (Langman). Williams’ friends, some of whom were accused of bullying
him, claimed others exaggerated the extent. One peer explained, “all of us joke around with each other, it’s a thing we do…it’s kind of all of us showing our love” (Langman, p. 6). Several classmates characterized Williams as a popular, well liked, funny, and happy student who did not appear to be on the receiving end of chronic harassment (Langman). Evidence of others bullying Williams was inconclusive.

While living in Santee, Williams performed poorly academically and his school attendance was an issue. In October 2000, the school informed Williams’ father his son’s grades were falling. Additionally, the school informed Mr. Williams his son received several detentions and was often either tardy or skipped school (Langman, 2014a).

Three days prior to the shooting, Williams’ drama teacher reprimanded him for not being prepared for class. Although Williams indicated he planned his attack after this reprimand, reports revealed he had begun talking about the shooting well in advance of this incident with his teacher (Langman). Williams talked about his plan to attack the school with several classmates. When they questioned him, he reportedly responded by saying “I’m just messing around” (Langman, 2014a, p. 3). Because of Williams reputation as a jokester among his friends, many did not believe he would follow through with it; notwithstanding his claim that one day he would “pull a Columbine” (p. 3). Friends thought he was joking but were concerned enough on the morning of the shooting that they had patted him down before school to see if he had a gun (Langman). The gun was in his backpack, and his friends did not check there. While as many as 20 students were alerted to Williams’ intentions, this information was never communicated to an adult (Figueroa & Rogers, 2005 as cited in Langman 2014a).
Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications

Twelve years after the shooting, Williams claimed the boyfriend of one of his mother’s friends sexually abused him (Langman, 2014a). He reported many of his friends suffered similar abuse. However, none of these claims were substantiated (Langman). Langman (2014a) did not view Williams as a traumatized youth, but rather classified him as a psychopathic shooter, providing examples of this psychopathic behavior such as substance abuse, truancy, theft, lying and dishonesty. While living in Santee, Williams and his friends reportedly paid a 12-year-old girl to steal a bottle of tequila. Williams, after becoming drunk, allegedly either molested the girl or attempted to do so (Langman).

Williams’ behavior both during and immediately following the shooting were described as calm and casual (Langman, 2014a). Those who observed Williams during the shooting recalled he was smiling. After police took Williams into custody, Deputy Jack Smith stated he “never chaperoned a boy so expressionless – almost to the point of nonchalant” (p. 5). During interrogations, Williams showed no signs of remorse (Langman).

Access to / Experience with Firearms

Firearms were present and used legally by the Williams family (Langman, 2014a). His mother and other family members had served in the military, and his father once worked for the Naval Medical Center in San Diego (Langman, 2014a). Williams reportedly had expressed interest in joining the Navy and wore a U.S. Navy sweatshirt on the day of the shooting.

Williams stole his dad’s key to his gun case to access a .22 revolver and bullets (Dickey, 2013). Years after the shooting Williams told his psychiatrist he had not intended to hurt anyone
and claimed he thought .22 bullets could not kill anyone (Langman, 2014a). Williams’ statement seemed unusual considering his experience with firearms (Langman). Langman noted Williams had attended a gun safety class, shot skeet, and hunted with his father. Immediately following the shooting, Williams stated in an affidavit he had “considered that he would be hurting people and that he might be punished for this behavior but had decided to do it anyway” (Langman, p. 2).

Family Environment

Williams lived with his father following his parents’ divorce (Dickey, 2013). His mother and half-brother moved out of state shortly after the divorce. Williams’ mother served in the military, and as a result, he reportedly saw her infrequently, typically at Christmas (Dickey). Mr. Williams was believed to be a loving and supportive father, and Williams reported he had enjoyed a normal childhood with loving parents (Dickey). When Williams moved to Twentynine Palms, California, he lived near his grandparents. This provided him with additional structure and values (Dickey).

Williams left Twentynine Palms for Santee when his father accepted a job as a laboratory-animal technician at the San Diego Naval Medical Center (Dickey, Killer recounts Santana High School Shooting, 2013). While Mr. Williams was a supportive father, his son did not avoid the temptations attendant to living in a single parent home. Many hours of Williams’ day were unsupervised and spent using drugs and drinking alcohol with his friends (Dickey).

Mr. Williams planned to move with his son again to a nearby location (Langman, 2014a). Despite his claims of others bullying him at school, Williams requested to continue attending Santana High School (Langman). The day before the shooting, Williams visited his new home
and appeared to be pleased. His father recalled his son smiled and calmly picked out the bedroom he wanted (Langman).

**Incident #10: Jeffrey Weise: Red Lake, Minnesota (March 21, 2005)**

**Overview of Incident**

The setting of this incident is unique as compared to others reviewed in this study. This rampage shooting is distinguished by having occurred on an Indian Reservation closed to outside or uninvited residents (Sevcik, 2005). The town operated under the authority of tribal law, including the police and emergency responders (Sevcik).

On March 21, 2005, 16-year-old Jeffrey Weise stole his grandfather’s .22-caliber gun and used it to kill both his grandfather and the grandfather’s girlfriend (CNN.com, 2005). Weise then drove to Red Lake High School with his grandfather’s police-issued shotgun, two handguns, and a protective vest. At approximately 3:00 p.m., Weise entered the school via an entrance equipped with a metal detector where he shot and killed an unarmed security guard (CNN.com). Weise forced his way into a classroom where he shot and wounded seven students and killed five students and one teacher (Newman & Fox, 2009). Weise continued the rampage into the school hallway. Four Red Lake tribal council police officers responded and Weise fired upon them. One of the police officers fired a shot that struck Weise. Thereafter, Weise retreated into a classroom where he ended the rampage by shooting himself in the head (CNN.com, 2005). Weise had spent less than ten minutes inside the school according to FBI special agent Michael Tabman (CNN.com, 2005). However, when the rampage ended Weise injured seven people and
ten, including Weise, were dead. As a result, the Red Lake shooting became the deadliest school shooting since Columbine High School (Newman & Fox, 2009).

**School and Community Profile**

Red Lake, Minnesota, is located in the remote region of Red Lake County, 109 miles northeast of Fargo, North Dakota, and 240 miles northwest of Minneapolis. Red Lake is geographically isolated, with the closest town being Bemidji, Minnesota, 30 miles away (Sevcik, 2005). At the time of the shooting, the Red Lake Indian Reservation was home to just over 5,000 Native Americans (Newman & Fox, 2009). The Red Lake Indian Reservation consisted of 880 square miles of land and was home for members of the Chippewa band of the Ojibwa tribe (Newman & Fox). Red Lake received little federal aid and was one of only two Indian reservations in the nation classified as closed, meaning no one other than Ojibwas lived on the reservation (Sevcik). Police, courts, and all crimes other than murder or capital offenses were handled within the tribal community (Sevcik).

According to the 2000 census, the median household income for reservation families was $23,224, well below the national average of $41,994 at that time. As of the 2000 census, the violent crime rate in the community was listed at 1.4 per 1,000.

Red Lake Senior High School was home to approximately 300 students during the 2004-2005 school year and was part of Red Lake School District #38. The school served the Indian reservation; therefore, ethnicity data for the 2004-2005 school year showed 100% of the students were Native American (Pioneer Press, 2015). Seventy-seven percent of the students were eligible for free and reduced lunch subsidies. Student proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment was in the lowest quartile in all academic areas (Pioneer Press).
Profile of Shooter

Weise, a 16-year-old Native American, was six-foot-tall and weighed 250 pounds (Newman & Fox, 2009). Mr. Weise’s death and mother’s impairment had resulted in him being shuffled between many schools throughout his childhood (Langman, 2015). Due to changes in living circumstances, Weise attended two schools during his fourth grade year and a different school for fifth grade before moving to the Red Lake Indian Reservation (Langman, 2014b). He failed eighth grade and the school held him back. He was both physically larger and older than his sophomore classmates (Newman & Fox). Weise considered himself a loner, but classmates thought Weise and his cousin Louis Jourdain constituted a “tight, but marginalized clique” (Newman et al. & Fox, 2009 p. 1290). Weise and his cousin dressed in black and had spiked and/or dyed hair and preferred heavy metal music in contrast to their classmates who preferred country or rap music (Burcum, Shah, & Collins, 2005).

Weise was well spoken and enjoyed reading classic literature (Wilgoren, 2005). Weise frequented the internet where he created and published violent animated videos depicting blood and his own suicide (Davey & Harris, 2005, as cited in Newman & Fox, 2009).

Some believed Weise might have used the rampage as the means of achieving fame and notoriety that had eluded him (Newman & Fox, 2009). Weise and Jourdain played out school shooting scenarios over a yearlong period prior to the attack, discussing potential logistics and repeatedly watching movies depicting the Columbine rampage (Channen, Louwague, Meryhew, & Von Sternberg, 2005, as cited in Newman & Fox 2009). Weise shared disturbing drawings of violent shootings with classmates and posted comments on the Internet under his real name.
These postings discussed weapons and violence, including a claim that he had lived as a German soldier during World War II in a past life (Johnson, 2005).

Weise spent considerable time selecting a date to enact the assault. He considered April 20 since it was the anniversary of both the Columbine massacre and Adolf Hitler’s birthday (Newman & Fox, 2009). Weise also considered prom night and the first day of school since these were times the school would be crowded.

Weise had threatened to shoot up the school on the fifth anniversary of the Columbine shooting. Because of this threat, the school canceled afterschool activities and police investigated Weise, but was cleared of charges related to the threat (Newman & Fox, 2009). As many as 39 people received advanced warning of Weise’s potential attack, but no one alerted the authorities (Newman & Fox).

**Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications**

Weise had suicidal ideations. During the summer prior to the shooting, Weise attempted suicide and entered a psychiatric facility (Hufstutter, 2005). A month before the attack, Weise had been barred from attending Red Lake High School due to an incident with a teacher and concerns about his medical condition (Hanners, 2005 as cited in Langman 2009b). A doctor prescribed Prozac, but it is not clear if Weise was taking the medication at the time of the attack (Langman, 2009b). The impact of the Prozac on Weise was inconclusive (Langman). In January of 2005, Weise became depressed, noting in one of his web postings, “I’m living every man’s nightmare and that single fact alone is kicking my ass, I really must be (expletive) worthless” (Langman, 2015, p.75).
Access to / Experience with Firearms

The weapons used in the rampage shooting belonged to Weise’s grandfather who was a police officer on the Ojibwa reservation. Weise accessed his grandfather’s .22-caliber gun in order to murder grandfather and the grandfather’s girlfriend (CNN.com, 2005). Research did not indicate where the weapons and ammunition were stored, nor was it clear if Weise had previously fired a gun prior to the shooting incident. Weise also accessed his grandfather’s police-issued shotgun, two handguns, and a protective vest which he used in the shooting rampage (CNN.com).

Family Environment

Weise’s parents never married, and when he was three months old, Weise lived with his father, Daryl Lussier, Jr., on the Ojibwa reservation in Red Lake, Minnesota (Langman, 2009b). When he was three years old, Weise began living with his mother Joanna Weise. Mrs. Weise lived in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and was reportedly an abusive alcoholic (Langman). During Weise’s youth, his mother and the men she became involved with physically abused him (Zenere, 2005). Joanna Weise subsequently bore two additional children with another man, Timothy DesJarlait. It was unclear whether or not Weise permanently lived with them for any period of time (Langman).

When Weise was eight years old, his father committed suicide during a police standoff. During this same time period, Weise’s mother was involved in a serious car accident and sustained a severe brain injury that resulted in her living in a rehabilitation facility (Langman, 2009a). Following the incident, Weise’s stepfather left with Weise’s step-siblings, leaving Weise on his own and his mother incapacitated (Hanners as cited in Langman 2009b). Weise
was forced in and out of foster care placements for several years. Weise eventually lived with his maternal grandfather and his female companion; however, at the time of the shooting he was living with his paternal grandmother (Langman, 2009b).

Weise’s closest family member and friend was his cousin Louis Jourdain. After the attack, law enforcement discovered emails between Weise and Jourdain revealing their discussions of a larger scale attack on the school (Newman & Fox). Because of this discovery, police arrested Jourdain and charged him for his role in planning the attack.

**Incident #11: Thomas “T.J.” Lane: Chardon, Ohio (February 27, 2012)**

**Overview of Incident**

On the morning of February 27, 2012, 17 year-old Thomas “T.J.” Lane rode the school bus to Chardon High School. Lane entered and exited the bathroom three times as he considered shooting students (*State v. Lane*, 2014). At 7:30 a.m., he entered the cafeteria where students were eating breakfast and waiting for the start of first period classes. Lane wore a long-sleeve pullover shirt emblazoned with large bold letters reading “Killer” (*State v. Lane*, 2014). Lane sat down at a table and watched a group of eight or nine students talking to each other. He continued to watch the students as he moved to a table directly behind the group of students and placed his book bag on the table. A few minutes later Lane pulled a .22 caliber handgun and a knife from his bag (*State v. Lane*, 2014). He rose and began shooting the boys at the table, while students fled the cafeteria. Lane shot four boys at the table. Lane also fired at two other students as a teacher chased him from the building. Three students were killed, one student was paralyzed, and two others were injured in the rampage (*State v. Lane*, 2014).
A deputy on patrol in the area was advised of the shooting, and at approximately 8:30 a.m., he spotted Lane sitting near a car on the side of the road about a mile from the school with his knife and gun. The deputy read Lane read his rights. Thereafter, Lane told the deputy he had just shot people at the high school.

School and Community Profile

Chardon, Ohio, is located in Geauga County, 25 miles outside of Cleveland, Ohio. It was home to approximately 5,000 people in 2012. The median household income, according to the 2000 census report, was $46,074, above the national average of $41,994. The violent crime rate in the community was listed at 1.8 per 1,000.

Chardon High School served grades 9-12 and enrolled approximately 1,100 students during the 2011-12 school year. Chardon was the only high school in the Chardon School District, which served kindergarten through grade twelve (State v. Lane, 2014). Approximately 96% of the students were Caucasian, with Hispanic, Black, and Asian races making up the remaining 4% (U.S. News & World Report, 2015). Students eligible for free and reduced lunch represented approximately 19% of the student body. Male and female students were listed at 49% and 51%, respectively.

Profile of Shooter

Lane had attended Chardon High School for the first half of ninth grade before transferring to Lake Academy, an alternative high school (State v. Lane, 2014). Lake Academy provided students the option of working while enrolled in school. Lane took the bus to Chardon High School each day, where he waited in the cafeteria for about 30 minutes until another bus
came to transport him to Lake Academy (*State v. Lane*, 2014). Lane described himself as being more mature than other students his age. He indicated during the 11th grade, he was enrolled in 12th grade courses and that he had planned to graduate from high school early, attend college, and study psychology (*State v. Lane*, 2014).

**Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications**

Following the shooting, Lane underwent a psychological exam and his answers were reportedly deceitful. During a post-shooting competency evaluation, Lane stated he heard voices and experienced delusions (*State v. Lane*, 2014). During a follow-up competency exam conducted by a different psychologist, Lane admitted he had previously lied about hearing voices and experiencing delusions. He also admitted to other fabrications, such as never having experienced anxiety, confusion, or depression. Lane acknowledged his claim of being sexually abused was also false. Lane stated he could force himself to cry when necessary to convince school staff he was depressed (*State v. Lane*, 2014). The second psychologist concluded Lane had invented these symptoms to avoid prosecution. The second psychologist concluded Lane showed no signs of either a mental condition or defect.

Lane did not offer a motive for the rampage shooting, but research reviewed for this study revealed possible reasons. Lane’s sister, Sadie, told the media in November, their 19 year-old half-brother, Adam Nolan, had died and the family struggled to cope (Pinckard, 2013). Another potential motive may have been connected to one of the victims who reportedly was dating Lane’s ex-girlfriend at the time of the shooting (Langman, 2015). Following the incident, Lane did not reference either of these occurrences as potential motives.
Lane claimed he had neither experienced problems with any of his victims nor had he been bullied or provoked (*State v. Lane*, 2014). Lane claimed the shooting victims had been randomly chosen and he did not know them. Two of the victim’s parents refuted this claim, stating their sons had socialized with Lane.

According to Lane, he first considered going on the shooting rampage two weeks prior to the attack. Lane felt he needed to “accomplish something” and believed once conceptualizing the attack he was committed to follow through (*State v. Lane*, 2014, p. 6). Counter to the other incidents included in this study, there was no evidence indicating Lane had shared his plan to attack the school with any of his friends or classmates (Langman, 2015).

**Access to / Experience with Firearms**

The night before the shooting, Lane loaded a magazine into the gun and packed two additional magazines into his school backpack. Lane claimed he had stolen both the gun and ammunition used in the shooting from his uncle the day before the attack (*State v. Lane*, 2014). Other reports indicated Lane had stolen the gun and ammunition from his grandfather, with whom he lived (*State v. Lane*, 2014).

**Family Environment**

Lane had lived with his maternal grandparents, Jack and Carol Nolan since he was three years old (*State v. Lane*, 2014). His parents, Thomas Lane and Sarah Nolan, never married and a court had declared them unfit to raise their son. The court awarded custody to his maternal grandparents. Lane visited his paternal grandparents on the weekends (Langman, 2015).
Police charged Lane’s father with multiple crimes, including domestic violence, assault, kidnapping, and theft. His father spent nearly a year in jail after being convicted of attempted murder and felonious assault in April 2002. Lane’s mother had been charged with domestic violence and convicted of disorderly conduct in 1995. It was not clear whether Lane had witnessed parental domestic violence (Langman, 2015).

Lane’s home life at his grandparents’ house was not without incident. In 2009, Lane’s half-brother Adam Nolan was involved in an altercation with his uncle. Lane reportedly restrained the uncle while Nolan beat him. Police charged Nolan with assault. Nolan had a substance abuse problem that resulted in several arrests for a variety of offenses (Glasier, 2012). Less than a month after this incident, Lane punched a boy in the face and put him in a chokehold. It was not clear whether Lane received punishment for this incident.

Lane also had a biological sister, Sadie. Little information about Sadie was available other than an indication she had attended Chardon High School and was in the cafeteria on the morning of the shooting. However, Sadie did not know Lane was the perpetrator until after the incident had concluded (Pinckard, 2013).

Incident #12: Jose Reyes: Sparks, Nevada (October 21, 2013)

Overview of Incident

On Monday, October 21, 2013, Jose Reyes, a 12-year old middle school student, stole one of his father’s guns (Langman, 2014b). Thereafter, Reyes’ mother dropped him off at Sparks Middle School at 7:08 a.m., as was her normal routine. Shortly after 7:12 a.m., Reyes entered the school grounds near the basketball courts (Langman). Reyes withdrew a Ruger 9mm
handgun from his backpack and shot fellow student Kaelin Guerrero. Reyes then walked toward the basketball court where teacher Michael Landsberry approached Reyes with his hands raised, attempting to persuade Reyes to turn over the weapon (Langman). Reyes shot Landsberry in the chest. Students fled and Reyes pointed the gun at a small group of female students who were huddled in one of the school’s entry alcoves. Reyes did not fire at the female students, but instead moved toward a larger group of students (Langman). Reyes fired two shots at Eric Perez, a teacher, but Reyes’ shots did not connect. Reyes reversed his course, and another student, Mason Kamerer, not knowing Reyes was the shooter told Reyes to get into the building (Langman). Reyes shot Kamerer in the stomach. Kamerer exited school property where a passerby helped him until medical personnel arrived (Langman). At this point Reyes walked along the exterior wall of the gymnasium and shot himself in the head. The shooting incident lasted approximately five minutes (Langman). Police arrived several minutes later to find both Reyes and Landsberry, a teacher, dead. Reyes wounded two students. At age 12, Reyes was the youngest rampage school shooter to take his own life (Langman).

School and Community Profile

Sparks, Nevada, is located in Washoe County and in 2012 was home to approximately 92,000 people. The median household income, according to the 2000 census report, was $45,745, slightly above the national average of $41,994. The violent crime rate was listed at 4.7 per 1,000 in the community.

Sparks Middle School was part of the Washoe County School District. The middle school was one of three middle schools in Sparks, with an enrollment of approximately 775 students. Approximately 70% of the students were Hispanic, 20% Caucasian, 2% Black, and 4%
Asian, and 4% listed as two or more races (Nevada Report Card, 2014) Students eligible for free and reduced lunch comprised nearly 75% of the student body. Male and female students were listed at 52% and 48%, respectively.

Profile of Shooter

Jose Reyes nearly died at birth when his umbilical cord became wrapped around his neck. Some reports indicated Reyes did not speak until he was five, but reports also indicate he was able to say individual words at age three (Langman, 2014b). He was late in developing language skills, and Spanish was the primary language in his home (Langman). Reyes received speech therapy in kindergarten and struggled academically. He had fallen several grade levels behind his peers in math and reading by the sixth grade (Langman). As a seventh-grader, Reyes had spent only two months at his new school prior to the shooting incident (Mason, 2013). The previous year Reyes had attended an elementary school in the district. Reyes possessed 47 first person shooter video games and frequently conducted online searches for multiple violence-related topics such as “school shooting”, “murder,” and “top 10 evil children” (Langman, 2014b). Reyes viewed information on perpetrators of previous school shootings, e.g., Kip Kinkel, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, and T.J. Lane. He also watched the video game Super Columbine Massacre and online videos of the song “Pumped up Kicks”, a video portraying a child shooting other children with his father’s gun (Langman).

In a note to his parents written just prior to the attack, Reyes referenced the ability to go back in time to change things in the past. He wrote about how he was a bad kid and stated, “I can be a smart and better kid so I can be the better son in our family” (Langman, 2014b, p. 3). His belief that he could go back in time to change things may have resulted from him watching
an anti-bullying film shown at his school. The film depicted a bullied student who shot a fellow student and later wished he could go back in time to reverse his actions. As a result of Reyes’ cognitive issues, he may have believed by killing himself he could go back in time and prevent past inappropriate behavior (Langman).

While Reyes had social interests and was helpful to others, he had a variety of social and behavioral issues that created questions regarding whether he was on the autism spectrum. Reyes struggled with social cues and was poor at making friends. Being corrected in front of his peers and transitioning to and from activities frustrated Reyes. Reyes was eligible for special education services, and as a result, he had an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Reyes’ January 17, 2013, IEP specifically stated “Jose will become frustrated when things go too fast, change in schedule, or his daily routines. It is hard for him to accept a poor grade on assignments, and it can take a half an hour to an hour for him to calm down” (Langman, 2014b, p.1).

Mental Health and Social Disorder Implications

Reyes often appeared to others as if he was in his own world and often laughed or made noises as if he were reacting to a thought or internal conversation taking place in his head (Langman, 2014). One teacher noted that he “sometimes loses his temper too easily, worries about things that can’t be changed, is nervous, is fearful, seems lonely, is easily upset, is negative about things, is pessimistic…. often cries easily” (Langman, 2014b p.2). A local psychotherapist had prescribed a generic form of Prozac for Reyes three days before the shooting (McAndrew, 2014). It was unknown whether Reyes’ parents planned to have the prescription filled.
Access to / Experience with Firearms

Limited information regarding Reyes’ access and experience with firearms was available. According to police records, Reyes’s father received a 9mm Ruger pistol as a gift from a friend of the family (Langman, 2014). Reyes’s father had an interest in firearms but neither had the money nor the need to purchase a firearm himself. The same friend gave a .357 Smith & Wesson revolver as a gift to Reyes’s dad (Dach & Triplett, 2013). Reyes’ parents believed they hid the guns well within the home and were not aware their son had knowledge of the gun that he took (Dach & Triplett). However, reports indicated at one point Mr. Reyes had pointed a gun at Mrs. Reyes in front of their son. Seeing his father improperly use a firearm may have adversely influenced Reyes (Langman, 2014b).

Family Environment

Information about the Reyes family was difficult to attain. Reyes had two younger sisters, ages seven and eight. Reyes’ father purchased and operated a restaurant. While the restaurant improved the family’s financial situation, it increased the father’s stress level (Langman, 2014b). Mr. Reyes reportedly yelled at his son when he helped in the restaurant. Reyes told one of his teachers when he was working at the restaurant his father was very hard on him and was sometimes physically violent with him (Langman). A cousin who worked at the restaurant reported he had witnessed Mr. Reyes slap his son when he made mistakes (Langman). On one occasion when his father struck him, Reyes received a black eye that remained visible for several days. Following this incident police arrested Mr. Reyes and charged him with child abuse (Langman).
The parents’ marriage was unstable. Mr. Reyes reportedly exhibited violence toward his wife, and according to relatives, he once put a gun to her head during an argument (Langman, 2014b). According to a 2007 school report, Reyes witnessed his father’s violence to his mother (Langman). Additionally, Mrs. Reyes had reportedly become aware of Mr. Reyes’s affair with a waitress from his restaurant. Reyes’s parents separated for a brief period of time, and Mr. Reyes avoided contact with his children during the separation (Langman). Mrs. Reyes considered divorce and apparently feared for her safety since Mr. Reyes had a gun. Eventually the parents reconciled (Langman).

Summary of Case Studies

The preceding twelve case studies represent a complete list of rampage school shootings meeting the criteria referenced in Chapter One and further explained in Chapter Three. These cases represent the most significant incidents from 1996-2013 in the United States and provide a large enough sample size to test Newman et al.’s (2004) framework.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The current study utilized a historical case study methodology similar to the methodology employed in a legal study. This research method was designed to analyze recent rampage school shooting incidents to determine whether Newman et al.’s (2004) framework is a reliable tool for identifying observable conditions for assessing future threats. Additionally, the current study sought to identify steps school leaders can utilize in mitigating the risks associated with rampage school shootings.

Newman et al.’s (2004) framework identifies five “necessary but not sufficient” conditions for rampage school shootings (p. 229). This study utilized these five conditions;

1. Marginalization of the perpetrator in social worlds important to him or her
2. Presence of either a diagnosed or undiagnosed psychological issue
3. Either cultural scripts or a template for how carrying out an attack may resolve the perpetrator’s issues
4. Failure of school surveillance systems to prevent the attack
5. Perpetrator access to guns or other weapons

The following research questions provided the framework for this study:

1. By examining past school rampage shootings, does Newman et al.’s (2004) framework provide a viable lens for analyzing and evaluating the potential for lethal student attacks within the public school K-12 environment?

3. What components of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework should public K-12 school officials include in their threat assessment or evaluation process to identify potential school shooters?

Case study research sets forth a detailed account of one, or more cases, in a holistic real-life context (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Therefore, to qualify for inclusion in this study, a rampage school shooting incident must have met the following criteria:

- The incident must have involved multiple victims with at least one fatality.
- Since the study’s purpose is to guide school officials, the incident must have occurred within a U.S. K-12 public school.
- The perpetrator must have attended the school in which the incident occurred at least a portion of the school year in which the shooting happened.
- The incident must have occurred between 1996 and 2013. The starting period was selected due to the increased frequency of rampage school shootings and 2013 concluded the study range due to the need for the researcher to have sufficient time to gather credible and detailed information of each event. In selecting a date range, the researcher reviewed incidents occurring in the early 1900s. Although there were many individual incidents during the first ninety years of the century, school shootings did not become commonplace until the late 1990s (Langman, Rampage School Shooters: A Typology, 2009).

As a result of applying these criteria, twelve rampage school shooting incidents were identified. The researcher was confident these incidents yielded an appropriate sample size for
this study because the sample is not so large as to render a detailed analysis overwhelming, yet not so small to confidently ensure the conclusions drawn from the data are representative of the whole.

**Triangulation**

In an effort to both enhance confidence in the findings and to ensure the research was appropriately robust, the current study examined prior research on threat assessments as well as past rampage school shooting incidents. More specifically, the study employed investigator triangulation, defined as “the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data” (Denzin as cited in Bryman, 2011, p. 1142). This study also examined peer reviewed journal articles, published dissertations, national organization reports, U.S. government reports, police reports, court findings, and other reliable news reports. Information from a variety of resources was analyzed to ensure consistency and accuracy and yield triangulation.

**Framework**

The researcher considered several analytical frameworks for use in this study. O’Toole (2000) provided a detailed examination of characteristics of potential school rampage shooters, but O’Toole’s study was impractical for educational leaders in a K-12 setting. O’Toole’s list of characteristics did not sufficiently focus on the specific concerns administrators could use to differentiate a rampage school shooter from other threats of potentially violent incidents. The researcher found Newman et al.’s (2004) model to be more prescriptive and appropriate for the use of a study on rampage school shootings. Specifically, Newman et al.’s model identified five discrete indicators school administrators have the ability to assess when engaging the available
resources with the school staff, the parents, and the community. While the assessment of each indicator would require a well-coordinated effort, it would be attainable in a K-12 setting. Additionally, Newman et al.’s (2004) model has been cited and supported by multiple researchers over the past decade.

As such, cases included in this study were analyzed using Newman et al.’s (2004) model and focused on school shooting incidents from 1996 through 2013. Newman et al. (2004) noted each of the indicators are essential, but not sufficient on its own, to create reason to suspect anyone might engage in a rampage school shooting. However, Newman et al. contended the indicators work interdependently to create a more reliable and valid approach for evaluating potential threats. It is this concept of interdependent conditions the current study was designed to examine. If Newman et al.’s framework is shown to be reliable; this finding could provide implications for threat assessment teams within K-12 school districts and will help education leaders identify improved or enhanced threat assessments to prevent future incidents.

Data Collection

Information on the shooting incidents included in this study were gathered from numerous sources. Online research focused primarily on peer reviewed resources to ensure information was credible. In some shooting incidents information was only available through court testimony, police records, and newspaper coverage. School and community profile information was gathered from each respective state or school website, along with additional demographic data obtained from census-based sources. The researcher grouped the information to explain the critical facts of each shooting incident in a manner the reader can logically follow without advanced understanding of the incident(s). The researcher consistently used
subheadings among all incidents researched. The subheadings of each section represent factors for consideration/coding based on Newman et al.’s (2004) framework

- Overview of Incident
- School and Community Profile
- Profile of Shooter
- Mental Health or Social Disorder Implications
- Access to / Experience with Firearms
- Family Environment

Data Analysis

This is a hybrid study; therefore, the data collection process differed from the methods employed in study’s using traditional qualitative or quantitative analysis. The researcher applied the indicators from Newman et al.’s (2004) framework to the individual cases in the study and created a table to summarize the results.

The table lists the five indicators across the top in columns and the individual case across the rows. For shooting incidents in which sufficient evidence demonstrates the presence of an indicator is positive, the researcher labeled it a Y for yes. A label of N for no was used when evidence of a particular indicator was not sufficient or was not present at all. It is possible as a result of this procedure, certain indicators for a particular case may not clearly demonstrate sufficient evidence due to a lack of credible information or due to inconclusive or conflicting information from the available research. In these instances, a third category of U for undetermined was used. The table was completed based on the answers to the following five questions embedded in the components of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework:
1. Did the evidence demonstrate the perpetrator felt marginalized in social worlds important to him or her?

2. Did the evidence indicate the presence of either a diagnosed or undiagnosed psychological issue with the perpetrator?

3. Did the evidence conclude the presence of cultural scripts or a template for how the perpetrator’s issues may have been resolved by committing the attack?

4. Did the evidence demonstrate a failure of school surveillance systems to prevent the attack?

5. Did the perpetrator have access to guns or other weapons?

In each incident, question five was confirmed or labeled as Y for yes. Since the study did not consider rampage school shootings in which the incident was averted, this indicator became less relevant. While the summative of the indicator for access to guns was certain to be yes, the researcher found the method in which the guns were accessed was important for learning more about prevention. Additionally, the researcher found value in noting individuals’, including parents’ and classmates’, knowledge of the perpetrators’ access to guns prior to the shooting incident.

The risk of researcher bias was present in this research methodology. Researcher bias is a threat to validity, defined as “obtaining results consistent with what the researcher wants to find” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 264). To account for the risk of researcher bias, multiple labeling processes occurred. For example, the first round of labeling was done with the full case study write up available to inform the researcher in coding each indicator as Y, N, or U. In an effort to remove extraneous information from the process, a second round of labeling was conducted with only the case name and relevant indicator facts. The researcher then coded cases
with a number and randomized. For example, chronologically, the researcher removed names or identifying factors in the case, assigned it a number, and then reordered the cases. The only information connected with each case was specifically the information summarized that connected with the indicators. In the prior method, details and context about the event were included, which might have swayed the researcher from keying in on the facts. The purpose of this was to ensure the researcher was coding strictly based on facts.

When analyzing each indicator, the researcher checked facts to provide sufficient evidence that the indicator criteria had been met. For example, indicator two involved the presence of either a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental health issue. It was not necessary for the perpetrator to have taken or have been prescribed medication to achieve a confirmatory response for this indicator. A psychologist or mental health expert may have conducted interviews or analyzed evidence after the incident and determined the presence of a mental health issue. Conversely, it was not sufficient to simply have the perpetrator’s classmate or family member as the sole source supporting the presence of an undiagnosed mental illness. Lack of an expert opinion, such as a psychologist, would prevent labeling this indicator as present or positive.

At the conclusion of the labeling process, any area having a variance in coding from one round to another was placed in the undetermined category.

Conclusion

Research on rampage school shootings is in its infancy, and the concept of having discrete threat assessment procedures based on the type of violent behavior has existed for less than two decades. This study sought to learn from prior rampage shooting incidents to inform the constructs for future school threat assessment. Through the process of utilizing Newman et al.’s
framework (2004) to examine twelve different school shootings over nearly two decades, the researcher believes the results will demonstrate the model’s efficacy for future use.

Confirmation of a reliable model for use in a K-12 school setting may assist educators in preventing future threats. All senior leadership members at a school district should be aware of implications from this study. However, Principals of K-12 schools and the threat assessment teams that support the schools are the primary audience for this study.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The current study examined the validity of employing Newman et al.’s (2004) five-prong framework to analyze multiple victim K-12 public school shooting incidents. The goal of this analysis was to identify patterns among the perpetrators in order to establish best practices for K-12 public school officials to use in developing and conducting threat assessments.

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. By examining past school rampage shootings, does Newman et al.’s (2004) framework provide a viable framework for analyzing and evaluating the potential for lethal student attacks within the public school K-12 environment?


3. What components of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework should public K-12 school officials include in their threat assessment or evaluation process for identifying potential school shooters?

Chapter 4 contains the following sections; examination process, findings, research questions, and additional demographic information. To minimize researcher bias, I examined evidence for each of the 12 selected case studies, using Newman et al.’s (2004) five indicators as a framework. Two independent reviews were conducted in an effort to ensure the researcher had not intentionally affirmed an indicator
that did not meet the necessary standard. The researcher conducted the first round of labeling to provide a comprehensive picture for accurately establishing whether Newman et al.’s (2004) indicators were present. The researcher isolated each case study incident and determined the identifying factors that were present.

During the first round, the researcher created a table for each case (see Tables 4.5-4.16 for a representative sample) and entered the results based on answers to the following five questions related to Newman et al.’s (2004) five indicators and the associated framework:

1. Did the evidence demonstrate the perpetrator felt marginalized in social worlds that were important to him or her?
2. Did the evidence indicate the presence of either a diagnosed or an undiagnosed psychological or social disorder with the perpetrator?
3. Did the evidence conclude the presence of either a cultural script or a template for determining how the perpetrator’s issues may have been resolved by carrying out the attack?
4. Did the evidence demonstrate a failure of the school’s surveillance systems that could have prevented the attack?
5. Did the perpetrator have access guns or other weapons?

Using the available case study information that was presented in Chapter Two, the researcher coded each indicator as Yes (Y), No (N), or Unable to Determine (U).

To remove extraneous information (such as demographic data) from the process, the researcher conducted a second round of review. The researcher randomly assigned the perpetrator’s names by case study (12) for each of the five indicators and utilized Microsoft Word to capture the 60 lines of data. For example, the researcher began in reverse order with the
The assignment of indicator five (access to guns) and selected numbers 1-12 until all perpetrator names were assigned a number. A reverse order process provided an alternative sequence of review from the initial round of labeling. Each code used the initials of the perpetrator(s) along with a two-letter code assigned to the category. For example, in Table 4.1, code “LW Ac” represents Luke Woodham and access to guns, and “CAW Ac” represents Charles “Andy” Williams and access to guns.

Table 4.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category/Indicator</th>
<th>Result (Y/N/U)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>LW Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>AW Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>CAW Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BL Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>EH &amp; DK Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>JR Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>KK Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MC Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>JW Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>AG &amp; MJ Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>TJL Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>ER Ac</td>
<td>Access to Guns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After the researcher completed indicator five, the process of randomly drawing names aligned to indicator four (failure of surveillance systems) was conducted. In Table 4.2, the code of “Su” represented the indicator “Failure of Surveillance Systems.” The researcher assigned numbers 13-24 to case studies in this category.
Table 4.2

Sample – Round Two Labeling Template Using Reverse Order Sequence #13-24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category/Indicator</th>
<th>Result (Y/N/U)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>JR Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>CAW Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>MC Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>BL Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>ER Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>ER &amp; DK Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>LW Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>TJL Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>JW Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>KK Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>AG &amp; MJ Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>AW Su</td>
<td>Failure of Surveillance Systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher deliberately drew each of the five indicators in a new random order and continued the process through all five cycles until each indicator contained a unique set of random case studies similar to Tables 4.1 and 4.2. The researcher assigned numbers 25-36 for the indicator “cultural script,” numbers 37-48 for the indicator “presence of psychological or social disorder,” and numbers 49-60 for “Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him”. Through the independent rounds of randomization, the researcher was no longer able to discern any patterns. This outcome ensured only the facts of each case were considered.

Once the labeling sheet was ordered accurately and all 60 lines were completed, the researcher went back to the evidence summaries and replaced the names of the perpetrators with an “X,” removed identifying factors for each case study from the evidence, and marked it with the assigned random number (1-60) described above. Table 4.3 shows an example of how the researcher used one of the case studies with the identifying details removed. While the researcher may plausibly have recognized some of the details listed for a specific case, this potential was minimized when compared to the initial round of labeling. Given the researcher’s predisposed
knowledge of each case, developing a process to completely eliminate the probability a case could be identified was not possible.

Table 4.3
Sample Case Study without Identifying Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>X did not fit in among his peers because his dark interests and threats of violence isolated him.</td>
<td>Unclear if this reached the extent of feeling marginalized at school. X lacked the strength to help more with his father’s business. X’s older stepbrothers appeared to be in better standing with his father than he perceived himself to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X was not accepted in his home as much as he would have liked and his parents argued regularly about how to raise him.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>X had suicidal ideations when he was ten years old. He reported prior to the shooting he often heard voices.</td>
<td>X’s mother confirmed most nights she left a light on in his bedroom and looked in the closet and checked under his bed to help her son fall asleep. While there are varying expert opinions regarding whether X was legally insane, “there is little doubt that X was mentally ill.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>According to a psychologist’s note, he manifested pre-schizophrenic ideations. “Psychotic thinking and delusions of persecution and grandeur” also existed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>The Westside incident may have provided the script X employed for carrying out his attack</td>
<td>X followed recent school shooting incidents and spoke regularly with his friends specifically about the Westside, Arkansas incident.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table continues on next page
All 12 tables, following the pattern shown in Table 4.3, were printed and cut into sections to separate each of the five indicators. The researcher handwrote the randomly assigned number (1-60) and grouped each section in numerical order. Finally, to minimize the likelihood the researcher would remember the identifying factors of the case study the documented evidence grouped by indicator was set aside for one week.

The researcher then conducted the second labeling process. During this process the evidence was sequentially analyzed. This second labeling process preserved the order of review by indicator type. For example, evidence for the indicator “cultural script” was performed as a group in order from numbers 25 to 36. Once complete, the researcher recorded and compared the results of the second label process to the original results in round one. At the conclusion of the second labeling process, the researcher coded any variance from the initial round in the undetermined category, i.e., U.

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</td>
<td>Reportedly X suggested to his friends that he someday might be responsible for a similar school shooting as the one in Westside, Arkansas. Prior to the attack, X made multiple references to the possibility of a shooting soon. X bragged about carrying a gun the night of the shooting.</td>
<td>His grades slipped as he entered the eighth grade when he received mostly D and F grades. He had also broken up with his girlfriend recently. Additionally, X reported he drank and had recently tried marijuana. At no time did any student notify an adult about X’s remarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td>Pistol and bullets used in shooting were kept in his parents’ room in an unlocked dresser drawer.</td>
<td>X reportedly had a fascination with guns and death.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The use of multiple labeling rounds was important to provide consistency among the labeling processes for each indicator. Additionally, the researcher sought to demonstrate an alternate method of review during the labeling process to validate the consistency of the initial labeling process. While it is not likely the order of review altered the results, an alternative method of analysis provided no known negative consequence.

The multi-stage process helped the researcher avoid potential bias. In the initial labeling process, the details and context for each event were included. This may have influenced the researcher from focusing upon only the facts. The second round allowed the researcher to more confidently conclude the results were from evidence only and not due to an unintentional desire to confirm or refute Newman et al.’s (2004) framework. In addition, the second round provided a second opportunity to objectively evaluate the facts in an alternate sequence.

The researcher analyzed evidence for each indicator to ensure Newman et al.’s criteria were sufficiently met. For example, indicator two involved the presence of either a diagnosed or an undiagnosed mental health issue. The perpetrator did not need to have taken, or been prescribed, medication to achieve an affirmative response for this indicator. A psychologist or mental health expert could have conducted interviews or analyzed evidence after the incident and determined the presence of a mental health issue. Conversely, it was not sufficient to simply have the perpetrator’s classmate or family member as the sole source to support the presence of an undiagnosed mental illness. The lack of an expert opinion prevented this indicator as being labeled as either present or positive.
Findings

The overall results, represented in Table 4.4, provide support for the efficacy of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework. In 11 of 12 cases, the researcher found sufficient evidence to confirm the validity of indicator one (i.e., marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him). Similarly, in 11 of the 12 cases, indicator two (i.e., presence of psychological or social disorder) was also supported. Indicator three (i.e., presence of a cultural script—example of how violence may resolve issues) was the least supported indicator, yet 9 out of the 12 cases demonstrated support. Indicator four (i.e., failure of surveillance systems) resulted in 11 out of 12 cases where the evidence was affirmed. The only indicator with 100% supporting evidence was indicator five (i.e., access to guns). Definitions and explanations of Newman et al.’s five indicators were explained in detail in Chapter Two of this study.

Table 4.4

Summary of Results by Newman et al.’s (2004) Indicator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undetermined</th>
<th>Indicator Affirmed</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Affirmed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 4.5-4.16 provide the evidence utilized in labeling each incident under the applicable indicator in Newman et al.’s (2004) framework. The purpose of each table was to summarize the specific evidence and demonstrate the rationale used by the researcher for coding all 60 indicators as described in Table 4.4.
## Table 4.5
Barry Loukaitis: Moses Lake, Washington (February 2, 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1           | Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him                    | Y   | Withdraw from peers. Described as a shy nerd who was bullied and teased (Kimmel & Matthew, 2003).  
Loukaitis was an only child. The Loukaitis family moved to Moses Lake prior to his fifth-grade year. | Unable to confirm this from any additional source.                                                                                                                                            |
| 2           | Presence of psychological or social disorder problems                                   | U   | During the trial, it was suggested Loukaitis had an undiagnosed bipolar disorder (Wold, 1997 as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000). |                                                                                                 |
| 3           | Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack | Y   | Loukaitis referenced how cool it would be to execute a killing spree like the one in *Natural Born Killers* (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999).  
Interactions with mother discussed violence as a resolution. (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000). | Mrs. Loukaitis testified she had told her son about her plan to confront her husband and his lover, tie them up, force them to listen to how much pain they had caused her, and then kill herself in front of them. Loukaitis attempted to talk his mother out of this plan. |
| 4           | Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues                              | Y   | Before the shooting, Loukaitis submitted a poem for his English class about murdering classmates (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999). |                                                                                                 |
| 5           | Access to guns                                                                         | Y   | Guns accessed from parents’ home (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).  
No research about specific location of guns were found  
Loukaitis was carrying 78 rounds of ammunition and three types of firearms: a .30-30 caliber rifle; a 357-caliber pistol; and a .25 caliber pistol. |                                                                                                 |
# Table 4.6

Evan Ramsey: Bethel, Alaska (February 19, 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Ramsey felt humiliated and abused living in a series of foster homes throughout his youth (Verlinden, Hersen, &amp; Thomas, 2000). Fellow student beat Ramsey up about two years prior to shooting incident (Langman, 2009b).</td>
<td>Persons described Ramsey as an outsider who was unpopular among his peers. Wearing glasses and having acne made Ramsey a target (Fainaru, 1998). Just prior to the shooting incident, Ramsey’s girlfriend broke up with him and moved out of the community (Langman).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Ramsey’s father used guns and other weapons to attack a newspaper office. Ramsey’s mother had abusive domestic partners (Langman, 2009b).</td>
<td>Ramsey’s father had been convicted of violent assault charges and sentenced to prison. Ramsey’s brother was also arrested for armed robbery (Langman, 2009b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Multiple disciplinary infractions; however, he was an honor student (Langman, 2009b). At least two friends knew about the attack days in advance (Langman).</td>
<td>One of Ramsey’s friends showed him how to use a shotgun and along with other peers identified the people Ramsey should shoot (Langman, 2009b).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Guns accessed from foster parents’ home in an unlocked safe near front door. (Langman, 2009b).</td>
<td>Ramsey’s friend taught him how to shoot the weapon (Langman).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.7

Luke Woodham: Pearl, Mississippi (October 1, 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Classmates frequently picked on him (McGee &amp; DeBernardo, 1999). Shooting occurred on the one-year anniversary of his girlfriend breaking up with him (Langman, 2010).</td>
<td>Woodham testified on the day before the shooting, that a fellow cult member spent hours on the telephone using insults and name calling to encourage him to follow through with the attack (CNN, 1998).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>He possibly suffered from Schizotypal personality disorder, a type of psychosis (Langman, 2010).</td>
<td>He claimed he heard voices, possessed magical powers and believed he was influenced by demons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Grant Boyette, the reported leader of the Kroth introduced him to Satanism and magic. Woodham followed Boyette’s fascination with Hitler as well (Langman, 2010).</td>
<td>Boyette reportedly assisted Woodham in beating, torturing, and killing Woodham’s dog (McGee &amp; DeBernardo, 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Classmates encouraged the attack from the beginning of the school year (Hewitt, 1997).</td>
<td>Teachers described him as odd and disagreeable, and a few teachers indicated they feared him (Langman, 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>He used a hunting rifle accessed from his mother’s home in the shooting incident. Reportedly, the gun belonged to his older brother.</td>
<td>No details were available about the specific location of the weapon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.8
Michael Carneal: Heath, Kentucky (December 1, 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Carneal was not a loner. He was on the fringe of several groups but not connected to any single peer group (Moore, 2003). Carneal had experienced teasing and bullying, especially after rumors suggested he had a romantic interest in another boy in the school (Moore).</td>
<td>While interacting in both the high school and other social circles, he generally appeared anxious and self-conscious and often sought approval and respect from both peers and adults (Moore, 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Carneal had a schizotypal personality and suffered from depression (Moore, 2003). After the shooting and Carneal’s incarceration, his psychologist stated Carneal’s mental illness had developed into paranoid schizophrenia (Moore).</td>
<td>Carneal exhibited paranoid behavior. He covered the air vents with towels when he showered, believing he was being watched and leaped on his bedroom furniture to avoid touching the floor because he believed assailants were hiding under it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Carneal exhibited an interest in violence. This interest included conducting research on how to make weapons (Moore, 2003). Carneal referenced a scene from the movie <em>The Basketball Diaries</em> in which the main character used a shotgun to fire at students in a school classroom (McGee &amp; DeBernardo, 1999).</td>
<td>Accessed on the internet the <em>Anarchists Cookbook</em>, a reference for making weapons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Carneal showed a gun to other students while at school prior to the shooting (Moore, 2003). In 71 days of school he had five minor infractions. However, his grades improved from eighth grade to ninth grade (Moore, 2003). Carneal warned friends to stay away from the prayer group the day of the shooting, indicating “something big” was going to happen (McGee &amp; DeBernardo, 1999 p. 3). Students later reported they did not tell school officials about the gun because they neither believed Carneal had ammunition nor thought he would use the gun Carneal was a high school freshman, making him a new student to the school the year the incident took place. Carneal had casually discussed with his classmates how he planned take over the school and kill others.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Carneal accessed guns from his parent’s home and a neighbor’s garage (Moore, 2003). Carneal was carrying two shotguns and two .22 caliber pistols. In total he had nine guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1           | Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him                    | Y   | Johnson was not popular among peers, but had friends. He was sensitive about his weight and was often teased (Moore, 2003).  
Golden was considered to have a short temper and vulgar mouth. He was not popular at school (Moore). | Johnson frequently picked fights and was beaten up by his peers for talking too tough (Booth, Schwartz, & Mencimer, 1998).  
Johnson’s parents divorced, causing turmoil and instability in their living arrangements during his youth.  
Golden’s parents worked long hours and reportedly left him alone regularly. He lived with two half-siblings from his mother’s previous marriage (Moore). |
| 2           | Presence of psychological or social disorder problems                                   | Y   | Johnson had talked about killing himself since he was ten years old; a year prior to the incident he had received psychiatric counseling (Moore, 2003).  
Johnson had been classified as traumatized (Langman, 2009b).  
Langman (2009b) categorized Golden as a psychopath (Langman, 2009b). He had a reputation as a menace who was cruel to animals and other kids in the neighborhood (Moore). | An older neighborhood boy reportedly sexually abused Johnson. At the time of the shooting, Johnson was charged for molesting a two-year-old girl.  
Johnson had issues with his father who threatened to move him back to Minnesota. This apparently made Johnson feel hopeless and he did not want to live anymore (Moore). |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Johnson and Golden did not demonstrate evidence of a specific cultural script.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Johnson talked about bringing a gun to school and once threatened another student with a knife (Verlinden, Hersen, &amp; Thomas, 2000). Johnson had many prior school behavior incidents and was suspended three times during the school year prior to the shooting incident (Verlinden et al.). Golden often threatened peers at school. He once shot another student in the eye with a popgun loaded with sand (Verlinden et al.). In October 1997, a student reported to his father Golden’s threat to bring guns to school to kill people. The student and father claim they told a school counselor about this threat (Moore, 2003).</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Johnson expressed high levels of anger when disciplined at school, and the teacher killed in the shooting incident had placed him in school suspension earlier that year (Jeter, 1998). Moore (2003) noted that in hindsight there were signs indicating Johnson was angry, sad, and feeling desperate; however, he lacked anyone at home or school to notice. Neighbors noted that Golden had struck little girls and used obscene language when interacting with both children and adults. School officials claim the reported threat was only about Golden potentially harming himself and not others. Officials did follow up with Golden and his parents, but no further action was taken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Johnson and Golden were fascinated with weapons and violence and had access to firearms (Verlinden et al.). The firearms used in the shooting were stolen from Golden’s grandfather’s house (Moore, 2003). Golden began using handguns and rifles at the age of six. His father trained him to shoot moving targets (Verlinden et al.). The boys stole three rifles and four handguns from the grandfather’s house by using cable cutters to access the guns (Moore, 2003). Three additional guns that were left unsecured were taken from Golden’s father (McGee &amp; DeBernardo, 1999).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.10
Andrew Wurst: Edinboro, Pennsylvania (April 24, 1998)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Wurst did not fit in among his peers because his dark interests and threats of violence isolated him from his classmates (Moore, 2003). At home, Wurst did not feel accepted and his parents argued regularly about how to raise him (Moore).</td>
<td>Unclear if the situation reached the extent of feeling marginalized at school. Wurst lacked the strength to help more with his father’s landscaping business. He perceived his older stepbrothers to be in better standing with his father than he thought himself to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Wurst had suicidal ideations when he was ten years old. He reported prior to the shooting he often heard voices (Moore, 2003). According to a psychologist’s note, he manifested pre-schizophrenic ideations. And “psychotic thinking and delusions of persecution and grandeur” existed (Moore, 2003).</td>
<td>Wurst’s mother confirmed most nights she left a light on in his bedroom and looked in the closet and checked under his bed to help her son fall asleep. While there are varying expert opinions regarding whether Wurst was legally insane, Moore (2003) observed “there is little doubt that Andrew Wurst was mentally ill.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>The Westside incident may have provided the script Wurst employed for carrying out his attack (Moore).</td>
<td>Wurst followed recent school shooting incidents and talked regularly with his friends specifically about the Westside shooting incident.</td>
</tr>
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Table continued on next page
Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues

Reportedly, Wurst suggested to his friends that he someday might be responsible for a similar school shooting as the one in Westside, Arkansas (Moore, 2003).

Prior to the attack, Wurst made multiple references to the possibility of a shooting at the upcoming dance. Wurst bragged about carrying a gun the night of the shooting (Moore).

His grades slipped as he entered the eighth grade when he received mostly D and F grades and had broken up recently with his girlfriend. Additionally, Wurst reported he drank and had recently tried marijuana (Moore).

At no time did any student notify an adult about Wurst’s remarks.

Access to guns

Wurst’s parents kept pistol and bullets in their room in an unlocked dresser drawer (Moore, 2003).

Wurst reportedly had a fascination with guns and death.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>His parents planned to send their son to a residential facility for students with conduct disorders (Verlinden, Hersen, &amp; Thomas, 2000). Kinkel had a lack of positive relationships with peers (Verlinden, Hersen, &amp; Thomas, 2000).</td>
<td>Mr. Kinkel acknowledged he felt unable to have a close relationship with his son. Kinkel was on the football team but rarely played due to poor attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>As an adolescent, he was diagnosed with depression and prescribed Prozac (Verlinden, Hersen, &amp; Thomas, 2000). Kinkel stopped taking Prozac eight months before the attack because his parent believed his behavior had improved (Langman, 2009b).</td>
<td>He was an oppositional child who struggled socially from an early age (Brandon, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al. 2000). Kinkel’s history of angry outbursts dated back to age five. Kinkel described the summer he was on Prozac as the best summer he ever had (Langman).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Kinkel enjoyed music and videos portraying graphic violence (Green &amp; Filips, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000).</td>
<td>The researcher found no evidence of a specific cultural script.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table cont. from previous page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Neighborhood children reported Kinkel bragged about killing and torturing animals. In English class, Kinkel routinely read from his journal about his plans to kill his fellow classmates (Green &amp; Filips, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000). Peers were aware of Kinkel’s fascination with guns because he had previously talked about suicide, and on one occasion he gave a class presentation about how to build a bomb (Verlinden, Hersen, &amp; Thomas, 2000).</th>
<th>Kinkel had brought a gun to school the previous day and received a suspension. Students did not take him seriously because Kinkel often made threats of killing others.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Kinkel owned a .22 rifle that he kept in his room. Additional guns belonging to his parents were accessible in the house.</td>
<td>His parents had full knowledge of their son’s firearms and even bought some of the guns for him as gifts (King &amp; Murr, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al, 2000).</td>
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</table>
### Table 4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Harris was smaller in stature and had several medical issues as a youth that resulted in him having feelings of shame and inadequacy (Langman, 2009b).</td>
<td>Both Harris and Klebold had their own group of friends and active social lives (Langman, 2009b).</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Klebold was shy as a child and needed organized play dates to be able to socialize well with other kids (Larkin, 2007).</td>
<td>Klebold and Harris both wanted to be part of this group and had friends who were members, but characterizations of their affiliation were inaccurate and were due to the fact they dressed similarly to members of the Trench Coat Mafia (Cullen, 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Klebold and Harris were described as “outsiders who were pushed to the fringe of high school society” (Verlinden, Hersen, &amp; Thomas, 2000, p. 40).</td>
<td>Klebold and Harris regularly endured taunts and slurs from the popular students. They felt that the class structure at Columbine favored athletes and the most popular kids (Verlinden, Hersen, &amp; Thomas).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Klebold struggled with his identity as a child of a mixed religious marriage (Larkin, 2007).</td>
<td>Jefferson County was a religious area but the Klebold’s disagreed about religion and had not attended church in five or six years. While there was conflict in the Klebold home, there were no signs of physical violence (Larkin, 2007).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table continued on next page
|   | Presence of psychological or social disorder problems | Y | According to Langman (2009b), Harris was a psychopath. His paranoia was characterized by an “intense fear of losing … identity and, more importantly, powers of self-determination” (p. 34).

Langman (2009b) believed Klebold had a schizophrenia-spectrum disorder characterized by psychotic symptoms ranging from strange thoughts and abnormal obsessions to delusions and hallucinations. | At the time of the shooting, Harris had been diagnosed with depression and was taking Luvox, a prescription medication. However, planning for the attack predated the Luvox prescription (Langman, 2009b). Harris stopped taking Luvox shortly before the shooting.

Langman further suggested Klebold had an avoidant personality disorder, a socially debilitating and exaggerated form of shyness characterized by fear of rejection, inadequacy and social anxiety (Langman). |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack | Y | Harris and Klebold loved rock music that glorified killing and death, and both were fascinated with violent video games, war, and military paraphernalia (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).

They played the video game “Doom,” a game in which a lone marine’s objective was to save the human race by eliminating subhuman monsters (Larkin, 2007). |

Klebold was fascinated with Charles Manson and often wrote about violence in his English class (Larkin, 2007).

They may have viewed themselves in a role similar to the lone marine and believed vanquishing their classmates was a mission to save the human race (Larkin). |
Table cont. from previous page

| 4 | Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues | Y | Columbine administrators were aware of the taunting directed at the so-called “Trench Coat Mafia,” a group in which Klebold and Harris were thought to be members. However, administrators did not appear to try and stop it (Verlinden, et al., 2000, p. 40).

Fellow classmate, Robyn Anderson, helped to purchase several of the weapons on behalf of Klebold and Harris (Cullen, 1999).

Klebold and Harris had prior incidents with the law. Klebold and Harris were arrested a year before the attack for breaking into a car. As a result, they entered into a youth diversion program (Cullen, 2009).

Harris was reported to the sheriff for internet postings threatening a classmate with death.

Klebold turned in violent writings for his English class. Additionally, both Harris and Klebold worked on a school film production portraying themselves shooting down athletes in the school hallways (Wilgoren & Johnson, 1999).

Because Harris and Klebold were able to amass and store a large amount of weaponry in both of their bedrooms, parental supervision of their activities appeared to be lacking (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000).

Robyn Anderson was reportedly infatuated with Klebold (Cullen, 1999).

Both Klebold and Harris were reported to the police for igniting pipe bombs.

Klebold and Harris warned classmates they would no longer tolerate being harassed and threatened: “We are going to shoot you” (Verlinden, Hersen, & Thomas, 2000, p. 40). |
|    | Access to guns | Y | One of Harris’ friends provided the duo access to firearms (Verlinden et al., 2000). Harris and Klebold acquired their weapons at a local gun show (Cullen, 2009). Classmate Robyn Anderson purchased three guns on their behalf (Cullen). Mark Manes, a drug dealer who ran a gun business on the side, also purchased a gun for Harris and Klebold in January (Cullen). A couple of months later Manes bought 100 rounds of ammunition for them at Kmart. | Harris and Klebold were able to amass and store a large amount of weaponry in both of their bedrooms (Verlinden et al., 2000). Harris posted pipe-bomb making instructions on the Internet and kept bomb-making components in his bedroom (Verlinden et al., 2000). |
### Table 4.13

Charles Andrew Williams: Santee, California (March 5, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Classmates reportedly called him “anorexic” and “albino.” (Langman, 2014a p. 7). Classmates indicated Williams was called a faggot and was burned with cigarette lighters (Langman). Several classmates indicated he was popular, well liked, funny and happy.</td>
<td>Williams claimed he was tormented and bullied during his time in Santee. He was short (5’4”) and considered unusually thin. One peer explained, “all of us joke around with each other, it’s a thing we do…it’s kind of all of us showing our love” (Langman, p. 6). Evidence of Williams being bullied was inconclusive Overall, evidence was not sufficient to indicate Williams was marginalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Langman (2014) classified Williams as a psychopathic shooter based on his substance abuse, truancy, theft, lying and dishonesty.</td>
<td>Following the shooting, Williams’ behavior was characterized as calm and casual. During interrogations, Williams was expressionless and showed no signs of remorse (Langman, 2014a). Williams made unsubstantiated claims of sexual abuse by the boyfriend of one of his mother’s friends (Langman, 2014a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>No evidence found</td>
<td>According to Langman (2014), Williams fell into a troubled crowd, but there were no examples provided of any script from peers or adults in Williams’ life.</td>
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<td>Table cont. from previous page</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Williams talked about his plan to attack the school with several classmates. When questioned, Williams reportedly responded, “I’m just messing around.” (Langman, 2014a, p. 3). While as many as 20 students were alerted to Williams’ intentions, this information was never communicated to an adult (Figueroa &amp; Rogers, 2005 as cited in Langman 2014a). Many hours of Williams’ day were unsupervised and were spent using drugs and drinking alcohol with his friends. Because Williams was known as a jokester among his friends, many did not believe he would follow through with his threats, notwithstanding his claim that one day he would “pull a Columbine.” (p. 3). Friends thought he was joking but were concerned enough on the morning of the shooting that they had patted him down before school to see if he had a gun (Langman). The gun was in his backpack, and his friends did not check there. While Mr. Williams was a supportive father, his son did not avoid the temptations attendant to living in a single-parent home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Williams had experience using firearms. The gun used was a .22 revolver. Williams stole his Dad’s key to his gun case to access the weapon and bullets (Dickey, 2013). His mother and other family members worked for the military. The Williams’ family kept guns in the home and used them legally prior to the shooting.</td>
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</table>
### Table 4.14
Jeffrey Weise: Red Lake, Minnesota (March 21, 2005)

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<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Weise considered himself a loner, but classmates thought Weise and his cousin constituted a “tight but marginalized clique” (Newman et al. &amp; Fox, 2009 p. 1290).</td>
<td>Weise and his cousin dressed in black and had spiked and/or dyed hair and preferred heavy metal music in contrast to their classmates who preferred country or rap music (Burcum, Shah, &amp; Collins, 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Weise had suicidal ideations. During the summer prior to the shooting, Weise attempted suicide and spent time in a psychiatric facility (Hufstutter, 2005).</td>
<td>Weise had been prescribed Prozac, but it is not clear if he was taking the medication at the time of the attack (Langman, 2009b). The impact of the Prozac on Weise was inconclusive (Langman). In January of 2005, Weise became depressed, noting in one of his web postings, “I’m living every man’s nightmare and that single fact alone is kicking my ass. I really must be (expletive) worthless” (Langman, 2015, p.75).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>When Weise was eight years old, his father committed suicide during a police standoff (Langman, 2009a).</td>
<td>Weise and Louis Jourdain played out school shooting scenarios over a yearlong period prior to the attack, discussing potential logistics and repeatedly watching movies depicting the Columbine rampage (Channen, Louwague, Meryhew, &amp; Von Sternberg, 2005 as cited in Newman &amp; Fox 2009).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A year prior to the shooting, Weise threatened an attack on the school on the fifth anniversary of Columbine. Weise showed disturbing drawings in his notebook of people with bullet holes in their heads, of half-living people with blank stares, and of skeletons. These incidents went unreported to school officials (Newman & Fox, 2009).

After-school activities were canceled and Weise was questioned due to an email he wrote that indicated something bad would happen on Hitler’s birthday (Davey, 2005a as cited in Newman & Fox, 2009). As many as 39 students had prior knowledge of a potential attack (Newman & Fox, 2009). Weise’s cousin and best friend Jourdain was arrested for his role in planning the attack. Emails between Weise and Jourdain revealed their discussions of a larger scale attack on the school (Newman & Fox).

Months prior to the shooting, Weise posted comments online under his real name that mentioned weapons and violence, including his conviction that he had lived a past life as a German soldier in World War II (Johnson, 2005 as cited in Newman & Fox, 2009).

According to CNN.com, Weise used his grandfather’s police-issued shotgun, two handguns and a protective vest. It was unclear where the weapons used in the shooting were stored. Research did not indicate whether or not they were secured (e.g. locked cabinet).
### Table 4.15

**Thomas “T.J.” Lane: Chardon, Ohio (February 27, 2012)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator #</th>
<th>Indicator Description</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Lane had lived with his maternal grandparents, Jack and Carol Nolan, since he was three years old (<em>State v. Lane</em>, 2014). His parents, Thomas Lane and Sarah Nolan, never married, and a court had declared them unfit to raise their son.</td>
<td>Lane’s home life at his grandparents’ house was not without incident. In 2009, Lane’s half-brother Adam Nolan was involved in an altercation with his uncle. Nolan also had a substance abuse problem that resulted in him being arrested several times for a variety of offenses (Glasier, 2012). Less than a month after this incident, Lane punched a boy in the face and put him in a chokehold. It was not clear whether Lane was punished for this incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Following the shooting, Lane underwent a psychological exam and his answers were reportedly deceitful. During a post-shooting competency evaluation, Lane stated he heard voices and experienced delusions (<em>State v. Lane</em>, 2014). Langman (2015) classified Lane as traumatized (Langman, 2015).</td>
<td>During a follow-up competency exam conducted by a different psychologist, Lane admitted he had previously lied about hearing voices and experiencing delusions. He also admitted to other fabrications, such as never having experienced anxiety, confusion, or depression. He also acknowledged his earlier claim of having been sexually abused was false. Lane stated he could force himself to cry when necessary to convince school staff he was depressed (<em>State v. Lane</em>, 2014).</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td><strong>Y</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</td>
<td><strong>U</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td><strong>Y</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicator #</td>
<td>Indicator Description</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Marginalization of school shooter in social worlds important to him</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presence of psychological or social disorder problems</td>
<td>Y</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural scripts or template for how school shooter’s issues may be resolved by committing the attack</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Failure of surveillance systems to identify student issues</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Access to guns</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Questions

The study’s results enabled, the researcher to answer the three research questions. Each research question and the corresponding results are set forth below.

Research Question 1

Question 1 posited, “By examining past school rampage shootings, does Newman et al.’s (2004) framework provide a viable lens for analyzing and evaluating the potential for lethal student attacks within the public school K-12 environment?”

All 12 of the cases included in this study demonstrated a consistent pattern of affirmation under the five indicators of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework. Four out of the five indicators were present in at least 91.7%, of the cases suggesting Newman’s indicators were present the majority of the time in all 12 cases. In some cases, it was undetermined if the indicator was present. The exception was in the case of Andy Williams who lacked the presence of a specific cultural script as a template, and did not appear to be marginalized in the social worlds that mattered to him. Williams’ case was an outlier of this study. Indicator three, presence of a cultural script, was evident in 75% of the cases. Despite a lack of presence in three cases, indicator three proved to be reliable in well over the majority of cases included in this study.

Research Question 2

Access to guns was the most reliable indicator (100%). Perpetrators who felt marginalized either had a potential psychological or social disorder or fell under the radar of a surveillance system. As an indicator feeling marginalized demonstrated the efficacy and reliability in 11 out of 12 cases (91.7%). Presence of a cultural script provided the weakest support for Newman et al.’s (2004) framework. Nine of the twelve cases (75%) supported this indicator. While this number was comparatively low, it still represented a sizable majority and, as such, could be considered a fairly reliable indicator.

Research Question 3

Question 3 asked, “What components of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework should public K-12 school officials include in their threat assessment or evaluation process to identify potential school shooters?”

Based on this study, each of Newman et al.’s (2004) indicators should be included as part of a school threat assessment to identify a potential school shooter.

- For marginalized students (indicator one), Newman et al.’s (2004) framework supported the importance of threat assessment teams monitoring students who are on the social fringes of the school culture.

- Newman et al.’s (2004) framework also demonstrated the potential efficacy of a threat assessment team considering the psychological frame of mind of their students. Typically, this role would be performed by a trained psychologist or possibly a trained counselor in the school. A school administrator who has suspicion or knowledge of the presence of a psychological or social disorder (indicator two) should consult additional experts in the field as part of the threat assessment process.
• A school administrator who is aware of a potential threat and is evaluating the seriousness of a threat should also consider whether the student has a cultural script in place (indicator three). The current study confirmed Newman at al.’s (2004) assertion that cultural scripts such as witnessing violence in the home, playing violent video games or watching movies that glorify murder increase the potential risk of that student. While cultural scripts alone may not give reason to suspect a high likelihood for violence, when considered along with other factors, they may be a tipping point.

• Failure of surveillance systems (indicator four) applies to both the school and home environments. Results of this study reflected in nearly all of the examined cases, someone had prior knowledge of the threat and failed to report it.

• Access to guns (indicator five) proved 100% reliable in all the studied rampage school shooting incidents because without a weapon no attack would have occurred. When considering students as potential threats, school administrators should assess the ease of access to guns as part of the threat assessment process.

In conclusion, the results of the study’s three research questions support the use of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework as part of a behavioral threat assessment. Additional data tables are included below to provide insight to the specific cases considered in this study.

Additional Demographic Information

Analysis on the school shooters’ demographic and family information, included in Table 4.17, show all 14 perpetrators in the selected cases were male students. Eleven (79%) of the perpetrators were white, one was Hispanic, one was Native American, and one was Native
Alaskan/white. The perpetrators’ ages at the time of the incident ranged from 11 to 18 years and represented grades 6 to 12.

Ten (71%) of the perpetrators came from family environments where some form of neglect or abuse was occurring. Just under half (43%) of the home environments contained first-marriage parents without stepsiblings. Five (36%) were perpetrators who lived in homes with either one or no biological parent.

Family birth order varied among the perpetrators. Seven (50%) were second born, five (36%) were first born, and two (14%) were third born in their families. No perpetrator in this study came from a family with more than three children and one perpetrator was an only child.

Table 4.18 describes the communities where the selected rampage school shootings occurred. Each of the studied incidents occurred in different states. The community populations ranged from 1,907 to 92,000. No rampage school shooting occurred in an urban community. Six incidents occurred in rural communities (50%) and six in suburban communities (50%). Violent crime rates and median household incomes varied among the communities included in this study.
Table 4.17

School Shooter Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Birth Order</th>
<th>Parental Status</th>
<th>Home Environment</th>
<th>Family Problems (If Unstable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barry Loukaitis</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1st (Only Child)</td>
<td>2 Parent Married</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Neglect and verbal abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Ramsey</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Native Alaska/ White</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2nd of 3 boys</td>
<td>0 Parent Foster Home</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Woodham</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2nd of 2 boys</td>
<td>1 Parent (Mother) Divorce</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Neglect and verbal abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Carneal</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2nd (older sister)</td>
<td>2 Parent Married</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Typical Older Sister – High Achieving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Golden</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3rd of 3 (older ½ siblings)</td>
<td>2 Parent Married Step-Siblings</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Johnson</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1st of 2 boys</td>
<td>2 Parent Mother and Step-Father</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Neglect and verbal abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Wurst</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3rd of 3 boys (older ½ siblings)</td>
<td>2 Parent Married Step-Siblings</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Neglect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kip Kinkel</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2nd of 2 (older sister)</td>
<td>2 Parent Married</td>
<td>Stable*</td>
<td>Typical Older Sister – High Achieving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Harris</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2nd of 2 (older brother)</td>
<td>2 Parent Married</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>No issues other than his family frequently moved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table continued on next page
Table cont. from previous page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Family Status</th>
<th>Stability</th>
<th>Home Stability Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dylan Klebold</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2nd of 2 (older brother)</td>
<td>2 Parent Married</td>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>Parents frequently disagreed and a lack of warmth and love reportedly existed in the home. Klebold and his brother regularly fought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles “Andy” Williams</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2nd of 2 (older brother)</td>
<td>1 Parent (Father) Divorce</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Lack of parental supervision was the only known issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Weise</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Native Am.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Only Child (mother had 2 kids with another man)</td>
<td>0 Parent Foster care initially, then lived with maternal grandfather</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Father deceased and mother incapacitated; Weise lived with grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas “T.J.” Lane</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1st of 2 (younger sister)</td>
<td>0 Parent Lived with Maternal grandparents</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Neglect. Additionally, Lane was part of physical abuse towards an uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Reyes</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Hisp.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1st of 3 (younger sisters)</td>
<td>2 Parent Married</td>
<td>Unstable</td>
<td>Physical and verbal abuse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Research indicated Kinkel’s home stability issues were related to his parents’ ability to deal with Kinkel’s behavior. Known to his parents, Kinkel was able to accumulate weapons in his room. Just prior to the shooting incident, Kinkel’s parents were in the process of sending him to a residential treatment facility.*
### Table 4.18

Community Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City/Town of Residence</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Urbanicity</th>
<th>Violent Crime Rate (per 1,000 residents)</th>
<th>Median Household Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barry Loukaitis</td>
<td>Moses Lake, WA</td>
<td>14,953</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>$36,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Ramsey</td>
<td>Bethel, AK</td>
<td>5,471</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>$57,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Woodham</td>
<td>Pearl, MS</td>
<td>21,961</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>$37,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Carneal</td>
<td>Heath, KY(Paducah)</td>
<td>26,307</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>$33,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Golden, Mitchell Johnson</td>
<td>Westside, AR</td>
<td>1,907</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>$32,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Wurst</td>
<td>Edinboro, PA</td>
<td>6,950</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>$26,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kip Kinkel</td>
<td>Springfield, OR</td>
<td>52,864</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>$33,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Harris, Dylan Klebold</td>
<td>Littleton, CO</td>
<td>40,340</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>$71,319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles “Andy” Williams</td>
<td>Santee, CA</td>
<td>52,975</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>$53,624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Weise</td>
<td>Red Lake, MN</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>$23,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas “T.J.” Lane</td>
<td>Chardon, OH</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>$46,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Reyes</td>
<td>Sparks, NV</td>
<td>92,000</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>$45,745</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A description of the location and time of each rampage school-shooting incident is set forth in Table 4.19. Of the 12 selected incidents, three occurred in February (25%) and three in March (25%). Monday was the highest frequency day of the week with five incidents (42%) followed by Friday with three incidents (25%). Five occurrences (42%) occurred before the start of the school day while the remainder of the shootings took place during the school day. Three incidents occurred in the morning (25%) and three occurred in the afternoon (25%). The Edinboro, Pennsylvania, incident was the only shooting that occurred both at night and at an off-site school-sponsored event.

The point of entry for each rampage shooting varied. The main entrance of the school was accessed in two (17%) of the shootings. Access via the side or rear entrance of the school occurred four times (33%). In three cases (25%), the perpetrators did not enter the school. Once inside the school, most perpetrators targeted common areas such as the lobby, hallways or the cafeteria for their attack. This was the case in six (50%) cases. Two other shootings (17%) took place in common areas outside the school, i.e., playgrounds or basketball courts.

Rampage shooting incidents ended in a variety of ways. Three (25%) cases ended in the perpetrator’s suicide, four (33%) ended with police intervention, and four (33%) ended as a result of school staff and/or student intervention.
Table 4.19
Rampage School Shooting Incident Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Month / Year</th>
<th>Day of Week</th>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>Bus Drop off</th>
<th>School Entry Point</th>
<th>Location of Shooting</th>
<th>Dead or wounded</th>
<th>Shooter survived attack?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barry Loukaitis</td>
<td>Feb. 1996</td>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>2:00P (skipped classes)</td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>Side Door of school</td>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>3 D 1 W</td>
<td>Yes. Subdued by teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Ramsey</td>
<td>Feb. 1997</td>
<td>Wed.</td>
<td>Just prior to start of school</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Main entrance</td>
<td>Hallways, commons &amp; main lobby</td>
<td>2 D 2 W</td>
<td>Yes. Surrendered to police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Carneal</td>
<td>Dec. 1997</td>
<td>Mon. after holiday</td>
<td>Just prior to start of school</td>
<td>Sister Drove</td>
<td>Back Door</td>
<td>Lobby</td>
<td>3 D 5 W</td>
<td>Yes. Surrendered to principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Johnson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kip Kinkel</td>
<td>May 1998</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>7:55A</td>
<td>Drove (parked 1 block away)</td>
<td>Entered back of school</td>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>2 D 25 W</td>
<td>Yes. Five students subdued Kinkel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table continued on next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Initial Entrance</th>
<th>Location Description</th>
<th>Deceased?</th>
<th>Suicide?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric Harris, Dylan Klebold</td>
<td>Apr. 1999</td>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>11:17A</td>
<td>Drove</td>
<td>Entered door near cafeteria initially to place bombs. Exited and returned through side entrance</td>
<td>Shooting started outside school and proceeded throughout the building</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles “Andy” Williams</td>
<td>Mar. 2001</td>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>9:20A</td>
<td>Walked</td>
<td>Unknown.</td>
<td>Student Quad and men’s restroom</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Weise</td>
<td>Mar. 2005</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>3:00P</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Presumed to be main entrance. Door with metal detector and unarmed guard.</td>
<td>Killed security guard then entered a classroom</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas “T.J.” Lane</td>
<td>Feb. 2012</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Just prior to start of school</td>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>Unknown.</td>
<td>Cafeteria</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Reyes</td>
<td>Oct. 2013</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>Just prior to start of school</td>
<td>Drop off (Mom)</td>
<td>N/A outside school</td>
<td>Outside Basketball Courts</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This study did not yield a consistent pattern showing how the rampage school shooters gained access to guns (see Table 4.20). Other than the Columbine shooting, at least one of the guns used in the incident originated from within the perpetrator’s home. Additionally, in 10 out of the 12 incidents (83.3%), at least one of the guns accessed by the perpetrator was unsecured inside the home, and 11 of the 14 perpetrators (78.5%) had experience shooting a gun prior to the incident.

Table 4.21 shows the shooters included in this study resided within the attendance boundaries of the four middle schools and eight high schools where the incidents occurred. The enrollments of the schools where the shootings occurred ranged from approximately 250 to 1900 students. Some of the perpetrators had recently moved to the community, while others had lived their entire lives in the same community. This study showed nine out of the 14 perpetrators (64%) attended their current school for two years or less. In some cases, a transition had recently occurred from elementary to middle school or middle school to high school.

The majority of students in the study either achieved high academic marks or had teachers who considered them to be bright students. The study indicated school staff viewed the perpetrators as performing below average academically in three out of 14 cases (21%).

From a behavior perspective, three students (21%) had zero discipline or police issues, six students (43%) had minor school infractions (e.g. detention); while the remaining five students (36%) had at least one or more serious infraction (e.g., suspension or police involvement) prior to the shooting incident. Of the perpetrators in this study, eight out of the 14 had reportedly been bullied (57%), while only two of the 14 perpetrators (14%) had bullied other students.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weapons Carried</th>
<th>Source of Weapon</th>
<th>Location Gun Accessed From</th>
<th>Experience with firearms?</th>
<th>Gun locked?</th>
<th>Knowledge from peer, parent, school of access?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barry Loukaitis</td>
<td>1 rifle, 2 pistols</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Parents Home (no specifics)</td>
<td>Yes (played at home)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Ramsey</td>
<td>Shotgun</td>
<td>Foster Family</td>
<td>Safe near front door</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Woodham</td>
<td>Hunting Rifle</td>
<td>Owned by shooter</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Yes (Hunting)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Parent &amp; Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Carneal</td>
<td>2 shotguns, 2 pistols</td>
<td>Family and stolen from neighbor</td>
<td>Parents Home and broke into neighbor’s garage</td>
<td>Yes (Shot gun at summer camp)</td>
<td>Yes (Locked box)</td>
<td>Peers (Brought gun to school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Golden</td>
<td>3 rifles, &amp; 4 handguns</td>
<td>Parents and Golden’s Grandparents</td>
<td>House(s) of parents and grandparents (specific location not identified)</td>
<td>Yes (since age 6 was trained to shoot moving targets)</td>
<td>Yes – Rifles locked</td>
<td>Parents and school staff aware of possible threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Johnson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Wurst</td>
<td>Pistol</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Parents’ Room</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Father and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kip Kinkel</td>
<td>1 rifle, multiple handguns &amp; 1 knife</td>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>Kinkel’s room and parents guns elsewhere</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Parents, peers and school suspended him (Police also aware)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Harris</td>
<td>Multiple guns, knives, and bombs</td>
<td>Friend, accessed from gun show</td>
<td>Harris’ and Klebold’s bedroom</td>
<td>Yes (practiced with friends)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan Klebold</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>School Name (Enrolled)</td>
<td>Years at School</td>
<td>Academic Standing</td>
<td>Prior Behavioral Issues</td>
<td>Bullied Others</td>
<td>Victim of Bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry Loukaitis</td>
<td>Frontier MS (600)</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Honor Student</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Ramsey</td>
<td>Bethel HS (446)</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Honor Student</td>
<td>Yes (several minor infractions)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Possibly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Woodham</td>
<td>Pearl HS (975)</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Honor Student</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Carneal</td>
<td>Heath HS (550)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Average, declining grades, but IQ of 120</td>
<td>Yes (several minor infractions)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Golden</td>
<td>Westside MS (250)</td>
<td>1st 3rd</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Johnson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Wurst</td>
<td>Parker MS (900)</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kip Kinkel</td>
<td>Thurston HS (1,465)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Average, declining grades</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Considered a bright student</td>
<td>Considered intelligent</td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Harris</td>
<td>Columbine HS (1,900)</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan Klebold</td>
<td></td>
<td>4th</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles “Andy”</td>
<td>Santana HS (1,900)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (minor infractions)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Honor Roll</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Weise</td>
<td>Red Lake HS (300)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Failed 8th grade, but was well-spoken and enjoyed classic literature</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas “T.J.” Lane</td>
<td>Chardon HS* (1,100)</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Considered a bright student</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Reyes</td>
<td>Sparks MS (775)</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes (minor infractions)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Lane was technically attending Lake Academy Alternative School at the time of the incident. However, he rode a bus to Chardon HS where he took a transfer bus to Lake Academy.
Table 4.22 delineates several predisposing factors for rampage school shootings. Four (29%) of the shooters were classified as having been traumatized. Five shooters (36%) were psychopathic, and five of the shooters (36%) were psychotic (Langman, 2009).

Eleven out of the 14 (79%) perpetrators had suicidal ideations, and 12 (86%) showed signs of depression or desperation prior to carrying out their attacks. Additionally, 12 of the shooters (86%) demonstrated at least some form of family conflict. In some cases, these were minor problems, as was the case with Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold. In other cases, such as Evan Ramsey, physical and verbal abuse occurred in the home on a regular basis.

Additionally, nine of the perpetrators (64%) had not received treatment or services for their social or psychological issues prior to the shooting incident. Four of the perpetrators (29%) had been prescribed medication, and one perpetrator (7%) had been seeing a counselor outside of school prior to the shooting incident.

Summary

This study provides evidence supporting the use of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework for assessing individuals for their potential to become a rampage school shooter. While isolated incidents involved indicators that may not have provided sufficient evidence, in its entirety Newman et al.’s framework demonstrated efficacy. As such, based upon the results of this study school threat assessment teams should consider using Newman et al.’s framework.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Mental Illness/Disorder*</th>
<th>Suicide</th>
<th>Depression, Desperation</th>
<th>Family Problems</th>
<th>Prescription/ Counseling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barry Loukaitis</td>
<td>Psychopath</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(neglect and verbal abuse)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan Ramsey</td>
<td>No (traumatized)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(verbal and physical abuse)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Woodham</td>
<td>Psychotic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No evidence</td>
<td>(neglect and verbal abuse)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Carneal</td>
<td>Psychotic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No evidence</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Golden</td>
<td>Psychopath</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Possible neglect</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Johnson</td>
<td>No (traumatized)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (verbal and physical abuse)</td>
<td>Yes, Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Wurst</td>
<td>Psychotic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes (neglect)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kip Kinkel</td>
<td>Psychotic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, Prozac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>However, he murdered his parents before school shooting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Harris</td>
<td>Psychopath</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Possibly (frequent moves)</td>
<td>Yes, Luvox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dylan Klebold</td>
<td>Psychotic</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Possibly (frequent fighting at home)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles “Andy” Williams</td>
<td>Psychopath</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Possibly (neglect and frequent moves)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Weise</td>
<td>No (traumatized)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Murdered grandfather and his girlfriend before school shooting</td>
<td>Yes, Prozac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas “T.J.” Lane</td>
<td>Psychopath</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Yes (neglect)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Reyes</td>
<td>No (traumatized)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(verbal and physical abuse)</td>
<td>Yes, Prozac</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Langman (2009) purports Newman et al.’s (2004) use of the label of “mental illness” is not sufficient. He recommends categorization under the heading of “Psychological Type”. Langman’s rationale for this is “some of the traits or behaviors associated with psychopathy either are not manifested in children or are difficult to assess….the diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder might be applicable, but as defined in DSM-IV-TR, it cannot be applied to people under the age of 18”.

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This study analyzed Newman et al.’s (2004) framework to determine its efficacy for assessing the potential for predicting the occurrence of K-12 public school rampage shootings. In formulating the framework, Newman et al. did not intend to create a profile of potential rampage school shooters but rather they sought to develop a collection of warning signs or indicators that could be employed to avert a school shooting. My study’s goal was to examine the validity and efficacy of Newman et al.’s framework by replicating and extending their research. This was accomplished through a multi-round process of examining 12 incidents to determine if evidence under the framework’s five indicators were present.

Rocque (2012) acknowledged, “Rampage school shootings remain very rare occurrences which makes demonstration of any policy efficacy that seeks to prevent them problematic” (p. 310). While rampage school shootings remain infrequent, an increase in incidents over the past two decades has yielded an increased sample size for study. As a result, this increased sample size can be explored to identify potential patterns and tendencies of possible perpetrators. The data tables set forth in Chapter 4 provided insights relevant to that discussion.

framework should school officials include in their threat assessment or evaluation process to identify potential school shooters?” Based on the findings of the current study, each of Newman et al.’s (2004) indicators should be included as part of a comprehensive school threat assessment to help identify potential school shooters. Several observable behaviors and events should be included as part of a K-12 threat assessment based on review of the 12 incidents included in this study. For ease of discussion, Chapter 5 is organized by Newman et al.’s indicators. Each are presented and reviewed in relation to the current study’s findings.

Indicator One

Recall that indicator one relates to the rampage shooter feeling marginalized in social worlds important to him. School administrators should be aware of marginalized students who appear to be on the social fringes of the school culture. Table 4.21 reflects eight out of the 14 perpetrators in this study (57%) were bullied, a form of social marginalization. While not as common, two out of 14 perpetrators were considered bullies. Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson both bullied other kids. While this may be considered an anomaly to the results of the study, it is worthy to consider bullies at school may still feel marginalized in some manner.

Students who feel marginalized at home can often be overlooked. Andrew Golden, for example, came from a home in which his parents worked very long hours. Golden was often left alone in the home and likely felt neglected (BBC News, 1998 as cited in Verlinden et al., 2000). While stability at home cannot always be easily measured from demographic data, Levin and Madfis (2009) found that nearly half of the school shooters in their study came from homes ought with conflict. Therefore, schools should actively consider the family life of students and how it may lead to marginalization as part of their threat assessment process. Threat assessment
teams may request school counselors to meet with students to discuss their home environment. Additionally, threat assessment teams could request to meet directly with the parents and guardians to discuss concerns they see in school to identify if similar concerns exist at home. In very serious cases, police or child and family services may be a resources to perform home visits to investigate potential neglect or abuse.

Positive school climate could also be a way to mitigate the marginalization of students. School climate refers to the quality and character of student life. School officials should ensure the school climate provides a welcoming environment for sharing information regarding potentially threatening situations as a means to address students who may feel marginalized.

As part of a positive school climate, school staff should also model positive behaviors. A student threat not taken seriously or minimized by an adult can have severe consequences. Student social structure matters in regard to behavioral issues and staff must avoid special treatment of certain students. For example, students held to a different standard, such as athletes and cheerleaders, as was the case in Columbine, can quickly cause deterioration in a school climate. Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris experienced taunts and slurs from athletes and felt staff did not intervene because of the athletes’ elite social status. Administration should immediately address situations where staff show preference for certain students or groups of students.

Another method for building a positive school climate includes student participation in extra-curricular activities. Schools that support students in finding opportunities to connect with other students in clubs and activities promote the likelihood students will feel included in the school structure. Administrators and staff can create additional activities and/or clubs as a method to foster a positive school climate. If opportunities exist to recognize students who are part of non-traditional clubs or activities, schools can enhance the climate with very little effort.
or expense. Newman et al. (2004) note that middle schools are usually primary targets of such initiatives. This can often be the time in a child’s life when he starts to feel more marginalized.

School administrators who seek to improve school climate should consider research by Pollack et al. (2008), who noted, “Simple and genuine measures, such as regularly greeting students, talking to students, and addressing students by name, help to make students feel connected and part of the school” (p. 8). School safety and security are dependent on two conditions: 1) a predictable and orderly environment characterized by school staff establishing consistent, dependable supervision and disciplinary procedures and 2) the climate being rooted in students feeling they are connected to the school and supported by their teachers and support staff (Cornell, 2006).

Several popular initiatives, such as cameras and metal detectors, of the post-Columbine era have not been successful in creating a positive school climate. Such initiatives likely worked to alienate students and produced a climate of fear and distrust (Trump, 2011). Additionally, the use of zero-tolerance policies has not proven successful in reducing violence (Trump). Furthermore, excluding students from the school setting through expulsions and suspensions does not resolve the underlying issues or reduce existing conflicts. Jeffrey Weise, for example, was expelled from Red Lake High School, yet the school was still targeted. Such actions have even aggravated and enraged students to commit violent attacks (Levin & Madfis, 2009; Madfis, 2012). Additionally, installations of armed security guards, security cameras, and metal detectors have failed to prevent school shootings. For example, Table 4.19 notes Weise’s attack at Red Lake High School included a confrontation with a security guard at an entrance where cameras and metal detectors existed. Weise immediately shot the guard and proceeded through the school seeking additional targets.
Research from Levin and Madfis (2009) found that rampage school shooting attacks often are part of a “cumulative strain” in which small incidents build (p. 1229). Their research suggests opportunities are likely to exist that would deter the escalation of violence such as warning signs in which school staff could intervene. However, “the problem is that teachers and school psychologists, and counselors do not always react to troubled students until they become troublesome and are seen as a threat to others” (Levin & Madfis, 2009, p. 1241 emphasis in original). School staff should identify and attempt to resolve these strains and neutralize the isolation from building into a potential massacre.

Marginalization may be one of the more challenging indicators for school threat assessment teams to monitor. It requires the ability to compare the behaviors of the student to a baseline of behaviors to monitor multiple interactions with various staff to attempt to discern if a pattern of troubling activities become apparent. Allowing teachers and other school staff the opportunity to collaborate and share information regarding students is an important objective for school administrators. Promoting a culture of inclusion and allowing multiple opportunities for students to feel a sense of belonging at school should be another primary objective.

Indicator Two

Indicator two considers how a rampage school shooters mental or social and emotional state may magnify marginalized feelings discussed in indicator one. A school administrator who has suspicion or knowledge of the presence of a psychological or social disorder may already be supporting those students through school-based counseling, social work, or psychological services. Special education services might be provided to some students as well. In some case, school teams should not limit their involvement to simply those services. When possible, threat
assessment teams should consider whether the student has received any outside mental health or counseling services. Mitchell Johnson was the only perpetrator included in this study who was known to have received counseling services. Johnson contemplated suicide as early as the age of ten, yet it was unknown if school staff were aware of these issues. Additionally, Kip Kinkel was prescribed Prozac and described the summer he was taking it to be the best summer of his life. Kinkel stopped taking Prozac prior to the shooting. It is unknown if school officials knew about Kinkel’s use of Prozac and/or the decision to cease the use of it. School staff must tread lightly in areas of mental health and social disorder issues. Only trained professionals should be involved directly with the student when assessing any potential diagnoses.

The predisposing factors of the rampage school shooters included in this study are located in Table 4.22. The vast majority (79%) had known suicidal ideations and 86% presented as depressed or desperate prior to the attack. However, depressed persons may never have suicidal or homicidal ideations. Nevertheless, this study offers a case for K-12 administrators to be aware that suicidal ideations, depression and desperation might manifest into severe violence within the school. Students with suicidal ideations may also need to be evaluated as a risk to others and be properly routed through a designated threat assessment process until evidence suggests otherwise. Furthermore, threat assessment teams should consider how familial supports factor into a potential threat.

Typically, mental health services are not provided in a school setting and school employees can be unaware that a student is receiving mental health services. However, under new federal education law, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), legal restrictions on school staff’s ability to intervene may be decreasing. Rossen and Cowan (2016) noted how ESSA “authorizes significant funding and provides broad latitude for states and districts to establish the
services and systems that best meet the needs of their school communities” (p. 30). Schools usually do not provide mental health services during the school day, but perhaps they should because community resources can be fragmented and detached from educational needs (Rossen & Cowan).

“One in five students will have a diagnosable mental health disorder at some point during their school-age years that significantly impacts their ability to be successful” (Rossen & Cowan, 2016, p.29). Rossen and Cowan suggest the issue of mental health care in school districts is analogous to their responsibility for other disabling conditions, such as vision impairment. While a student’s vision impairment has been traditionally considered something that adversely impacts education, mental health issues are not visible in some students who may internalize matters. While some students likely exhibit warning signs in regard to mental health, others are adept at masking their symptoms.

Trump (2011) contends budget constraints and limitations on staff time are two major obstacles schools experience in supporting mental health initiatives. Unfortunately, even if schools do a great job of supporting students’ mental health issues during the school day, those same students may be experiencing a dysfunctional home or community environment.

Similar to suggestions under indicator one, school administrators should strive to find time for teachers and related services staff to collaborate regularly. While focusing on instructional time is certainly the priority, allowing time for staff to discuss their students’ dispositions may provide a clearer picture of a student demonstrating depressed or desperate behaviors (Newman et al., 2004). Middle schools’ use of grade level teaching teams is one such model that may support an opportunity for information sharing.
With one out of five students likely to be experiencing some type of mental health issue, school staff need to dedicate time to issues discussed in indicator two. Even if students never exhibit signs of taking action on a serious violent attack, there is value in addressing concerns under indicator two to improve success in the classroom. As Rossen and Cowan (2016) indicate, issues related to mental health and social disorders impede the learning process and should be treated as such. School administrators should be conscious of those who feel ignored and left out by society. In serious instances, students may find examples of violence that provide an outlet for their feelings.

Indicator Three

Indicator three relates to the rampage shooter having a template or cultural script in place for how a violent attack may resolve their problems. Gun violence in America is considerably higher than in other advanced countries (Ingraham, 2015). According to the FBI, United States gun homicides totaled 8,124 in 2014, i.e., more than 22 gun homicides per day.

Media, movies, music, and video games may provide further templates for how both fictional and non-fictional characters resolve matters with violence. Students who enjoy violent video games, movies, music or are obsessed with prior mass shooting or genocide events should rise to the level of concern in a threat assessment process. In some cases, adolescents make very strong connections to how characters in the media content they consume are able to resolve their struggles through violence (Newman et al., 2004). Jose Reyes (Sparks, NV), for example, believed first-hand shooter video games and movie characters succeeded in resolving problems through violence.
A school team evaluating the seriousness of a threat should also consider whether the student has a real-life cultural script in place. If a student comes from a home in which violence occurs, as did Evan Ramsey (Bethel, AK) and Jose Reyes, evidence suggests he/she is more likely to be a potential perpetrator in a rampage school shooting. School staff should have a process for including these data in their threat assessment.

Developing adolescent minds are seeking role models. In some situations, role models are not found in reality but are found in fictional characters that may create a sense of connection. Michael Carneal referenced a movie *The Basketball Diaries* and Barry Loukaitis cited *Natural Born Killers*, as movies that may have glamorized the redemptive feeling of violence towards others. Additionally, obsessions with past school shooting incidents and historical genocide (such as Nazi Germany) may indicate an adolescent is seeking notoriety without concern for the ramifications of their actions. Such was the case with Eric Harris and Jeffrey Weise who were fascinated with Hitler. Andy Williams talked about “pulling a Columbine,” and Jose Reyes viewed information on perpetrators including Kip Kinkel, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, and T.J. Lane. While cultural scripts alone do not give reason to suspect a high likelihood for violence, when considered among other factors, they may form a tipping point.

Indicator Four

Indicator four contemplates a failure of surveillance systems to identify troubled youth. Failure of surveillance systems, also applies to both school and home environments. School staff have opportunities to understand potential warning signs that may take place in either a home or school setting. School administrators may be able to learn if a student is largely unsupervised at
home. Neglected youth, such as Andy Williams (Santee, CA) or Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson (Westside, AR), often had parents who either worked long hours or failed to engage appropriately in their lives. In some situations, the home environment contained either one or no biological parents. Evan Ramsey was one of five perpetrators included in this study who lived in a home without both biological parents. In Ramsey’s case he lived in a series of foster homes and experienced considerable neglect and abuse. Threat assessment teams should try to determine the household makeup and adjust the level of risk associated with a student based on such knowledge.

Findings of the current study, similar to many preceding it, demonstrated that leaked information often preceded a violent attack. Klebold and Harris told multiple friends of their attack and foreshadowed violence and despair in their school assignments. Kip Kinkel’s school assignments also demonstrated profanity and violence. Andy Williams told multiple friends of his planned attack to the extent that at least one friend searched his pants for a gun on the morning of the attack (unfortunately, the gun was in his backpack, which was not checked). Vossekuil et al. (2002) reported that over 80% of their perpetrators communicated their scheme to at least one individual and nearly 60% informed multiple persons. To enhance school climate, school administrators must provide resources for students to safely communicate potential risks without fear of retribution or belief they will simply be ignored.

More directly, schools are in a position to monitor students who make threats. Many students in this study foreshadowed their acts of violence. In some cases, homework and writing assignments were marred with disturbing and violent threats or images. In other cases, students learned of the attacks well in advance. These are all forms of leakage. School administrators must make it a priority to create a culture in which students and staff tell someone if they are
suspicious or worried about a potential written or verbal threat. All threats or concerns must be treated respectfully. Student fear of retribution for reporting such incidents should be minimized as much as possible. Threat assessment teams should consider implementation of some type of anonymous tip line to encourage sharing those concerns without fear of what may happen.

School officials also face a challenge in monitoring potential student threats due to changes in educational environment. Assimilating into a school’s culture is a difficult and emotional process for an adolescent who seeks to cultivate an identity or sense of belonging (Humphrey & Ainscow, 2006). Even transitions perceived as normal, e.g., elementary to middle school and middle school to high school, can be challenging (Anderson, Jacobs, Schramm, & Splittergerber, 2000). Table 4.21 shows the number of years each perpetrator had attended the school prior to the shooting incident. Nine of the perpetrators (64%) had attended their school for less than two years. Michael Carneal and Jose Reyes had attended their school for less than a year after transitioning from another school within the school district. Administrators should consider using transitions as opportunities for incoming students to connect with students and staff. These transitions also afford staff to learn more about incoming students.

Students who move to a new community, are assigned to alternative schools, are homeschooled, or attend different school districts for grades K-8 and high school may require additional coordination to understand better their behaviors and characteristics. Newman et al. (2004) and Rocque (2012) advocated for increased staff accessibility to academic, counseling, and disciplinary records for new students. While concerns about labeling or stigmatizing students by sharing prior records exist, the potential damage of not sharing such records may be far greater. In addition, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records. Administrators should be aware of the law and follow
consent guidelines before disclosing any personally identifiable information. Therefore, the first course of action by an administrator might be to request consent from the parent or legal guardian. Once consent is received, the information may be shared. If consent is not obtained, legal counsel should be consulted to determine what, if any, student related records can be shared. However, threat assessment teams may be able to take advantage of FERPA exceptions for sharing information without consent when there is an “actual, impending, or imminent emergency, such as an articulable and significant threat” (USDOE, 2013 p. 41). Ultimately, administrators must balance the privacy rights of the student against the potential risk of harm when deciding what action to take.

Trump (2011) asserts it is both unfair and unrealistic for schools to bear the burden of solving youth mental health issues but contends the school should absolutely be a “key player at the table” (p. 118). The information school administrators can gather is limited by privacy laws; however, they should not hesitate to ask for consent to collect the most information possible to make an informed decision about a potentially serious threat. Even if parents do not provide consent, school administrators can share their concerns about the student directly with the parents and, in serious cases, directly with a community based counselor. Such action may serve as an opportunity to confirm whether similar observed behaviors have taken place outside of the school setting. Mental health professionals are bound by confidentiality except in certain cases. For example, they are required to report serious and immediate threats (Tarasoff v Regents of the University of California, Cal. 1976), but in an exception under 45 CFR 164.512 in which a provider may disclose information to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat is permissible (Ellis, 2016).
School administrators also should consider alternative staffing options to monitor student threats. Limited research has indicated that School Resource Officers (SROs) decrease general school violence, but the impact they may have on rampage school shootings is even more difficult to discern given the limited sample size (Newman et al., 2004). Increased employment of SROs came from the increase in school shootings in the late 1990s but slowed during budget cuts following the great recession (Trump, 2011). If a district has SROs, they should function as school employees to help students through challenging situations and avert a path to violence. The goal should not be for the SRO to “cuff and stuff” by making arrests or simply reacting to trouble (p. 86).

The home environment is a challenging area for school officials to monitor. While it cannot be expected that every student’s home life becomes the business of school staff, this study found potential for threat assessment teams to consider the home environment of students as part of the assessment process. Table 4.17 indicates 10 (71%) of the perpetrators’ homes were unstable. Additionally, less than half (43%) of the home environments contained two biological parents. Neglect and abuse were common in 57% of the home lives of perpetrators included in this study. The collective study on birth order data revealed no conclusive trends; however, 50% of the cases examined in this study revealed the perpetrator was second born and did not have a strong relationship with his older sibling. Threat assessment teams may want to consider if there is an academically successful and/or popular older sibling and what this relationship may mean in terms of the younger sibling’s ability to fit in both in school and at home. For example, Kip Kinkel (Springfield, OR) and Michael Carneal (Heath, KY) had older sisters who were considered both smart and popular. Pressure to live up to their older siblings’ successes may have been a contributing factor. Interestingly, no perpetrators in this study came from a home
environment with four or more children. Since the sample size of this study is small, no viable conclusions should be made about family size or birth order. Future studies may wish to expand upon this analysis.

Strong communication and collaboration skills are required to sufficiently address concerns under indicator four. School administrators must be able to respond to forms of leakage and direct concerns to a threat assessment team as necessary. From that point, threat assessment teams would be wise to access all necessary resources. Strong community relationships with organizations such as police and family counseling agencies may help to avert a situation from turning violent.

Indicator Five

Indicator five assesses a rampage school shooter’s ability to gain access to guns or other weapons. Access to guns or other weapons is the only indicator that is 100% reliable in predicting a rampage school shooting incident. This seems rather obvious, as all rampage shootings necessarily have guns involved as they are shootings. Although all rampage shooters in this study had access to guns, many students have access to guns. This does not mean any student who has access to a gun should rise to the level of concern for a threat assessment team, it is simply another indicator for the team to be aware of as it completes a comprehensive threat assessment.

Threat assessment teams should evaluate a student’s access to a gun from multiple perspectives. The student’s household should be a primary focus. Does the parent own a weapon? Is the weapon kept in a secure location? In threats concerning the safety of an individual, an SRO or police officer should visit the home to check on and inquire about
weapons in the home. Threat assessment teams should also consider the student’s peers in evaluating a student’s potential access to weapons. In the case of Klebold and Harris guns were accessed through peers; in this case, older peers were able to purchase weapons without parental permission. A threat assessment team’s ability to consider multiple sources for accessing a weapon rather than locking in on the home environment creates a higher probability for averting an incident.

School administrators may ask parents if they have guns or weapons in the home and if they are secured. In serious cases, the police could get involved through home visits to assess the situation. Police involvement is essential in this area. Possession of guns by minors or attempts to access unregistered or stolen weapons are police matters. Parents of students who pose a potential threat and who may be careless about securing weapons are also concerns with which the police can assist. While laws exist to protect gun owner’s rights, police and/or parent intervention can help prevent the ease of access by the suspected student. Additionally, police may know of suspected gun suppliers in the community and can help monitor specific students thus assisting the school in its process.

A 2012 Congressional Research Services report estimated there were approximately 310 million guns in 2009 and approximately 357 million in 2013 (Ingraham, 2015). These estimates indicate there are more guns than people in the United States. The number of weapons on K-12 school campuses continues to be a concern. For example, a 2015 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report noted 5% of students surveyed had carried a weapon to school within the 30 days prior to the survey’s administration. According to the NCES’s 2015 study, during the 2013-14 school year, schools reported 1,501 firearm possession incidents, or three occurrences per 100,000 students. While the NCES study did not focus on gun control legislation, it should
be noted the 14 perpetrators included in this study were able to access a gun. Many of the perpetrators’ parents, guardians or neighbors had failed to secure firearms in their homes. As shown in Table 4.20, the perpetrators accessed at least one unsecured gun in 10 out of the 12 shooting incidents (83.3%) included in this study. No patterns emerged about how and from where guns were accessed. While many law-abiding citizen own guns and treat them responsibly, there was a consistent pattern of neglect or carelessness by the parents, guardians, and family members of the perpetrators included in this study.

In spite of the information presented above, recent data suggest some improvement in keeping guns away from children. The NCES (2015) study found students ages 12-18 who reported access to a loaded gun without adult permission decreased from 7% in 2007 to 4% in 2013.

While access to guns alone may not pose a problem, students identified in the threat assessment process should be evaluated based, in part, on the student’s ability to access a gun. In each of the incidents studied, students accessed guns. Usually this was due to the gun being unsecured. Threat assessment teams are limited in their ability to control whether weapons are stored in a child’s home and/or if they are securely stored. However, threat assessment teams can consider the probability of risk of weapons in the students’ home and engage local police to assist in protecting the safety of their students and staff.

Additional Considerations for Threat Assessment Teams

In addition to considering Newman et al.’s (2004) five indicators, there are factors threat assessment teams may want to consider. These are set forth below. The threat assessment approach requires a member of a threat assessment team to gather information and answer
questions to determine whether sufficient evidence exists to suggest a school shooting may occur (Reddy et al., 2001). Thus, the development of an effective threat assessment approach may be the ideal initial step in the identification of potential behaviors or outcomes (Chavez, 1999; Furlong & Morrison, 2000 as cited in Reddy et al.). In Chapter 2, Cornell’s (2006) Virginia Model for Student Threat Assessment provided background for a research-based method that school-threat assessment teams could use as a template. Other potential threat assessment models also exist. For example, Deisinger and Randazzo (2008) created a decision tree model for use by K-12 school officials.

Regardless of the threat assessment model school officials elect to employ, all threat assessment processes are conceptually similar. Their common purpose is to identify a threat and determine how serious the threat may be. For students identified as potential school shooters, school officials can mitigate risk of an incident by implementing a risk management plan as well as referring the potential school shooter to a counselor, social worker, psychologist, and/or other mental health related services (Reddy et al., 2001).

Threat assessment team members should have varying roles depending on the specific school district and the type of assessment process the team chooses to employ. Prior research shows assessment team participants should include principals, mental health professionals, and law enforcement officers (Langman, 2015; Newman et al., 2004; O’Toole, 2001). Larger school districts or high schools may be able to include additional staff, such as a dean of students. In general, the size of the threat assessment team should not be larger than is necessary to conduct timely and objective reviews. Team sizes can be either expanded or contracted in response to the nature of a specific threat.
The threat assessment team should strive to differentiate between credible student threats and false alarms and should examine multiple perspectives related to the background of the student who made the threat (Langman, 2015). For example, if the student is receiving special education services, it may be necessary to include special education staff on the team. It may also be necessary to include outside school staff, such as legal counsel, to assist on a case-by-case basis. Regardless of team size or the roles of the team members, documentation of the entire process will ensure a consistent threat assessment approach.

School Shooter Profiling

Utilizing school shooter characteristics from previous incidents to develop a profile or checklist for preventing future attacks is not recommended. A threat assessment team should utilize previous incidents to assist in widening the scope of potential ways a school shooter may reveal their intentions prior to the attack. Additionally, members of a threat assessment team may find it helpful to examine the information in Tables 4.17 and 4.21 to avoid potential biases. Table 4.21 provides data showing the majority of students in this study were considered average or above average academically and in most cases (74%) never had a serious school infraction (suspension or police involvement). School administrators may have a blind spot for certain groups of students who have historically perpetrated a rampage school shooting. It may run counterintuitive to members of a threat assessment team that intelligent Caucasian males have the capacity to execute a rampage school shooting. Table 4.17 notes that only male students have perpetrated a rampage school shooting attack. This does not mean a female student would never be an attacker, but the probability is less likely based on past data.
Table 4.19 presents details of specific rampage school shooting incidents. The conclusion of the attack varied among the 12 incidents. While some perpetrators were stopped through police intervention, in just as many cases (33%), a school staff or student assisted in ending the rampage. Three incidents (25%) ended in suicide. Interestingly, a rampage attack culminating in suicide had not occurred prior to Columbine. Since Columbine, three out of five incidents (60%) have ended in suicide. Possibly Columbine represented a shift in the approach of rampage school shooters toward an outcome beginning with an assault on others but culminating in suicide. This is a relatively new trend and should be considered with caution. However, a threat assessment team considering a student who is suicidal as only a risk to him/herself would be wise to be aware that a shift toward harming others could develop and manifest in a rampage school shooting.

Community Considerations

Table 4.18 sets forth the characteristics of the communities included in this study. Fifty percent of the incidents happened in rural settings, while 50% occurred in suburban settings. The results of this study suggest rampage school shootings are more likely to occur in communities located outside an urban or large city area. This study indicated rampage school shootings were not related to the community’s violent crime rate, median household income, or size of population. Newman et al. (2004) note close knit and homogenous communities present a greater potential threat. The current study was not able to either confirm or refute that claim. Regardless, administrators should avoid believing that a rampage shooting “can’t happen here”.
School Facilities

Schools typically have many doors that are easily accessible from the outside (Trump, 2011), which increases the opportunity for a malicious attack on schools. For example, Table 4.19 indicates Kip Kinkel and Michael Carneal both entered through an unsecured back door of the school. In the Columbine attack, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold entered unsecured doors near the cafeteria. At the time of those attacks, leaving doors accessible at multiple locations throughout the school day was common. However, such practices have largely changed in today’s school environment. This study’s findings did not identify any specific patterns associated with school facility entry points or shooting locations. Common spaces such as hallways, lobbies, cafeterias, and playgrounds were typically the setting for rampage school shooting. However, no trends of the specific location among these common areas were identified in this study.

Convenience for parents and staff generally drives the desire to have multiple points of access. Trump (2011) recommends use of panic bars that secure the door from the outside but allow for egress in the case of an emergency. In recent years, many schools have moved toward investing in single points of entry along with visitor management systems (Trump).

While no incidents in this study occurred in a portable classroom, their use presents a safety concern. Trump (2011) noted that two of the main concerns include unlocked doors and a lack of communication with the main facility. If school districts feel portable classrooms are necessary, they need to include such areas in the district-threat assessment plan. Assuming portable classrooms are absolutely necessary, school administrators should limit their use and discontinue use of portable classrooms when capacity in the school building allows for it.
Even if portable classrooms are not used, communication systems in school buildings are often antiquated. In cases of a school shooting, the ability to notify staff immediately and proceed into lockdown procedures are essential. Trump (2011) argues for the use of cell phones by crisis team members to ensure positive communication flow even if classroom phone systems are down.

School districts considering new facility construction should consider Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). CPTED is a field of study dedicated to the application of concepts associated with how design impacts safety (Trump, 2011). Trump recommends inclusion of these concepts early in the design process. Areas of focus include the placement of common areas and sites for after-hours events, parking lot placement and traffic patterns, and line of sight for hallways and areas requiring supervision. Trump contends that implementing measures focused on addressing safety is much easier in the initial construction process than attempting to retrofit a campus. Building chain-link fences around schools, increasing lighting, and removing graffiti are part of recommended practices for school administrators (Fox & Burstein, 2010 as cited in Rocque, 2012).

Challenges exist around measuring the efficacy of additional security measures. Metal detectors, security cameras and random locker sweeps must be balanced against the perceived loss of freedom each initiative includes. Despite the spread of such initiatives since the Columbine attack, there is not a method of rigorous evaluation to demonstrate their success (Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Snell et al., 2002 as cited in Rocque, 2012).

Nationally, school districts have reported at least one positive tendency in access point procedures. An NCES study (2015) found approximately 76% of students aged 12-18 observed
locked entrance or exit doors during the school day in 2013. That represented an increase of 11% from 2011 and a 38% increase from 1999.

Further attention to school facility design and improvements is needed in K-12 schools. Partnerships with police, fire, and regional safety organizations likely will yield potential opportunities for improvement. As school districts consider remodeling, expansion of facilities, or constructing new school buildings, it is advised that threat assessment experts be included in the design phase to ensure student safety is considered.

Limitations of Study

This study was limited in several ways. First, the sample size was constrained. Thankfully, we do not have more occurrences to draw from as rampage school shooting incidents devastate communities. While future years likely will yield opportunity for a larger sample size, it is unknown if there will ever be a point when a study will include a large enough sample from past results to produce a completely reliable and valid threat assessment procedure that averts future rampage school shootings.

Since this study did not consider averted rampage school shootings, it was limited in its consideration of comparative data from schools that had prevented incidents. There may be validity in future research identifying specific attributes of school staff to student ratios where rampage school shootings took place compared to those that averted a similar incident.
Suggestions for Future Study

Future research should include a more in-depth consideration of facility design and staffing models to support best practice behavioral threat assessment models. For example, do schools have one single point of entry throughout the day? If not, who monitors entry and exit points in the school? Does that person, or persons, change depending on the time of day? Is monitoring done actively or passively? When school districts renovate or construct new schools, how are safety considerations handled? What communication plans are in place should something suspicious occur? Areas of research such as this may prove valuable to the field as K-12 administrators consider optimal school facility design in assessing threats at their schools.

This study did not include averted rampage school shooting attacks. Future research should focus specifically on the discrete category of averted rampage school shootings. Obtaining detailed data on these events is challenging, mostly because the high levels of media coverage and journal articles do not extend to incidents in which a shooting incident never occurred. Even when an averted incident does rise to the level of media coverage, the news cycle is short and the details necessary for a research-based study typically are not easily accessible. Knowing the successful ways in which schools have discovered and prevented rampage attacks would be helpful for principals and threat assessment teams.

Further research should also focus on the specific training and professional development process for K-12 staff. How prepared principals and superintendents feel about leading their respective buildings or district through the implementation of a behavioral threat assessment process is unclear. Determining the specific challenges at K-12 school districts will provide the
field with a better understanding of resources for developing strong threat assessment teams grounded in best practice research.

At the time of this study, only the state of Virginia has a requirement for behavioral threat assessments at the K-12 level. In contrast, many collegiate campuses have a mandated process (Ellis, 2016). Current research does not indicate the rationale for limiting the requirement to the collegiate level. Future research on this practice will be valuable to the field. Based on my research, I feel all schools should have a behavioral threat assessment process. The primary concern for school administrators must be safe educational environments and the well-being of students. While the process should be flexible enough to meet the needs of each individual school district, all districts should be engaged in the process and identify a model for proactively evaluating threats to their specific educational environment.

Conclusion

This study supports the use of Newman et al.’s (2004) framework as part of a behavioral threat assessment. Principals of K-12 schools and associated school staff, including a behavioral threat assessment team, are the anticipated beneficiaries of this study. Superintendents and other senior leadership team members at the district level will also benefit from the findings of this study through providing additional supports and resources to those individuals charged with monitoring student threats.

Superintendent and Principal preparatory courses should include awareness on mental health research and legal implications for staff. Staff training should focus on what supports schools may provide to mitigate risks associated with mental health. School administration should not ignore the effects mental health has on the learning process given approximately 20% of school-
aged children are impacted (Rossen & Cowan, 2016). Schools can assist in lowering barriers to seeking mental health care by reducing the stigma, reducing scheduling conflicts and eliminating transportation challenges. Training for staff should also focus on how to build relationships with community-based resources. Schools cannot support the mental needs youth in their community alone. Forging strong relationships and building trust within the community is essential.

From a legal perspective, school staff should be trained on the proper way to handle a student who is believed to have a mental health or social disorder. Teachers should provide referrals to trained experts, such as social workers or psychologists within the school building or district. Principals should ensure building staff communicate legitimate concerns to them as soon as an issue is suspected. Principals and superintendents would benefit from training on how to navigate through the appropriate process when investigating behavioral threats from students to best understand when confidentiality applies and when it may be broken. Community-based counselors and/or parents may initially be reluctant to disclose otherwise confidential information, but school administrators with serious or imminent concerns for the safety or self or others should pursue and share information about the student in order to protect the safety of all students and staff.

School districts need to account for how the various roles on a threat assessment team will collectively position the district to avert the myriad of threats that may arise. Principals and threat assessment teams must feel empowered and supported in identifying and acting on potential student threats. Schools with a threat assessment in place must inform their superintendent about the efficacy of the process. Threat assessment teams should ensure a consistent and comprehensive assessment is being utilized in each situation.
Use of a threat assessment model, such as Deisinger and Randazzo’s (2008) decision tree model, outline the process threat assessment teams should take to identify the seriousness and legitimacy of the potential threat. Common to all threat assessment processes should be an initial screening to determine if the threat is imminent. School staff should consider the specificity of the threat to determine if it is substantive or transient. All substantive and imminent threats would be directed immediately to law enforcement. Assuming the threat is not imminent, the concerned staff member should discuss the situation with the Principal to determine if a substantive concern exists. Upon determining one exists, the threat assessment team should meet to conduct a full inquiry. Assessment teams have the option of developing a management plan or referring the case to a trained expert. Critical to the process, the threat assessment team must be diligent about documentation and follow up on all cases. It is recommended that a regular meeting is established to monitor and discuss ongoing management plans or referrals. This may be done on a monthly basis or potentially more frequent depending on the availability of the team. Threat assessment team should set aside time to reflect on the lessons learned from the process once a case is officially closed.

While the Board of Education and community need not be involved in the details of a threat assessment process, they should have knowledge of the school district’s research-based approach for prevention of school-based threats. Administration should understand partnerships with local police, fire, community-based counseling services and other agencies help to enhance the efficacy of the threat assessment process.

Additional professional development opportunities exist for Superintendents and Principals related to facility design and operational school facility procedures. Schools should strive to do more than the minimum requirements. Teachers and school building staff are adept at
knowing the priority trainings take based on the manner in which the training is conducted. It is recommended that drills are directed in as realistic manner as possible. Active shooter drills are required in some states, but do not necessitate students being involved in the training. Further, these trainings may be conducted at any time in the day and date in the school year. While such trainings may provoke concern for students and parents, being prepared for such an event is not possible without regular and realistic practice. Schools are encouraged to effectively communicate the importance of such trainings and attempt to create scenarios that closely simulate a real attack. Research has shown many active shooter incidents take place before school hours or over the lunch period. Trainings during these times of the day are recommended.

Finally, building staff should be considered the true first responders to an incident. Teachers may find themselves in a position to either save a wounded colleagues life by administering first aid, defend their students from the attack, or to apprehend the perpetrator. School staff should be trained in these areas as well.

Communication systems should be well thought out. Use of cell phones, classroom phones, walkie-talkies, and intercom systems in the school may all be considered as part of the plan. Ensuring these communication devices work effectively should be a priority.

Operationally, staff should be aware of the building security measures and ensure only authorized access to the building is allowed. All visitors and late student arrivals should proceed through the main visitor entrance. Administrative staff must take seriously their role to monitor who enters and exits the facility. Suspicious activity and non-compliance of building procedures should be addressed immediately. Bus drivers, custodians, and food service staff should all be trained to be alert for suspicious activity and to report concerns immediately to the building Principal.
When administration remodels or builds a new school, it is important to invite emergency responders into the conversations during or prior to the design process. Special attention should be taken towards protecting the perimeter of the property with barrier fencing that allows sight beyond the property boundary. Staff in the administrative office should have highly visible sight lines to high traffic areas including parking lots and the main entrance. Additional time to prepare for a potential risk may prove to be critical.

A potential rampage school shooting could be plotted anywhere. School staff must be prepared and proactive in their threat assessment approach. Given the massive destruction to the community, administrators must take on the obligation to have means in place to avert a serious violent attack seriously. O’Toole et al. (2000) pioneered the shift from the use of a simple profile for a shooter to a more effective model of evaluation. Behavioral threat assessment teams are likely the best method for prevention. While no process will completely eliminate risk, an assessment team utilizing Newman et al.’s (2004) framework as described in this study may be the best investment of time and resources a school district has to protect the safety of its students.

Verlinden et al. (2000) argued for differentiating risk factors for school shootings compared to general youth violence. This means that even within the general threat assessment process, there may be a need for discrete indicators based on the type of violent attack the team is seeking to avoid. The process of evaluating a child for a routine behavioral issue or for minor crimes, such as stealing, has not proven to be an effective indicator for evaluating threats of a more serious and potentially deadly nature, such as rampage school shootings (McGee & DeBernardo, 1999; Newman et al., 2004; Verlinden et al.).

While Newman et al.’s (2004) framework provides a solid base for a reliable prevention approach for rampage school shootings, schools must consider how to account for the various
types and levels of threats they may encounter. A successful threat assessment relies on communication among administrators, teachers and students to create an environment in which threats of violence are reported routinely, investigated, and addressed and the contributing underlying factors receive appropriate attention (Collins, 2007). As future research provides a broader perspective on the topic, administrators should monitor the field and compare new theories to the effectiveness of their own district’s approach.
REFERENCES


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