



# Indiana Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc.

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This series of observations and suggestions from the Indiana Association of Chiefs of Police regarding the safety of schools in Indiana is intended to provide guidance and practical advice from chiefs who have dealt with school shooting incidents in their jurisdictions. It relies heavily on best practice literature from the US Department of Justice, the FBI's Behavioral Sciences Unit, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, and the expertise of the IACP's school safety specialists.

There are vast differences in school systems, their resources, available social and mental health services, and responding law enforcement, fire, and emergency medical services in Indiana. There are also differences in the degree of levels of security communities are willing to permit in the school environment. For these reasons any guidelines for school safety must be carefully evaluated and considered within the context of the particular school district, including considerations of their available outside resources.

Prevention of, and preparation for response to, acts of violence in schools is not dissimilar to preparation for acts of terrorism after September 11, 2001. Dealing with the threat must be done on three different levels- prevention, deterrence, and response.

The United States' primary emphasis post- 9/11 was in prevention, through identification, investigation, and criminal prosecution of those planning terrorist acts. We believe that the same system is the primary line of defense in Indiana schools, and the State of Indiana can have very positive impact on the success of this effort.

In June of 2018 the FBI released a study of pre-attack behaviors of active shootings in the United States between 2000 and 2013. The study clearly indicates that the assailants involved exhibited specific identifiable behaviors before the shootings occurred.

The ability to identify and successfully intervene with potential shooters before an attack is initiated is the most effective way of dealing with such an incident.

We suggest that the State of Indiana consider the following suggestions:

1. Pass legislation allowing for appropriate exchange of information between educators and educational staff, guidance counselors, mental health professionals, and law enforcement to discuss potential threat individuals and situations.
2. Encourage development of technology solutions to aid in the discovery and identification of potential threatening persons.
3. Pass legislation allowing courts to supervise those who meet guidelines allowing for judicial intervention. This may involve additional definitions in the juvenile and adult code providing for certain threats (“terroristic threat” language in other states).
4. Develop and fund training for schools, law enforcement agencies, social service providers, and parents and kids to educate them on what concerning behaviors exist and when, where, and how to report them.
5. Develop mental health treatment protocols to deal with juveniles or adults who are identified as potential threats.
6. Develop a “See Something, Say Something” type program to encourage public reporting of potential threats.
7. Criminalize careless storage of firearms which results in personal injury or death.

The next layer in the integrated system is deterrence. Although some controversy exists regarding the effectiveness of an armed presence as a deterrent, much best practice literature suggests that the most effective deterrent is the presence of a trained police School Resource Officer. In addition to the officer’s presence, the SRO has a great ability to instill a culture of safety at a school. This plays a vital role in training students and teachers to respond quickly and appropriately should a threat occur.

The IACP recommends that there be a School Resource Officer present in each school building in the state. The school resource officer should be an ILEA certified police officer who is also specifically trained as a School Resource Officer, an Indiana School Safety Specialist, and have adult and juvenile CIT training.

Another aspect of deterrence is restriction of access to school buildings. We recommend that each building be locked from the outside and that all visitors be required to enter through a single access point, monitored and controlled by school staff. The access point should be secure so that unwanted visitors are physically prevented from entering the building. Consideration should be given to protecting glass from blunt force and ballistic threats.

We further recommend that all interior doors be locked from the outside during school hours. Again, consideration should be given to protecting interior glass from blunt force and ballistic threats.

We recommend that the state consider the following:

1. Continued pursuit of federal funding for COPS grants targeted specifically for establishment or expansion of SRO programs within Indiana school districts.
2. Facilitating SRO, school safety specialist, and CIT training (including funding) for properly training police officers to act as resource officers.
3. Continue availability of funds for physical protection of school buildings.

The final layer in this integrated system is response. The purpose of this layer of the system is to build in sufficient delay to protect innocent people from the threat until law enforcement can respond and deal with the assailant. There are multiple components to this layer.

It is vital that law enforcement be alerted as quickly as possible that an emergency exists, and the IACP strongly recommends that each school system implement an alerting system that allows for immediate notification to the school office (so proper lockdowns can be initiated), the SRO, and all jurisdictional law enforcement agencies (local, county, and State Police).

All schools in Indiana should train and drill in lockdown procedures and threat response such as the Unarmed Response to Active Shooter Events, A.L.I.C.E., or similar programs.

We recommend that all Indiana law enforcement agencies be required to conduct active shooter response training for all sworn personnel. This training should be included in the state mandated training cycle and required each year. There should be an included segment in emergency treatment of gunshot wounds including use of chest seals and tourniquets.

We also recommend that multi-discipline response training be conducted annually to include all first responders including any jurisdictional law enforcement agency, fire departments, EMS agencies, county emergency management, and any other public entities or NGO's appropriate to the area.

It is important that all law enforcement personnel be equipped to deal with active shooter situations. This includes immediate availability of proper weapons, hard armor, and individual first aid kits appropriate for the immediate treatment of gunshot wounds.

We recommend that the state consider:

1. Continue and expand funding for school security systems to allow installation of alerting systems in each school in Indiana. While there are many school security systems and manufacturers of such systems, the IACP strongly recommends a vendor neutral position regarding manufacturers and/or systems.
2. Require Unarmed Response or similar training be conducted in schools in the same manner as fire drills are mandated.
3. Include active shooter response training in state mandated law enforcement annual training and charge the Indiana Law Enforcement Academy with developing a program which establishes minimums based on best practices.
4. Provide funding to assist in providing necessary equipment for law enforcement agencies.