

# Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center

TRAININGS BY REQUEST

## Threat Assessment in Schools: Basics and Benchmarks Training

*An overview of targeted school violence and findings from the Safe School Initiative study*

The Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS), is pleased to offer the "Threat Assessment in Schools: Basics and Benchmarks" (Threat Assessment) Training by Request (TBR). This on-site, 4.5-hour training presents findings from the *Safe School Initiative (SSI)*, a study that focused on the thinking, planning, and other behaviors engaged in by students who carried out attacks on schools.

### TRAINING DESCRIPTION

In the wake of several high-profile school shootings that occurred in the 1990's, ED and the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) together conducted a study to learn more about the targeted shootings and whether any action could have been taken to prevent the attacks from occurring. The study, entitled the *Safe School Initiative*, reviewed 37 incidents of targeted violence. The final report that was issued in 2002 provided 10 key findings. Among the findings was one that generated a considerable amount of debate: Prior to the incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea and/or plan to attack. Specifically, in 81% of the incidents, at least one other person had some type of prior knowledge of the attacker's plan, while in 59% of the incidents, more than one other person had some type of prior knowledge of the attacker's plan.

In light of these study findings, officials from ED and USSS then became interested in learning why these individuals, or "bystanders," did not come forward even though they had some prior knowledge about planned school violence. This apparent incongruity raised questions about why the information was not brought forward or used in any way to avert the attack and resulted in a follow-up study entitled *A Systematic Pilot Study of Student Responses to Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence: What we can learn about life-sustaining prevention?* (Also known as the *Bystander Study*).

Findings from the initial and follow-up studies, as well as their implications for educators and law enforcement officials, will be discussed during the Threat Assessment TBR. Participants will also be introduced to the Threat Assessment process, an important element of a [comprehensive school emergency operations plan](#), which holds the primary purpose of preventing targeted violence.

### Training Goals

- ☑ Provide an overview of targeted school violence
- ☑ Share findings from the *Safe School Initiative* study
- ☑ Present relevant case studies
- ☑ Introduce participants to the Threat Assessment process

### Functions of a Threat Assessment

- ☑ To identify students of concern
- ☑ To assess each student who comes to attention
- ☑ To manage situations and students who are deemed to "pose a threat" of targeted school violence

### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

The Threat Assessment TBR is applicable for school staff that serve, or will serve, on their school or school district's EOP planning team and/or Threat Assessment team, as well as community partners, such as law enforcement.