STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF UPDATED PROTOCOLS
AND PROCEDURES FOR FASTER ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPRESSION TIME BY
ONSITE PERSONNEL DURING A CRISIS

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Abstract

Education is a field that prides itself on pioneering the art of implementing new best practices for educating students and staff. Educators today are inundated with the idea that nothing stays the same, and every detail must be reviewed introspectively to ensure that everyone is learning. Countless hours of professional development have been targeted to focus educators on accountability and effective methods of educating all learners. On the other hand, effective practices for protecting the physical security of students and educators have not received adequate attention, especially regarding innovative methods of dealing with increased threats. Educators and students are no safer today than they were nine decades ago when the Bath, Michigan, school bombing occurred.

The participants in the research represented a broad spectrum of populations, districts, and experiences affected by school violence. The research highlights the need for new protocols and highly specific training for all personnel. New best practices implemented to effectively engage and suppress a violent actor or active killer. All staff should be trained in life saving medical practices to drastically improve victim survival. More importantly, safety practices and strategies on all campuses must evolved to suppress the heightened possibility for a terrorist event. Today’s heightened risk of violent acts / active killers terrorizing campuses, call for new strategies and updated protocols to protect the nation’s intellectual capital.

Keywords: school shootings, suppression engagement tactics, campus safety, active killer, suppression engagement, suppression tools, elapsed time theory, stress inoculation training, emergency preparedness plans, response time, SET.
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Dedication

This research study is dedicated to every student, teacher, and victim that has had to endure the loud ticking of the clock, as death hovered, while waiting for first responders to arrive at the school. As a lifelong learner, educator, father, husband, and grandfather, I was desperately affected by the timeline of events during Sandy Hook. To the families of every community affected by these horrific events, it is my hope that this work proves the catalyst for immediate lethal suppression of the evil actor by highly precise actions of onsite personnel. The loss you have endured has served as inspiration to develop “SET” as the new model to keep our nations families from experiencing your grief.
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Scott Anthony Davis, Sr.

Signature: Scott Anthony Davis, Sr.

Date: June 1, 2018
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Background of the Study

In the wake of the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, in which 26 innocent victims were fatally wounded (20 students and six adults), educators realized that adequate and appropriate safety measures were not present in many schools. The conclusion was inescapable: neither geographical location, nor population density, nor emotional security prevents tragedy. Administrators have invested countless hours attempting to understand how to effectively deal with this type of event. The educational system has spent nine decades, since the tragedy in Bath, Michigan, on May 18, 1927, trying to effectively prevent these violent tragic events from occurring.

Best practices focused on mitigating the actions of the perpetrator after the violent act and employing life saving measures for the survivors. In light of the fact that violent events continue to happen in the hallways of educational institutions across the United States, it is apparent that implemented best practices have not been effective in addressing the situation, especially when success is measured in lives saved. Best practices in trauma care have improved dramatically with the implementation of common battlefield wound treatment regimens. Medical staff across the United States has recognized the similarities in the casualties of violent school acts and battlefield casualties (Jacobs et al., 2013). The Hartford Consensus paper recommends training and implementing Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) programs, which help professionals respond to these crises across our society (Jacobs et al., 2013).

Research Problem

The depth of knowledge in the area of school safety and protection has rapidly increased. Increasing the depth of understanding to improve known best practices in the event of an active killer act or violent act should also increase the awareness of legal liability to educational
districts. The deeper meaning for students and teachers is the desire to fulfill all of life’s goals and ambitions.

**Purpose of the Study**

The Texas State University report, in conjunction with the FBI, Blair and Schweit (2014) provided data indicating engaging the active killer or perpetrator of a violent act immediately, using suppression engagement tools and suppression engagement techniques (SET) reduced the time the offender can cause harm to innocent people. This study provided the foundation for understanding the crucial role that response time plays in an active killer event.

In all realms of management, problems are made to be solved or strategically managed. In the event it becomes apparent that a problem is not easily solved, it then becomes inherent upon authorities to put into place effective management strategies. Effective management strategies increase the ability to positively impact the outcome of a given situation.

Professional managers understand that simply implementing a program is not the final step. The program should undergo continuous rigorous evaluation and ongoing professional training provided to ensure success. The practice of routinely evaluating and improving emergency action plans “can enhance their performance, especially when implementing, training, and improving professionalization as it relates to capacity building and sustainability” (Cousins et al., 2015, p. 74). This study sought to investigate the perception of emergency personnel regarding response time’s impact on strategically managing an active killer event.

*Stress inoculation training* (SIT), a resilience-building intervention intended to “minimize the negative squeal of traumatic stress, is well suited for the military culture because it is easily and quickly learned in a group format” (Hourani et al., 2016, p. 1152). This strategic implementation piece for effective management of response time in educational and public settings in all societies may be one key to effective training.
Stress inoculation training provides trainees with the opportunity to experience “tunnel vision, auditory exclusion, time distortion and memory distortion” and adjust to these affects that are produced by stress in these events (Jacobs, 2015, p. 7). Trainees experiencing these effects during highly specialized training readily adapt and effectively execute their training without adverse reactions to these effects. Guided by the understanding of the elapsed time theory, onsite personnel can dramatically improve their ability to engage the active killer with suppression engagement tactics SET and execute precision deployment of suppression tools, limiting further casualties and potential injury.

Providing direct support, appropriate guidance, and precision training to improve response times could decrease the likelihood of victims and increase the survivability of casualties. Tragedies are not common place, but since they do occur, management strategies should be in place. It is important to note that educational institutions already prepare for generic tragic events, but educators are not provided with stress inoculation training (SIT) or suppression engagement tactics (SET) as options for active killer events.

The local educational authority at the school level is the principal. Each school’s principal is responsible for creating an emergency preparedness plan (EPP) in coordination with other local agencies. Current emergency plans should be “multifaceted intricate documents that accommodate everything: natural disaster, terrorist attacks, fire threats, flu pandemics, disruptive students and dress codes” (Stone & Spencer, 2011, p. 296). This EPP should be shared with all staff, and professional development should be provided for implementation of the EPP, and routine drills should be conducted to ensure proper implementation of said plan.
Research Question

The central research question for this qualitative study was “How do stakeholders’ perceptions of improved protocols and procedures impact faster response times to an active killer?”

Rationale for the study

Learning theory. Learning theory is used to de-construct what individuals have learned, and understand the need to change learning. Learning theory constructs a better educational process to engage cognitive learning and fuel the emotional connection to move toward acceptance of innovative best practices. Environmental influences are considered, as well as prior experience, in order to increase understanding for the need to implement better practices in order to make schools safer.

Education is the key to understanding all things unfamiliar. Through education an individual can be taught how to better prepare and undertake many tasks where previous experience is lacking. Additionally, individuals with some level of experience in a subject can use further education to improve skills and efficiency. In the area of security, many professionals and organizations have a greater depth of knowledge in implementing applicable experience for the best practices of protection.

Implementing progressive practices of suppression engagement with suppression tools, suppression techniques, and precision deployment requires further education and training at local and state levels of the educational system.

Constructivism. Constructivism is the schemata, the structure of core memory. It is the process to change the mindset of an individual or group. EPPs can be bureaucratic and long, and
even after the federal and state guidelines have been accommodated. Improving school safety at the local level takes a modicum of planning (Stone & Spencer, 2011). On one hand, administrators are responsible for creating a safe haven for students to learn. A safe learning environment is a key factor enabling students and instructors to focus solely on learning. Students at all levels are faced with outside concerns that affect their ability to learn. School administrators strive daily to provide a safe refuge for all students to receive a high quality education.

Americans who experienced formal schooling during the seventies and eighties may remember the duck-and-cover maneuvers associated with atomic bomb drills (Shuffleton, 2015). These events had a profound psychological impact on the idea of safety and awareness of external factors possibly affecting the safe haven for education. Scholars on both sides of school security continue to declare that oversight authorities should consider all options to secure schools today. The fear of many parents, grandparents and school officials today is not fire, tornadoes, or natural acts of God. The underlying concern of the stakeholders is the single active killer, the domestic terrorist (Lawler, 2016); will local law enforcement be able to respond in time to save their loved ones?

Training on-site personnel to effectively implement suppression engagement techniques and utilizing suppression tools with precision deployment to immediately suppress the violent perpetrator or active killer is theorized to decrease casualties and improve victim survival. On-site personnel continue to place themselves in harm’s way by relying on outdated protocols and faulty ideology in an effort to protect students.

**Conceptual Framework**

Suppression engagement is the process of empowering on-site personnel to actively, immediately, and with overwhelming force, engage and lethally suppress the violent actor or
active killer. The effective use of suppression engagement tactics in combination with stress inoculation training greatly enhances the ability of onsite personnel through precision training to safely suppress the violent actor or active killer. Precision deployment of suppression engagement tools to lethally suppress the violent actor or active killer directly increases the number of survivors during a violent event/active killer situation. Time is the most “critical element in responding to a school shooting [because] the faster someone stops a killer and cares for the injured, the more lives can be saved” (Irvine, 2015, p. 3). The need to train personnel on specific clearing and security methods for precision delivery is paramount for their safety.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations. A qualitative research study will be conducted with semi-structured interviews. The researcher will not focus on one demographic of school designation, rural, suburban, or large urban districts. The research will not focus on the ideology or mindset of participants during the interview solicitation process. Constructivism will be used to validate a common dialect to discuss new strategies and implementation processes. Learning theory will be utilized to construct a foundation for understanding in the effort to bring consensus for updated protocols.

Delimitations. The research study will focus on how to effectively decrease response time to engagement of the evil actor in a school. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with four specific groups who have worked with school security. Tactical professionals, police officers, school resource officers, and educational administrators. A broad cross-section of school populations will be used, ranging from rural, suburban, and large urban districts.

The Researcher

On the day of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, the researcher was teaching second grade in an urban turn-around school. The national focus of the
news outlets was, “How could the world deal with the tragedy at hand?” The media closed that
day with speculation on local reaction from students in the surrounding schools and the realistic
possibility of this occurring close to home.

A career in education spanning two states, five districts, 14 schools, public and private,
with populations ranging from 150 – 2,000 provides an individual with a broad spectrum of
experience. In all of these settings, it is possible that these institutions may have provided a false
sense of safety and security. Trust is assumed because the safe havens seemingly created by
educational institutions are in some way protected by the society we serve. However, rising
through the administrative ranks of the educational structure, it is more apparent each and every
day just how much safety measures seem to be lacking in schools.

The author is a lifetime educator who has worked in developing a number of Emergency
Preparedness Plans for elementary, middle, and high schools. In his formative years, he was
trained to deploy and work with suppression engagement tools.

The author does not believe that violent, deadly events can be stopped; however, he does
believe they can be effectively managed. The effective management of violent acts and active
killer events can effectively decrease casualties and will dramatically impact victim survival.

As a member of the United States Army, the author was qualified as extremely proficient
in the use of suppression engagement tools. The experience and education of the author in
working with schools at all levels in developing safety protocols, and experience in precision
deployment of suppression techniques provide unique insight into the protection of the nation’s
intellectual capital.

The researcher has thirty years of experience working in elementary, middle, and high
school educational institutions in multiple states. His experience also includes ten years spent
learning in institutions of higher education and formal military training in the United States
Army. During his lifetime spent in educational institutions across various levels of instruction, he has encountered a wide range of experiences.

**Assumptions and Definition of Terms**

**Assumptions.** The politics of society seemingly deems death for educators and students as a valid option. This may sound strange, but one can see this assumption at work because new educators know they must face the question, “If I become a teacher, will I be killed in the school building?” Young people, however, do not usually enter the “field of education with the ideology for combat in their future” (Dotson-Renta, 2015).

Lockdown as a current “best practice” is outdated and effectively increases the body count during a violent event. As Americans become desensitized to media reports about school shootings, it is becoming “clear that long-standing practices of law enforcement, fire/rescue, and EMS responses are not optimally aligned to maximize victim survival” (Jacobs et al., 2013, p. 1399).

**Definitions.** The use of specific terminology is important in order to engage in meaningful dialogue with all advocates interested in saving innocent lives, and supporting improved strategies to create safe effective actions to increase survivability of these horrific acts.

**Comprehensive emergency preparedness plans.** Comprehensive emergency preparedness plans are required by federal education laws which mandate that all educational institutions must have them available for use by all personnel in the event of an emergency.

**Elapsed time theory.** This theory states there is a direct correlation between the time which elapses from the start of an active killer event, domestic terrorism event, or violent act until suppression engagement is initiated.
Legal liability. Legal liability describes the financial exposure incurred by employers who fail to fulfill positive duties toward their employees. In the context of this paper, one example would be the liability incurred by employers mandated by federal and state law to provide employees with a safe work environment, but expose or subject those employees to adverse contingency or action because of the employer’s lack of action.

Local empowerment of school boards. Currently many states have laws that empower the local school boards to effectively train educators in suppression engagement techniques (Jones 2016, pg. 20).

Precision delivery. Precision delivery refers to personnel deploying suppression tools at a 90% rate of accuracy.

Precision tactics. Precision tactics are specific movements and tactics designed to enable local personnel to enter an area strategically and with precision to suppress an act of violence in the safest manner possible.

Precision training. Precision training is designed with specific tactical initiatives for on-site professionals to stay up to date on all new best practices.

Response time. This is the elapsed time from the onset of a violent act until the perpetrator is engaged by local authorities or onsite personnel.

Security record. The security record is the legal official label for suppression tool authorized users.

Suppression engagement techniques. Suppression engagement techniques are highly developed tactics and procedures to immediately suppress the active killer and limit the number of casualties and provide improved safety for effective engagement.
Suppression engagement tools. Suppression engagement tools refer to the equipment available to local personnel trained in suppression engagement with precision tactics and precision deployment of equipment to suppress any lethal act.

Suppression engagement. This is the act of immediate engagement of any perpetrator of a violent event with the sole purpose of effectively eliminating the threat, and thereby decreasing response time and body count.

Summary

The first chapter introduces the study, follows the path of historical foundation, current practices, and newer practices to be implemented. It also explains the theoretical and conceptual theories used to develop the study, as well as research questions that guided the study. Additionally, this section includes limitations and delimitations, and definitions for terms or phrases which may be unclear. The second chapter reviews the literature, specifically the historical impact of violent acts on campuses and the effect of response time. Chapter Three explains the methodology used to research this topic. Chapter Four details the data gathered from the research. The final chapter provides a review of the findings, especially the implications, conclusions, and recommendations drawn from those results.
CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Broad Historical Literature on the Topic

The research gathered for this project was focused on all relevant sources possible to provide insight into the need for implementing new best practices to protect all educational establishments. School administrators find it difficult to use established protocols and best practices to engage and disrupt an active killer while waiting for local authorities to respond. Amy Bishop, a survivor of an active killer event reported that she ducked under a table and was crawling while she grabbed the perpetrator's legs (“Alabama Shooting,” 2010.) Rosi Moroni, a student at NIU, reported the sound of the shot was followed by “a lot of people screaming” and then people chaotically sprinted from the building, screaming phrases like, “He’s got a gun, call 9-1-1” (Bohn, 2008, pg. 1). Because of acts like these, principals are searching for ways to effectively stop a crisis event.

The second chapter discusses the historical path of emergency preparedness plans (EPPs) to address all manner of security issues in schools. The EPP covers fire drills, tornado drills, evacuation plans, active killer drills, and hazards on campus. The evolution of these plans began with the need to save the lives of staff and students from death by fire. These plans began with the recognition that careful planning, thoughtful preparation, safety drills, and facility inspections could be implemented in tandem to save lives. The educational administration of districts across the United States understood that the plans need to be revised with the improvement of tools, practices, protocols, and updates.

The second chapter continues with a literature review that explores research demonstrating how former practices have evolved to address the ever changing methods of the perpetrator. The literature continues to support the idea that these events are planned, and they
have an intended multipronged purpose. Administrators also understand in order to be successful, planning must occur to predict, prepare, and provide security measures to ensure the educational environment is a safe haven.

The literature review then moves to discuss best practices used in school killings. The research continues to show these events happen without prior warning; they are immediate, over within minutes, and teachers die placing themselves between the evil actor and their students. In 2012, One L. Goh calmly began shooting at Oikos University before he instructed students to line up in order so that he could kill them (Ganga & Rubin, 2012). The FBI has updated lockdown procedures to reflect the ideology of “Run, Hide, Fight.”

The review then discusses the need to recognize existing and future threats to the nation’s educational institutions at all levels. EPPs should be comprehensive documents focusing on collaboration among all entities providing security, emergency support, and guidance to assist in crises that arise at the schools. All employees onsite must be provided coordination of resources, implementation of updated protocols, intensive training of personnel, and familiarity of the plan. Terrorism is another threat that is discussed in the literature review. Domestic terrorism is on the rise worldwide, and has already struck educational establishments in America. During the Oklahoma City bombing at the Murrah Federal Building, a home-grown terrorist attack resulted in nineteen children killed that day (Gjelsten, 2008).

Laws and mandates are then discussed regarding the movement to address the desire of local administrators and educators to engage the active killer at the onset of the event. The literature shows that specific states have taken steps legislatively to address the need for suppression engagement tactics to be a viable means of addressing the elapsed time theory to save lives in the nation’s educational institutions. States like Texas, Ohio, Colorado, are moving legislatively on the state and local level to empower educators to act.
The literature review then turns to a discussion of school emergency preparedness, addressing the need to implement newer protocols and practices to improve life-saving measures onsite. The literature speaks over and again in each event how quickly the event started, ended, and the impending chaos and lack of continuity reported by survivors. Research literature records the number of minutes expired between the onset of the active killer event and the arrival of local law enforcement.

The literature review concludes by discussing the vulnerability of all educational institutions and the need for highly trained onsite personnel. Local preparation and implementation is needed at the local, organizational, or district level to facilitate comprehensive EPPs. The research also addresses the need for SROs in the educational institutions and their respective roles as it pertains to active killer events. The literature review is completed by addressing the need for a national response to school security and updated protocols to protect educational institutions.

**Literature Search Methods**

The researcher used a number of sources during the process of locating relevant information on the subject of active killer events. Carson Newman University Library provided access to peer reviewed articles and documents through the digital platform *Library Guides*. The researcher also used *Google Scholar* for books and peer reviewed articles from a broader spectrum of inclusion for the research. The periodical and daily articles were researched to locate actual eyewitness accounts from published news sources. The timelines for these events were retrieved from police reports cited in the online digital records of local, national, and international newspapers.

As an administrator in multiple high schools, the researcher’s insight into the interactions of school resource officers (SROs) and local law enforcement, the benefits of NIMS training, the
professional development of current educators, and the daily increased possibility of responding
to an active killer has guided the focus of the literature review.

**Criteria for Inclusion in the Literature**

Peer-reviewed articles from multiple educational, legal, security, and medical journals
were included. Historical articles were reviewed for actual eye witness accounts and local,
national, or international law enforcement timelines of the documented events. The literature
review addressed current best practices, legal arguments, victim survivability, casualty rates,
national movements, and professional opinions across multiple fields of expertise.

**Discussion of Literature**

**National response to active killer events.** Emergency preparedness plans have existed
in various forms since the first individual studied a tragic event and predicted a future event. In
the scope of predicting the next event, whether fire, tornado, flood, act of God, look for methods
to mitigate loss. The act of preparing to implement a coordinated response in an effort to mitigate
loss of life and property enhances one’s appreciation for needing an emergency preparedness
plan. This plan can then be shared with other groups to adapt and utilize to increase safety for all
members of the entity.

School administrators are tasked with creating an emergency preparedness plan that is
applicable to their educational institution. The plans must be all encompassing; they must require
schools to conduct an annual safety audit of the facility and update all relative information for
team members and staff skills. Education professionals should ask themselves what they will do
in the course of these events, rather than not preparing, and implement their EPP (Rider, 2015).
In exploring the comprehensive needs of school emergency preparedness plans, Lunenberg
(2010) found “the increased level of lethal violence is one of the primary concerns for school
administrators today” (p. 1). ALERRT calculated that in the years “between 2000 and 2015,
schools were the second most common location for active shootings (44 events) with business locations (99 events), as the highest” (The Shooter, 2017, para. 10).

In the context of school emergency preparedness plans, these documents have evolved for more than 120 years. ALERRT is one program created to meet the need for improved response to an active killer event. Forty students died from being trampled during the mass exodus of the building from a false fire alarm in 1851 (Heath, et. al, 2007, p. 209). It took another similar event and 31 years before “NYC Superintendent John Jasper, ordered all NYC school principals to conduct ‘practice fire drills’” (Heath et al., 2007, p. 208). It has taken a long period of time for practical change to occur in the way practices and protocols evolve into application. The need for emergency preparedness plans must be recognized, and then professionals with knowledge and experience in particular fields must input valuable information to create updated protocols.

School emergency preparedness plans require monthly practice drills to familiarize staff and students with the proper procedure for lock down or evacuation. Providing staff and students the opportunity to practice a walk through allows the participants to become desensitized to the drama surrounding the emergency. The desensitization and familiarity with the process allows for a quick, safe, and effective evacuation of the school building. There are multiple technological advances in fire suppression which has improved safety over the past 35 years (“School Building Fires,” 2014). The evolution of early warning devices and fire suppression equipment has contributed directly to saving the lives of staff and students alike.

The process of evaluation and prediction is an ongoing event that can occur by the minute, event, or scheduled annually. The emergency preparedness plan undergoes an annual evaluation by the school administration, and is updated as needed or when dictated by the administration. In the 1950s, the U.S. Department of Education initiated “duck and cover” drills
to prepare students for a nuclear attack (Heath et. al, 2007). The process of review became an annual event and coincided with preparation for the beginning of each new school each year. A safety audit conducted each July or August guided recommendations for updates or initiated new procedures for the upcoming school year.

School administrators should be prepared for any conceivable emergency that might arise, and they need to plan accordingly to address the event with policies and procedures to improve the safety of the staff and students (Lunenberg, 2010). The ability of the administrator to foresee and prepare for an event is facilitated by the emergency preparedness plan. The items covered in the plan, while not completely comprehensive for all statistical possibilities, are comprehensive in the eyes of educational security professionals. The plans cover fire, tornado, crisis management, active killer events, and they provide protocols to address each event. The plans also list the responsible persons for point of contact, liaison, media contact, specific task assignments, staff emergency skills, multi-lingual skills, etc. Schools with operative crisis management plans are those with effective “leadership (i.e. superintendents and building level administrators) who show a commitment to school safety” (Rider, 2015, p. 63).

The process of updating the emergency preparedness plan to include new protocols and procedures may be complicated by the echelons of required approvals. In most instances the federal or state government regulates new safety requirements, and districts execute them with local schools. Local school initiatives would be supported by the administrator and approval sought from the district level to implement the new procedures or protocols. After the Newtown, Connecticut, school shootings the “FBI—with the Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance—teamed up with the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) program, which was developed in Texas, supported by the state of Texas, and housed at Texas State University” (“Active Shooter Resources,” 2017, para. 7).
Administrators at the local school level should look at information regarding active killers and domestic terrorism to consider the potential impact to their communities. Research demonstrates that in regards to emergency preparedness plans, clarity and specifics are lacking in providing guidance for exact actions to be taken by educators in the event of an active killer / domestic terrorism event (Stone & Spencer, 2011).

In the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School active killer event, the nation was reeling for answers to stopping these evil acts. Pundits from across the globe continued to espouse the same rhetoric from previous events, however, professionals from many fields rallied to provide additional insight to surviving an event of this magnitude. Over the course of the next year, many great minds came together to review local and national ways to deal with these events. The Hartford Consensus developed the acronym THREAT to address an active killer event as it unfolded, and the survivability of victims in the aftermath. The T represents “threat suppression, the most critical action that must be taken as rapidly as possible” (Jacobs et al., 2013, p. 951).

In the FBI’s “Active Shooter Study,” (2013) bullet points show data for the duration of these events, of which “44 (69%) ended in five minutes or less, with 23 ending in two minutes or less.” Best practices should be considered a starting point to develop a platform to create an individual school response plan to the active killer / violent event. Due to the response time for local authorities to respond and the short duration of the events, there were eleven incidents that “involved unarmed principals, teachers, other school staff and students who confronted shooters” (Blair & Schweit, 2014, p. 8). Civilians have made life and death choices during the time it has taken for law enforcement to arrive.

Research indicates that 40.6% of the incidents ended when a “violent actor met citizen engagement or the violent actor turns the weapon upon themselves” (Blair & Schweit, 2014, p.
The ability to immediately engage and suppress the violent actor by on-site personnel can directly impact the number of lives saved in these specific events. The ability to substantially decrease the time from onset of the event to the initial engagement of the active killer by on-site personnel, should increase casualties and victim survival rates of these events. Understanding the increased threat of an active shooter and the “swiftness with which active shooter incidents unfold, these study results support the importance of training exercises – not only for law enforcement but also for citizens” (Blair & Schweit, 2014, p. 21).

**Best practices.** The US has been at war for over 300 years. Discourse on the active killer events has been held captive by the polarizing sides, pro-gun rights and pro-safety camps. School security plans have provided a sense of safety, but time and practice have demonstrated their need to be updated to reflect new better protocols and practices. History provides numerous examples of people dying at the hands of violent actors. Dying while running away or at the attacker should be an unacceptable consequence. When the active killer’s gun jammed on the second floor hallway of Freeman High School in Spokane, Washington, a brave high school student was killed when he tried to stop the active killer (Siegel, 2017). Protocols should evolve over time to save innocent lives.

FEMA describes the process of creating threat assessment teams. Threat assessment teams seek to evaluate persons of concern by (“Quick Reference Guide,” 2017):

- Identifying individuals whose behaviors cause apprehension or disturbance, whether it is on campus or away.
- Evaluating whether the individual has intent and capability to execute violence.
- Determining if the individual has made any preparative steps for an attack. (p. 1)

FEMA maintains that a large part of incident management includes disrupting the threat, decreasing the risk, and implementing plans for long term success (“Why Prepare,” 2017).
Incident investigations continue to prove that these horrific acts are schemed and planned, just waiting on the catalyst to act. On March 24, 1998 in Jonesboro, Arkansas, two junior high school students pulled a fire alarm before running to the nearby woods, where they opened fire when the staff and students exited the building; five people were killed, and ten were wounded (“Deadliest U.S. Mass,” 2016). The Department of Homeland Security has updated the lockdown procedure to include “Run, Hide, Fight,” which encourages civilians faced with an active killer to decide action to be taken to improve their viability for survival during these events (Agnich, 2015). Furthermore, development of a tactical plan known as QUAD (Quick Action Deployment) has become the preferred action for responding authorities (Stone & Spencer, 2011, p. 299).

Principals, SROs, and counselors develop the acumen to read the body language and non-verbal cues of individuals as they strive to understand students. This group of educational personnel spend a great amount of their time dealing with crisis management in resolving conflicts that develop on a daily basis. These professionals also are usually the first to engage with the public when they enter the school. The individuals who are the first to come in contact with the active killer are immediately confronted with life and death decisions before the police can arrive on the scene (Arslan & Olsen, 2016). Sadly, in many cases, the first indication of an emergency may likely be the chaos that erupts when shots are mixed with cries and screams in the hallways (Buerger & Buerger, 2010).

The educators who died trying to protect their students, sacrificed their lives as heroes, and are remembered daily by the lives their courageous actions saved (Patierne, 2015). Unsurprisingly, teachers, parents, and students are all “concerned about their school’s safety, especially the safety against the school shooting” (JeeHae, 2013, p. 88). These violent acts have been more tragic when they come to fruition against young, innocent victims.
Safety is the primary goal of crisis management. The most imperative concerns for a school district are the health and safety of students and faculty. An emergency preparedness plan provides the particulars of how to identify, confront, manage, and resolve the crisis, and after the event, reestablish stability and support suitable adaptive reactions (Estep, 2013; Rider, 2015).

There is a tremendous need to be fluid in updating policies, and educational leaders must be open for discussion regarding implementing new and updated protocols for campus safety and security. Suppression engagement tactics enables teachers to feel confident and have great self-efficacy in their ability to react effectively to an active killer, which may “prove to be highly effective in providing protection for themselves and the students in their care” (Rider, 2015, pp. 44-45). Teachers who have set goals to gain knowledge, experience, and training in active killer protocols will take the responsibilities earnestly to protect themselves and their students. The decisions they make may mean the difference between life and death for themselves and their students.

All options should be considered when creating a school safety plan. Regrettably, today’s educational institutions are not perfectly prepared, nor are all SROs “fully versed, let alone trained, in the arena of rapid deployment tactics” (Fassinger, 2011, p. 80). Administrators and staff members at the school level should be empowered to implement new protocols and provided with continual professional development regarding updated security measures. Rapid deployment tactics, when combined with the proper tools and knowledge, may very well prepare respondents to reach their objective, engaging and lethally suppressing the active killer mindset (Fassinger, 2011).

**Active Killer Events**

**Threats.** Active killers or violent actors in educational institutions are predominantly *lone wolves*. In the era of social-emotional learning, it is of utmost importance for school
personnel to comprehend and recognize the signs and symptoms of a potential attacker, as obscure as they may be. Educational authorities should focus on the methods and behaviors of the lone-wolf and develop a detailed threat assessment with the idea of a single active individual. Theodore Kaczynski (the Unabomber) and Eric Rudolph (Atlanta, Olympic Bomber) both found it difficult to integrate into society, thus representing the model of the lone wolf. Even Leon Panetta, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), maintains the lone-wolf is the primary threat to our nation (Zierhoffer, 2014).

According to the literature, in most events, there was a great deal of pre-planning that took place. The motives ran the gamut of individuals who were bullied or social outcasts who did not quite fit into the social realm of school. Most perpetrators considered previous violence, such as Columbine in the United States and Erfurt in Germany (Sumiala & Muschert, 2012). Even though these events are seen as rare, school shootings occur more in urban schools and large public schools, accounting for the largest number of fatal shootings (Rider, 2015).

The FBI reports that many of these events are over in less than five minutes. The events end before most local authorities arrive on the scene, and the majority of these events were simply one-way missions that end in suicide. Even if the local authorities respond to the scene promptly, active killer events “were resolved by school administrators, educators, and students or by the attackers themselves (e.g., running away, surrendering, etc.)” (JeeHae, 2013, p. 107). Immediate suppression of fire could save the entire building; immediate suppression of the active killer will “save the rest of the innocent lives at the scene” (Arslan & Olsen, 2016, p. 167). The variance between typical hostage events and an active shooter attack demonstrates “a need for civilians to take immediate actions to disrupt an active shooter attack prior to the arrival of law enforcement officers” (Lawler, 2016).
Most survivors report hearing the active killer engaging targets without ever receiving the actual announcement to begin lockdown procedures (J. Brenner, personal communication, June 6, 2017). In most scenarios, the only time an educator receives the lockdown announcement is when a drill is being conducted. Administrators of educational institutions must focus on decreasing the amount of time that elapses before an active killer is identified and engaged with suppression tools and tactics. By doing this, lives are saved and destinies will be fulfilled.

Onsite highly trained personnel available to immediately implement SET utilizing precision deployment of suppression tools interrupt the attack and dramatically decrease response time. Blair and Schweit (2014) found the following to be true:

The majority of the 160 incidents (90 [56.3%]) ended on the shooter’s initiative before the police arrived—sometimes when the shooter committed suicide or stopped shooting, and other times when the shooter fled the scene. In 63 incidents where the duration of the incident could be ascertained, 44 (69.8%) of 63 incidents ended in 5 minutes or less, with 23 ending in 2 minutes or less. (p. 23)

Educators provided with the means to immediately engage the active killer with suppression tools and tactics can dramatically improve the response time to less than one minute. Life-saving action would improve the outcomes for any number of faculty and students. Educational institutions have waited for local authorities to arrive on the scene and unknowingly empowered the active killer additional time to inflict additional carnage upon innocent victims. EPPs should include methods and measures to provide onsite educators the means to dramatically impact the elapsed time which the active killer utilizes to gain fifteen minutes of fame by the media.

Domestic Terrorism

Events. Terrorism is on the rise globally, and the United States is no stranger to this devastating act of violence. The first domestic terrorism attack targeting a school was right here
in America: the bombing of Bath Consolidated School in 1927. Andrew Kehoe, upset by an increase in taxation to fund the school, bombed the school and his own car after killing his wife; he caused the demise of a total of 45 people, including 38 children in this violent act against an entire community. Later, neighbors noticed a sign attached to a fence bordering Kehoe’s property which read, “Criminals are made, not born” (Vargas, 2017, para. 9). A New York Times article from 1927, described the actions of Kehoe which,

may give an inkling to the psychology of the man who with measured deliberation, it is believed, attempted to wreak vengeance on this community for what he felt was the high tax imposed on him and other financial troubles ... He was notified last June that the mortgage on his farm would be foreclosed, and that may have been the circumstance that started the clockwork of anarchy and madness in his brain. (qtd. in Vargas, 2017, para. 11)

Another horrific domestic terror attack took the lives of hundreds of adults and 19 children when Timothy McVeigh detonated a truck bomb right outside the daycare. Timothy McVeigh’s bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, “claimed 168 lives and injured more than 500 others” (Davidson & Hudson, 2012, p. 3). The idea of deliberately delivering a violent attack against children seems irrational, or even out of bounds, but the ever changing tactics of terrorists and terrorism have changed, as demonstrated by the use of automobiles to run down innocent civilians (Gjelsten, 2008).

These violent attacks on school property are calculated to kill large numbers of innocent victims and wreak social and emotional havoc on the local communities. Administrators should, therefore, plan for these events in their annual emergency preparedness plans. These acts of terrorism generally appear well planned and preparations for the aftermath must be addressed. The educational establishment must consider this option because the front line of attack is
manned by the teachers and students in the school, not law enforcement, and a logical solution would be to educate teachers in suppression engagement tactics to suppress the active killers. Apathy in the general population should be recognized because those who believe that “it cannot happen to me” or “it will never happen here” should be effectively counseled (Gjelsten, 2008, p. 45).

Administrators create EPPs each year for their respective campuses. Basic guidelines for the EPP have been provided by the federal government, and many districts supplement the guidelines by providing templates to guide the process. These guidelines provide and encourage the use of best practices; however, due to the ever changing nature of the threat of domestic terrorism, these best practices must be re-visited to improve effectiveness. School districts should consider increasing the comprehensiveness of EPPs to provide onsite personnel SET training to effectively disrupt and engage the active killer or domestic terrorism event in an effort to save lives and decrease exposure to financial liability.

The ACLU added language to increase understanding of the USA Patriot ACT, which explains the “real risk of domestic terrorism could include acts which cause serious physical injury or death” rather than all acts that are considered "dangerous to human life" (“How the USA,” n.d., p. 38). SET could be added to EPPs to provide active intervention at the beginning of a coordinated terrorism attack by disrupting the perpetrators, thus, creating a lack of continuity and thwarting the plan.

Administrators have struggled with the fact that there is no ideal way to solve this issue to keep everyone safe. Each campus, of course, is different, but every school has the same need to protect the safety and wellbeing of its staff and students. SET provided in conjunction with SIT training could be effectively implemented to limit elapsed time available to the active killer while waiting for local authorities to arrive onsite. Employing suppression tactics, paired with
Precision deployment of suppression tools, will effectively empower onsite personnel to engage the evil actors of domestic terrorism with the safest proactive measures available thus saving countless lives and negative psychological impact upon the local and national educational community (Gjelsten, 2008).

Armed SROs are found within many American schools today, and they have become an important part of the educational establishment. These individuals are trained and permitted to have unlimited access to the building and valuable input into the EPP. JeeHae (2013) found that after the Sandy Hook Elementary School domestic terror event, a few schools across the nation empowered onsite personnel with access to suppression tools on campus, and many school systems increased the number of SROs in their districts.

Schools in other countries have experienced mass casualty events in which terrorists hit soft targets. Untold tragedy is inflicted upon these local communities; therefore, the governing authorities have added SET protocols into the EPPs in order to thwart future events. Nedzel (2014) compared school facilities in which there are large numbers of targets consolidated on a daily basis to “barrels of defenseless fish” (p. 429).

Highly trained onsite personnel, trained with effective practices and provided with the necessary means to immediately suppress the active killer or domestic terrorist, can effectively remove the intruder’s perception that he or she will face no opposition to their aggressive actions. The understanding that the evil actor will come face to face with precision delivery of suppression tools by onsite personnel utilizing lethal force should become a real psychological deterrent to impending violence. The lone wolf terrorist, or group of terrorists, should have to consider the inevitability of face-to-face lethal action without the ability to become a media sensation. Eliminating this ideation of gaining “fifteen minutes of fame” by inflicting terror upon
our society and schools should be one of our goals when dealing with the *lone wolf* persona (Sumiala, & Muschert, 2012, pg. 1).

The possibility of domestic terrorism in educational institutions has created the idea that citizens should be empowered to respond accordingly. Understanding that these acts are strategically planned events, not merely random acts of violence, increases the acceptability for retaliation against these perpetrators of violence. Citizens have taken action to prepare for the eventuality of facing an active killer event in the public setting (Lawler, 2016).

Research indicates that most emergency response plans for schools “lack specificity and clarity regarding teacher actions during an emergency, such as an active killer event or terrorist attack” (Stone & Spencer, 2011, p. 297). The average time elapsed between an active shooter’s first shot and the shooter’s incapacitation is less than 4 minutes, with an innocent person shot on average every 15 seconds (Lawler, 2016, p. 48). Any intruder who continues to engage in deadly physical violence should be suppressed immediately with precision deployment of suppression tools by responding personnel.

Administrators of all schools should consider action plans that incorporate and provide for suppression engagement in an act of domestic terrorism. These plans should consider terrorist groups as possible hostage takers, and educators need to know that immediate suppression engagement is crucial to ending the event. Failing to act immediately to “disrupt the plans of the individual or group, only allows the terrorist time to carry out his or her plan to negotiate and take more innocent lives” (Arslan & Olsen, 2016, p. 167).

Terrorist training camps have been documented showing the use of “training films of school takedowns” in Afghanistan, and the discovery of building floor plans for a school were found “on a laptop confiscated from a known Al Qaeda operative” (Gjelsten, 2008, p. 20). The terrorists, whether lone actors, lone wolves, or isolated groups, generally operate independently
and clandestinely, while “drawing ideological sustenance, not direction, from propagandists operating in the free market of ideas” (Davidson & Hudson, 2012, p. 12).

School violence is not an isolated event in the far reaches of the world. Education officials and law makers only need examine the horrific actions of terrorists across the world, such as Erfurt, Germany in 2002; Belsan, Russia in 2006; Baku, Azerbaijan in 2009; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2011; and Peshwar, Pakistan in 2014, to understand the devastation just one act of this magnitude can have on a community. The number of victims from a successful terrorism event may range into hundreds and possibly thousands of staff and students. An act of domestic terrorism is the worst possible atrocity to be perpetrated upon the American educational system. Moreover, active killer events or terrorist attacks occur so quickly that emergency response plans must address actions to be taken prior to the arrival of law enforcement personnel (Lawler, 2016).

Terrorism is not only about the threat to an individual life or even a small group of people, but it is also designed to instill fear in society at large. Terrorism can threaten the sense and safety of security of everyone in the community attacked because they are ever “aware that terrorists may strike again in unpredictable locations” (Gjelsten, 2008, p. 25).

Significant challenges exist in preparation for a terrorist attack at the school level; however, disrupting a coordinated terror attack by multiple actors should be the focus of onsite personnel prior to the arrival of police (Lawler, 2016). Onsite personnel who are highly trained with SET and SIT may well be the only chance a local community has to effectively disrupt and quell a coordinated group of active killers. Administrators should expect and plan for these events; onsite personnel should be trained to respond and empowered to enact real time decisions with precision, lethal deployment of suppression tools. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, while speaking at the Securing the Schools Initiative seminar,
detailed the attacks “during the 16-year period from January 1990 to September 2006” in which “there were 949 incidents of deliberate attacks on educational systems worldwide” (see Appendix A) outside of the United States’ borders (Gjelsten, 2008, p. 27).

**Laws and Mandates**

**Liability.** When surveyed regarding violence in the workplace, most employers believe “it won’t happen here” and hopefully it is not as “bad as the media tries to make us believe” (Whitten & Mosley, 2000, para. 1). In fact, since 9/11 workplace violence has increased significantly. During the years from 2000 – 2013, a total of “24% of workplace violence has occurred in schools or colleges” (Blair & Schweit, 2014, p. 13). Workplace safety laws have been in place for a number of decades; however, in light of the impact of active killer events, employers must provide increased levels of safety for their employees.

Educational institutions may become financially liable for failing to protect their employees in active killer events. Institutions of higher learning have a legal and moral responsibility to provide a safe and secure campus environment. Even though eliminating all random acts of violence may not be possible, schools must strive to keep their environment safe. Employers today are accountable for having policies in place to prepare for emergencies and providing for their employees’ safety regarding a foreseeable event. Ultimately, people caught in a workplace emergency may need to subdue the shooter through force. Training for such an emergency should emphasize “teamwork, improvised weapons, and the element of surprise to increase the chances that such an attempt will succeed” (Vaughn, 2015, p. 132).

Educators do not enter the teaching profession to become police officers or enforcers; however, many teachers have died by placing themselves between an active killer and their students. These individuals understand the value of their students’ lives and the need to protect their innocence from evil actors. Nedzel (2014) described how Israel implemented SET in
schools, on field trips, and dangerous areas, in response to the PLO’s massacre of students in the 1970’s, and their educators have not been attacked since.

The Hartford Consensus found that real challenges to systemic change in the emergency response system faced political realities at different levels of government. Federal, state, and local legislation, however, has been enacted in Texas to allow educators to use suppression tools. A number of local school boards in other states have also approved specific training that allows for suppression engagement techniques and tactics to be implemented in local schools (Jacobs et al., 2013).

People finding themselves caught in an active killer event may as a last ditch attempt need to subdue the assailant with force (Vaughn, 2015). Accountability in the workplace for policies and protocols to be in place for employee safety is of eminent importance for employers involving a foreseeable event.

It is especially important for school districts to know that the identities of trained personnel should remain completely confidential. Jones (2016) asserts the Texas School Marshall Program does not release or make the identities of participants public. Active killers who know there will be opposing force, but not knowing who or what building, provides a psychological barrier to action. The psychological value of safety to the community should not be understated in acknowledging the inherent force potential evil actors would encounter.

In Texas, where legislative action has empowered local educational authorities to implement action plans and strategies to ensure immediate suppression of perpetrators, students have found a safer haven for learning. The professionals chosen to train for these events have undergone a rigorous selection process in order to be approved, and they have been vetted for additional service in the school, as indicated by (Jones 2016, p.21).
First, they must pass a federal background check to purchase a suppression tool. Second, they must pass the requirements for a carry permit by the local authorities to qualify with a suppression tool (Jones, 2016, p. 21). Third, they must be chosen by local administrators to attend the training for SET. Fourth, they must be admitted to the program after an interview by the instructors to ensure they are a fit for the program. Fifth, they must pass the battlefield triage training portion of the class to ensure they are able to administer life-saving medical care. Sixth, the participants must take part in live action scenarios to experience stress inoculation training and undergo after action reporting procedures. Seventh, the participants must qualify on the suppression tool deployment training course at a minimum of 90% accuracy. This process is designed to effectively reduce the elapsed time from the onset of the first round fired by an active killer, until the threat is lethally subdued by onsite personnel.

In the face of recent research involving the need to decrease the response time to an active killer event, districts may face legal liability for lack of implementing newer more effective strategies to save employee lives. Intellectual thought, calculated actionable response, and effective protocols can greatly limit financial exposure for educational institutions. Statistics indicate active killer events in schools, however rare, have become nationally predictable according to recent Homeland Security and FBI published reports (Blair & Schweit, 2014). Utilizing teamwork and the element of surprise in conjunction with weapons training greatly enhance the success in deterring a school threat (Nedzel, 2015).

Educational institutions across the United States seek to improve their EPPs through updated protocols to increase safety. By simply following the FBI’s advice to fight back makes educational professionals less likely to become a target for evil actors seeking fame. Education professionals, tactical security personnel, school boards, and legislative bodies have begun to understand that updated protocols must be implemented to protect the United States’ most valued
asset: the intellectual capital of our youth. Lawler (2016) interviewed school administrators in the northeastern United States and found eight of ten participants surveyed viewed an armed educator as a potential solution to an attack local law enforcement arrives.

It is important to note that both administrators and local authorities increasingly understand the need to eliminate elapsed time from the onset of the active killer event until engagement to limit casualties (Kopel, 2009; Jones, 2016, p. 20). SET implemented as a best practice can effectively demonstrate what the FBI recommends, which is fighting back; it is a plausible act for survival by onsite personnel. Tactical professionals provide a great depth of knowledge to prepare educators to safely and effectively subdue the active killer with precision deployment of suppression tools. Providing onsite personnel with SIT to experience audio occlusion, tunnel vision, and memory fragmentation will enable responders to become familiar with the experience and enhance the reliability of executing their training.

Strategies utilizing increased ability to respond and suppress a deadly act of violence should be implemented. The ability of onsite personnel to immediately respond to the event and provide safety and security for staff and students should only enhance the abilities of the SROs and local law enforcement to provide support when responding to these horrific acts of violence. Decreasing the response time to the active killer or domestic terror event is the single most important factor for saving lives during the onset of these events (Arslan & Olsen, 2016). Providing onsite, frontline personnel with hands-on training for suppression engagement techniques delivers improved outcomes for the staff and students onsite during these events.

Many educational professionals come from different career paths; some have served in the armed forces or have worked as a first responder. Providing these professionals with additional strategic tactical training to effectively harness their current abilities to protect innocent lives has been an option some districts across the nation have chosen. It is essential that
the identities of the participants, like those in the Texas School Marshal Program, are kept confidential (Jones, 2016, p. 26). This particular program in Texas is one of a number across the United States that stresses the importance of protecting the identities of those trained participants or members. Armed educators on-site, provided with specific intense, ongoing training, who are dedicated to saving lives, can and will ensure the only significant decrease of casualty rates in these tragic events because:

They know that people are armed, but they don’t know who they are. If I go to a campus and there’s a security guard and I know that’s the only person that’s armed, if I want to do damage, all I’ve got to do is take out the security guard and I’ve got free reign. (Jones, 2016, p. 34)

Laws surrounding the act of terrorism are subject to federal prosecution, and they are laced with many nuances. The term terrorism and extremism are sometimes used interchangeably to explain the acts that occurred. Using the expression extremist allows “prosecutors, policymakers, and investigators the flexibility to discuss terrorist-like activity without actually labeling it as terrorism and then having to prosecute it as such” (Davidson & Hudson, 2012, p. 8).

Complicating the issue is the practice of the Department of Justice and the FBI to keep from the public the list of domestic terror groups or the refusal to label these groups. Davidson and Hudson (2012) assert that “Constitutionality aside, the lack of a list” of potential terrorists increases the vagueness regarding trends of groups and public perception of the federal government’s view of domestic terror (p. 9).

School Emergency Review

School preparedness. Of the 160 incidents, 90 ended before police arrived, at the shooter’s discretion, sometimes after the shooter committed suicide or when he or she fled the
scene. In 63 incidents in which the duration of the episode could be determined, “44 (69.8%) of 63 incidents ended in five minutes or less, with 23 ending in two minutes or less” (Blair & Schweit, 2014, p. 11).

Institutions that have active-shooter policies in place should conduct annual reviews to align the plan with the ever changing landscape of security threats (Myers, 2017). In many cases, this may be performed by an assistant principal who is tasked with re-formatting the previous report to ensure dates and names are updated. Educational institutions should assign an individual professional to conduct ongoing checks and implementation of policy and procedures to ensure fidelity of the plan. The plan should be reviewed with staff, and professional development should be offered to allow practice to develop familiarity with the implementation of the plans.

The federal government provides a great deal of crisis planning information for states and local districts that need guidance with safety-planning. Elapsed time theory directly addresses the overall need to decrease response time to the active killer event, not response time by local law enforcement. The FBI continues to provide insight in responding to active killer events and the need to develop new strategies to address these events. Best practices for fighting the active killer have been updated by the FBI, and hopefully these will be implemented through professional development by local administrators (Gjelsten, 2008, p. 50).

Local investigations also continue to demonstrate that elongated response times directly impact active killer events. These investigations show that events ending in under five minutes are not successfully countered by local authorities. Even in those events in which local law enforcement was available to “respond within minutes, civilians often had to make life and death decisions, and, therefore, should be engaged in training and discussions on decisions they may face” (Blair & Schweit, 2014, p. 8).
Principals of public high schools across America understand the need to implement new policies and procedures to provide enhanced protection for staff and students. Heath et al. (2007) provide insight to address the challenges that principals face when creating individual all-inclusive crisis plans that are focused on the local school while responding to federal and state mandates. Recently, in a dissertation survey, eighty percent of participants perceived an armed teacher as a “potential solution to the disruption of an attack prior to the arrival of law enforcement personnel” (Lawler, 2016, p. 126).

Lawler (2016) found the number of active shooter attacks in our “nation’s schools during the past two decades” indicates the need for local school authorities to develop protocols to engage an active killer and disrupt the attack as it begins to develop (p. 127). Rider (2015) believes those teachers who participate in school violence training programs maintain increased self-efficacy (i.e. more confidence) with regard to their ability to respond effectively to acts of school violence, including active killer incidents.

Continually updating best practices implies utilizing knowledge from industry professionals experienced in handling active killer events and preparing on-site professionals who may be faced with suppressing active killers, in order to limit casualties and victims’ injuries in these safe havens. Given the intricacy of the concerns involved and the “magnitude of the problem, every reasonable proposal that can plausibly have an impact” should be embraced (Fritz, 2015, p. 8).

Vulnerability. It is possible that many educational efforts to create safe havens for learning, including “Gun Free Zone” signs, may have improved the perception of security, but compromised the essence of school safety. Patierne (2015) remembers entering the teaching field 22 years previously, but “never in [his] wildest dreams did [he] think he would be writing a dissertation regarding school shootings” (p. 14).
The number of casualties and victims who have been adversely impacted by the unsustainability of the safe haven experiment could lend credence to emboldening evil actors to seek their fifteen minutes of fame. Active killers understand their ability to take life, and this god-like feeling of power provides them with a level of assumed control over their own lives. The ability to take life provides the evil actor with control over a system to affect the perceived lack of control over themselves. The reality remains that those evil actors eventually become active killers and extract the bare life from the innocent in our local communities (Shapiro, 2015).

Principals must consider any plausible strategy which could possibly be successful in disrupting or preventing an attack years before the actual event, including “strategies for disrupting an attack-in-progress while waiting for the arrival of law enforcement officers” (Lawler, 2016, p. 46). Current educational authorities, whether they are cognizant of the fact or not, have a broad range of tools at their exposure to thwart possible violent acts in the future.

Educational professionals use their insight of students to intervene prior to problems arising. The insight into the lives and issues affecting students is a skill that is developed over time, and is utilized to counter problems before they could develop. The focus of pre-emptive training and signals of student warnings are good measures, but as history has shown, in many instances law enforcement usually arrives after the active killer has spent a number of minutes undeterred from his target goal (Lawler, 2016, p. 47).

Lawler (2016) acknowledges that it is extremely difficult to convince staff to adequately prepare for the “black swan event” which was coined in an unusual, if not interesting, method. Society had presumed black swans were nonexistent, because only white ones had previously been sighted (p. 46). This metaphor describes the bias we have toward a particular object, one
which we have never seen, ultimately becoming a rhetoric fallacy; in our individual lives we may have never personally seen a school shooting, but that does not mean they do not exist.

School principals may often face challenges in inspiring faculty to create adequate response plans to effectively disrupt and suppress an active killer. Evil actors plan to thwart police response by creating obstacles that will likely delay building entry, providing them unabated time “to kill as many people as possible” (Giduck & Bail, 2011, p. 359). The reality of the threat of elapsed time theory is the one reality that should be extensively prepared and planned, onsite personnel trained, and immediate suppression engagement available to address to this ever changing threat. SET is a plan of action that educates onsite staff with the competency, ability, and tools to dramatically impact a positive outcome while waiting on the arrival of local law enforcement.

The short period of time prior to the arrival of law enforcement personnel is the “most crucial time period, given the fact that it is during these first few minutes that the majority of lives are lost” (Lawler, 2016, p. 58). In the Virginia Tech massacre, Cho “chained the main doors shut from the inside and began entering classrooms on the second floor, shooting anyone he saw” (Davies, 2008, p. 10). The West Nickel Mines Amish School was a safe harbor for education until Charles Carl Roberts entered the building with violence in his heart and mind. Kasdorf (2007) alleged that Roberts freed the boys, but kept the girls as hostages for approximately one hour before killing himself and five others as police stormed the building (p. 328).

The Hartford Consensus estimated the “long-standing practices of law enforcement, fire/rescue, and EMS responses are not optimally aligned to maximize victim survival” (Jacobs et al., 2013, p. 947). In the event of an attack of this magnitude, the coordination of all emergency services would be paramount. The EPP should address this need and outline the policies, procedures, and protocols in the event that tragedy does strike.
Sovereign exception provides society the right to enforce rules as created by a political process, philosophical debate, and educational conversations regarding the justification of suppression engagement with precision delivery of suppression tools to lethally suppress the active killer. According to Malik (2015):

Terrorist attacks have claimed thousands of innocent lives in Pakistan over the last several years, but the school children’s massacre is the bloodiest in the Nation’s recent history. It has also sparked unparalleled shock across the country and abroad – as people disbelievingly grieve the loss of young children attending an otherwise normal day in school. (p. 1)

Administrators at most schools are consumed with planning for all aspects of the school operations. EPPs are just part of schools’ operational plans; however, the impact of a catastrophic attack makes this plan gravely important. Subsequently, many school principals and administrators may “seek additional options for disrupting an attack prior to the arrival of law enforcement personnel” (Lawler, 2016, p. 48). In 160 incidents, at least 65 of the events ended by “citizen engagement, or the violent actor’s suicide ended the shooting at the scene before law enforcement arrived” (Blair & Schweit, 2014, p. 11). Rural police departments or those in large urban areas could likely imagine the death and destruction wreaked by the evil actor at Virginia Tech because “after all it was unprecedented” (Giduck & Bail, 2011, p. 365).

Time Lines of Active Killer Events

An active killer can create carnage in only a matter of seconds. According to FBI statistics, most of these events only last from two to five minutes (Blair & Schweit, 2014). In this amount of time, the evil actor can dispense numerous rounds from multiple weapons, completely unabated during the attack. Marking the time for each action, from the onset of the event until it ends, creates the resulting timeline. Active killer events usually end before authorities arrive on
the scene; therefore, suppression engagement tactics to reduce response time is “the key to protecting the public” in these unique situations (Carr, 2017, p. 26). These timelines are analyzed by authorities to account for the actions taken by the perpetrator and responding authorities in an effort to improve response time and response procedures for these events.

**Townville Elementary Shooting in Greeneville, South Carolina on September 28, 2016; Two Casualties**

Jesse Osborne, 14 years old, shoots his father in his home, then calls his grandparents crying, but was unintelligible. He then drove a truck to the elementary school and jumped out as it rolled to a stop. He drew a .40 caliber handgun and began indiscriminately shooting at teachers and students on the playground. The gun jammed after a number of rounds and Jesse used his cell phone to call his grandfather. The principal and several teachers were peering from an upstairs window when one of the teachers asked, “Is that Jesse Osborne?” (Cox, 2017, para. 20). He wandered across the playground with the jammed gun until he was subdued by an off-duty firefighter. The entire event lasted 12 seconds, from the time the shooting began until the gun jammed. In the event the gun had not jammed, more innocent lives may have been lost.

According to *The Washington Post*, an analysis of “online archives, state enrollment figures, and news stories indicated that since the Columbine tragedy, 18 years ago, more than 135,000 students attending at least 164 primary or secondary schools have experienced a shooting on campus” (Cox, 2017, para. 14).

**Umpqua Community College, Roseburg, Oregon; October 1, 2015; 10 Casualties, 9 Wounded**

On October 1, 2015, Chris Harper-Mercer entered the beginning of his expository writing class in Snyder Hall room 15, and began shooting. At 10:38 a.m., the 911 center received the
first call reporting gunfire on the campus. Almost immediately, at 10:39 a.m. dispatch sent out a
call that a shooter was in the science building.

UCC placed the campus on lockdown mode at 10:40 a.m. At 10:41 a.m. reports came in
that at least one female was down and the dispatcher attempted to get more information. 10:42
a.m. Oregon State Police received reports of an active killer on the UCC campus. Two police
officers and a wildlife officer arrived on the scene at 10:44 a.m. At 10:46 police exchanged
suppression deployment with the suspect on the south side of Snyder Hall. A broadcast echoed
from the radio at 10:48 a.m.: “Suspect is down!” (Staff, 2015).

The active killer event began in a classroom in Snyder Hall. The professor and a room
full of Chris Harper-Mercer’s classmates were beginning the day in the writing class. In the
initial seconds and minute the action began (See Figure 2.1).” SET may have been deployed by
the professor or a colleague down the hall. The ability to engage the perpetrator with equal or
greater suppression tools can save lives in the first few seconds of action. During the time the
police were in route responding to the 911 calls, parents, sons and daughters were being
murdered inside Snyder Hall.

**Figure 2.1. Umpqua Community College**

![Figure 2.1. Time Elapsed in the Umpqua Community College Attack.](image-url)
Army Public School, Peshwar, Pakistan; December 16, 2014; 145 Casualties, 130 Wounded

The BBC (“Peshawar Taliban,” 2017) reported seven attackers wore suicide bomb vests, implying the attackers had no intention of being captured. The militants accessed the school by scaling the walls and set a bomb off to create chaos in the beginning of the assault. The deadly attack began in the morning during classes, and lasted for approximately eight hours (see Figure 2.1).

Survivors reported locking doors, hiding under desks, and running for their lives. All of these actions proved fatal for 145 students and teachers. The attackers were finally subdued when the army overwhelmed the assailants to end the ordeal. The students reported watching the gunmen go from class to class killing their school mates and teachers. “One boy told reporters he had been with a group of 10 friends who tried to run away and hide, and he was the only one to survive” (“Pakistan Taliban,” 2014, para. 18).

Mudassir Awan, an eyewitness stated, "As soon as the firing started, we ran to our classrooms. I saw the attackers. There were six or seven men. They were entering every class and they were killing the children” (“Peshawar Taliban,” 2017, para. 2). Kashan, a ninth grade student recounted they were “in the hall and a colonel was giving a lecture when we heard firing from the back.” The sound of the firing kept moving closer when suddenly the door behind us was kicked down and two people started firing indiscriminately (“Peshawar Taliban,” 2017, para. 17).

Amir Ameen, 17, reported, "It took us a few minutes to understand the situation - and then we ran. Before we could lock the door from inside, three attackers entered. There were around ten boys in the room. They killed all of them. I am the only one who survived.” The military source confided the suicide bombers “burnt a teacher in front of the students in a
classroom. They literally set the teacher on fire with gasoline and made the kids watch” (“Peshawar Taliban,” 2017, para. 2).

Marysville-Pilchuck High School, Marysville, Washington; October 24, 2014; 5 casualties

On October 24, 2014, at 10:39 a.m., a 15-year-old male, armed with a handgun, began shooting in the cafeteria of Marysville-Pilchuck High School in Marysville, Washington. Four students were killed, including the shooter’s cousin; 3 students were wounded, including one who injured himself while fleeing the scene. The shooter, when confronted by a teacher, committed suicide before law enforcement arrived (ALERRT, 2017, para 14).

Santa Monica College, Santa Monica, California; June 7, 2013; Six Casualties

A man armed with a semi-automatic rifle killed at least “four people and wounded several others as he carried out a deadly rampage across several blocks, and moved to the Santa Monica College Library where police shot him dead,” said Vincent Zhang, a 20-year-old economics major who said he heard a woman pleading before he saw her “shot in the head. Administrative assistant Trena Johnson, who looked out the window of the dean's office, where she worked, heard gunfire. "I haven't been able to stop shaking," she said. Inside the library, students reported hearing gunfire and screams. “I turn around and that's when he's just standing there, like he's modeling for some ammo magazine," Orcutt said. "He was very calm just standing there, panning around, seeing who he could shoot, one bullet at a time, like target practice” (“Santa Monica Shootings,” 2013).
Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Connecticut; December 14, 2012; 26 Casualties 2 Wounded

On December 14, 2012, at 9:30 a.m., a 20-year-old male, armed with two handguns and a rifle, shot through the secured front door to enter Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. He killed 20 students and six adults, and wounded two adults inside the school. Prior to the shooting, the shooter killed his mother at their home. In total, 27 people were killed; two were wounded. The shooter committed suicide after police arrived. (ALERRT 2012-2015, 2017, para 6).

Tasso da Silveira School, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; April 7, 2011; 12 casualties, 12 wounded

Wellington Menezes de Oliveria, a 23 year old former student at Tasso da Silveira School shot and killed at least 12 students and wounded at least 12 others. He entered the school at the beginning start of classes, armed with two handguns. Many of the victims were in “one eighth grade class. The gunman, who left a suicide note, shot himself after being wounded by police” (“Timeline of Deadly,” 2015, para. 9).

Univ. Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, Alabama; February 12, 2010; 3 casualties

“University of Alabama biology professor Amy Bishop uses a 9-mm pistol to shoot six professors at a faculty meeting, killing three” (“Timeline of Deadly,” 2015, para. 10). “I mean, you’re crawling under a table. I grabbed her leg and,
I don’t know what I was thinking. I wasn’t thinking anything. I was thinking:

“Grab her!”

**Azerbaijan State Oil Academy, Baku, Azerbaijan; April 30, 2009; 13 Casualties, 13 Wounded**

Farda Gadyrov, a Georgian native, entered the Oil Academy after classes began, and he started shooting every person he encountered; before authorities could stop his assault, he “killed 12 people and injured another 13 with a semi-automatic Makarov pistol. With police approaching, Gadyrov kill[ed] himself” (“Timeline of Deadly,” 2015, para. 11).

**Mercaz Harav Yeshiva, Jerusalem, Israel; March 6, 2008; 8 Casualties, 9 Wounded**

In 2008, eight teens were killed and nine others seriously wounded after a “Palestinian gunman opened fire in a crowded library at Mercaz Harav Yeshiva” in Jerusalem; the shooter was subsequently shot and died (“Timeline of Deadly,” 2015, para. 14).

**Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia; April 16, 2007; 33 Casualties, 17 Wounded**

On April 16, 2007, at 7:15 a.m., a 23-year-old male, armed with two handguns, began shooting in a dormitory at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. Two-and-a-half hours later, he chained the doors shut in a classroom building and began shooting at the students and faculty inside. Thirty-two people were killed; seventeen were wounded. In addition, six students were injured jumping from a second floor classroom and were not included in other reported injury totals. The shooter committed suicide as police entered the building (ALERRT, 2017).
Giduck and Bail (2011) asserted the assailant Cho “managed to fire 174 rounds in at most an 11 minute time span, or was firing at a rate of 14.5 to 15.82 rounds per minute, or one round every 3.79 to 4.14 seconds throughout the attack” (p. 219). Cho had chained the doors shut to the hall, and this barricade blocked the entry of police, allowing unabated time to move between classes. It is practical to think the responding officers would have arrived within minutes, however in many areas of the country response time may be in excess of ten minutes (“Giduck and Bail,” 2011). In the event responding officers had arrived within minutes utilized the “QUAD” technique, they still would have had to breach the barricaded doors. This elapsed time allowed the evil actor to move unabated from room to room to achieve his goal of destruction.

**School Number One, Belsan, Russia; September 13, 2006; 330 Casualties**

Men and women wearing masks who wore bomb vests entered Beslan's School Number One, opened fire in the courtyard as a ceremony celebrating the beginning of the school year was concluding. The hostages, crammed in the sports hall, sat beneath explosives strung from the basketball hoops. The survivors and their families report Russian officials sorely mishandled the hostage situation and ignored signals indicating that a hostage scenario was taking place. The European Court of Human Rights censured Russian authorities for failure to prevent the militants from meeting and travelling during the day of the attack; furthermore, Russian authorities failed
to bolster security at the school or warn the community of the threat (“Beslan School Siege,” 2017). Giduck and Bail (2011) maintained every state in America has an al Qaeda or related terror group studying and gathering intelligence on educational institutions in anticipation of a “Belsan-style assault” (p. 358).

**Red Lake High School, Red Lake, Minnesota; 9 Casualties, 7 Wounded**

On March 21, 2005, at 2:49 p.m., a 16-year-old boy who was armed with a shotgun and two handguns began a gun assault at Red Lake High School in Red Lake, Minnesota. Before the incident at the school, the shooter shot and killed his grandfather, a former police officer, as well as one other individual at their home. He subsequently took his grandfather’s police tactical gear, assault guns, and body armor to the school. Nine people were killed that day, including a teacher, five students, and an unarmed security guard; six other students were wounded. The shooter committed suicide while exchanging gunfire with local police (ALERRT, 2017).

![Figure 2.5. Red Lake High School](image)

**Figure 2.5. Time elapsed in the Red Lake High School attack.**

Morales (2005) claimed the threat that Mr. Weise obviously presented to the school was “readily apparent and Mr. Brun attempted to confront that danger without regard for his personal safety “thereby placing his duty to the safety of the school and its occupants above his own personal safety” (para. 6). The officer was the first person killed at the school, which demonstrates the fortitude of professionals in the business of education to willingly place
themselves in harm’s way to intervene on a student’s behalf. Red Lake public safety director added that responding officers effectively “utilized their training and went in as a team” (“In Red Lake,” 2005, para. 6). The actions of the responding officers was the first time following the Columbine shooting that updated protocols allowed officers to form a small squad and enter a building during an active killer event.

All of these events have a number of common threads. First, the short amount of time that it took for human life to be impacted by an evil actor with a plan. Second, the complete unexpectedness of the victims of the attack. Third, the social and emotional impact upon the communities as a whole, and the national outrage for such tragic events. Fourth, in all of these events, the response was reactionary following existing protocols of lockdown, hiding under desk and chairs, trying to hide and becoming a victim. In all of these instances prior planning and highly trained onsite personnel could have utilized suppression engagement tactics and possibly impacted the outcome by saving lives of the victims:

The impact of targeted attacks cannot be measured in statistics alone. Schools and places of worship traditionally are places of safety and peace where people can learn and worship without fear of armed violence. However, violence can happen in any setting, and each attack—no matter how rare—can result in many fatalities. Even one such death will have a tremendous and lasting effect on family and loved ones, the surrounding community, and the Nation as a whole and can generate tremendous stress and anxiety. (“Why Prepare,” 2017, para. 2)

On June 15, 2017, Singman wrote the article “Shooting Spurs Calls for New Lawmaker Security Measures,” which focused on the actions of the security detail present for the congressional baseball practice. At the sound of the initial gunfire, officers immediately
responded with suppression engagement tactics with precision deployment of suppression tools. The lethal force used was adequate to subdue the active killer, and the officers are now regarded in high esteem for their heroic actions.

Professional educators gave their lives in each of the aforementioned events without the aid of suppression engagement tactics or the ability to provide precision delivery with suppression engagement tools. Likewise, many educators in the United States currently have some form of military, police, or suppression tool training. Administrative officials who understand the process of research on evaluation could utilize this process with formal guidelines to provide guidance on implementation of new protocols. The new protocols would allow educators to receive professional training for SET and SIT, providing viable support to the FBI’s recommended “Run, Hide, Fight” protocol.

Organizational response. FEMA asserts that schools and places of worship “traditionally are places of safety and peace where people can learn and worship without fear of armed violence” (“Quick Reference Guide,” 2017). American schools are currently known locally, nationally, and internationally as being gun-free zones. This is basic knowledge that evil actors, mentally unstable, and rational individuals across the world use in their planning for these horrific events.

Teachers’ perceptions of the principal’s ability to handle routine crises, may greatly affect their own abilities to react effectively, especially an active killer event (Rider, 2015). The unknown factor of suppression engagement practices, and the probability the criminal will be faced with lethal force, should create a real psychological factor to prevent the actions of active killers. The evil actor should have to ponder the possibility they are facing lethal force and will not have time to inflict multiple casualties. For a prospective mass shooter, educational facilities
and military bases, such as “Fort Hood and the Navy Yard at Annapolis—are like barrels full of defenseless fish” (Nedzel, 2014, pg. 431).

Arslan and Olsen provided a nine-step strategy for officers responding to an active killer event. Older methods of dealing with active killers employed negotiations and the hope of a peaceful resolution. On the other hand, any perpetrator who “continues to engage in deadly physical violence must be met with immediate deadly physical force from responding officers [who are] prepared with weapons that provide stopping power and precision accuracy” (Arslan & Olsen, 2016, p. 162). Decreasing response times by utilizing the skills of on-site personnel and the implementation of suppression engagement practices should be considered to immediately stop the threat. Implementing battlefield triage training for on-site personnel and first responders on the scene will also serve to save lives.

Specific research focused in regard to an active killer in a school, may encourage more educational systems to implement suppression engagement tactics. This could mean that teachers may “increase their confidence to respond effectively in an active killer incident” (Rider, 2015, p. 48). Rapid response and immediate suppression at the initial onset of the event is the main underlying component to limiting casualties and saving lives.

The Ohio Legislature recently provided funding in its state budget to support FASTER Saves Lives program to provide training for those districts who are leading the country on safety for their students and staff (Irvine, 2017). Likewise, Cedarville University considered “all of the issues very carefully and implemented use of suppression tools for fulltime employees” (Weinstein, 2017, p. 2).

Progression of Response to Active Killer Events

**National responses.** After the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School, many American school districts have “increased the number of school resource officers on campus and,
in a few cases, permitted teachers to carry concealed weapons themselves” (JeeHae, 2013).

Contemplating the elapsed time theory as the underlying component for mass casualties and increased victim counts provides added understanding for the implementation of suppression engagement as a valid response. Georgia has joined nine other states that legally allow “suppression tools on campus, with proof of basic training or active service in the military” (“Georgia Colleges,” 2017, p. 2). Response time from the onset of the active killer event until the final round is fired is crucial in limiting mass casualty and victim counts. Spending the evening talking to our loved ones about the heroic actions of our teachers is better than spending time talking to a grief counselor or planning a funeral.

A national initiative has been the move to hire School Resource Officers (SROs) to compensate for the lack of a police presence in many schools. Incidence rates of violence in schools has been lowered due to the influence of SROs “through the use of crisis intervention techniques. SROs are also trained to spot trouble, and develop positive relationships with students to build a reporting rapport in the event of a possible incident” (Ponzi, 2016, pg. 21).

SROs that are capable of befriending students, and providing a safe reporting avenue for them to self-report possible incidents can prove to be a valuable resource to the school administration. The SRO present at Columbine was not able to stop the school shooting, and SWAT still responded to the event (Fassinger, 2011). Research indicates the elapsed time during the active killer event should be addressed by improved response to the event (Sanrow, 2007; Yarbough, 2008; Howe, 2007; Fairburn, 2007). In successfully responding to active killer incidents in the effort to save lives, “deployment tactics must change” (Fassinger, 2011, p. 66).

Active killer events affect all walks of society, and effective strategies are utilized in a subjective manner. Recently, in the US capital, senators were attacked during an early morning baseball practice. The perpetrator had planned the attack and chose that moment to become an
active killer. A US senator participating in the practice was escorted by his personnel security detail. The security detail, using the Elapsed Time Theory, immediately engaged the active killer with suppression engagement techniques, utilizing suppression tools with precision deployment and lethally subdued the assailant.

“Without the actions of Capitol Hill police, it would have been “a massacre—we had no defense—we had no defense at all,” Senator Rand Paul, a Republican from Kentucky said on Fox & Friends. Rand claimed the entire group gathered at the practice were “like sitting ducks”.

The current sole practice of “lock down” simply makes educational staff and students virtual “sitting ducks.” Educational institutions could learn from our nation’s law makers and implement updated protocols to immediately suppress active killers. Fassinger, (2011, p. 76-77) presented the updated protocol for police response resulting from research into the Columbine shooting. The recommended procedure for law enforcement officers to respond to an active killer is Quick Aggressive Deployment, also known as QUAD, which utilizes the following factors:

(a) Someone must stop the shooter, thereby ending the killing spree. (b) The shooter will be highly focused on spraying bullets into as many people as possible. (c) Expect the scene to be loud and chaotic. (d) Use the chaos to move quietly to an advantageous position. (e) Terrified victims and the sound of gunfire will direct officers to the shooter. (f) When an active shooting is in progress, officers do not have to verbalize warnings or requests if it endangers lives. Take the shot! Make the shot! (g) If the subject is contained in a nonviolent pose, officers should begin negotiations and initiate a classic SWAT response. (Fassinger, 2011, pp. 76-77)

The concept of merging the talents of management, tactical defense professionals, and training of on-site personnel into the development of improved school security guidelines to
suppress the active killer or domestic terror attack (see Figure 2.6), will dramatically decrease response time, casualty / victim count, and dramatically increasing the survivability of the actual event (Lawler, 2015; Davies, 2018).

**Figure 2.6. Conceptual Concepts Framework**

**Educator Skill Sets**

Teaching is a profession that utilizes many skill sets that can be utilized inside an outside of the classroom. The public idea regarding education, is that everyone in the building is a teacher, however, many individuals from various backgrounds work in educational institutions.
They interact with students on many different levels, and have transitioned to the education field from different avenues.

Administrators who are adept at data mining resumes are able to hire individuals with skill sets beyond that vary from the new hire fresh out of college. Principals are recognizing former service members bring a grit and determination to the classroom that could “improve student performance and lower teacher turnover rates” as they transition into a new career field (Toppo, 2013, para. 5).

Educators are not just teachers, they have diverse interest, multiple skill sets, and most have skill sets beyond delivering pedagogy. Principals are educational leaders and managers of human capital in their respective buildings. In the event a specific skill set is needed, the administrator who is familiar with their staff backgrounds can readily fill a void by managing the human capital in the building. In the event they are in need of a specific skill set, and it is not available, the next school year will provide an opportunity to acquire the skill set through hiring specific teachers. Rich Appel, principal of Chilton (Wis.) Middle School, said service members just learn to be able to adapt and overcome on so many different levels. They tend to have an innate sense of diplomacy, for one thing, and an ability to put small struggles and challenges into perspective. They just roll with the punches, not stressing out when other people are stressing out. (Toppo, 2013, para. 11)

Education administrators hire book keepers, janitorial staff, maintenance workers, coaches, culinary staff, attendance clerks, secretaries, accountants, electricians, plumbers, school resource officers, counselors, IT professionals, etc. The list can be endless for the skills needed to work in the profession of education. The administrator who knows the backgrounds of his or her employees has access to the solutions for a multitude of issues that may arise within a given school year.
The educator is a multi-faceted employee who is capable of uncommon loyalty and valor when engaged with the students in the building. Professional educators spend their lives building, protecting, nurturing, and developing the intellectual capital of the nation. Some educators have even paid the ultimate price by dying in an effort to save and protect this most valuable asset.

**Implementation Practices**

Campbell (2016) provides the experience of a teacher / federal prosecutor who expresses, she would not arm teachers. She was “humbled when [she] could not pass the simulator training, experiencing an elevated heart rate, tunnel vision, and hearing problems, all issues that are solved with proper training (p. 6). Stress inoculation training (SIT) is a necessary part of becoming familiar with how stress affects reactions and abilities during events. SIT is a process of de-sensitizing an individual to the physiological effects of stress on the human body.

Technology has become a vital part of the educational process. Utilizing virtual reality in the training process for suppression engagement tactics allows the individual to become adjusted at a greater depth than simply role playing. Utilizing virtual reality to experience a real time scenario is just one of the ways *VirTra* can train employees to engage the active killer (Lapowsky, 2017).

All educators who participate must obtain local board approval to utilize suppression tools and complete a certification course at or above standards, they must additionally pass a multi-level background check (Posey, 2016). All educators trained with SET principles and authorized to utilize suppression tools must pass an FBI background check, be approved by the local law enforcement agencies, be approved by their local school board, and be chosen by the building administrator to operate in that capacity.
The suppression tool on one’s hip is real; it is filled with CO₂, providing the experience of live action during precision deployment. This real time experience is invaluable to training onsite staff in the use of suppression engagement tactics (Lapowsky, 2017). Additionally, the training system comes with a wearable device that gives onsite personnel a small electrical shock to simulate an actual gunshot (Lapowsky, 2017). While others may be running and hiding, those who are armed and trained can take effective measures, and it is commendable to a degree that it is imperative to have a serious dialogue in our communities to defend our children (Posey, 2016).

**Summary**

Local educational authorities at all levels should be aware of the need to protect their staff and students in their care. In light of the tragedies that occur with more regularity, the likelihood of being affected by one of these tragic events is greater each day. While institutions of higher learning have a “legal and moral responsibility to provide a safe and secure campus environment, they cannot maintain an open and free community and, at the same time, eliminate the possibility of random acts of violence” (Myers, 2017, p. 55).

Gjelsten (2008) asserted that terrorist attacks around the world have demonstrated the ability of terrorists to strike the most unimaginable soft targets, thus allowing the vicarious experience of the incident happening on American soil. The National Commission on Productivity Report (1973) indicated that even though a “direct correlation did not exist between response time by police and crime prevention or deterrence common sense would dictate that there is a need to make rapid response a priority” (Fassinger, 2011, p. 42-43).

All members of the educational community should be aware of the plausibility of these events and be ever vigilant to react appropriately. Homeland Security and the FBI have provided numerous statistics for historic events and updated protocols to address the evolution of the
active killer, however, the research provides support for implementing specific steps and actions educators could take in order to successfully engage and suppress an active killer before they are a statistic.
CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used to conduct the study. It includes the research question, primary questions, instrument used, process for data collection, and statistical analysis procedures. The purpose of this study was “How do stakeholder perceptions of improved protocols and procedures impact faster response times to an active killer?”

Time is the key factor in lives saved by immediate engagement of the active killer by onsite personnel in an event of this magnitude. The event itself is horrific by all accounts, and when less time is available to the active killer, fewer lives may be lost.

During the 16 years from January 1990 to September 2006, there were 949 reported “incidents of deliberate attacks on educational systems worldwide” (Appendix A) outside of the United States (Gjelsten, 2008, p. 27). In the majority of the 160 national incidents, 90 (56.3%) of them ended by:

the shooter’s initiative before the police arrived—sometimes when the shooter committed suicide or stopped shooting, and other times when the shooter fled the scene; in 63 incidents where the duration of the incident could be ascertained, 44 (69.8%) of 63 incidents ended in five minutes or less, with 23 ending in two minutes or less. (Blair & Schweit, 2014, p. 11)

As simple as it may seem, time is of the essence for engaging and lethally suppressing the active killer.
Description of Qualitative Research

School administrators are tasked with providing a safe environment for learning. Parents send their most precious resource to school each day. Mothers and fathers trust that they will see their children at the end of the day and continue with the routine of life. However, all too often the news flash on the phone, radio, or television informs Americans of the tragic events unfolding in their hometown or schools (Appendix B).

The loss of life is shocking, but Americans are becoming desensitized to media reports detailing this very problem. By revealing the “extraction of bare life and the modern efforts to assume power over it with violence and the threat of violence, we reveal a certain reality” (Shapiro, 2015, p. 423). Hindsight provides numerous opportunities for administrators and district officials to postulate how the victims could have been better protected. Foresight and intense effective management preparation and planning to respond to a possible attack, however, empowers on-site personnel to affect a more positive outcome for the inevitability of the next active killer event.

In light of the research regarding the effects of decreased response time and its impact on casualty rates and victim injuries, this study began with semi-structured interviews of tactical industry professionals, former SROs, and administrative professionals in the field of education. The information gathered in this research was used to discover if the decrease in the elapsed time until the engagement of the active killer is a valid link to saving lives. What advantages are gained by onsite personnel, utilizing suppression engagement techniques with precision deployment of suppression tools, thus decreasing the time an active killer has to wreak carnage upon innocent victims?
Description of the Specific Research Approach

Constructivism was used to present this information in a way that shed new light on this tremendously important subject. The need to present new terminology and application of definitions were used to guide the conversations around this topic. The use of specific terminology is tremendously important in order to engage in meaningful dialogue with all advocates interested in saving innocent lives, and supporting improved strategies to create safe effective actions can help increase survivability of these acts.

In the aftermath of the 1999 Columbine High School attack, the Secret Service and the Department of Education created and added the term targeted violence to the lexicon of school and law enforcement officials (Stone & Spencer, 2011). This research presented a new method of discussing the subject of school safety measures, allowing professional educators, legislative bodies, law enforcement, tactical defense professionals, medical professionals, and other interested groups to come to the table and have substantial positive dialogue to impact the implementation of new best practices.

The Carson Newman University Institutional Review Board (IRB) received the outline of the research for its approval. The interview of each participant was semi-structured and consisted of one driving question for each participant to expand upon while providing answers. The semi-structured interview was the focused interview in which the interviewer was well aware of the respondent, and when deviating away from the primary topic, the interviewer largely refocused the respondent towards the key subject (Jamshed, 2014).

The survey of these individuals provided a unique perspective in how these events are approached in the future. The industry has moved from a hostage approach, to lockdown, to the current form of lockdown, run, hide, fight! In today’s high stakes world of domestic terrorism,
possible lone-wolf attacks, and the grasp at 15 minutes of fame, new protocols to improve the safety of schools need to be implemented.

**Description of the Study Participants and Settings**

School violence is not a new problem facing administrators. Often, it is an issue that school administration plans for, but stakeholders hope it will never occur. Administrators and school personnel alike may recall tragic events as the darkest days of their career, but they must be prepared to seize control in the event of tragedy. The episodes of violence are not new, just new to the victims it is perpetrated upon.

The participants for the semi-structured interview consisted of four groups impacting or impacted by the active killer.

**Group 1:** Tactical professionals are knowledgeable in implementing tactical procedures to increase the safety of onsite personnel and how to utilize precision deployment to suppress an active killer. These tacticians are leaders in their fields of expertise and lead initiatives to provide cutting edge protection for educational staff and students.

**Group 2:** Police officers having received rigorous initial and ongoing training to effectively work this type of event during the course of executing their duties. These individuals should have experience with active killer situations that require immediate response to secure a scene and protect citizens. Their real life experience provided a broad historical and current perspective of the effectiveness of decreased response times to an active killer or violent event. This set of professionals were individuals who may have encountered active killers / violent actors in the line of duty.

**Group 3:** Former school resource officers (SROs) possessing a unique perspective and insight on the impact of this type of event because of their work with educational staff and students. The SROs completed the semi-structured interview and provided additional insight
regarding the need to decrease the response time of local law enforcement. Their view of a prospective active killer / violent situation was important in how decreased response times may impact the survivability of this type of event. They also have a different personal view of the magnitude or inevitability of a possible attack due to lack of experience with an active killer / violent event.

Group 4: District level administrative stakeholders who could impact decisions from an implementation standpoint within a school system. These individuals completed the semi-structured interview and provided unique insight into this subject from the local level. They provided their opinions, attitudes, and beliefs with their answers.

The settings for the semi-structured interviews were prepared and controlled by the interviewer. The location was mutually agreed upon by the researcher and the interviewee. In the event travel was necessary, the researcher traveled to the interviewee to improve availability to the subject. The researcher provided flexibility of time, but also managed the time of the semi-structured interview to ensure the interviewee’s time was not unduly encumbered.

The tactical and law enforcement participants have received training specific to local law enforcement. The tactical professionals provide training for a broad spectrum of public institutions and personnel of local entities. The qualitative study data were gathered using open-ended questions that provided the participants the opportunity to expand upon their original answers.

The questions were reviewed for validity and reliability by a panel of industry experts. The interviews were conducted in person, recorded, and each respondent was given ample opportunity to expand upon his or her answers. Each individual was provided a transcript of his or her responses for review, and each was guaranteed confidentiality in his or her answers.
The researcher focused on specific target groups for data during the study. Not all participants taking part in the research, however, have received suppression engagement training. Participants in the study have different backgrounds and experiences with suppression engagement techniques and precision deployment of suppression tools.

**Validity and reliability.**

Once the IRB approved the study, reliability was determined by bringing a panel of experts together, ensuring the semi-structured interview questions were aligned with the goals of the research. The panel consisted of two security professionals, a former SRO, and a retired high school administrator. The validity questionnaire for which the panel provided answers is attached as Appendix D. The responses to this questionnaire were evaluated by the researcher and advisors for reliability, and necessary changes were made to the instrument as needed.

The semi-structured interview provided the researcher with the opportunity to frame primary interview questions (Appendix E) based on the interviewee and his previous response. This allowed discussion to proceed with fluidity and cover specific areas in greater detail. Covering the area of decreased response time by on-site personnel provided broader insight without there being a structure or preconceived plan for dealing with the topic.

The participants were garnered using a letter of solicitation, in which the informed consent was included (Appendix F). Participants’ answers were based on their actual experiences from working in the field with these type of events and the practices that have evolved to provide higher success rates. The data gleaned from these interviews were clean and straightforward in an effort to provide additional validity and reliability to the research.
Data Collection Procedures

The semi-structured interview process was designed to gather data from tactical industry professionals who are engaged in providing protection to public entities and security professionals. The qualitative data that were collected from the interviews was coded.

A letter of solicitation (Appendix F) was sent to each tactical professional, police officer, former school resource officer, and district level administrator. The information from the survey was secured through the researcher’s home office in Nashville, Tennessee. All information was kept confidential and no identifying information was released.

The semi-structured interview followed an exploratory qualitative methodology to help locate themes and specific concepts contained in the data. The answers were coded for consistency and plotted on a graph in order to locate themes and trends that should develop. This data were used to report on the themes and trends that develop from the professionals answers. The data were used to develop improved best practices providing enhanced safety and security measures for the staff and students of educational institutions.

Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative methodology was utilized in order to identify recurring themes within the data (Creswell, 2014). The researcher assigned each participant a code in the top row of analysis chart. The codes were, Tactical Professionals (TP1), (TP2), Police Officers (PO1), (PO2), School Resource Officers (SRO1), (SRO2), Educational Administrator (EA1), (EA2), etc. The transcripts were evaluated, line by line, for specific phrasing, distinct wording, and items stressed as important by participants. The identified answers were transferred to the analysis chart and assigned to the specific code for future reference. The process of analyzing each transcript line by line for specific items, and assigning a specific code to each participant, provided further depth from the semi-structured interviews.
The researcher reviewed all items discovered in the transcript assigned to the data set and highlighted like answers with a corresponding color. The highlighted responses were then used to identify primary and secondary themes. The primary and secondary themes revealed within the face-to-face interviews were annotated and listed as they were discovered within the transcripts. The themes were then coded and placed into a spread sheet to further organize the data sets.

The highlighted data gathered from the semi-structured interviews were assigned to the primary or secondary theme to further understand the participant’s ideas regarding implementation of suppression engagement strategies for use in educational facilities. The data were further coded using Axial Coding to explore the relationships of the categories and the connections between them. The Axial Coding model used, was “Causal conditions = >, Central Phenomenon = >, context = >, Intervening conditions = >, action/interaction strategies = >, and consequences” (Gibbs, 2010). Reviewing the data to explore causal relationship and carryover within the responses provided additional depth to the understanding of the research.

The resulting qualitative data set was derived from answers provided during the semi-structured interviews of the participants in order to understand the circumstances, behaviors, and opinions gathered from the participants. The opinions of the district level group participants are tremendously important because they hold or have held positions in educational structure to impact decisions regarding the implementation of newly updated policies and procedures suggested by the research. It is important to understand the educational settings and the demographics of the districts that are represented in this group. These variables were considered for the final data analysis of the research. In order to increase trustworthiness and double-check the work of the researcher, a peer de-briefer had input in multiple stages of the analysis process. At the end of the analysis, the researcher shared a summary of the findings with two
participants in order to check that the conclusions were aligned with their perceptions. The input from both of these sources was used to inform the final form of the findings.

**Summary**

The data for this chapter were collected from professionals in the tactical defense industry, police officers, SROs, and district administrators. The perceptions of these individuals were unique to the different aspects of school security and implementation at the school level. Collaboration between the respective professions is key to developing comprehensive EPPs, and therefore necessary to know their perceptions to achieve workable solutions. The collected data were coded and plotted to provide a greater depth of understanding of the whole, toward new protocols and procedures for responding to the evil actor.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to understand how elapsed time impacts the rate of casualties and the increased victim count when the active killer is not engaged. The study was implemented during February 2018 and March 2018. The “Stakeholder Perception Interview” was conducted with 12 professionals in the areas of education administration, tactical training professionals, former police officers, and former school resource officers. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions regarding violent school events. Study participants were career professionals who have spent their careers in the school building, educating students, protecting students, and creating solutions to continue providing for school safety. These participants have a depth of understanding that is unequaled across a broad spectrum of the United States culture and society. One group lives with the student, one group provides on-site security, one group provides community security, and one group studies methods to continue effectively protecting the United States intellectual capital.

The researcher obtained permission from three school districts that allowed district personnel to participate in the research. Each participating district required a copy of the final dissertation to be submitted to its respective office. Carson-Newman University granted IRB approval in January, 2018.

Participant Selection

In February 2018, after receiving IRB approval, the researcher began sending e-mail requests to school districts, tactical organizations, police officers and SROs across the United States. The participants were chosen from a nationwide search based upon their experience with the subject and the focus of their careers. The researcher valued experience from professionals who have dealt with training, preparation, annual reviews, and updated protocols. All participants have been in their current profession for a minimum of 20 years and a maximum of over 40 years.
Applications requests to conduct research were submitted to eight school districts; five districts agreed to participate in the research and three districts never replied to the request. All remaining participants identified to take part in the research study were either retired police officers, retired school resource officers, or tactical professionals; one police officer and one school resource officer declined to participate in the study.

**Study Participation**

As shown in Figure 4.1, 12 professionals with careers impacting school security, 25% were education administrators, 25% tactical training professionals, 25% police officers, 25% school resource officers. The following process was followed when a participant agreed to participate in the study: The participant was called or e-mailed a request to participate in the semi-structured interview. Once a verbal agreement was received, the participant was mailed or e-mailed a consent form, and consent forms were subsequently completed; one was retained by the researcher and one by the participant, participants were either interviewed face-to-face or over the telephone, each interview was recorded on the iPhone, each interview was transcribed, and the final transcription was e-mailed back to each participant for final approval.

![Figure 4.1. Semi-Structured Interviews](image)

*Figure 4.1 Study Sample: Displays the interviews requested, participation, and interviews declined.*
Demographic Data

Figure 4.2 displays 91.6% of participants were male, with one female participating in the study.

Figure 4.2 Study Sample: Gender of Participants

Figure 4.3 shows that 17% of the participants were ages 40-50, 8% were over 65, and 75% were between the ages of 51–64.

Figure 4.3 Study Sample: Age of Participants
Figure 4.4 displays the highest position held by the study participants; 75% of the participants served or currently serve at the highest tier of their profession, 8% serve in an executive role, and 17% serve in a leadership role.

As shown in Figure 4.5, the length of service in their highest position is displayed for the participants; 25% have served 0 – 10 years, 50% have served 11 – 25 years, and 25% have served over 26 years.
Figure 4.6 displays the years of service for the 12 study participants; 17% of the participants have 0 – 15 years of service, 58% have 16 – 30 years of service and 25% have 31 – 47 years of service in their respective fields.

As shown in Figure 4.7, the participants in the study have worked in a wide range of districts with different populations; 33% have worked with populations up to 15,000 students, 25% have worked populations up to 30,000 students and 17% have worked with populations up to 75,000 students.
Figure 4.8 displays the size of the smallest schools served by the study participants; 50% have work experience in schools with under 250 students, 33% in schools with under 600 students and 17% in schools with under 1,000 students.

Figure 4.8 Study Sample: Student Population of Smallest Schools Served

Figure 4.9 displays the size of the largest schools served by the study participants; 50% have work experience in schools with as many as 250 students, 25% in schools with as many as 2,100, and 25% in schools over 2,100 students.

Figure 4.9 Study Sample: Student Population of Largest Schools Served
Figure 4.10 shows the 2016 census count for county size of study participant districts; 25% of the participants work with county populations under 10,000 residents, 42% work with county populations under 100,000 residents, and 33% work with county populations under 10,000 residents.

Figure 4.10 Study Sample: Participant Population of County Served (2016 Census)

Figure 4.11 displays the classification of individual participant districts; 50% of the participants are located in rural districts, 42% of the participants are located in suburban districts, and 8% are located in urban districts.

Figure 4.11 Study Sample: Participant District Classification
Research Themes

The following guidelines were used to ensure external validity. The researcher detailed to participants, in depth, reasons for conducting the research, how their professional experiences and knowledge could provide a deeper understanding, and the methods for gathering the research data. The participants were provided with a thorough background for the primary research question. They were also informed regarding the research biases and the professional occupation of the researcher. Subsequently, the participants consented to the semi-structured interview. Each answer provided by the participants was recorded and transcribed for their approval. The transcripts were evaluated, line by line, for specific phrasing, distinct wording, and items deemed as important by the participants. Initially, 26 themes emerged from the first review of each semi-structured interview. The data were then reviewed for commonalities and relationships, which allowed the researcher to consolidate the research into nine primary themes and three secondary themes for this project.

The themes were annotated and listed as they were discovered within the transcripts. Axial coding was then utilized to explore the relationships of the categories and connections between them. This analysis provided the researcher with increased depth and breadth of the subject to consolidate into following themes. The primary themes revealed, in order of significance, were: (1) Response Time, (2) Layers of Security, (3) Scenario Training, (4) New Protocols, (5) Tactical Training, (6) Stress Inoculation Training, (7) Medical Training, (8) Terrorist Event, (9) Evolution of Protocols. The secondary themes revealed were; (1) Current Staff Skills, (2) Current Tools, (3) Negative Drawbacks. The Axial Coding model used, was “Casual conditions =>, Central Phenomenon =>, Context =>, Intervening conditions =>, Action/Interaction strategies =>, and consequences” (Gibbs, 2010). Reviewing this data and exploring the relationship and carryover within the participants’ responses provided the researcher with an increased depth of understanding to expound on the research gathered.
Research Questions

Considering research regarding the effects of decreased response time and its impact on casualty rates and victim injuries, this study began with semi-structured interviews of tactical industry professionals, former SROs, former police officers, and administrative educational administrators. The information gathered in this research was used to determine if the decrease in the elapsed time until the engagement of the active killer is a valid link to saving lives. What advantages are gained by on-site personnel? Are they utilizing suppression engagement techniques with precision deployment of suppression tools? Can these practices decrease the time an active killer has to wreak carnage upon innocent victims? The central research question for this qualitative study was “How do stakeholder perceptions of improved protocols and procedures impact faster response times to an active killer?”

The participants were asked to provide answers to the following interview questions:

1. How would professionally trained on-site personnel effectively decrease the response time to engagement and suppression of an active killer / violent event in a school?
2. What new protocols could be implemented to improve the current practice of “Lock Down” or “Run, Hide, Fight,” in an active killer / violent event in a school?
3. What tools could educators use to immediately engage and suppress the active killer?
4. What protocols or procedures are in place to license on-site personnel in the use of suppression engagement tools?
5. How is tactical training for an active killer / violent event in a school different from current School Resource Officer training for the same event?
6. How would live, real-time scenario training improve the safety and response time by on-site personnel in an active killer / violent event in a school?

7. How does Stress Inoculation Training prepare on-site personnel to react and emotionally handle suppressing an active killer?

Subsequently, the following follow-up questions were presented.

1. In the event of a terrorist event, is this training applicable?

2. Have you realized or experienced any negative drawbacks to utilizing your expertise in the area of implementing new school safety protocols?

The researcher assigned each participant the following codes to protect identity and qualify validity of the responses:

- Educational Administrator (EA1), (EA2), & (EA3)
- Tactical Professionals (TP1), (TP2), & (TP3)
- School Resource Officers (SRO1), (SRO2), & (SRO3)
- Police Officers (PO1), (PO2), & (PO3)

Observations from Research

The realized concern by all professionals is to dramatically improve response time to the evil actor in these events. During the semi-structured interviews, the educational administrators recognized response time was not quick enough; however, they conveyed the willingness to continue to wait on local law enforcement. Additionally, 100% of the tactical professionals and police officers stated the only way to decrease the time of response is utilizing on-site personnel. The depth of understanding for the current practice of, “Run, Hide, Fight”!

1. Participants ascertained the real need for current protocols to be updated.

2. Participants’ awareness of events causing change to current protocols.

3. Participants stated need for offensive tactics on-site to improve response time.
4. Participants’ depth of concern for all participants regarding the safety of schools.

5. Participants stated need to prepare and train staff to respond effectively to an evil actor.

6. Participants’ heightened concern for schools as soft targets for terrorism.

7. Participants’ focus on the negative drawbacks for initiating new protocols.

Figure 4.12 displays a variety of responses by all four groups of professionals; 100% of the police officers and tactical professionals agreed that they were not able to respond in time to actively suppress an evil actor during a crisis event; 66% of SROs agreed on-site staff would provide the quickest response, and no education administrators were in support of on-site staff using suppression engagement tools. In like manner 100% of police officers and tactical professionals, 66% of SROs, and no education administrators agreed that response time could be improved with a combination of on-site staff and SROs trained in precision delivery of suppression engagement tools and suppression engagement techniques. Additionally, 66% of education administrators continue to rely on local law enforcement to respond to the evil actor.

![Figure 4.12. Improved Response Time:](image)

**Figure 4.12 Improved response time: Who can immediately suppress the violent actor**

The tactical professionals and police officers stated the best option for decreasing response time is by on-site personnel implementing precision delivery of suppression tools with
suppression engagement techniques. The Hartford Consensus developed the acronym THREAT to address an active killer event as it developed and the survivability of victims in the aftermath. Threat suppression is the critical action to be implemented with speed and precision and is represented by the T in the acronym, (Jacobs et al., 2013). TP2 stated, “By the time we arrive, the event is over.”

Results indicated that 66% of educational administrators and school resource officers continue to rely on local law enforcement for active engagement of the evil actor, and 33% of educational administrators believe that all staff should do something to immediately impact a positive outcome at the school level. EA3 stated, “I can’t in good conscience tell my employees to fight back, however, I can suggest that they do something to counter the evil actor’s action.”

Figure 4.13 shows an outline of the current community layers for school security. The research revealed that all groups interviewed have different depths of understanding regarding the layers of security outlined in the schools’ EPPs. While the semi-structured interview research questions focused on the need to update protocols, 100% of the administrators were more adept at discussing the current layers of security.
When providing answers, they addressed how the layers operated within the school according to EPP guidelines. The researcher acknowledges that the administrators create the EPPs and deliver the EPPs as written; however, the need to cooperatively train for specific events allows the information and needed actions to be communicated and coordinated across the scope of all entities that are involved.

- Participant EA1 said, “Administrators must weigh the need to accept a certain level of risk balanced with access control of the facility. All visitors must undergo a Raptor visitor background check. A lockdown drill should occur within the first 30 days of school beginning. Educators should be aware of student and family history, as well as any student actively planning to hurt teachers. All staff should be trained in ALICE.”

- Participant EA3 stated, “We have to protect the masses and not give the evil actor access to the masses. ALICE fits into our educational model, and we also apply repetition.
training scenarios. Staff are trained to use a radio, phone, or PA system to communicate in the event of a crisis event. First, announce ‘Lockdown’ man with a weapon in the gymnasium, be very specific.

- Participant TP1 stipulated, “Everyone should have a ‘playbook’ that is practiced in the event of any emergency. We use computer-based modeling to run timed scenarios with different obstacles and events in order to predict the best strategy for protection.”

- Participant TP2 articulated, “Run, Hide, Fight! Run if we can. Hide if we need to. Fight if we become a target. All educators have already been fingerprinted and undergone background checks by their district.”

- Participant SRO1 said, “You have a major obligation to keep those kids safe. Each venue is different. Staff must be properly trained and implement effective tactics and techniques.”

4.13. Scenario Training

Participants consistently opined that training must be ongoing, incremental, realistic, and conducted with fidelity.

- Participant EA3 said, “Promotes instinctual response with less to think about, promotes better response. Staff should quickly identify the particular situation and communicate that using plain talk. Verbal communication should be provided as soon as possible.”

- Participant PO2 articulated, “I will reference learning to drive. At first you are overwhelmed with all of the controls, blinkers, brake, gas pedal, speed odometer, etc. It is a very dynamic situation because of all the decisions that have to be made, however, over time, driving becomes automatic. One does not even think about turning on the blinker or braking. It becomes a natural extension of the activity.”
• Participant PO3 stipulated, “You need to see staff reactions when they step into the active role.”

• Participant SRO1 stated, “Recreate the obstacles, interferences, etc., and force them to solve the problem.”

4.13. New Protocols

The school district administrators overwhelmingly indicated they continue to rely on local law enforcement. Educational administrators continue to reference their current EPPs for each site. The EPPs are to be re-visited each school year; they should designate responsibilities for all staff members and outline actions to be taken in the event of a specific emergency. Current emergency plans should be comprehensive documents that address, fire, weather, and man-made crisis events (Stone & Spencer, 2011). EPPs serve a major purpose for each facility and are updated annually to reflect the ever malleable aspects for creating a safe haven for education.

• Participant EA3 stated, “In the event of a violent act, the SRO is to immediately enter the situation and subdue the perpetrator, by any means necessary within the scope of training. Staff are empowered to make real-time decisions and think on their feet. Staff would immediately follow protocols, go through lockdown procedures, call 911, and staff’s primary focus is to keep all students safe” (EA3, personal communication, February 27, 2018).

Local law enforcement overwhelmingly indicated that they are not able to get to the scene fast enough to intervene.

• Participant SRO3 said, “I call it ‘tactical math,’ someone understands ‘tactical math’ you are already behind the proverbial eight ball.”
Participant TP1 suggested, “Run, Hide, Fight, is not the correct protocol. It should be Run! Evacuate the building. How close are they to the shooter? Should they hide? Do they recognize the shooter? Computer modeling with an SRO presence reduces casualties by 60%. Computer modeling with a mix of staff and SROs results in even fewer casualties.”

The literature review supported the concept that the killing has subsided by the time local law enforcement arrives. Study participants overwhelmingly support the idea of on-site tactically trained staff with suppression tools. Study participants also opined that through cooperative training and mutual support, the presence of on-site staff that are highly proficient in the methods of use and deployment of suppression engagement tools is the only efficient way to limit casualties and create response time when these events occur.

School resource officers offered mixed reviews on decreasing response time. Currently, SROs that have received training in SOLO response are the only hope in actively suppressing the violent actor. They also noted that additional on-site staff would be valuable in improving response time in these events.

Tactical professionals, individuals who train personnel in suppression engagement techniques and precision delivery of suppression engagement tools, completely rule out local law enforcement and single SRO response. The experience of these individuals in real-time violent event has fostered the belief that the most effective way to respond to an in-progress violent actor is with tactical suppression engagement tactics.

Previous studies detailed the on-site staff is familiar with each individual educational setting. These professionals recognize the innate nature of educators to protect their students. Research details the number of educators working under faulty protocols that died or were injured when attempting to protect students from a violent actor. All of these professionals
suggested that an educator, trained in suppression engagement techniques and precision delivery of suppression engagement tools, can re-direct a violent actor and defend the innocent lives in their charge.

Figure 4.14 shows the data as related to each individual group. Tactical professionals and police officers have the same understanding of the current protocol. 100% of tactical professionals and police officers answered the first option is to run away from the evil actor if you can, hide if you can’t run away, and fight back if you become a target. Similarly, 100% of education administrators and SRO’s answered the first option is to hide, 66% answered you should run if you can, and 66% answered fight if a last resort.

As displayed in Figure 4.15, when the participants were asked, which protocols should be added or improved regarding current evil actor events, 83% of the professionals answered updating the current protocol of “Run, Hide, Fight?”
Additionally, 83% of all study participants supported adding the element of “SET” to the protocol. Guided by the understanding of the elapsed time theory, on-site personnel can dramatically improve their ability to engage the active killer with suppression engagement tactics (SET) and execute precision deployment of suppression tools, limiting further casualties and potential injury. The Hartford Consensus developed the acronym THREAT to address an active killer event as it unfolded and the survivability of victims in the aftermath. The T represents “threat suppression, the most critical action that must be taken as rapidly as possible” (Jacobs et al., 2013).

4.15. New Protocols

- Participant EA2 said, “You already have somebody on site, promptness is essential. I am completely on board with that.”
- Participant EA3 stated, “I want educators to do something, what are they willing to do? Parameters range from, talk to them, yell at them, scream at them, just do something!”
• Participant TP1 stipulated, “Computer modeling shows a mix of SROs and teachers with suppression engagement tools result in fewer casualties. In all cases, additional suppression engagement tools in the school setting were shown to reduce casualties.”

• Participant TP2 said, “The administrator, maintenance person, school staff, would become hunters in search of a predator.”

• Participant TP3 opined, “Active response to the evil actor has the ability to change the scenario or outcome. The perpetrator now becomes the hunted with on-site staff using suppression engagement tools.”

• Participant PO1 suggested, “Teachers and staff should have the ability to think on their feet. The biggest improvement would be to provide suppression engagement tools to staff, but it has to be a complete package. Everyone has to do their job.”

• Participant PO2 stated, “Teachers and using ‘suppression engagement tools’, empowered to immediately engage with force on force is the only hope to disrupt or slow down a horrific event like this.”

• Participant PO3 said, “We need to be proactive and not reactive. Providing ‘suppression engagement tools’ to willing educators who volunteer, that will step up to the plate and do it.”

• Participant SRO1 stipulated, “People in the kill zone must utilize violent response toward the shooter if they are in close proximity.”

• Participant SRO3 suggested, “The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy utilizing a suppression engagement tool with precision delivery.”

The participants who were opposed to on-site staff utilizing suppression engagement tools to aid in limiting casualties voiced ardent concerns.
• Participant EA1 said, “I would never support empowering staff to actively engage the killer. We need to limit access to the building. A two-buzzer entrance, one to get into the office, one to be allowed into the building.”

• Participant SRO2 stated, “Well, if staff are trained to actively pursue and engage the evil actor, it is a huge game changer, because of them being in close proximity and being able to respond immediately. However, it would strictly be law enforcement’s job to engage the active shooter.”

4.15. Stress Inoculation Training

One of the key aspects to implement suppression engagement techniques and tactics is stress inoculation training (SIT). SIT provides trainees with the opportunity to experience, audio occlusion, memory loss, and elevated heart rate and adjust to effects produced by stress in these events, (Jacobs, 2015).

• Participant EA3 said, “It works! Staff are inoculated through the training regimen. Over time they perform better under stress to achieve better long-term outcomes.”

• Participant PO1 stated, “Increased training for police officers and staff with suppression engagement tools to train together.”

4.15. Medical Training

Best practices in trauma care have improved dramatically with the implementation of common battlefield wound treatment regimens. Medical personnel in the United States have recognized the similarities in the casualties of violent school acts and battlefield casualties (Jacobs et al., 2013). Research participants noted the necessity of all staff receiving training for life-saving measures. Participant consensus indicated that emergency medical technicians responding to the scene, to the fullest extent possible, will have viable patients to save.
• Participant EA3 stated, “We have instituted the “Stop the Bleed” program district-wide. School Nurses, SROs, EMTs, and firemen are part of a rescue task force. They are provided with helmets and vest to press into the actual event”.

• Participant TP1 suggested, “Every member of the staff should receive repetitive training in emergency medical response.”

• Participant PO1 opined, “Medical training should be mandated for all staff with the possibility of being in an active shooter environment, trained to use a tourniquet and compression bandage.”

Figure 4.16 shows how research participants, in the semi-structured interviews, indicated the need to use tools for defense in these events. No education administrators wanted on-site staff to utilize suppression engagement tools. However, 100% of education administrators support local law enforcement and SROs utilizing suppression engagement tools.

![Figure 4.16 Tools for On-Site Use](image)

**Figure 4.16: Tools available for on-site use**

Additionally, 33% of SROs and 66% of education administrators support educators using a baseball bat, flag pole, cans of food, or a stapler as on-site items that could be used to fight back. Similarly, 100% of tactical professionals and police officers answered that suppression
engagement tools could be used by on-site staff and SROs to engage and suppress evil actors during these events.

4.16. Response Time

- Participant EA3 said, “Private schools form umbrella security companies to provide armed security.”
- Participant TP1 stated, “Computer modeling in surrogate environments of these events reduces casualties by 70%.”
- Participant TP2 suggested, “A teacher could defend the students she is protecting while hiding, setting up an ambush with a suppression engagement tool.”
- Participant PO1 said, “Based on timelines, the more time that goes by, the more people that are dead or seriously injured.”

4.16. Evolution of Tactics

Most of the participants referenced the active shooter event at Columbine High School when addressing the topic of changing tactics. In the wake of the 2005 Red Lake High School shooting, public safety director Pat Mills lauded the police officers responding to the event for utilizing their training and going in as a team (“In Red Lake,” 2005). Quad entry became the newly accepted protocol following the Columbine High School shooting. This updated protocol allowed officers to form a small squad and enter a building during an active killer event. Tactics have continued to evolve since Red Lake, and Single Officer Life-saving Others (SOLO) is now the accepted practice in these events. Local law enforcement is expected to arrive on the scene and immediately enter the building. They no longer wait on backup, but seek the shooter in an effort to effectively suppress the violence.

- Participant SRO3 stipulated, “Law enforcement is the minority factor in stopping the killer. When law enforcement is successful, 70% of the time it is due to SOLO response.”
• Participant PO1 opined, “Based on timelines, the more time that goes by, the more people that are dead or seriously injured.”

• Participant TP3 suggested, “ALICE and lockdown simply delay the inevitable. These procedures do not stop the killing or shooting. These procedures do not stop the determined killer. The SRO in Florida did not follow through with his training. He should have oriented and responded appropriately. If an evil actor has a weapon when entering the classroom, the teacher can utilize a suppression tool with precision delivery and simply lethally dispatch the intruder.”

• Participant SRO 3 said, “Half of all rapid mass murder events are not stopped by anybody; that means the murdering stops only when the killer stops.”

• Participant PO1 stated, “Past experience tells us existing safety devices and procedures are not changed until they are soaked in the blood of innocent persons.”

4.16. Tactical Training

The concept of merging the talents of management, tactical defense professionals, and training of on-site personnel into the development of improved school security guidelines to suppress the active killer or domestic terror attack will dramatically decrease response time, casualty/victim count, and significantly increase the survivability of the actual event (Lawler, 2015; Davies, 2018). The tactical professionals who participated in the semi-structured interviews were extremely detailed when noting the difference between police officer training and tactical training for an active shooter event. Local law enforcement receives training for these events; however, their professional training encompasses the broad aspects of public law enforcement. Tactical training for educators to utilize suppression tools to engage and suppress the active shooter is highly specific. The educators are simply agents of immediate suppression trained for precision delivery, if necessary, in a school setting. Their sole responsibility is to
immediately provide precision delivery for life-saving lethality to the evil actor in the fastest manner possible.

- Participant SRO 1 stated, “Number one is mindset. I have to feel like I can take a human life. You can’t hesitate! Can you take him down? That is a hell of a thing for a teacher to wrestle with.”
- Participant PO2 said, “The misconception is that we are going to put a duty belt and vest on these teachers.”
- Participant TP3 stipulated, “It is important to broaden the mind of the operator in an effort to prepare them for the bad situations and crazy stuff that happens in these events.”
- Participant PO2 said, “Most SRO training is watered down. Faculty/Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response (FASTER) training is very high end training. SROs are in those positions to simply talk to kids. They should be held to a much higher standard of training.”

As shown in Figure 4.17, 12 participants identify the need for a national model to license on-site staff to engage and suppress the evil actor. Only 33% of the educational administrators would actually support licensing on-site staff in their districts; 66% of the educational administrators would consider licensing staff in their districts if there was a national program. Conversely, 100% of tactical professionals, police officers, and SROs answered to support a licensing program if one existed.
4.17. Current Tools

FEMA asserts that non-violent places such as schools and houses of worship are recognized in all communities as safe places for respective activities. American schools are currently known locally, nationally, and internationally as being gun-free zones. Subsequently, evil actors, those that are mentally unstable, and other irrational individuals use this knowledge when planning events. ALICE training has been available to the educational community for many years; however, the research participants opined that this training should be updated to reflect newer practices. Numerous professionals involved in this research recommended updates to the supported FBI response of “Run, Hide, Fight.” In some states, legislation has been initiated that would officially license educators to utilize suppression engagement tools on campuses.

For instance, Texas, Ohio, and Colorado are initiating state and local legislation to address the need for suppression engagement tactics to be a viable means of addressing the elapsed time theory, therefore empowering educators to act lethally. Ohio has the FASTER
Saves Lives program, in which educators are trained in their building to protect students and actively engage and suppress the active shooter. Numerous study participants were familiar with some or all of the attempts to create a national model to address the evil actor event. However, at the time of this research project, a model national program had not been named.

- Participant EA1 said, “ALICE training, barricade your door and utilize all tools on hand. The flag pole with the point on the end, fire extinguisher, or swarm the intruder and take him down when he enters the room.”
- Participant TP1 stated, ALICE training says, a can of vegetables can be used a projectile to distract the evil actor.”
- Participant PO2 stipulated, “ALICE training teaches to counter the evil actor and you are not allowed to fight back. Counter is a measure to delay or make the person unable to engage the victims.”

4.17. Evolution of Tactics

The unknown factor of implemented suppression engagement practices, faced with the possibility of lethal force, should create a psychological dynamic to discourage the actions of active killers. The evil actor should have to consider the reality that he/she is facing lethal force in the building. According to Nedzel (2014), educational facilities and military bases are appealing to a prospective mass shooter due to the large number of defenseless victims.

- Participant EA3 said, “Enforcement has evolved from SWAT to Diamond or combined response. Diamond or two-officer response has evolved to SOLO response. SOLO response should implement the use of suppression engagement tools and tactics to produce positive time critical results. Tactics change and shooters change the way they do things.”
• Participant SRO1 suggested, “SROs, police, and all armed staff members should train side by side.”

• Participant TP1 stated, “Publicity around arming teachers provides the evil actor with the knowledge of implied resistance. This public knowledge of armed staff becomes a deterrent for the evil actor.”

• Participant PO1 said, “After the 1974 student massacre in Israel, everything changed to keep this event from ever happening again.”

As shown in Figure 4.18, 100% of the study participants identify the need for multi-department scenario training. In addition, 100% of the tactical professionals, 100% police officers, 100% educational administrators, and 66% of the SROs stated the need for limited scope training to actively suppress the evil actor.

![Figure 4.18. Types of Training (Group)](image)

However, 100% of the tactical professionals, 100% police officers, 100% SROs, and 66% of the educational administrators indicate the need for SIT. In addition, 100% of the tactical professionals, 100% police officers, 66% SROs, and no educational administrators support SET when it involves educators actively engaging the evil actor. In converse, 100% of the educational
professionals completely support SET when only tactical professionals, police officers, and SROs actively engage the evil actor.

- Participant EA1 stated, “SROs are police officers and they carry weapons.”
- Participant EA2 said, “Teachers and Administrators are trained to support students, not combat the actual problem.”
- Participant EA3 said, “I can't in good conscious tell my employees to fight back.”

As shown in Figure 4.19, each of the participants identify with the need to implement different types of training; 100% of all participants agree that training should be across multiple departments and scenarios.

In like manner, 100% of all participants agree that stress inoculation training (SIT) should be a part of training opportunities. Only 75% of all participants agree that suppression engagement training (SET) should be included in the training model. However, 100% of all participants agree that SET training should be conducted with a limited scope. The limited scope consist of training volunteers to utilize suppression engagement tactics to deploy suppression engagement tools with precision to lethally suppress the evil actor.
4.19. Current Staff Skills

SROs are present in many schools, but most are not adequately trained in current best practices to effectively engage and suppress a violent actor or active killer using the safest method to limit casualties and improve victim survival. Regrettably, today’s educational institutions are not perfectly prepared, nor are all SROs knowledgeable or trained in tactical operations (Fassinger, 2011). All research participants indicated that staff training should be limited in scope and highly specialized. Participants also indicated that the training should include all responding departments, local law enforcement, SROs, tactical professionals and on-site staff. Interview responses consistently suggested that all participants should recognize one another and get to know each other. Highly specialized, limited-focus training conducted together provides opportunities to learn how departments and individuals operate in the moment.

- Participant EA2 stipulated, “School staff are trained to support the students, not combat the problem.”
- Participant TP1 said, “SRO presence is basically geared toward, the cop is really cool guy. He is friend of the students.”
- Participant SRO3 stated, “I am not aware of a standard SRO training, it may be nothing extra over the normal police training.”

Figure 4.20 shows 100% of tactical professionals and police officers support realistic training, across all involved agencies, utilizing multiple scenarios over a period of hours; 66% of SROs and 33% of educational administrators support multiple hour simulated events. Only 33% of educational administrators support realistic training events for evil actors. Conversely, 100% of the SROs and 66% of educational administrators support training multiple events of this type.
4.20. Scenario Training

Successful implementation of scenario training to effectively manage live, real-time practice emergencies in educational and public settings is one component of effective training. Conducting multiple additional situations during a training scenario effectively builds depth to the training and provides ongoing opportunities for all parties to stay engaged in the training. Understanding the increased threat of an active shooter and how fast the evil actor events transpire highlights the need for improved training for everyone (Blair & Schweit, 2014).

- Participant EA1 opined, “Schools should conduct lock down drills during class change and lunch times in order to prepare for all situations. Full scale, multiple agency exercises should be conducted during the summer.”

- Participant EA2 suggested, “We could do a better job being prepared for different situational factors. We could conduct drills during lunch, or during pep rallies.”
• Participant EA3 said, “The drills improve reactions, defines roles and responsibilities, provides real time experience, and decision making. Is the drill conducted during lunch, class, or class change”?

• Participant TP1 stated, “Exercises should both reinforce and highlight the need for repetition with training.”

• Participant TP3 noted, “Visualization and mindset are tremendously important. You have to put yourself mentally into these situations. We want teachers to have the experience of clearing the room. The body will not go where the mind has not been. The evil act is not the place to find out how you will respond.”

• Participant SRO1 said, “Scenarios are critical to the success of training by placing personnel in a critical situation that can be evaluated for success. First, is mindset! Second, are (sic) tactics. Are you able to quickly and safely get to the threat? Run, Hide, Fight, is fine if practiced and implemented with fidelity. All of the practices are valid if they are used properly.”

• Participant PO2 suggested, “The culture must be changed, you need to understand, the only way to stop violence is with violence. Armed intruder drills are fluid, unlike fire or tornado drills. The drills are always different and should be practiced with as much fidelity as possible. The kids understand what is going on and they’re willing to be trained. Teachers and parents are scared for their children to participate in a live scenario training. They have a mental block that the kids will be scared. The students need to practice how to act if the event were to occur.”

• Participant SRO3 stated, “Staff need to be evaluated under duress making decisions and implementing tactics. After-action debriefings should prompt the staff to justify their decisions during response.”
4.20. Medical Training

Medical personnel across the United States have recognized the similarities in the casualties of violent school acts and battlefield casualties (Jacobs et al., 2013). Study participants expressed that all staff should be trained to provide basic medical care in the form of compression bandages and tourniquet application. The Hartford Consensus paper recommends training and implementing Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) programs, which help professionals respond to these crises (Jacobs et al., 2013). Participants indicated that all staff must pass a basic battlefield triage training class to ensure they are able to administer life-saving medical care.

- Participant EA1 stipulated, “All staff need medical training to keep viable patients for EMTs.”
- Participant TP2 said, “Battlefield triage, is the victim shot in the head, leg, or abdomen? Do I move to the next victim, apply a compression bandage or tourniquet?”
- Participant TP3 noted, “Everyone in the building needs medical training for catastrophic events. Throw kits with bandages and tourniquets should be available. Personnel should be proficient in applying tourniquets and pressure bandages. The goal is to save one life! That’s what they always say.”
- Participant PO1 stated, “Medical training should be mandated for all staff with the possibility of being in an active shooter environment. They should be trained to use a tourniquet and a compression bandage. They are the only thing between the students and death. They have to be successful in their mission.”

Figure 4.21 shows 100% of tactical professionals, 100% of police officers, and 33% of educational administrators rate SIT as a high priority for training in these events; 66% of SROs and educational administrators rated SIT as a priority for training in these events.
4.21. Stress Inoculation Training

This type of intense training was highly recommended by all research participants. The ability for all trainees to experience the stress of decision-making in the midst of the event was very important. According to Hourani (2016) stress inoculation training (SIT), a resilience-building intervention intended to diminish the impact of stressful events, can be utilized for multiple participant training. It also allows participants to experience tunnel vision, auditory exclusion, time distortion, and memory distortion, which adds realism to the training.

- Participant EA1 opined, “Participants need to live and feel the stress induced during a live event.”
- Participant TP1 said, “It also provides scenarios to show how responders actually handle situations and provides real-time learning opportunities.”
- Participant TP2 suggested, “Force the participant to further than just stopping the shooter. Have them answer; What do they do with the students? Who can they get to help? Who can they get to call 911? The important thing is to make it as realistic as possible.”
- Participant SRO1 stated, “They also experience the effects of the adrenaline high and the adrenaline dump.”
- Participant SRO3 said, “That’s extremely important because it creates emotions and the emotional impact can make it a Kodak moment.”
- Participant PO1 noted, “If the first time that somebody is stressed and faced with a life and death situation is when they have to perform, it is too late.”
- Participant PO2 stated, “Decision making must become automatic and muscle memory should kick in.”
- Participant PO3 suggested, “It must be realistic with screaming, yelling and shooting. Staff must locate the evil actor, make an assessment, identify the target, and take the target out.”

As shown in Figure 4.22, 100% of educational administrators, tactical professionals, and police officers are aware that the United States educational system is a potential target for terrorist attack. The data also show 100% of tactical professionals and police officers are aware schools are vulnerable to terrorism. Only 66% of educational administrators and 33% of school resource officers who work in schools are somewhat unaware of this vulnerability.
4.22. Terrorist Event

Participant understanding of threats of terrorism to schools was significant. Globally, schools are the sites of horrific terrorist acts. Student casualties run in the hundreds and these events end with local militia or military storming the complex. The closest related event in the United States occurred in Oklahoma City. The bombing at the Murrah Federal Building, a home-grown terrorist attack, resulted in the deaths of 19 children (Gjelsten, 2008).

Figure 4.23 indicates that 75% of all participants are aware that a terrorist event could happen at an educational institution. In like manner, 75% of the participants expressed grave concern over the buses as a highly available target. Similarly, 83% of participants recognize the potential for schools as soft targets and the tragedy that would arise from such a catastrophe; however, 75% of participants identified buses as a target. In the United States, buses are unprotected soft targets that operate daily.
Research study participants expressed the following sentiments regarding possible terrorist events.

- Participant EA1 said, “Threats such as car bombs, IED’s, hitting a school bus, this would be the most-scary scenario. If a terror group ever hit a school, you would probably see schools become fortresses.”

- Participant EA stated, “Tactics change and shooters change the way they do things. We have not seen a multi-shooter event at this place in time. Religious, political, bullying, terrorist kill large numbers of people. The entire world is watching how we handle these events. The impact as a result of this type of carnage would be astronomical.”

- Participant TP1 noted, “Active shooter events in countries which have banned personal ownership of weapons experience casualties in the hundreds from school shootings. Porosity makes it harder to keep weapons out of the hands of evil actors. The only way to have a chance in a terrorist event is to have a specifically trained group with one mission, suppressing the evil actor.”
Participant TP2 said, “What is the mission of the people trying to kill you? To kill everyone in the building. You have no choice but to fight. Your goal is to suppress the bad guy and protect your area of the building.”

Participant TP3 detailed, “A four person team with a coordinated plan would be a highly trained team. Armed staff would focus on taking the person nearest them out to disrupt the attack. They are not expecting to face force and you must disrupt the plan in order to save as many as you can. Ultimately, they will kill everyone in the school.”

Participant SRO1 said, “Schools are extremely soft targets. We need to disrupt terror events by hardening our schools. We need a stronger law enforcement presence and to extend the perimeter. The key is to stop it before it happens.”

Participant PO1 opined, “It is just a matter of time until we have a full-blown event, either single operator or a team of actual terrorists with a domestic or international attack on a school. The event in Florida could be considered domestic terrorism. Potential gauged by overseas events can be stated as it is their intention to kill kids in the United States. Terrorist events begin with killing to get people under control. Then they barricade, negotiate, and get media attention before they kill everyone. Armed staff, empowered to immediately engage with force on force, is the only hope to disrupt or slow down a horrific event like this. The goal is to slow them down until law enforcement arrives.”

Participant PO2 stated, “Afghanistan is notorious for people trying to take over schools and kill children. What would we do if a bunch of children were kidnapped, raped, or killed? If a coordinated attack on a bunch of schools in suburbia occurred at some point in the USA, and it’s just a matter of time. What a difference it would make if 18-20 of the terrorists were immediately taken out by educators with suppression engagement tools.”
The act would be terrible; however, we would have at least been prepared to initiate the layers within the updated security plan.”

- Participant PO3 suggested, “If you see something, say something. You come into a school with a weapon, you are terrorizing people. Address the credible threats; response to a terrorist event must be immediate. The people in the building know the layout and they have a tactical advantage knowing the location to disrupt the event. Staff have trained with local law enforcement so they are now just one more functioning arm of the team.”

**Underlying Objections to Stronger Security Measures**

Throughout the course of this research, numerous objections were noted regarding the need to update school safety protocols. Several participants detailed opinions or biases regarding the implications of providing enhanced security for schools. These objections, opinions, and biases were used to plot the data for this study.

- Participant EA1 said, “Educators are in too close proximity of students each day to protect their weapon. The students will know who is armed and that educator will become a target. Students will locate the educator weapon if it is in the building. I do not support educators being armed in the building. I do not want my staff to engage a violent actor. Parents don’t want a little teacher to get involved. Two buzzer systems, metal detectors, and additional security will increase cost to the school system.”

- Participant EA2 stated, “From a district perspective, cost is a huge thing to consider.”

- Participant TP1 suggested, “Computer modeling for specific locations would allow the community to have a decision-making tool. If the community wanted to make an informed, educated decision, they would have a tool to use. Often the politics within the
community just don’t want a weapon in the school for any reason. Communities will now have a tool to show with computer modeling, the potential to save lives.”

Summary

The results of the data show that there is a significant difference in the scope of the problem as it is perceived by the different classes of participants. Tactical professionals and police officers continue to state that they cannot arrive on time to save lives during these events. Education administrators and SROs both acknowledge that response time by local law enforcement is too long for these events. The data continue to show all four groups acknowledge the need to continue to refine and update current protocols for these events.

Tactical professionals continue to refine and develop suppression engagement techniques that provide the highest level of safety for on-site staff and precision delivery of suppression engagement tools to engage the evil actor. The data show police officers supporting these methods when paired with cooperative training events with the SROs and on-site staff. The data also demonstrate educational administrators have mixed views regarding the multiple-agency training approach, the use of suppression engagement tools by on-site staff, and the practicing multiple hour scenarios, including stress inoculation training. The data seem to suggest that educational administrators would view this as the last resort to providing security for their students.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Design

This was a qualitative research study, and the principal research instrument was a semi-structured interview. The semi-structured interview consisted of seven primary questions and two follow up questions. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in person and via telephone with 12 education and law enforcement professionals in four different areas working to ensure educational institutions continue serve as safe havens for learning. The four professions represented were: Education Administration, Tactical Training Professionals, former Police Officers, and former School Resource Officers.

Population

In February 2018, after receiving IRB approval, the researcher began sending e-mail request to school districts, tactical organizations, police officers and SROs in the Mid-Western United States. The participants were chosen from the regional search based upon their experience with the subject and the focus of their careers. Of the research participants, 92% were male and 75% were career professionals who have spent 10-25 years working in educational settings to educate and protect students, as well as providing for school safety. They have a depth of understanding that is unequaled across a broad spectrum of the United States culture and society. Education administrators live with the student, SROs provide on-site security, police officers provide community security, and tactical professionals create methods to continue effectively protecting the United States’ intellectual capital. Experience, combined with professionals who have dealt with training, preparation, annual reviews, and updated protocols, was invaluable to the researcher. All participants have been in their current profession for a minimum of 10 years to a maximum over 40 years.
Sample

The sample participants were professionals from Alabama, Tennessee, Ohio, and Indiana with experience in the research subject. A broad range of school populations were represented with 50% of the participants having experience with schools under 250 students and 50% with student populations from 1,000 – 2,100. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in February 2018 and March 2018. The semi-structured interview was scheduled for 30 minutes and 12 professionals participated. Three school districts declined to participate; one acknowledged receipt of the submitted request but did not reply, and one did not reply. Three professionals declined to be interviewed for the research project.

Research

Participants were asked to schedule a time for the semi-structured interviews at their convenience. The participants either replied with a couple of dates and times to choose, or asked the researcher to provide multiple options for the interview. Once the interview was scheduled, the researcher either traveled to the participant’s interview location or conducted the interview via telephone. After reading and signing the consent form (See Appendix A), participants answered the semi-structured interview questions (See Appendix B). The semi-structured interview questions were designed to provide insight from the professional’s expertise and opinions toward decreasing the time of engagement to suppress the evil actor causing a violent school event. The semi-structured interview questions also asked the participants to expand upon current protocols and possible new or updated protocols that could be implemented. The participants were also required to be currently involved professionally in district-level school administration, or serve(d) as tactical professionals, police officers, or school resource officers. Twelve participants, three from each discipline, consented to semi-structured interviews. All
interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The data was then coded for observations.

**Discussion of Findings**

**Conclusions from Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

The use of specific terminology is important to engage in meaningful dialogue to improve strategies with all advocates interested in saving innocent lives, as well as supporting improved strategies to create safe effective actions to increase survivability of these horrific acts.

The information discovered in this research supports the idea of focusing on specific decisive actions that can be taken to decrease the amount of time it takes to engage the evil actor. Group PO consistently stated, that they cannot arrive before the incident is over. Group EA consistently stated they would continue to rely on Group PO’s arrival to intervene during a crisis event. Group TP consistently indicated the only viable option, successful suppression of an evil actor, must be affected by on-site personnel. Group SRO supported suppression tools in the school building utilized by local law enforcement, but only 17% supported on-site educators utilizing suppression tools. Each of the seven questions, as well as the two follow-up questions, showed statistical significance.

The data attempted to ascertain if the decrease in the elapsed time until the engagement of the active killer is a valid link to saving lives. What advantages are gained by on-site personnel who use suppression personnel, utilizing suppression engagement techniques with precision deployment of suppression tools, to decrease the time an active killer has to wreak carnage upon innocent victims? The central research question for this qualitative study was “How do stakeholder perceptions of improved protocols and procedures impact faster response times to an active killer?” The participants were asked to provide answers to the following interview research questions.
Question 1 – How would professionally trained on-site personnel effectively decrease the response time to engagement and suppression of an active killer / violent event in a school?

Proximity to the evil actor is essential to being able to stop the event as it unfolds. Historically, in almost all cases, the event is over when local law enforcement arrives on the scene. The sound of a weapon discharging is very confusing. Most people do not recognize the sound if they hear it at all, or the mind registers this sound as another possibility. The realization that a weapon is being discharged is a harsh reality that frequently causes immediate panic and chaos.

The ensuing panic and chaos complicates the event for victims fleeing for safety, but can serve to provide cover and clarity for on-site personnel responding to the event. On-site personnel trained in SIT, implementing SET, can respond effectively by following training procedures and protocols. On-site personnel trained for a very limited scope of action can successfully engage and suppress the evil actor. The sole focus of on-site personnel is to stop the evil actor immediately with lethal force. They are not trained to negotiate, look for alternatives, or create multiple solutions. They are trained to stop the evil actor with immediate, precision delivery and decisive actions to stop the killing.

In each horrific event, the evil actor enters the educational institution for only one purpose; he/she is there to wreak untold carnage, death and destruction upon innocent victims. The families of these victims have inherently entrusted the safety and well-being of their students to the public good, with the faith that the public good is responsible for ensuring the safety of innocent students.
Question 2 – What new protocols could be implemented to improve the current practice of “Lock Down” or “Run, Hide, Fight,” in an active killer / violent event in a school?

The semi-structured interview of research participants should provide a unique insight into the methods used to approach these events in the future. Law enforcement methods have evolved over the decades from a hostage approach, then quad entry, SOLO entry, and lockdown / lockout protocols, to the current form of lockdown/lockout, run, hide, fight! In the high-stakes world of individual attacks, possible domestic terrorism, the grasp at 15 minutes of fame, and copycat actors, school administrators need to implement new protocols to ensure students are provided with a safe learning environment.

Evolution of practices is tremendously important for ongoing safety, but even greater importance should be focused on the fidelity with training practices. Educational institutions continue to successfully practice fire drills, tornado drills, etc. These are simple movement drills that can be completed with routine repetition and ease. Crisis event drills present differently, are never the same, and are fluid during the event.

One improvement would entail utilizing a different scenario each time a drill is conducted. One drill may occur during lunch, one in a particular part of the building, and another may occur during class change. Thus, each drill requires a slightly different response. Preparing for these drills in advance prepares staff to make decisions in real-time. The stress of the upcoming event provides an opportunity for staff to pre-think possible favorable outcomes of their decisions. The drill provides insight and preparation for students to also know what should be done in the event of a crisis event. The drill also provides stress inoculation for the staff and students, thus emotionally preparing them for the stress of reacting. Participants in these drills should understand what “Run, Hide, Fight, SET” means.
Run

- Run, if you can! Get out of the building, away from the evil actor, to a pre-determined safe spot.

Hide

- Hide if you cannot run, due to proximity to the evil actor. Hide anywhere possible. Barricade yourself in your hiding spot and prepare to defend yourself if necessary.

Fight

- If you become a target, attack the evil actor. Throw objects, give demands, scream, yell, and fully commit to your action.

SET

- Immediately upon recognition an evil actor is attacking, highly-trained staff, in limited scope, will utilize suppression engagement tactics to locate and lethally suppress the evil actor with precision deployment of a suppression tool.
- Once the evil actor is suppressed, secure the weapon, check the room for injured students, and provide immediate battlefield triage for the wounded.
- Immediately designate a specific person with capability in the room to call 911.

Question 3 – What tools could educators use to immediately engage and suppress the active killer?

Semi-structured interviews revealed that attitudes of education administrators appear to be changing with the intent of improving current practices. Actions of trained individuals in prominent school shootings have prompted national discussion about ever evolving practices. Many, if not all, current professionals have witnessed the evolution of procedures and protocols within society. The influx of electronic devices in society has forced numerous industries and personal relationships to evolve regarding use of new protocols and procedures. However, with
the increased need for protection of America’s intellectual capital, ever-evolving protocols need to be updated due to the emotional price paid by families as a result of each tragedy.

**Question 4 – What protocols or procedures are in place to license on-site personnel in the use of suppression engagement tools?**

Currently, there is not a national model for licensing on-site educational staff to utilize and deploy suppression engagement tools on campus. Laws vary from state to state and educational institutions vary by level of governance at the state and local levels. Many states have moved legislatively at the state and local levels to begin approving the use of suppression engagement tools in educational settings. A number of states have implemented programs to provide on-site personnel with additional training and tools to provide another layer of security for their educational institutions. One program, Faculty / Administrator Safety Training and Emergency Response, is based in Ohio. This program works with local school districts to provide training for faculty and staff to protect the intellectual capital of their communities.

Applicants for the FASTER program undergo a rigorous process to attend the training. The trainees must be intrinsically motivated to become educated in the use of suppression tools. They must pass a respective state FBI background check in order to procure the tool, and then pass a local law enforcement background check to be licensed to carry the suppression tool. Once the individual has volunteered to be a part of the local education team, he/she must be recommended by his/her building administrator and the local governing body of the district. Subsequently, FASTER will schedule interviews with each applicant to select 24 participants for training.

The interview process is ongoing during the training. Program trainers and administrators continue to review the actions of the individuals during the complete course of training for final certification from the program. The 24 participants in each cohort are not guaranteed certification
until approved by the tactical trainers. Volunteers must also qualify with 93% accuracy in the precision deployment phase of the training. The precision deployment phase of the training is conducted on-site through active scenarios. The active scenarios depict real-time events where volunteers make decisions and take decisive action in high-stress situations.

Upon certification from the program, the volunteer continues to be under the guidance of the district and local administrator. Continued education and training are required to maintain certification, and certification can be revoked immediately at the district or local administrator’s discretion. It should be noted that, not all participants who are approved for training and complete the program are ultimately approved to provide support at the local level. Many factors continue to be considered at the training, district, and local levels to impact these decisions.

Question 5 – How is tactical training for an active killer / violent event in a school different from current School Resource Officer training for the same event?

Tactical professionals were very detailed in the difference between police officer training and tactical training for an active shooter event. SROs are currently present in most middle schools and high schools, but most are not adequately trained in current best practices to effectively engage and suppress an evil actor. The SROs should be jointly trained with on-site staff using the safest methods to limit casualties and improve victim survival. All research participants indicated that staff training should be limited in scope and should be highly specialized.

Tactical training is a highly specific form of training provided in a limited scope to suppress the evil actor. The premise that every teacher will be provided a suppression tool is one of the fallacies that compounds the confusion regarding providing lethal suppression devices in educational facilities. Ideally, only specific, highly-trained volunteers who are rigorously and
continually evaluated and are capable of maintaining licensure, should be empowered to provide SET in the educational facility.

Tactical training teaches a set of highly specific, limited scope skills which are used to provide immediate lethal suppression to stop a deadly event. The evil actor views the educational setting as the optimal target-rich environment. Thus, lethal suppression has to be the focus of the training. SIT is a main component of tactical training and each volunteer learns to hone his/her focus under the highest levels of stress. This allows the volunteer to be evaluated for success in the real-time environment under duress.

After-action questioning of decision making is an additional component adding support for the trainees’ actions. Upon completion of each live event, the trainers will question every decision made during the action. This process provides the opportunity for the trainee to reflect on his/ her action and support his/her actions by describing the event as it unfolded. The after-action process heightens the trainees’ awareness of the need for SIT and increases their ability to improve future actions.

**Question 6 – How would live, real-time scenario training improve the safety and response time by on-site personnel in an active killer / violent event in a school?**

Participants who take part in real-time scenario training have an improved understanding of necessary actions and the need to follow various processes. Fire drills in educational facilities have become so routine that society can follow these drills in almost any location. Most people understand the implications when a fire alarm sounds. Scenario training provides additional support in the same manner. People learn what works during the drill and practices that may need to be improved.

In crisis events dealing with an evil actor, none of the events are exactly the same. Multiple factors must be considered; location of the evil actor, time of day, and what is
happening during the action. The fluidity of these issues creates the need to by staff to make real-time decisions that ensures student safety. If these events are not practiced, authorities are not provided with the ability to positively impact future decisions. Often, the scope of practicing scenarios requires the event occur outside of normal operating hours. However, scenario training is the essential component providing safe actions for all involved in keeping students alive.

**Question 7 – How does Stress Inoculation Training prepare on-site personnel to react and emotionally handle suppressing an active killer?**

Good decisions are essential for solving problems. Decisions made under high emotional levels of stress create situational aftereffects that impact the decision maker. Improving good decisions made under these circumstances results from problem-solving experience and can have a conflicting impact on the decision-maker. Plans for reacting to an evil actor involve advance thinking through good decisions made under the highest levels of stress.

SIT provides the situations and environments for trainees to prepare themselves to take decisive action in the worst situations. Trainees who experience audio occlusion, memory loss, tunnel vision, adrenaline high, adrenaline dump, etc., become more adept at handling the next situation. This process allows the trainee to develop immunity to the effects of stress on the body. The ability to perform effectively under high levels of stress is inherent upon all volunteers to build efficient capacity in chaotic situations. Successful trainees are able to function effectively, react faster, act instinctively, bounce back emotionally, and return to a sense of normalcy faster.

**Question 8 – In the event of a terrorist event, is this training applicable?**

This research evidenced a lack of awareness by education administrators regarding the possibility of a terrorist attack on their schools. This lack of awareness may have been fostered by their focus on educating their students and/or their lack of education in dealing with criminal
activity. Nevertheless, education administrators need to increase the awareness of terrorism in schools and current domestic terrorism in their communities.

Tactical professionals, police officers, and SROs in this study all agreed that a terrorist action against educational institutions in the United States would be horrific. The resulting casualty count and emotional impact of this magnitude on any local community would have national implications. The main focus seems to be on the local school setting; however, school buses run different daily routes in the community. School buses provide numerous targets, are unprotected, and have the potential to separate law enforcement. If multiple buses were attacked in a coordinated effort across a school district, gridlock would become certain in many areas of a community. This logistical crisis has the potential to impact educational policy toward school security across the United States.

Coordinated terrorist attacks on a school would also be devastating to the educational communities’ ideas of safe havens for education. It should be understood that a terrorist attack on American educational institutions is for the sole purpose of killing the innocent to wreak emotional havoc and toil on the local community to effect a national impact. As demonstrated on the national stage, terrorists attempt to take over a school to fake negotiations, demand change, gain attention, and kill hostages. Tactically-trained volunteers are the only hope to deal with an event of this magnitude in the local building.

Tactical training for educators to utilize suppression tools to engage and suppress the active shooter is highly specific. The educators are simply agents of immediate suppression trained for precision delivery, if necessary, in a school setting. Their sole responsibility is to immediately provide precision delivery for life-saving lethality to the evil actor in the fastest manner possible. Through the use of computer modeling, a school can be divided into specific protection zones.
In the event of a coordinated terrorist attack involving multiple actors with the mission of taking over an educational facility, volunteers must understand their roles. The unique aspects of a coordinated terrorist attack must be understood to provide maximum protection for students. Volunteers would be responsible for immediate lethal suppression of any violent actor / action within their zone and provide cover for immediate evacuation of their zone. The only hope for survival is disrupting a coordinated attack and getting safely out of the building.

**Question 9 – Do you know of any updates needed to improve current protocols for these events?**

The researcher believes the terminology used to discuss this topic is of utmost importance to furthering improved methods and strategies. Communication among each group involved in this research is essential. Each group uses its own dialect for discussing the topic of school security. In implementing new terminology, the groups can use common language to create policy for the purpose of implementing solutions.

**Common Dialect**

**Comprehensive emergency preparedness plans.** Comprehensive emergency preparedness plans are required by federal education laws, which mandate that all educational institutions must have these plans available for use by all personnel in the event of an emergency.

**Response time.** This is the elapsed time from the onset of a violent act until the perpetrator is engaged by local authorities or on-site personnel.

**Elapsed time theory.** This theory states there is a direct correlation between the time which elapses from the start of an active killer event, domestic terrorism event, or violent act until suppression engagement is initiated.
**Precision delivery.** Precision delivery refers to personnel deploying suppression tools at a 90% rate of accuracy.

**Precision tactics.** Precision tactics are specific movements and tactics designed to enable local personnel to enter an area strategically and with precision to suppress an act of violence in the safest manner possible.

**Precision training.** Precision training is designed with specific tactical initiatives for on-site professionals to remain updated on all new best practices.

**Suppression engagement techniques.** Suppression engagement techniques are highly developed tactics and procedures to immediately suppress the active killer, limit the number of casualties, and provide improved safety for effective engagement.

**Suppression engagement tools.** Suppression engagement tools refer to the equipment available to local personnel trained in suppression engagement with precision tactics and precision deployment of equipment to suppress any lethal act.

Modern-day educational institutions need to create and implement safer highly-effective on-site actions to impact and improve survivability of these horrific acts of evil. Positive discourse and improved abilities to speak about this subject at the highest levels of United States government is paramount to implementing a national model.

The researcher believes that many lives can be saved by requiring all educational personnel to receive specific training in life-saving medical care. Battlefield triage should be taught in all educational facilities each year as ongoing professional development. Educators should know how to place a tourniquet and use a compression bandage in order to provide first responders with viable patients. These simple steps will allow the best chance for victims of these horrific events the opportunity to return to their families and resume their respective lives.
The researcher believes that the use of SET in a crisis event should be considered as an update to current protocols. Adding SET to the current protocol of “Run, Hide, Fight” will provide specific additional guidance to surviving a crisis event. SET provides specific guidance, strategies, and tactics to safely and effectively suppress the evil actor. It serves as a precursor a national model to be effectively implemented to ensure the safety of American students.

SET implemented with limited scope training is a highly specific procedure to empower volunteers to act in a crisis event. It also provides volunteers with stress inoculation training in real-time scenarios to increase the reliability of the volunteer. Ongoing training to ensure precision delivery with a suppression tool is paramount to delivering lethal suppression to the evil actor. Ongoing training is also provided in conjunction and support of local law enforcement to improve fidelity of training and teamwork between the impacted departments.

Conclusions from Interviews

Conducting the semi-structured interviews was very revealing and impactful for the researcher. Primary themes that developed from the research were the attitudes and opinions of the educational administrators. Two participants were either unaware of the possibility of a terrorist event or dismissed the likelihood of a terrorist event altogether. Another participant was highly aware of this possibility and was very concerned about communication between law enforcement (local, state, and federal) with the school system. The need to understand the implications of terrorism on soft targets / schools is a major concern for the researcher.

Tactical professionals have a depth of understanding that is unrivaled in the area of defense and suppression of evil actors. The future use of computer-aided modeling to create protection solutions for individual facilities will be of great use in developing future protection plans. Tactical professionals’ abilities to train, clarify, and focus on the mission are to be considered as a great resource for all groups involved in this research project. Improved
terminology used in this research project will allow stakeholders to have a broader impact in providing services in the educational setting.

Of the police officers interviewed for this research, 83% repeatedly stated they were not able to arrive on the scene in time to provide any meaningful action to stop the evil actor. The killing is completed before they arrive, and only on-site personnel have an opportunity to intervene. Police officers agree that highly trained SROs with a combination of on-site staff provide the best possibility for survival in one of these events. Educational administrators who are not supportive of empowering staff to use suppression tools on campus are at odds with this view. These administrators support the SRO use of suppression tools; however, these tools are not located in all parts of the school building, and current training does not provide the necessary skills to implement SET.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of Research**

**Strengths.**

Study participants were a valuable component of this research. Twelve highly-qualified members from four specific groups of professionals responsible for protecting the intellectual capital of American society volunteered to participate in this research. These participants are currently or were formerly involved in this task on a daily basis. During their careers, these participants have experienced and/or introduced protocol updates and life-saving scenarios. They experienced the challenges presented to protect American schools in a rapidly changing society. These participants provided valuable insight for needed updates to the current protocols in educational settings.

The participants also represented a wide cross section of urban, rural, and suburban school districts with populations in schools ranging from 250 students to over 2,100 students. County populations from the 2016 census ranged from just under 10,000 residents to well over
100,000 residents. The participants also worked in school districts serving student populations from 10,000 to 75,000.

Their experiences and proven insight far outweigh the pundits or opinions of those who simply speak to the problem. Participants in this research have dedicated their lives and careers to solving the toughest challenges of active shooter events and crisis events. Their depth of knowledge surrounding these events is vast. Knowledge regarding international events and the necessary tools and tactics to deal with these situations can provide a model to better prepare to suppress a terrorist event in the United States.

**Weaknesses.**

Public perception that all educators should carry weapons was a negative component of this research. Such a perception is nonsensical. This idea supports the understanding that the Theory of Knowledge should be used to guide future conversations.

Ideology was another negative component of this research. The idea that all weapons are evil, and anyone who supports weapons on campus is not a member of academia. Academia states that all options should be on the table, except, the only viable option supported by tactical professionals, police officers and most SROs. Theory of Knowledge must be used to deconstruct these arguments and re-educate academia in order to protect the educational stakeholders in the United States.

**Future Research**

It is entirely possible that schools in the United States will face a terrorist attack in the future. How will the attitudes and ideologies of current educational leadership be impacted to support planning and preparation to deal with this type of event?

Is it feasible to utilize SROs in the schools as a component of strike teams to suppress the active shooter? Will these individuals still be a friend of the student?
Can strike teams be funded with supplements, much like coaching stipends? Could this be a solution to the funding crisis of hiring additional fulltime employees?

Is there a need for a national model to implement suppression engagement tactics and utilization of suppression tools?

Additionally, countries like Israel have dealt with school violence or decades. The country has chosen to prepare their students to expect violence and react accordingly. Violence as part of the culture of schools in the United States should serve as a wakeup call. Administrators, faculty, and students should be prepared to deal with the events in a proactive manner to survive.

**Recommendations**

Best practices in trauma care have improved dramatically with the implementation of common battlefield wound treatment regimens. Research participants noted the necessity of all staff receiving training for life saving measures. Participant consensus indicated that emergency medical technicians responding to the scene, to the fullest extent possible, will have viable patients to save if new medical practices are utilized at the school level.

SET should be implemented to update the current protocol to “Run, Hide, Fight, SET.” The new terminology should be used to discuss and implement suppression engagement techniques in all schools and businesses. Public schools, private schools, churches and businesses should update their practices to reflect the latest findings in addressing the evil actor. On-site personnel know the battlefield, the people who should be there, and have the safety and well-being of their students at heart. They are invested in numerous ways in their various settings, which allows them to volunteer, train, and commit to stopping the evil actor. They should have the opportunity to walk away from the action and rejoin their families instead of standing defenseless between their students and the evil actor.
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Alabama shooting survivor: There was no way to ever anticipate this. (2010, February 18). *CNN*. Retrieved from


Appendices
Appendix A:

Major Terror Attacks on Schools Outside of the United States
## Major Terror Attacks on Schools Outside of the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Casualties</th>
<th>Wounded</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 16, 2014</td>
<td>Army Public School, Peshwar, Pakistan</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, June 15, 2012</td>
<td>University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 7, 2011</td>
<td>Tasso da Silveira School, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 30, 2009</td>
<td>Azerbaijan State Oil Academy, Baku, Azerbaijan</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, March 11, 2009</td>
<td>Albertville Tech High School, Winnenden, Germany</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 23, 2008</td>
<td>Kauhajoki School of Hospitality, Kauhajoki, Finland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 7, 2007</td>
<td>Jokela High School, Tuusula, Finland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 13, 2006</td>
<td>School Number One, Beslan, Russia</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Wednesday, March 13, 1996</td>
<td>Dunblane Primary School, Dunblane, Scotland</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>Wednesday, May 15, 1974</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Appendix B:

Record of Active Killer Events in Educational Institutions
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Wounded</th>
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<td>Washington</td>
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<td>North Park Elementary</td>
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<td>California</td>
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<td>Wednesday, September 28, 2017</td>
<td>Townville Elementary</td>
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<td>Oregon</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
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<tr>
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<td>New Mexico</td>
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<td>Albertville Tech High School</td>
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<td>Mount Morris</td>
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<td>DeKalb Alternative School</td>
<td>Decatur</td>
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<td>Dunblane Primary School</td>
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<td>Blackville-Hilda High School</td>
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<td>L'EcolePolytechnique</td>
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<td>Friday, December 16, 1988</td>
<td>Atlantic Shores Christian School</td>
<td>Virginia Beach</td>
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<td>Oakland Elementary School</td>
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<td>Hubbard Woods Elementary</td>
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<td>49th Street School</td>
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<td>Grover Cleveland Elementary</td>
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<td>Sturgeon Creek School</td>
<td>Winnipeg</td>
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<td>Lansing</td>
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<td>St. Louis</td>
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<td>Wednesday, May 15, 1974</td>
<td>Netiv Meir School</td>
<td>Ma’a lot</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Grand Rapids High School</td>
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<td>University of Texas in Austin</td>
<td>Austin</td>
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<td>Tuesday, September 15, 1959</td>
<td>Edgar Allen Poe Elementary</td>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>Texas</td>
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<td>Wednesday, May 18, 1927</td>
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Appendix C:

Validity Questionnaire
1. In the time before Local Law Enforcement arrive on the scene, what strategies may school principals use to thwart an active killer event?

2. What actions could civilians take to improve the likelihood of victim and casualty survival while waiting for law enforcement officers to arrive?

3. What actions could school personnel take to improve the likelihood of victim and casualty survival while waiting for law enforcement officers to arrive?

4. What are current methods of training that would be beneficial to on-site personnel during an active killer event?

5. In the event of an active killer / violent act at a school, what is the response of local law enforcement officers?
Appendix D:

Research Question and Primary Questions
Research Question

The central research question for this qualitative study was “How do stakeholder perceptions of improved protocols and procedures impact faster response times to an active killer?”

Primary questions.

How would professionally trained onsite personnel effectively decrease the response time to engagement and suppression of an active killer / violent event in a school?

A. What new protocols could be implemented to improve the current practice of “Lock Down” or “Run, Hide, Fight,” in an active killer / violent event in a school?

B. What tools could educators use to immediately engage and suppress the active killer?

C. What protocols or procedures are in place to license on site personnel in the use of suppression engagement tools?

D. How is tactical training for an active killer / violent event in a school different from current School Resource Officer training for the same event?

E. How would live, real time scenario training, improve the safety and response time by onsite personnel in an active killer / violent event in a school?

F. How does Stress Inoculation Training prepare on site personnel to re-act and emotionally handle suppressing an active killer?
Appendix E:

Letter of Solicitation and Informed Consent Form
Title of Study: Stakeholder Perceptions for Implementation of Updated Protocols and Procedures for Faster Engagement and Suppression Time by Onsite Personnel during A Crisis

Researcher: Scott A. Davis, Sr.

Contact Number: (615) 500-1152

**Purpose of Study**

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of response time to and active killer on increased casualty count and victim survivability.

**Participants**

You are being asked to participate in the study because of your professional background and your background’s relevancy to developing, implementing, defense strategies against active killer and domestic terrorism attacks in educational settings. As a current educational administrator, tactical defense instructor, law enforcement officer, or former school resource officer with specialized training in developing strategies for defense, developing Emergency Preparedness Plans, you meet the criteria for selection within this research study. Your perspectives and opinions are critical to providing insight into the suppression of an active killer event or domestic terror attack on America’s educational institutions.

**Procedures**

Upon volunteering to participate in this research study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Participate in a semi-structured interview.
2. Answer open-ended questions regarding strategies by onsite personnel to effectively suppress and active killer or domestic terror attack on an educational institution.

3. Allow an iPhone recording of the interview process.

4. Review the transcript of the interview at a later date to ensure the accuracy of the typed transcript and verify the intended answers are in alignment with the interview.

**Benefits of Participation**

There may/may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to learn how to more effectively utilize onsite personnel to increase the survivability of school staff and students in the event of an active killer / act of domestic terrorism attack.

**Rules of Participation**

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study is estimated to involve minimal risk. An example of this risk is the emotional distress / frustration you may endure when expressing the need to improve effective strategy implementation in educational institutions to empower onsite personnel to suppress the active killer / domestic terrorism event.

**Cost / Compensation**

There will be no financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. You will not be compensated for your time. Carson Newman University will not provide compensation or free medical care for an unanticipated injury sustained as a result of participating in this research study.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Scott A. Davis, Sr. at sadavis783@cn.edu or (615) 500-1152 or Dr. Deborah Hayes at dhayes@cn.edu. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, or any complaints or comments regarding the
manner in which the study is being conducted, you may contact Carson Newman University –
Doctorate of Education with Administrative Leadership Concentration at (800) 956-8903.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or at any time during the research study.

**Confidentiality**

Your personal identification and agency affiliation will remain confidential. The data you provide during the interview process will be securely stored in digital storage and the written transcript will be stored on the personal computer of the researcher. The records will be stored for a period of five years and then destroyed.

**Participant Consent**

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

__________________________  _______________________
Signature of Participant Date

__________________________
Participant Name (Please Print)