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RISK MANAGEMENT



# MITIGATING SCHOOL SHOOTING

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# Mitigating School Shooting

Active shooter events are increasingly being discussed on the news as a fact of life for Americans. Many individuals live their lives concerned that they or a loved one will be a victim of an active shooter event. The Parkland and Newtown further amplified the anxiety as caused substantial loss of life and were targeting schools and students. Such gruesome and heart-wrenching events create an impression that most school shooter events are such high-profile, mass casualty events. Such events are not, in fact, common nor are such mass casualty events, where four or more individuals die, increasing. According to numbers published by Northeastern University, schools are, indeed, safer than they were in the 1990's.

That said, the fact that research shows that schools are safer than in the 1990's does not, however, imply that they are free of danger or that active shooter scenarios are not a cause for serious concern. In fact, when one defines a school shooting as the discharge of a firearm in a school or on a campus, since the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012, there has been, on average, one school shooting per week.

Much attention has been focused on policy and procedural changes. Examples include changes in firearm laws such as revisiting bans on assault weapons, bump stocks, increasing the purchase age for certain firearms to 21 from 18, or increasing the number of individuals with mental illness that can be denied the right to purchase a firearm; creating anonymous avenues for individuals to report suspected behavior to enable early intervention; engaging in active shooter drills at schools and undertaking additional processes to better fortify the school against such attacks; and increasing the quantity and quality of mental health resources available to schools.

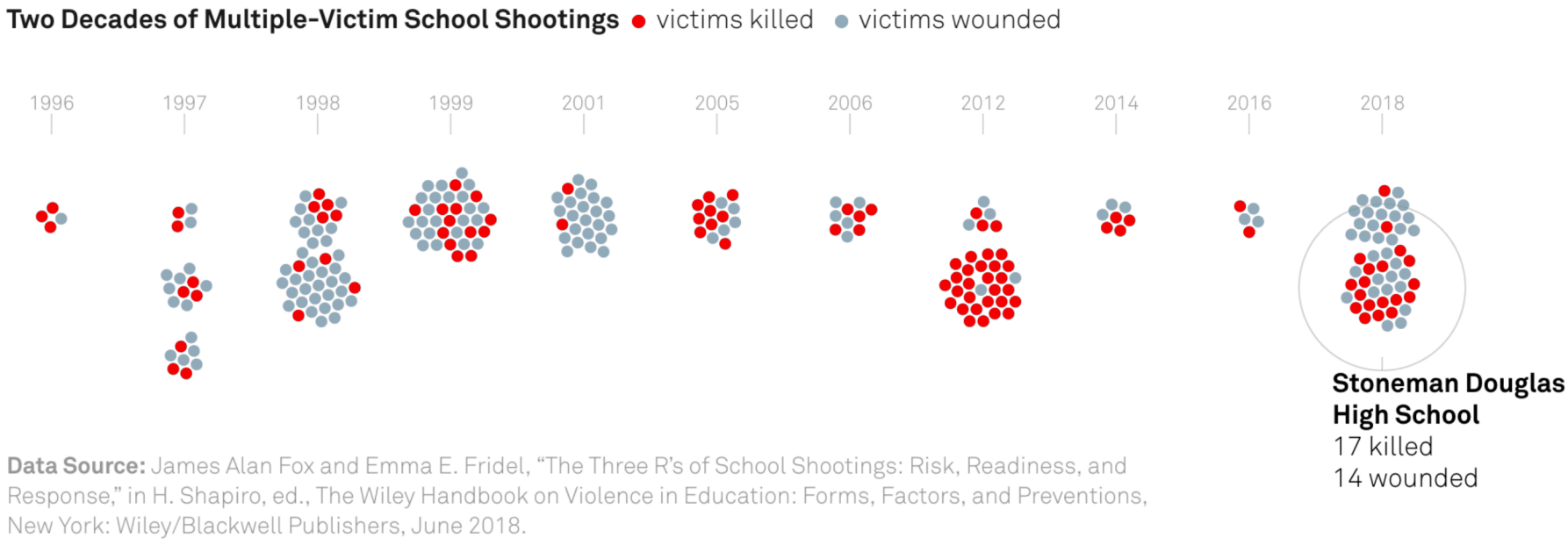
Regardless of the merits of any of the above-mentioned prescriptions, they are often undertaken by various state governments or local school systems without much data-driven analysis. While many sectors – healthcare, finance, and retail are three obvious examples – have embraced data-driven decision making, in mitigating the risk associated with active shooters, schools are not necessarily embracing such decision making methodologies. According to Daniel Young of Circadian Risk, schools have, however, in the past used data-driven decision making and risk analysis to mitigate risks from events such as tornadoes – hence the existence of tornado drills even in regions where tornadoes are relatively rare.

Young notes that what successfully reduced death rates from events such as tornadoes was the use of data to identify precursor events that foretell of a more dangerous event (e.g., a weather event that likely precedes a tornado).

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Such analyses can occur to help reduce security threats in schools and can be done in a relatively straightforward manner using existing data analytics technologies. Data-driven risk assessments can assist those in charge with securing school facilities on how to develop adequate physical access controls – much as administrators of networks must do to help prevent security breaches – and how to best facilitate efficient communication between school personnel and law enforcement.

School personnel have access to tools already – Circadian is, in fact, a vendor for such tools – thus, the barrier for entry into using data to decrease the risk from active shooters is relatively low. As the public conversation about mass shooting events and school safety continues, it is likely that educational leaders will more strongly embrace and implement such methodologies to increase the safety for those under their care.




## Soundbite analytics

- Since 2013, in 160 school shootings, 59 individuals have died.
- In contrast, only 0.1% of school fires result in a fatality.
- There are, on average, 270 kidnappings on school grounds every week.

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- Over the last 25 years, about 10 students a year have died from gun fire.
- To understand the scale, there are over 50 million students in public schools.
- Overall, 1300 children die each year from gunshots (nearly 40% are suicides).

## SOURCES

1 https://news.northeastern.edu/2018/02/26/schools-are-still-one-of-the-safest-places-for-children-researcher-says/

2 http://www.latimes.com/projects/la-na-school-shootings-since-newtown/

3 https://www.tssbulletproof.com/blog/big-data-prevent-school-shootings/

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