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Office of Justice Programs
National Institute of Justice



National Institute of Justice

**The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative:
2015 Report to Congress**

Awards Made in Fiscal Year 2014

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Introduction

The Department of Justice Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) provides \$75 million for the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (CSSI). This Initiative, originally launched and funded at the same amount in FY 2014, is overseen by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) within the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). NIJ carries out this important initiative in collaboration and through consultation with partners from multiple, relevant disciplines, including other executive branch agencies and Congress.

In the report accompanying its version of the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill (S. 2437), the Senate Committee on Appropriations requested a report on NIJ's progress in developing a strategy and model for comprehensive school safety. The relevant language from the Senate report follows:

“The Committee’s recommendation includes \$75,000,000 to continue a competitive grant program as part of the comprehensive school safety initiative started in fiscal year 2014. The NIJ shall provide competitively awarded grants with strong research and evaluation components to local school districts and State educational agencies to support the implementation of school safety interventions under the existing construct. The Committee directs the NIJ to provide a report not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this act, on its progress in developing a strategy and model for comprehensive school safety as required by Public Law 113–76.”

CSSI is designed to improve the safety of schools and students nationwide by developing, supporting, and rigorously evaluating school safety programs, practices, and strategies. An important part of the initiative is the partnerships between school professionals and researchers to develop and test approaches that address the real-world safety needs and priorities of America’s schools and students. This research-focused, practically-oriented approach is intended to produce knowledge with wide utility and applicability beyond the specific schools that are directly involved in the CSSI. NIJ engages in the following interrelated activities as part of the CSSI:

- Funding programs and research in local schools to develop and test innovative approaches to enhancing school safety;
- Developing and testing a comprehensive school safety strategy through a series of coordinated activities and evaluations within a select number of school districts;
- Assessing technology designed to increase school safety;
- Enhancing data collection efforts related to school safety;
- Convening experts, including school professionals and researchers, to distill and translate knowledge regarding school safety; and

- Maintaining partnerships with federal agencies that focus on school safety issues from a variety of vantage points (e.g., education, law enforcement, health and mental health, and criminal justice).

This report describes CSSI, including its goals, guiding principles, activities and accomplishments, and future activities.

Goals

- Improve the safety of schools and students nationwide by developing, supporting, and rigorously evaluating school safety programs, practices, and strategies.
- Develop and test a comprehensive school safety model or framework for K-12 schools that has broad practical applicability and is based on research evidence.
- Increase scientific knowledge about the incidence and root causes of school violence and other threats to school safety.

Guiding Principles

- Support school safety activities with a commitment to generating knowledge and research findings relevant to the priorities of a wide range of schools and school districts.
- Emphasize and demonstrate the value of close coordination between researchers and school safety professionals, educators, and other practitioners.
- Address a wide range of practically-oriented research questions using the most appropriate and rigorous research methods available.
- Recognize that schools are, first and foremost, places of learning that operate with limited resources and exist within communities to carry out an essential function of society.
- Take steps to protect students, who as children are an inherently vulnerable population, from possible unintended negative consequences of efforts to promote safety or study school safety issues.
- Recognize that although students may commit violence or otherwise become threats to school safety and that they must be held accountable in ways that are appropriate to their behavior, schools must not adopt overly severe or exclusionary disciplinary policies that unnecessarily remove students from schools and place them into the juvenile or criminal justice systems.

FY 2014 Activities and Accomplishments

In FY 2014, NIJ established an interagency working group within the executive branch to provide advice on the initiative, released two solicitations to support pilot projects and research in the field, contributed to national data collection efforts to better understand the nature of school violence, and launched assessments of technologies with the potential to enhance school safety.

Federal Partnerships

An interagency working group of federal partners meets regularly to assist in the development and implementation of the CSSI. NIJ coordinates with selected federal partners to share information and identify priority issues, subject matter experts in the field, and peer reviewers. NIJ anticipates expanding its work with these partners as more projects in the field become operational. Federal partners include representatives from:

Department of Justice:

- Office of Justice Programs
- OJP/Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)
- OJP/Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)
- Civil Rights Division (CRT)
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

Department of Education (ED):

- Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Department of Homeland Security:

- U.S. Secret Service

Department of Health and Human Services:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- NIH/National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
- NIH/National Institute on Drug Abuse
- NIH/National Institute of Mental Health
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Investigator-Initiated Research and Pilot Projects

In 2014, NIJ issued two solicitations to identify the best projects to study school safety. Under the first solicitation, entitled *Investigator-Initiated Research: The Comprehensive School Safety Initiative*, NIJ awarded \$18,249,540 through nine awards. NIJ also made 15 awards for a total of \$45,036,399 in response to the solicitation titled *Developing Knowledge about What Works to Make Schools Safe*. See Appendix A for project descriptions for all 24 awards. Both solicitations generated great interest from the field and together they generated over 200 applications. Funded projects address a wide range of school safety topics, including:

- School resource officer training and effectiveness
- Mental health and trauma-informed response
- Exclusionary discipline
- Restorative justice
- Threat assessment using social media
- Positive behavioral interventions and supports
- Bullying prevention
- Wraparound services/comprehensive approaches
- Protecting students as they walk to and from school

National Data Collection Efforts

Practitioners, policy makers, and researchers rely on accurate data to advance understanding and responses to school violence and other threats to school safety. High quality statistical collections produce reliable data that provide a more accurate picture of school safety issues and challenges.

Through the CSSI, NIJ funded and contributed to a number of existing data collection and data improvement efforts in 2014, with periods of performance ranging from one to four years:

- Developing a data collection platform and database of averted school attacks (COPS and the FBI, \$500,000);
- Developing a school safety component for the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program (CDC, \$100,000);
- Enhancing data collection for the School Associated Violent Deaths national database (CDC, \$250,000);
- Conducting a new national survey of law enforcement personnel in schools (BJS, \$1,000,000); and

- Supporting and enhancing the School Survey on Crime and Safety (ED and the Department of Commerce’s U.S. Census Bureau, \$1,700,000);

See Appendix B for descriptions of data collection efforts and the use of CSSI funding to expand and enhance these efforts.

School Safety Technology Assessments

Technology plays an increasingly important role in maintaining safety in school environments. New technologies are developed and marketed to school professionals with increasing frequency. It is an ongoing challenge for practitioners and policy makers to make informed decisions about the acquisition and use of safety technology. At the same time, school officials and technology developers are challenged to identify the most important school safety needs. In FY 2014, NIJ invested \$1.5 million into assessing how technology is used to promote school safety and assessing the unique technology needs associated with school safety. The results of these projects will be used to identify unmet school safety technology needs. See Appendix C for descriptions of these school safety technology assessment projects.

Ongoing and Future Activities

NIJ will continue to support the projects and core activities of the CSSI that it started in FY 2014. NIJ will continue to meet with its federal partners on the interagency working group, and will continue to identify priorities and new opportunities to achieve the goals and advance the guiding principles of the Initiative. This includes ongoing efforts to support programs, research, evaluation, and data collection efforts that build practical knowledge to reduce school violence and make schools safer. NIJ will continue to work to identify unmet technology needs, develop and test school safety technologies, and provide information to practitioners and policy makers to help them make informed choices regarding school safety technology.

In the coming year, NIJ will expand activity in three specific areas. In all of these efforts, NIJ will be applying lessons learned in the first year of the CSSI to further advance the range of strategies and questions that will be addressed, as well as focusing on the types of partnerships between practitioners and researchers that will be most effective in advancing the understanding of what works.

First, NIJ will expand its level of engagement with experts in the field by hosting and participating in multiple meetings with key constituencies, as well as individual-level surveys and key-informant interviews. Through these engagements, NIJ will promote information exchanges that benefit state and local education and school safety stakeholders by sharing current research knowledge and providing opportunities for peer-to-peer sharing of best practices. NIJ and its federal partners will also benefit from these engagements by learning about priority issues and challenges facing the field as well as promising practices that may merit further replication and testing. High priority constituencies include stakeholders

(including parents and students) from the dozens of school districts involved in projects that NIJ funded in FY 2014; school safety and school law enforcement professionals in general; mental health professionals that work in schools; and city-, county-, and state-level officials that help guide and set priorities and budgets for schools across the country (e.g., superintendents, boards of education, mayors, county executives).

Second, NIJ will expand its efforts to develop and test truly comprehensive approaches to school safety. In FY 2014, most of the projects that NIJ funded were to implement and rigorously evaluate discrete school safety programs and practices, individually or in combinations of two or three. This is important work that NIJ will certainly continue. But there is a broad spectrum of activities that schools must consider when they wish to develop comprehensive safety plans and strategies. The practical challenges to be addressed are many. How should schools create a social climate that reduces the likelihood of violence? How should schools identify potential internal threats within the student body and how should this information be shared and used? How should schools work with mental health professionals and others to support students and their families when they are having trouble or involved in violence as victims or offenders? How should schools manipulate the physical environment to prevent violence or access from potential external threats? How should technology be used to prevent or detect violence or precursors to violence? How should discipline policies be set to send a clear message that violence is not acceptable and offenders will be held accountable, without taking overly severe or exclusionary actions that channel those who commit minor disorder offenses into the juvenile or criminal justice systems? All of these questions reflect important individual challenges, but schools encounter and respond to them all (and many others) simultaneously. As they do so, decisions are made in one area in response to one challenge that affect responses to other areas and challenges.

The same activities and principles that guide the overall CSSI will also guide NIJ's efforts to develop and test comprehensive approaches to school safety. This work will be accomplished in a small number of dedicated and committed school districts to enter strong multi-year partnerships with highly qualified and diverse research teams. Practitioners and researchers will work together to develop, demonstrate, and test strategies that incorporate a host of individual programs and practices currently available to schools. In order to rigorously evaluate these approaches, it will be necessary to stagger implementation within and across school districts in a way that will create high quality quasi-experimental designs. These may be longer term projects that will require considerable ongoing support from local leadership. Changes in local leadership can be a challenge for projects like these; therefore, NIJ may administer these efforts as cooperative agreements¹ with clear expectations and milestones for both researchers and participating school districts and localities. NIJ anticipates that these projects will produce many practical and scientific products to improve knowledge of school safety, including a research-

¹ A cooperative agreement, as defined at 31 U.S.C. 6305, is a type of grant instrument used when the federal awarding agency expects to be substantially involved with the grantee agency as it carries out its federal grant-funded activities.

informed, comprehensive school safety framework that can be applied in K-12 school districts across the nation.

Third, NIJ will expand its support for shorter turnaround projects that can produce rigorous practical knowledge in a 12 to 24 month period of performance. Many of the projects funded in FY 2014 use randomized experimental designs² to answer important questions about effectiveness of school safety programs and practices. These studies have longer durations, and may range from three to five years. Going forward, NIJ will also seek to fund projects that can be implemented and studied within one or two school years. These projects might include detailed case studies or comparative research that builds understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and lessons learned from efforts to increase school and student safety under different circumstances. For example, the federal government has provided guidance and assistance to schools across the nation to help them develop emergency operations plans. Still, states and localities may take very different approaches to this work and schools across the nation face very different circumstances. Short term studies could build a body of knowledge about variations in school emergency operations planning and shed light on implications for effectiveness.

Conclusion

CSSI represents a historic opportunity to create safer schools and communities for the children of this nation, advance school safety practice and policy, and build scientific knowledge to provide objective and independent answers to difficult school safety challenges. NIJ is proud to administer this initiative and to partner with other federal agencies, experts, professionals, and stakeholders to ensure that our schools are safe environments in which our children can learn and grow in healthy ways to become the next generation of leaders for this nation.

² Randomized experimental designs are recognized as the “gold standard” for research designs that are intended to isolate and measure the effects of interventions.

APPENDIX A

CSSI Funding From FY 2014 Solicitations

Awardee and Shortened Project Title	Award Amount
Investigator-Initiated Solicitation	
1. Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (CT): School Staff Interactions With Students and Police	\$566,104
2. Center for Court Innovation (NY): Examining School Safety and Positive Climate and Culture	\$629,952
3. WestEd (CA): A Randomized Impact Evaluation of the No Bully System	\$1,497,696
4. WestEd (CA) National Impact Study on the Effectiveness of School-Based Youth Courts	\$1,836,976
5. Westat (MD): A Comprehensive Study of the Presence of Police in Schools	\$1,861,520
6. University of Virginia (VA): Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy	\$2,497,529
7. Virginia Commonwealth University (VA): Olweus Bullying Prevention in Urban Low-Income Schools	\$2,660,933
8. University of Pennsylvania (PA): Space-Time Study of Youth and School Violence	\$3,082,625
9. University of Virginia (VA): School Climate in Maryland Middle Schools Using PBIS	\$3,616,205
Total	\$18,249,540
Developing Knowledge about What Works to Make School Safe Solicitation	
1. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WI): Wisconsin School Violence and Bullying Prevention Study	\$858,187
2. Puget Sound Educational Service District (WA): Brief Interventions Enhancing School Safety	\$1,475,000
3. Columbus County Schools LEA (NC): Teen Courts for Middle and High School Students	\$1,499,019
4. Baltimore County Public Schools (MD): Comprehensive Emotional and Behavioral Health Model	\$1,965,158
5. Board of Education (Chicago, IL): Connect and Redirect to Respect Program	\$2,197,178
6. Brevard Public Schools (FL): School Safety and Climate Study	\$2,269,744
7. Chesterfield County School District (SC): Integrative Models: PBIS and Olweus Bullying Prevention	\$2,460,220
8. School District of Pittsburgh (PA): Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities	\$3,021,407
9. Bozeman School District #7 (MT): School and Family Engagement - Trauma Informed (SAFE-TI)	\$3,319,810
10. Central Falls School District (RI): Using Restorative Justice Conferencing	\$3,680,000
11. School District of Palm Beach County (FL): School Safety and Student Performance Partnership	\$3,909,116
12. Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District (TX): Safe Schools Research Initiative	\$4,137,035
13. The School Board of Miami-Dade (FL): Evaluating Campus Shield	\$4,273,799
14. Cincinnati City School District (OH): Walking School Buses and the Good Behavior Game	\$4,971,284
15. Arizona Department of Education (AZ): SRO Training to Improve School Climate & Student Safety	\$4,999,442
Total	\$45,036,399

Awards From “Investigator-Initiated Research” Solicitation³

Applications received = 107

Total awards = 9

Total value = \$18,249,540

1. Effective School Staff Interactions with Students and Police: A Training Model

Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

Connecticut

\$566,104

Principal Investigator: Ronald Sabatelli, Ph.D.

Teachers, principals and other school staff are often unsure about the best ways to discipline students. This uncertainty can lead to inconsistent, ineffective and discriminatory treatment. The goal of this project, “Effective School Staff Interactions With Students and Police: A Training Model” is to determine best practices in achieving positive disciplinary measures, less juvenile justice system involvement and reduced disparities based on race and ethnicity. A one-day training program will be given to administrators, teachers and support staff (including School Resource Officers and school security) in six middle schools and six high schools in Connecticut. The program encourages school districts and police departments to work together to achieve consistent, graduated and appropriate responses to student misbehavior, with an eye toward eliminating the “school-to-prison pipeline.” The University of Connecticut research team will also select 12 schools (the “control” group) based on a host of comparable factors, such as location, size of community, type of school, socioeconomic status of the students, previous training on discipline, and school-police; these control schools will not receive the training. Then, using publicly available data from 2015 (the year of the training) and two additional, post-training, years, researchers will perform statistical analyses to determine if the schools that received the training had fewer disciplinary incidents, out-of-school sanctions and referrals to juvenile court than the schools that did not receive the training. The project will also consider disparate disciplinary-treatment issues, based on student race and ethnicity, and will include a qualitative analysis based on focus groups at the schools.

2. Examining School Safety and Positive Climate and Culture: A Comprehensive Study in New York City

Center for Court Innovation

New York City, New York

\$629,952

Principal Investigator: Michael Rempel

Over the past decade, new programs and policies have been developed to address school safety issues, including plans for high-risk schools, school-based police officers and

³ The following were eligible to apply for this solicitation: States (including territories), units of local government (including federally recognized Indian tribal governments), nonprofit and for-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and qualified individuals.

technologies, such as metal detectors, security cameras, automatic door locks and telephones in classrooms. Although intense security policies may yield tangible benefits, they may, if not carefully implemented, also result in a “supervision effect,” in which less serious infractions are over-detected and over-sanctioned, leading to higher rates of suspension and juvenile justice referrals. Research has shown that students of color, especially black male students, are more likely to be suspended or expelled than white students, leading to phenomena such as a “racial discipline gap” and a “school-to-prison pipeline.” Much of the data related to these and other phenomena have not been rigorously tested. This project, “Examining School Safety and Positive Climate and Culture: A Comprehensive Study in New York City,” is a “what-works” analysis of students that were in grades 7–11 in all of New York City’s middle and high schools (976 schools) during the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years (selected to allow a minimum of two years of follow-up data collection). Researchers from the Center for Court Innovation, in partnership with the New York City Criminal Justice Agency, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation serving the city’s criminal justice system, will perform a quantitative analysis of neighborhood-, school-, and student-level data to determine what factors improve school safety and academic performance; and, if a student is involved in an incident, what factors reduce future incidents and involvement in the criminal justice system. The researchers will also conduct in-depth case studies, including staff interviews and student/parent focus groups, of five schools that, based on the quantitative analysis, were shown to be the most effective in implementing successful practices and policies.

3. A Randomized Impact Evaluation of the No Bully System

WestEd

California

\$1,497,696

Principal Investigator: Thomas L. Hanson, Ph.D.

Bullying is a widespread problem in U.S. schools. Although it is pervasive across grades, some research has shown that bullying is even more common in elementary schools. Bullying has negative short- and long-term effects on both the victims and the bullies; a 2002 study, for example, found that approximately two-thirds of school shooters (attempted and completed shooting) had been bullied. Given how widespread bullying is, and how well-known its harmful effects are, on both victim and bully, it is no surprise that, as of 2013, 49 states had laws that require school districts to have anti-bullying policies and programs. One such program is the No Bully System (NBS), a non-punitive approach that guides school leaders and staff through a series of interventions for responding to aggression or harassment (single acts) and bullying (multiple acts), depending upon the severity of the incident. At the core of NBS is the Solution Team, in which a trained adult facilitator (Solution Coach) works with the victim, the bully’s followers and the bully’s pro-social peers to develop solutions to end the bullying. Although NBS is widely disseminated, with promising evidence regarding its effectiveness, rigorous evaluation of the program is needed. This project, “A Randomized Impact Evaluation of the No Bully System,” is a partnership between WestEd (an educational research, evaluation, development and service organization), No Bully (the developer of the NBS), the Oakland Unified School District, and Dr. David Farrington of Cambridge University. In the first-ever randomized

controlled trial of NBS, 24 elementary schools in Oakland (a large urban district in Northern California's Alameda County where no elementary schools have previously used NBS) will be randomly assigned to one of two groups: the treatment group (where NBS will be implemented) and a wait-listed control group, which, over a two-year period, will conduct business-as-usual. Within each school, 3rd, 4th and 5th graders will complete online surveys. The evaluation will measure key outcomes, including resolution and recurrence of bullying incidents; bullying perpetration and victimization; bystander behavior; and student perceptions of peer support, school safety, and other indicators of school climate.

4. National Impact Study on the Effectiveness of School-Based Youth Courts

WestEd

California

\$1,836,976

Principal Investigator: Anthony Petrosino, Ph.D.

Youth court is one of the most common "diversionary" strategies used by schools in the U.S. to hold accountable juveniles who commit less serious offenses: larceny, graffiti, vandalism, minor assault, harassment, alcohol possession, minor drug offenses and truancy without the stigma of formal school sanctions or involvement in the juvenile justice system. In youth court, peers perform the roles of judge, jury, prosecutor, defender and bailiff, and offenders receive a peer-imposed sentence, usually community service or restitution. Despite the popularity of youth courts, however, the only randomized study of their effectiveness to-date did not look at a school-based model, and the study experienced significant problems with randomization integrity and attrition. In this project, "A National Impact Study on the Effectiveness of School-Based Youth Courts," WestEd, a not-for-profit research and services firm, in partnership with Analytica, Inc. and Global Youth Justice, will conduct randomized control trials of the four most common school-based youth court models: school only; school and juvenile justice partnership; school and community partnership; and school, juvenile justice and community partnership. In four sites (one for each model), researchers will randomly assign 250 youth who commit offenses to either attend youth court or to go through business-as-usual procedures. They will collect data (including school and non-school offenses, formal disciplinary actions by the school, attendance, and grade progression) to analyze both the implementation and impact of youth courts. Results of the four-year study, the largest randomized trial of school-based youth courts ever conducted, will guide decisions made by local schools and inform national, state, and local policymakers and practitioners regarding the efficacy of this alternative to formal school and juvenile justice sanctions.

5. Study of Police in Schools

Westat

Maryland

\$1,861,520

Principal Investigator: Denise Gottfredson, Ph.D.

Schools have adopted a number of approaches for increasing safety, including the use of controlled access to buildings, security cameras, metal detectors, and the placement of

school resource officers (SROs). Using SROs, generally sworn law enforcement officers, is a costly and widely used practice: the 2009-2010 School Survey on Crime and Safety estimated that 43 percent of public schools have at least one SRO present at least once a week. However, few rigorous studies have evaluated the effectiveness of SROs, including whether there are possible unintended consequences that may harm students, such as increased arrests for disorderly conduct (which might otherwise be handled by a school administrator) or exclusionary disciplinary practices (such as suspensions and expulsions) that disproportionately affect minority youth and youth with disabilities. In this project, "Study of Police in Schools," Westat will compare data on 100 public middle and high schools in California and Florida that hired SROs through the Department of Justice's 2013 COPS Hiring Program to data on 100 similar schools that did not receive COPS grants (or otherwise add SROs). The goal of the three-year study is to determine the effects of an increase in SRO placement on schools, communities and students. Numerous outcomes will be measured, including the SRO approach (and "dose") used, the effectiveness of SROs and how those effects vary both by student characteristics (including race and ethnicity) and by community and school characteristics. The researchers will also perform a validity study in 16 schools (approximately 200 students) to determine whether the reporting of disciplinary incidents is affected by the increased presence of SROs. The study's findings have the potential to redefine the role of, and the training requirements for, SROs. Information from this study will help communities to determine if the placement of SROs in their schools is warranted or if resources could be more profitably invested in alternative approaches.

6. Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy

University of Virginia

Virginia

\$2,497,529

Principal Investigator: Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

Studies by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education have found that student perpetrators of school shootings almost always threatened to carry out an attack, or gave other indications of violent intentions, before the shooting. In fact, many school shootings have been prevented after threats were investigated, which suggests that schools could use threat assessment as a violence prevention strategy. In 2001, researchers at the University of Virginia developed a threat assessment model that uses multidisciplinary school-based teams to investigate and resolve threatening situations, replacing a zero-tolerance approach; six studies of this model showed promising results. Two years later, Virginia became the first state in the nation to mandate threat assessment teams in its 1,900 K-12 public schools. When a promising practice is implemented to scale, however, it is crucial to pay attention to issues such as training and implementation fidelity. This project, "Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy," conducted in partnership with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and the Virginia Department of Education, will examine whether the model is a safe and effective strategy for reducing suspensions, including their disproportionate impact on minority students. In the first phase, researchers will conduct a statewide review of threats, including the types of threats made, the demographics of students making them, and the frequency and type of threat assessments

that are conducted. In Phase 2, there will be a statewide inventory of threat assessment models to determine if different models show different outcomes. Numerous outcomes will be analyzed, including student factors (such as resolving threats without violence and staying in school without suspension) and school factors (such as decreased violence and bullying, improved school climate, and fewer suspensions, especially for disproportionately suspended minority students). Phase 3 is a randomized controlled trial in which outcomes in 50 secondary schools that receive technical assistance using the threat assessment model, including online instruction, a summer training institute, and team consultations for a greater range of disciplinary infractions, are compared to 50 control schools that do not use the threat assessment model.

7. Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Sustainability of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in Increasing School Safety for Urban Low-Income Middle Schools

Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia

\$2,660,933

Principal Investigator: Terri Sullivan, Ph.D.

Bullying, which occurs frequently in U.S. schools, puts both the perpetrator and the victim at risk for physical injury, school disengagement and poor academic achievement. It can also lead to disciplinary sanctions, including suspension and expulsion. Because of the high prevalence of bullying and its significant impact, anti-bullying programs are needed, particularly in middle school where bullying occurs more frequently than in high school. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is a comprehensive, school-based program that targets risk factors for bullying behaviors at individual, classroom and school levels to prevent violence. Although OBPP is currently implemented in hundreds of schools across the country, and has been designated as “promising” by Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development, few studies have tested its effectiveness in the United States, particularly in disadvantaged urban areas that serve minority students. This project, “Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Sustainability of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program in Increasing School Safety for Urban Low-Income Middle Schools,” builds on an ongoing evaluation of OBPP conducted by the Virginia Commonwealth University’s Academic Center of Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention (VCU-ACE). Although the evaluation is currently funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, that funding will end in 2015 and this project will allow researchers to collect and analyze data for an additional three years on three urban middle schools (randomly assigned to receive OBPP in three different years) in Richmond, Virginia. The four-year project will also include focus groups with teachers to determine challenges and best practices for implementing the program. Finally, the researchers will perform a cost-benefit analysis, including potential benefits such as decreased disciplinary code violations, absences, juvenile justice involvement, and alternative school placements.

8. Space-Time Study of Youth and School Violence

University of Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania

\$3,082,625

Principal Investigator: Douglas Wiebe, Ph.D.

Based on data from the National Electronic Surveillance System All Injury Program, researchers estimate that more than 7 million youth were treated in U.S. emergency departments for violent injuries sustained at school and en route to and from during 2001–2008. To date, most school violence-prevention strategies have not been “targeted”; rather, they are based more broadly on the school environment (such as metal detectors, security cameras and SRO’s). Therefore, it is crucial to understand the locations and times when students are vulnerable to assault as they traverse the landscape of their school days. In this project, “Space-Time Study of Youth and School Violence,” researchers will use two innovative methods (case-time-control, first developed in pharmacoepidemiology, and geographic information system (GIS)-assisted interviewing) to determine risk and protective factors for school assault. The research team will study 200 students (50% male, 50% female, 50% African American, 50% Caucasian or other), between the ages 12–18, who are treated in the emergency departments at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania for an assault-related injury (including from gunshot, fist, stick and knife) that was sustained on school property, on the way to or from school or at a school-sponsored event. The children will be interviewed using portable GIS technology to develop detailed data of how, when, where, and with whom they spent time, indoors during school, and outdoors before and after school, from the time they woke up until the time they were assaulted. Analyzing these data along with secondary data about weather, streets, buildings and neighborhood populations to determine the students’ ability to see surroundings clearly and the potential for someone to be concealed or hiding nearby, the researchers will determine what individual and environmental factors could, if targeted, lead to the greatest reduction in school assaults.

9. Comprehensive Assessment of School Climate to Improve Safety in Maryland Middle Schools

University of Virginia

Virginia

\$3,616,205

Principal Investigator: Catherine Bradshaw, Ph.D., M.Ed.

Research has shown having a positive school climate is a protective factor against negative outcomes such as dropout, absenteeism, truancy, suspension, drug use, and violent and aggressive behavior. A positive school climate refers to the beliefs, values and attitudes shared by students, teachers and administrators that set the parameters for behavior that is acceptable in school. Unfortunately, many schools spend money and time reacting to problems by implementing non-evidence-based programs. The goal of this project, “Comprehensive Assessment of School Climate to Improve Safety in Maryland Middle Schools,” is to improve middle school safety. The project is led by the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Maryland Initiative, a 15-year partnership between the University of Virginia, Johns Hopkins University, Sheppard Pratt Health System, and the Maryland State Department of Education. In the initial phase, the researchers will modify for middle schools a program called the Maryland Safe and Supportive Schools (MDS3), which is a U.S. Department of Education -funded program that has been shown, through

randomized control trials, to have a significant impact on school safety and climate in high schools. Middle school is a place where bullying and violence increase and student connectedness decreases. In a second, 6-month, phase, the modified MDS3 program will be tested in four “pilot” schools. Finally, the research team will conduct a randomized control trial to determine the efficacy of the program in 40 middle schools (grades 6–8) in three diverse Baltimore-area counties. The researchers will analyze outcomes over a three-year period, including whether the MDS3-intervention schools experience fewer behavioral infractions (such as office disciplinary referrals and suspensions) and ethnic disparities; greater school safety (fewer fights, threats of violence and bullying); and better attendance and academic achievement than the control schools, which will continue to operate under normal procedures. Finally, a team of economists will perform cost-benefit analyses, focusing on direct costs (the prevention of medical and crime costs) and indirect costs (such as improved future earnings due to better school retention).

Awards From “Developing Knowledge” Solicitation⁴

Applications received = 109

Total Awards = 15

Total Value = \$45,036,399

1. Wisconsin School Violence and Bullying Prevention Study

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Wisconsin

\$858,187

Bullying is a very real, nationwide problem in schools. This project will examine the impact of PBIS in combination with a comprehensive bullying prevention program on bullying behaviors, other violent acts, and perceptions of school safety among middle schools. The project will compare outcomes to schools with an active PBIS program, but without a concurrent bullying prevention program. Specific outcome measures include bullying (rate and incident), out of school suspensions and expulsions due to violent acts, out of school suspension and expulsions for any reason, and perceptions of school climate. The study holds the potential for far-reaching implications related to violence within the school environment and behavior of youth within and outside of the school environment, school day and school career. By integrating PBIS and bully prevention programs and evaluating the effect on the behaviors of students and the perceptions that come with it, we can better understand the effectiveness of this approach.

2. Brief Interventions Enhancing School Safety

Puget Sound Educational Service District / University of Washington

Washington

\$1,475,000

In light of the need to create safer school settings and alter the school-to-prison trajectories for at-risk students, the purpose of this project is to evaluate a three-step, early warning and intervention process that prioritizes timely identification of students at risk and ongoing matching to effective, brief interventions that meet their individual needs. This early warning and intervention process is designed to shift schools away from disproportionate, reactive and punitive discipline toward a more proactive and positive approach. Specifically, this project will investigate the effects of building capacity within schools to make data-driven decisions surrounding the selection and delivery of evidence-based, brief, relatively low-cost interventions proven to improve students’ mindsets and school belonging. Student mindset and sense of school belonging are two constructs linked to increased school engagement and safety. As the research partner, the University of Washington will conduct a rigorous examination of effectiveness of these processes across the school district of more than 4,600 students. The research will improve the ability of schools to make data-driven

⁴ Eligible applicants for this solicitation were limited to local education agencies (LEAs), public charter schools that are recognized as an LEA, and State education agencies (SEAs).

decisions surrounding the selection and delivery of evidence-based interventions before students engage in anti-social behavior.

3. Group Randomized Trial of Teen Courts to Address the School-to-Prison Pipeline, Reduce Aggression and Violence, and Enhance School Safety in Middle and High School Students

Columbus County Schools LEA, NC / North Carolina Academic Center for Excellence in Youth Violence Prevention (NC-ACE)

North Carolina

\$1,499,019

This project will examine the impact of teen courts on a variety of school safety outcomes, including bullying, aggression, victimization, mental health and reductions in exclusionary discipline. The project will involve the implementation and evaluation of an innovative school safety initiative that includes comprehensive school-based needs assessments (the School Success Profile-Plus student reporting system) and teen courts in schools to emphasize restorative justice, keep first-time offenders out of the juvenile justice system, and reduce the school-to-prison pipeline. As the primary research partner, the North Carolina Academic Center for Youth Violence Prevention will conduct a randomized experimental design in 24 middle schools: 12 test schools (where the intervention will be implemented) and 12 control schools. Student-level data and outcomes within these schools will be tracked and assessed. The goal is to provide evidence on the effectiveness of this popular school safety program and its ability to reduce the use of exclusionary discipline.

4. Promoting School Safety: A Comprehensive Emotional and Behavioral Health Model

Baltimore County Public Schools / University of Maryland, Baltimore

Maryland

\$1,965,158

Schools across the country are struggling with how to formulate comprehensive and effective programs to address the mental health needs of students and thereby help preserve school safety. This study will employ a randomized controlled study design involving 44 schools to evaluate the impact of a new comprehensive emotional and behavioral health crisis response and prevention (EBH-CRP) intervention on school safety outcomes. The EBH-CRP intervention is a comprehensive training, organization and support protocol for school and community stakeholders aimed at increasing school and community competence in responding to and preventing student emotional and behavioral health crises. The intervention uses evidence-based, culturally competent, school-informed strategies that address emotional and behavioral health concerns across a continuum and efficiently coordinates across child-serving systems. This project will build on existing school and community resources to implement a streamlined emotional and behavioral health crisis response and prevention protocol and comprehensive continuum of services, including universal prevention, early identification, assessment and service linkage, crisis response and post-crisis relapse prevention. The research conducted by the University of

Maryland at Baltimore will generate evidence about the effectiveness of a large-scale, multifaceted, mental-health-focused intervention.

5. Connect and Redirect to Respect Program

Board of Education – City of Chicago / University of Chicago Crime Lab

Illinois

\$2,197,178

Social media is often the first place students turn to post their true feelings and affiliations, which are often kept hidden from parents, teachers and counselors. It is therefore potentially one of the leading sources for information on violent behavior and confrontations occurring between students. Cognizant of the need to address gang activity and violence in and around schools, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) proposes the Connect and Redirect to Respect (CRR) program to a review of social media for potential gang activities. The CRR program will monitor social media to identify students most in need of remediation, link high-risk individuals to the district's Gang School Safety Team (GSST) for intervention, refer students to follow up social-emotional intervention strategies within the school or community, and maintain continual post-intervention follow up to ensure successful outcomes. CPS is partnering with the University of Chicago Crime Lab, which will evaluate the project and examine its implementation in 24 treatment schools and 24 control schools. The project will provide a comprehensive test of a unique crime reduction strategy that takes advantage of the increasingly prominent role of social media in the lives of young people. This approach may eventually serve as a best practice on a national level for disrupting gang activity, curbing youth violence, encouraging behavioral modification and building positive school cultures.

6. School Safety and Climate Study

Brevard Public Schools / University of Central Florida

Florida

\$2,269,744

Previous studies have examined benefits to schools from mental health policies and programs, but relatively few have explored the relationship between mental health services, school climate and school safety. This project will involve training staff (including teachers and school resource officers working in schools) in four middle schools and one high school to improve their ability to identify and respond to students in need of enhanced mental health and social services. These services will be made available to approximately 1,000 students with the goal of improving their mental health and behavioral outcomes. The University of Central Florida will work in partnership with the Brevard Public Schools to conduct comprehensive pre-test, post-test assessments and evaluate comparison schools at the student and school levels. The research component of the project will determine the impact the intervention has on a variety of school safety outcomes and climate and culture measures. The project will provide evidence regarding whether mental health trainings and interventions, including the role of youth social workers, can impact positively school safety in a needy jurisdiction.

7. Integrative Models to Improve School Safety: Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Chesterfield County School District / Clemson University / University of Oregon
South Carolina
\$2,460,220

Most of what is known about promoting school safety is based on evaluations of stand-alone interventions. Many schools integrate effective programs, but there has been little systematic assessment of the impact of these integrated approaches. This project will attempt to fill this gap by combining two evidence-based approaches: Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) and subjecting the integrated intervention to a rigorous evaluation. Both approaches target school-, classroom-, student-, family- and community-level risk and protective factors. Although the OBPP has been shown to be effective using quasi-experimental designs, there has been no randomized control trial to evaluate this program in U.S. schools. Many schools appropriately combine SWPBIS and OBPP, and this study will evaluate an integrated SWPBIS/OBPP approach to respond to bullying and school safety issues. Clemson University and the University of Oregon will evaluate the intervention which will involve 16 high schools divided into a control group, an OBPP group, and a SWPBIS/OBPP group. Researchers will follow the impact that these programs have on a large number of students. The strong three-group random assignment research design will provide better understanding about the effectiveness of the popular Olweus Bullying Prevention Program when it is used alone and in conjunction with the also popular Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support program.

8. Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities

School District of Pittsburgh / RAND Corporation
Pennsylvania
\$3,021,407

Discouraged by high rates of misbehavior and high racial disparities in disciplinary actions, support for, and adoption of, Restorative Practices appears to be growing. Restorative Practices involve informal and formal processes to address misconduct, not as a reactive response to crime and other wrongdoing but as a proactive process of building relationships and a sense of community. The purpose and overarching goal of this project, entitled Pursuing Equitable Restorative Communities, is to measure the capacity of Restorative Practices to improve the safety and climate in our schools. The project's specific objectives include:

- Improving student and staff perceptions of school safety
- Reducing incidents of juvenile justice involvement, violence and out-of-school suspension
- Reducing racial disparities in suspensions
- Reducing gender-specific disparities in suspensions
- Improving peer-to-peer respect and adherence to rules
- Improving student attendance.

The School District of Pittsburgh is partnering with the RAND Corporation to conduct a comprehensive examination of the intervention through a randomized controlled trial involving 50 schools across the district. The research will provide strong evidence regarding whether a large-scale restorative justice intervention can address discipline and school safety outcomes effectively.

9. School and Family Engagement – Trauma Informed (SAFE-TI)

Bozeman School District #7 / The University of Montana
Montana
\$3,319,810

While individual and group-based clinical interventions for addressing childhood trauma have been researched in mental health services and some school settings, research is lacking on the implementation of a comprehensive, multi-tiered, trauma-informed approach in schools. We have little evidence about its impact on discipline, recidivism, attendance and academic achievement. This project will examine the impact of just such a large multi-tiered mental health- and trauma-informed interventions (termed SAFE-TI) on a wide variety of mental health and school safety outcomes. The SAFE-TI program involves the tiering of students based on their mental health needs. Six specific mental health- and trauma-informed interventions will be implemented based on these assessments. Students will be randomly assigned at intake to either an immediate intervention group or a three-month waitlist control group. Interventions will be implemented across 11 schools in this largely rural district with a large Native American population of students. Researchers from the University of Montana will provide evidence of the effectiveness of these multi-tiered mental health- and trauma-informed interventions on school safety outcomes. Unique features of the project include its geographic dispersion, rural population, and high Native American population.

10. Using Restorative Justice Conferencing to Enrich School Climate and Improve School Safety

Central Falls School District / The Urban Institute (Justice Policy Center)
Rhode Island
\$3,680,000

Policymakers, educators, and parents alike recognize the negative consequences of punitive and exclusionary school discipline policies and of the disparate application of such policies to minority youth. As a result, there is a renewed interest in alternative approaches to school discipline and safety. Restorative justice conferencing is one such alternative. Restorative justice conferencing sets up an opportunity for a subset of the community (affected parties and their allies) to arrive at the best possible solution for all. Central Falls School District and The Urban Institute will test the impact of this intervention on a high-need population of students in four high schools and two middle schools. The project will use a matched sample design to examine whether this specific restorative justice program can impact positively perceptions of safety and climate and reduce the use of exclusionary

and punitive discipline. The findings are expected to provide strong evidence regarding restorative justice conferencing's impact on school safety in a high-need community.

11. The Palm Beach County School Safety and Student Performance Partnership Research Project

School District of Palm Beach County / Florida State University
Florida
\$3,909,116

There is a need to understand how best to improve school safety, as well as to improve student performance outcomes, including attendance, suspensions, expulsions and grades, and to do so through intervention with both lower risk and higher risk youth. To address this need, the proposed study will expand the pilot school-based intervention developed by the School District of Palm Beach County (SDPBC) and evaluate it using an experimental design. The SDPBC intervention consists of several components, including a school-based approach to probation and early intervention; a comprehensive, wraparound strategy that emphasizes collaborations among schools, law enforcement, the juvenile court, and service and treatment providers; identification of at-risk youth, assessment of them, development of intervention plans and monitoring of the implementation of these plans, complete with crisis intervention; and the use of several staff positions to implement the intervention. A central premise of the intervention is that improved school safety requires systematic attention both to high-risk and at-risk youth. Florida State University will follow a treatment group of 400 students across four high schools and a matched sample of 400 students without treatment. The unique aspect of this research is that it will provide evidence on the effectiveness of these interventions on a sample of youth who have already engaged in at-risk behavior and who have come to the attention of the criminal justice system.

12. Safe Schools Research Initiative

Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District / SRI International
Texas
\$4,137,035

This project will examine school safety interventions in the unique cultural milieu of the Rio Grande Valley, with a largely Hispanic population. The proposed intervention will combine Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with a Blueprint for Violence Prevention Model for Spanish-speaking populations called *Familias Unidas*, which includes family engagement components. As the research partner, SRI International will evaluate the program in seven randomly selected middle schools and high schools and compare the results with eight control schools. They will use a variety of scales and outcome measures to examine the impact of these interventions on a large number of school safety outcomes. The unique aspects of this research include the geographic location, predominantly Hispanic population, and the relatively low socioeconomic status of the population.

13. Enhancing School Safety Through Digital Intelligence: Evaluating Campus Shield

The School Board of Miami-Dade, FL / WestEd-Atlanta
Florida

\$4,273,799

Like many urban areas, Miami-Dade County faces significant school safety challenges from a wide range of threats, including gangs, serious targeted incidents on school property, bullying and drugs. This project will implement a pilot test and evaluate the effects of an innovative “intelligence fusion center” known as Campus Shield. The goal of Campus Shield is to improve school safety and climate through deployment of a specific data collection, analysis and dissemination system that permits proactive responses to potential threats, both immediate (as in the case of gang activity) and over time (such as deteriorating school climate or escalations in bullying). The Campus Shield intervention also includes access card and security camera installations and linkage to mental health services through access to Mental Health Specialists. As the research partner, WestEd will evaluate the ability of Campus Shield to proactively identify and address school safety threats in 12 experimental schools and compare the results with 12 control schools. The project will provide a rigorous experimental test of the effectiveness of the Campus Shield package on school safety and will contribute knowledge to the field about the impact of such complex interventions.

14. Evaluation of Walking School Bus Programs and the Good Behavior Game

Cincinnati City School District / RAND Corporation

Ohio

\$4,971,284

Playgrounds, school buses, pedestrian crossings and routes to school are an often overlooked aspect of the instructional setting. These micro-environments have fewer rules or behavioral expectations, and there is typically little adult representation in such settings. This project seeks to enhance and learn about school safety through adopting the Walking School Bus (WSB), a program that is gaining widespread support from many communities. The WSB is recognized as potentially having multiple benefits, including reducing obesity and pollution, but this is the first project to focus primarily on the safety aspects of a WSB. The project will combine the WSB with a nationally recognized effective prevention program, the Good Behavior Game (GBG). The core elements of GBG are essential for students at all grade levels, and contribute to the development of protective factors for, and reduction of the risk of, violence, drug use and other deleterious outcomes. Guided by the theory of the WSB, bolstered by GBG, this study will test if the program will reduce exposure to violence and community disorganization, and thereby reduce risk profiles/enhance protective factors for children in at-risk neighborhoods. The research partner, RAND Corporation, will implement a strong randomized interrupted time series design with waitlist controls across 12 schools. The goal is to examine if the interventions improve the safety and well-being of students and have an impact on the overall climate and safety of schools. The project will provide evidence on the effectiveness of these potentially innovative interventions to address safety challenges for students in and around schools and coming and going to school.

15. School Resource Officer Activities and Training to Improve School Climate & Student Safety Outcomes

Arizona Department of Education / University of Arizona

Arizona
\$4,999,442

Schools have been increasingly hiring School Resource Officers (SROs) over the past 50 years. But there is no empirical data about their effectiveness, and without evidence of their impact, it is extremely difficult to assess costs and benefits. This study is a step towards providing that evidence. The Arizona Department of Education and the University of Arizona will examine the impact and effectiveness of school resource officers who work as partners in a multi-agency team of mental health professionals and who received enhanced SRO training. The project will be implemented in 45 schools across the state of Arizona. Researchers will evaluate the implementation of these officers through a creative design that includes the use of SRO training logs to track specific SRO activities. The researchers will compare the effects of very specific types of SRO activities on a variety of school safety outcomes and across sub-populations of students. This will enable researchers to identify which aspects of the program have the greatest impact and detect specific subgroups for whom the program is most effective. Through this innovative study, researchers will also be able to determine whether the type of training SROs receive makes a difference, that is, the researchers will compare enhanced training to standard training.

APPENDIX B

Data Collection Interagency Agreements

Development of an Averted School Attacks Data Collection Platform

Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS)

\$500,000

Under this agreement, NIJ and COPS seek to improve the quality and quantity of available information pertaining to averted and completed school attacks. School shootings themselves are relatively rare events, and widening the area of focus to include averted school attacks will expand greatly the availability and utility of information on these threats. Currently, there is no national repository of information about averted school attacks or completed school attacks. The COPS Office will collect systematically in-depth information regarding averted and completed school attacks through the development and implementation of a new data in-take platform.

The system will enable schools and law enforcement agencies to input data on averted school attacks, including various data points that may be useful to researchers and others who wish to identify lessons learned and effective practices. The database will be populated initially by reviewing public domain sources and interviewing local officials involved in prevented and completed school attacks since January 2000. With a deeper understanding of the dynamics, timing and evolution of these threats, those directly responsible for protecting the nation's students will be better prepared to accomplish that critical responsibility.

The COPS Office has extensive experience managing cooperative agreements and currently is in the process of developing a similar officer safety "near miss" data platform for law enforcement agencies through a cooperative agreement with the Police Foundation.

Development of a School Safety Component to the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

\$100,000

Under this agreement, NIJ and the CDC National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) seek to pilot test an expansion of the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP) to collect improved information when individuals injured in school violence come into emergency departments. Data elements may address the type of school, whether the victim was a student or visitor, where the incident occurred on campus, weapon involved, and method of transport to the emergency room.

NEISS-AIP already collects data about the relationship of the perpetrator to the injured person and the context of assaults (such as altercation, robbery, sexual assault, drug-related, gang-related, and drive-by shooting). Preliminary analysis of NEISS-AIP data for

2012 collected more than 1,400 emergency department cases of nonfatal assault-related injuries that occurred on school property. Weighted data based on these emergency department cases suggest there were about 60,000 school-associated assaults treated in U.S. hospital emergency departments in 2012. NIJ will fund CDC/NCIPC to pilot an expansion of the NEISS-AIP Special Study screen to collect information on school context. The CDC/NCIPC will work with NIJ and other federal stakeholders on the development of the additional data capture elements. This pilot stage is necessary to determine the availability of this assault circumstance data in the emergency department chart. The pilot will take place at five NEISS-AIP hospitals over a period of about 6-9 months.

Enhancement of the School-Associated Violent Deaths (SAVD) Data Collection

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

\$250,000

Under this agreement, NIJ and CDC seek to improve the efficiency and timeliness of the School-Associated Violent Deaths (SAVD) Surveillance System, which captures data on all homicides, suicides, and legal-intervention deaths associated with U.S. elementary and secondary schools that occur at or on the way to schools or school-sponsored events. The CDC has been collecting data on school-associated violent deaths since 1992 through SAVD. SAVD provides the most comprehensive national level data available about school-associated violent deaths, common features of these events, and potential risk factors for perpetration and victimization. To date more than 850 deaths have been confirmed within the SAVD system. SAVD data play an important role in monitoring and assessing national trends in school-associated violent deaths and inform practitioners and policy makers in their efforts to prevent fatal school violence.

SAVD uses multiple strategies to identify potential cases, including a systematic search using Lexis Nexis and independent searches of public records and internet search engines, actively confirming that each report meets the case definition. A unique aspect of SAVD is the inclusion of detailed information obtained from law enforcement investigative reports and structured interviews with law enforcement personnel who investigated the incident and school officials who are familiar with the incident. These sources provide rich information about the nature of each incident (e.g., specific location, time of day, nature of dispute, gang involvement, warning signs), school characteristics (e.g., size, urbanicity, population served), and victim and offender characteristics (e.g., demographic and behavioral information for students as well as non-students). Through this IAA, the CDC will obtain complete law enforcement and/or school data for recent cases of school-associated violent deaths and institutionalize processes to increase future efficiency and timeliness of SAVD's data collection.

An annual analysis of SAVD data is published in the Indicators of School Crime and Safety produced by the National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.

Conduct a New Data Collection Survey of Law Enforcement Personnel in Schools (SLEPS)

OJP/Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)

\$1,000,000

Under this agreement, NIJ and BJS seek to improve the amount of information pertaining to the roles, responsibilities, and actions of local law enforcement in primary and secondary schools as part of a data systems enhancement effort aimed at improving school safety information at the national level. Although there have been isolated local efforts to examine empirically law enforcement involvement in schools, focusing on School Resource Officers (SRO) in particular, no current comprehensive national-level data exist on the extent of law enforcement involvement in the nation's schools or in their typical roles and responsibilities.

Common roles of law enforcement personnel in schools include law-related education, counseling or mentoring, and law enforcement. There is variation across programs on which of these roles is the primary focus. Officers in schools may be employed by a local police department, sheriff's agency, or school system and are tasked to work closely with school administrators in an effort to create a safer environment for both students and staff. Many law enforcement officers working in a school environment are often referred to as school resource officers (SROs). Given the wide scope of law enforcement agencies within our public schools, understanding their roles, responsibilities, functions, and impact on crime and student discipline is critical.

Anecdotal evidence points to increases in the numbers of officers working in schools as communities respond to well publicized school shooting incidents. However, estimates of the approximate number of officers working in schools vary widely. BJS will collect systematically in-depth information regarding the school safety roles, responsibilities, and actions of local law enforcement working in K-12 public schools. BJS also will collect data on the numbers of arrests of students on school grounds and the nature of these arrests. The primary goals of the 2015 SLEPS are to: (1) identify a national roster of active law enforcement agencies that have law enforcement personnel operating in some capacity in U.S. K-12 public schools, and (2) generate detailed, accurate and reliable national statistics describing the scope, size, characteristics, and functions of law enforcement personnel that work and interact in a school environment.

Administration and Enhancement of School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS)

Department of Education (ED)

\$1,700,000

Under this agreement, NIJ and the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) seek to collect School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) data an extra year to provide longitudinal data consistent with other research efforts undertaken as part of the CSSI. In addition, improvements to SSOCS through an enhanced data collection instrument will provide important data from a nationally representative sample of approximately 3, 500 public primary, middle, high, and combined schools. This enhanced

data collection includes in-depth information into specific aspects of school safety, most notably the roles and responsibilities of mental health professionals and law enforcement officers working in schools.

The SSOCS is the primary source of individual school-level data on crime and safety in the United States and is administered by NCES. The SSOCS is a nationally representative cross-sectional survey of about 3,500 public elementary and secondary schools, and is designed to provide estimates of school crime, discipline, disorder, programs and policies. SSOCS is administered to public primary, middle, high, and combined school principals in the spring of even-numbered school years. SSOCS data frequently are used by researchers and schools to benchmark school activities and to provide data for various research efforts. Data are used to assess what crime prevention programs, practices, and policies are used by schools and to examine the relationship between school characteristics and violent and serious violent crimes in elementary, middle, high, and combined schools.

This funding will allow NCES to conduct a 2015/2016 administration of this instrument. In addition to providing base funding for SSOCS, NCES will work with NIJ and other federal and non-federal stakeholders to develop more in-depth information into specific aspects of school safety, most notably to include additional information on the roles and responsibilities of mental health professionals and law enforcement officers working in schools.

APPENDIX C

Identifying Unmet School Safety Technology Needs

Assessing How Technology is Used Today to Prevent and Respond to School Violence

Johns Hopkins University

NIJ is working with Johns Hopkins University to undertake a comprehensive assessment of how technology is currently used in the United States and other countries to prevent and respond to criminal acts of violence in K-12 schools, both public and private. This assessment will: 1) identify the technologies currently being used; 2) how they are used; 3) what is known about the efficacy of those technologies; and 4) considerations affecting their deployment and employment, to include cost and legal considerations. This assessment will consider, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Physical security technologies, including, but not limited to, access controls, locks, cameras, and school-wide communication and emergency notification systems
- Information technologies that, for example, may facilitate the exchange of information among schools, law enforcement agencies, and mental health and services providers to help identify individuals, including students that may pose a threat to themselves or others
- Software risk assessment and planning tools
- Social media monitoring technologies

Discovering the Unique Technology Needs Associated with Preventing and Responding to School Violence

RAND Corporation

In 2014, the RAND Corporation (RAND) received a competitive award under this program to assist NIJ to identify and assess high priority technology needs. Among other activities under this award, RAND hosts focus groups to assist NIJ in refining specific technology needs and approaches to addressing those needs. RAND will conduct a focus group to assess the unique technology needs associated with preventing and responding to acts of violence in K-12 schools, both public and private. This focus group will engage the major stakeholders partnered with law enforcement in preventing and responding to such acts. These stakeholders include: law enforcement, mental health professionals, parents and students, researchers, school administrators, and teachers.