A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH ON SCHOOL RAMPAGE VIOLENCE:

PERSPECTIVES FROM LAW ENFORCEMENT, A LEGISLATOR,

AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

JULIE KAY LAUCK

DR. MARILYNN QUICK – ADVISOR

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

MAY 2016

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH ON SCHOOL RAMPAGE VIOLENCE:

PERSPECTIVES FROM

LAW ENFORCEMENT, A LEGISLATOR,

AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

JULIE KAY LAUCK

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Marilynn Quick   March 21, 2016
Committee Chairperson   Date

Dr. John Ellis   March 21, 2016
Committee Member   Date

Dr. James Jones   March 21, 2016
Committee Member   Date

Dr. Jeff Swensson   March 21, 2016
Committee Member   Date

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
MUNCIE, INDIANA
MAY 2016

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

From the very start of this process, the first moment I sat in my living room reading my

assigned copy of *The Dissertation Journey*, by Carol M. Roberts at 2:00 in the morning, I

thought about who I would need to thank by the end of this process, and how that would even be

possible. Well, that time has now come, and at least one of my questions is easily answered.

Who to thank is easy; how to truly express my sincere gratitude to everyone, and give the

appropriate acknowledgement take much more thought.

To start, thank you to the members of my committee for their thoughtful, patient, and

professional input and feedback. As we all know, this is a learning process, and as educators we

know the value of honest corrective criticism.

One of my goals from the beginning was to earn a sense of accomplishment from pushing

myself through this process. I had set a goal to finish by May 2016, and with the consistent, yet

kind, persistence of regular conversations, encouragement, and guidance of Dr. Quick, I

remained on track to reach my goal. Thank you, Dr. Quick. From the very first call I made to

Ball State in July 2014 to re-start my doctorate program, you have been simply amazing at

making sure I had everything I needed to make this happen.

Thank you to my wonderful husband, Joe. Joe, from the very first class I took at Indiana

University South Bend so many years ago, you have been right by my side to encourage me,

support me, and love me through the challenging times. You are my strength, and I love you.

Thank you to Dr. E. Ric Frataccia first for the encouragement (or directive. . .not sure

which) to get back to Ball State and get this dissertation finished. Additionally, the generosity

you have shown with your time to sit with me and talk me through this process, help me practice

my responses, crunch my numbers, and proof-read my work not only speaks highly of your

professionalism, but of your kindness and friendship. I firmly believe that God puts us where we need to be…that thought is confirmed every day I get to work with you.

Finally, thank you to my family. My parents and siblings, all of whom have been a constant source of encouragement. I will even forgive my brothers, each of whom have a Ph.D. in science, for their harassment and questioning of my qualitative methods. All I can say is that qualitative or quantitative, it sure feels good to be the girl in the family with a doctorate! Take that, brother Docs.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Gabriel Harper Duplechian. My dearest of dear grandsons. I had started down the road toward this doctorate several years ago only to put the process on hold for a bit while Gabe endured treatment for leukemia. Gabe, you have been, and remain, my inspiration not only for the long hours I put into finishing this dissertation, but for the courage you displayed as you endured treatments, hospital visits, set-backs, and worse. Though no comparison to what you have been through, every time I began to feel tired, or too stressed to sit down and work on my dissertation, your sweet face popped into my head and kept me going!

Now, as we both wrap-up our long journeys, you with your treatment, and I with my dissertation, I believe it is time for Gabe and Juma to spend some special time together. Thank you, Gabe, for keeping me going! I love you.

This dissertation is additionally dedicated to Dr. John Lauck, former Ball State professor and beloved father-in-law. Happy Jack, you were, from the beginning, a role model for steadfast determination and educational pride. Your physical absence is greatly felt, but your Cardinal Pride spirit will live on in another Dr. Lauck.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

School rampage violence is "extremely rare: only about 1 in 2,000,000 school-age youth will die from homicide or suicide at school each year" (Muschert, 2007, p. 61); however, the impact from an incident of school violence can be devastating beyond the frequency of occurrence. Rare as incidents of school violence may be, they are not a new phenomenon. Incidents of school rampage violence date back to 2000 BC with descriptions of educational disruption on tablets in Mesopotamia (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). Not quite as historical in terms of time, but certainly worth noting, is that reports of student mutinies date back to reports from Colonial American teachers (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). In 1840, Horace Mann was vocal about the incidents of students flogged for classroom disturbances (as cited in Cornell & Mayer, 2010).

Welton, Vakil, and Ford (2014) noted that adolescents come to the school already burdened by family and social stressors, thus prompting a multi-causal approach to addressing school rampage tendencies. However, since those stressors may only be a portion of the possible reason behind why student perpetrators commit heinous acts of school rampage violence, a thorough review of the different perspectives is integral in deciphering such a complicated phenomenon.

Cornell & Mayer (2010) made a poignant observation by noting that until recently, in an engine search of the term *school violence* in PsycINFO, there was a dearth of informational articles. The search of the term *school violence* resulted in only three articles in 1970, but as many as 443 since 2000 (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). Cornell & Mayer (2010) noted in 2009 more than 15,000 related articles resulted from the same engine search of *school violence* in Google Scholar. Although not a quantitative statement on the number of incidents of school violence,

the aforementioned data denotes an increased interest in reporting on incidents of school

rampage violence.

The literature review revealed an abundance of articles from the perspectives of

psychologists and social scientists. Peer-reviewed journal articles from the perspectives of law

enforcement and legislators were fewer in number than social scientists, with even fewer

contributions from school administrators. It is unlikely that school administrators, legislators,

and law enforcement are less concerned about incidents of school rampage violence than

psychologists and social scientists; yet, psychologists and social scientists appear to be more

prolific on contributions to the topic.

Do school psychologists and social scientists, law enforcement, legislators, and school

administrators manifest a different perspective relative to incidents of school rampage violence?

The literature review indicated that incidents of school rampage violence, from the perspectives

of psychologists and social scientists, is a topic worth studying. A plethora of papers, articles,

and research about incidents of school rampage violence and perpetrators has been done by

psychologists and social scientists. School administrators should at least be as interested in the

study of incidents of school rampage violence in an effort to effectively manage and confront

future incidents, or to possibly enhance their possible aversion. Formal research on the topic

from the administrators' perspective is not evident.

Law enforcement, to include school resource officers, state department of education

safety specialists, homeland security, and others also have a great interest in incidents of school

violence, and a desire to avert future incidents; however, the literature from the perspective of

law enforcement is not as vast as that of psychologists and social scientists. Substantial time,

energy, training, and funding have gone into the training of response protocol, but the literature

review did not reveal a substantial amount of academic research on the topic from the perspective of law enforcement.

Research by legislators on incidents of school violence focused mainly on research for the sake of policy and law. A reactive view of incidents of school violence seems to be the base from which legislators work. This is not to place blame, but simply put, their day-to-day function in government is so broad and ever-expansive, that to dedicate an inordinate amount of time to conduct research on incidents of school violence may be too narrow relative to the larger scope of their responsibilities. Regardless, the prospective legislators concerning both the cause and the broader impact of violence is vital to school administrators.

Despite the lack of formal research conducted by law enforcement, administrators, and legislators, each has a significant amount of interest in, and share perspectives of incidents of school rampage violence that are similar to the perspectives of psychologists and social scientists. I further hypothesize that from a deeper and richer insight into the perspective of law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators, a multi-causal approach to averting incidents of school rampage violence may emerge. The contribution of research by psychologists and social scientists is important, but not less important than a similar body of research which should also be conducted by administrators, law enforcement, and legislators.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine specific perspectives of school rampage violence from law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators. The desired outcome of this research was to provide additional insight into ways in which schools can avert future incidents of violence.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators see as common characteristics among children who have shown a propensity toward violence?

2. What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators?

3. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators perceive as the most effective approach for averting future incidents of school violence?

Significance of Study

Aside from the plethora of bullying awareness training and policies that have been developed and that essentially mandate educators to address incidents of bullying and potentially threatening acts of school rampage violence, educators are the frontline for recognizing potentially dangerous characteristics in students. Educators play an important role in implementing and carrying out the requirements of laws and policies that come about as a result of such acts of mass violence. Educators are integral to the development of establishing a culture that embraces diversity, recognizing incidents of social alienation, and enacting the best research-based policies and related practices to address issues that may have potential for leading to acts of school violence. The significance of my research provides educators with additional resources from multiple perspectives of school rampage violence to better arm them with insight into why violence happens, and how it can be averted. My research takes school violence from being something to which we simply react, to something that we can actively be a part of averting. Approaching incidents of school rampage violence from multidisciplinary perspectives can provide a broader base of knowledge for school personnel.

This study is of importance to the field of education in that it provides educators with information about incidents of school rampage violence from the perspective of law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators. Armed with a broader perspective, educators may be better prepared to avert future acts of school rampage violence. Mayer and Leone (1999) stated, "With regard to school violence, the organization of the school environment plays a critical role as either a facilitator or inhibitor of violence and disruption" (p. 334).

The primary purpose of Chapter 2 is to review literature from law enforcement, legislators, and school administrators. Additionally, Chapter 2 highlights characteristics associated with potential perpetrators who may harbor a propensity toward developing the mental state of mind more prone to acting out in such a massively violent nature. Significant for educators, this study provided a variety of perspectives into what may be underlying conditions adding to situations that potentially propel students to do harm to themselves and others as a result of social alienation, victimization, bullying, and trauma. Further, this study may help educators gain a better understanding of the laws and policies that were developed as a result of school rampage violence.

Seeking to provide greater insight into incidents of school rampage violence, an in-depth comparison of similarities and differences of the perspectives of law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators will be beneficial to educators. The knowledge gleaned from Chapter 2 better informed my methodology and/or analysis of incidents of school rampage violence.

This study focused on qualitative findings in order to gain an in-depth understanding of perspectives of school rampage violence from law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators. Additionally, this study examined both the differences and similarities in the perspectives of incidents of school rampage violence of law enforcement, a legislator, and school

administrators. Last, incidents of school rampage violence were studied from a multiple

perspective to facilitate the development of an understanding about the similarities and

differences in the perspectives of the entities who research, report, confront, and manage school

rampage violence incidents.

Delimitations

This study was limited to qualitative data from the perspective of law enforcement, a

legislator, and school administrators. Other viable perspectives of parents, the perpetrators,

medical examiners, and school guidance counselors may well be equally as important and worth

further study. The perspective of parents, the perpetrators, medical examiners, and school

guidance counselors may potentially increase the level of knowledge and effective practices

associated with the management of and possible aversion of incidents of school violence.

However, by narrowing the qualitative research to the perspective of psychologists and social

scientists, law enforcement personnel, a legislator, and school administrators, I was able to go in

depth, and valuable information was generated from the perspectives of practitioners who study,

research, manage, and try to avert school rampage violence as a professional responsibility.

The perspective from medical doctors on incidents of school rampage violence was not

used in this study. Although the study was limited to law enforcement, a legislator, and school

administrators, no assumptions could be made concerning possible physiological medical

reasons for possible mental illness as a factor in school rampage violence incidents such as brain

tumors, cancer, or head injuries.

Definition of Terms

Averted school shooting – An incident of school rampage violence that had been discussed and planned by one or more potential school shooters, but did not occur due to interventions taken by law enforcement or school administrators (Daniels et al., 2010).

Bullying – Repeated acts of teasing, taunting, or alienation inflicted upon students by other students or school staff. Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (stopbullying.gov).

Ceremonial violence – Violent acts that are carried out for the sake of bringing attention to the perpetrator's sense of public revenge and acknowledgment of past perceived wrongs inflicted upon him (Fast, 2008).

Connected – A sense of belonging; affection and trust; acceptance into society with a beneficially mutual bond to others; absence of alienation (Hutcherson, Seppala, & Gross, 2008).

Narcissism/narcissistic – "An unrealistically inflated sense of self" (Welton et al., 2014, p. 3). Craving attention and lacking empathy is a combination in narcissistic tendencies that can move a person with suicidal thoughts from suicide to mass murder (Fast, 2008; Warnick, Johnson, & Rocha, 2010).

Restorative Justice – An approach to maintaining a safe and orderly environment through the use of relationship building to restore relationships (Saufler, 2000).

School climate – The creation of a safe and supportive school environment that fosters positive relationships within the immediate school community, and within the larger community of support systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

School rampage shooter – The perpetrator, or perpetrators, who actively engage in an act of rampage violence on a school campus.

School rampage violence – An incident of violence that results in multiple injuries or deaths occurring on school grounds where the perpetrator does, or did, attend school. Rampage shootings are meant to be expressive, public, and non-targeted attacks (Langman, 2008; Muschert, 2007).

School resource officer (SRO) – Defined by Part Q of Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 and amended in 1998 by the U.S. Department of Justice 1999 as "a career law enforcement officer, with sworn authority, deployed in community-oriented policing and assigned by the employing police department or agency to work in collaboration with school and community-based organizations" (May, Fessel, & Means, 2004, pp. 75-76). An SRO is further defined by Johns Hopkins University (2004) as, "a sworn officer assigned to a school on a long-term basis trained to perform three major roles: law enforcement officer, law-related counselor and law-related educator" ("Examining School Safety and Gun Violence in America, 2014, para. 10).

Symbolic target – A symbolic target is someone who may represent what the perpetrator views as the collective whole of those who have caused him harm (Rocque, 2011).

Target hardening – "Target hardening" as a means of creating a safer school environment, which is achieved by installing cameras, metal detectors, and adding police, schools gain a sense of being safe from incidents of school rampage (Borum, Cornell, Modzeleski, & Jimerson, 2010).

Threat assessment – Developed by the U.S. Secret Service, it has evolved into a standard for law enforcement to analyze potentially dangerous situations (Strong & Cornell,

2008). The gathering of facts to help make a determination on the likelihood that the potential

perpetrator will act on the threat (Daniels et al., 2010).

   Zero tolerance – A range of policies that seek to impose severe sanctions in schools for

minor offenses in hopes of preventing more serious offenses. These initiatives are based on the

theory of deterrence as a means of preventing serious infractions (Borum et al., 2010).

Organization of Study

   The remainder of this study is organized into four chapters. Chapter 2 presents a review

of literature from the four perspectives of psychologists and social scientists, law enforcement

personnel, legislators, and school administrators as related to possible underlying reasons for

incidents of school rampage violence, and suggested ways in which future incidents can be

averted. Chapter 3 contains the method by which research was conducted. Chapter 4 presents an

analysis of the data collected of the research findings. Chapter 5 summarizes the study, provides

conclusions, and suggests recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

An examination of literature from the perspective of psychologists and social scientists, law enforcement, legislators, and school administrators was conducted to identify any parallels that may exist between the early identification and intervention of potential school rampage tendencies in adolescents and the perspectives noted by psychologists and social scientists, law enforcement personnel, school administrators, and legislators. "Cutting through the hype and public emotion about school shooting, in the background social scientists have been at work in trying to tease out the varying dimensions of this phenomenon" (Muschert, 2007, p. 60).

The purposes of this literature review were to: (a) examine incidents of school rampage violence from the perspective of psychologists and social scientists, law enforcement personnel, legislators, and school administrators; (b) examine incidents of school rampage violence in a selected historical context; (c) identify both the similarities and differences in the perspectives that psychologists and social scientists, law enforcement personnel, legislators, and school administrators manifest relative to school rampage violence; and (d) explore possible approaches to reduce the probability of incidents of school violence in the future.

The literature review was also significant to educators, particularly in noting the impact that the culture of a school has on students, staff, and policy. Langman (2008) indicated that the number of school rampage violence incidents in 1990 was an impetus for a shift in school safety and policy. Furthermore, educators who seek knowledge about why students might harbor violent tendencies, and whether there exists a set of common attributes will find the literature review beneficial. Knowledge gleaned from psychologists and social scientists, law enforcement personnel, legislators, and school administrators may have a favorable impact upon how schools

approach incidents of bullying, social alienation, policies and procedures, discipline, and the inclusion of all students.

History of School Rampage Violence

Incidents of school rampage violence are not a new phenomenon, nor limited to the United States. In 1927, in Bath, Michigan, a school caretaker planted a bomb that when detonated, killed 45 people; 38 of whom were children, and another 58 who were injured (Welton et al., 2014). Welton et al. further reported that the reason behind this tragedy stemmed from a discord with taxation and personal financial issues. On January 29, 1979, Brenda Spencer, aged 16, shot and killed a school principal and a custodian and wounded eight elementary children (Fast, 2008). On February 19, 1997, Evan Ramsey went to school and killed a student with whom he had an on-going disagreement, the principal, and wounded several others (Fast, 2008). In Winneden, Germany, Tim Kretschmer killed several students, teachers, and himself (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). In 2000, a 16-year old student in Brannenburg, Bavaria, shot a teacher and then himself (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). In Erfurt, Germany, a 19-year old student who had been expelled from school, took 17 lives before taking his own (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010).

It is often thought that this phenomenon of school horror began on April 20, 1999, in Columbine, Colorado; however, the aforementioned incidents, offer evidence indicating that school shootings began long before 1999. The phenomenon of school rampage violence obviously has a history in addition to being a matter of concern. Of particular concern is what appears to be an increase in the number of incidents that occur.

Are Schools Safe?

Regardless of the long history of increased incidents of school rampage violence, schools are still considered safe. "Despite the widely diffused recognition and fear associated with violence in schools, empirical evidence indicates that schools are among the safest places for children, compared to their homes and neighborhood environs" (Muschert, 2007, p. 60). Small and Tetrick (2001) also reported that schools are safe and that violence to students and staff is rare but can contribute to a climate of fear that might impact the learning environment.

Muschert (2007) pointed out that school shootings often create the belief that schools are not safe. This belief is due in part to the over reporting and sensationalizing of the incidents when they occurred. Fast (2008) noted that school rampage shootings represent acts of almost inexplicable terrorism that can instantly destroy a school, a community, and many lives; however, also noteworthy was the comment that, ". . . government studies show that school remains among the safest places a child can be" (Fast, 2008, p. 9).

Elliott, Grady, Heys, Ntepp, and William (2002) suggested that school shootings are rare and violence is brought into the schools as a result of what is happening in the homes of students. To further support that schools are still safe for students, Flannery, Modzeleski, and Kretschmar (2013) argued that the numbers support the reports that schools are safe. From 1996 to 2006, there were 207 homicides that occurred in schools, thus producing an average of 21 homicides per year (Flannery et al., 2013).

Even with the statistically low numbers of homicides in schools, one homicide is far too many. Acts of school violence and incidents of school rampage violence must be closely examined in an effort to avert future incidents of violence within schools. Looking into multiple

perspectives of school violence provides a broader view of underlying causes and ways in which to prevent incidents of school violence.

Possible Causes of Incidents of School Violence

Regardless of the quantity of reports that emphasize that schools are still relatively safe, the commonly held goal to achieve zero incidents of school violence also fosters the desire to identify causal variables that somehow produce the negative outcome of an incident of school rampage violence. From violent, desensitizing video games and seemingly dark or satanic music, to access to questionable Internet sites, a wide-range of causal variables have been examined as potential contributing factors to school violence (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). Bullying has been investigated as a possible causal variable and has increasingly become a major area of study and focus for schools. School personnel are often keenly aware of family dynamics, family dysfunction, and socioeconomic factors that may have a negative impact upon the social and emotional well-being of students.

It would be careless to make the school violence argument as simple as a dysfunctional family or bullying. Bullying and peer harassment are common on a daily basis and have been for some time; however, school shootings do not occur every day (Langman, 2008). Video games have grown more realistic and violent in nature, and many of students play these games quite often—yet, again, school rampage is not considered prolific (Langman, 2008). Langman (2008) made a very important point, "Explaining aberrant events by commonplace behaviors is not a productive approach" (p. 80). In the aftermath of a disturbing and horrific tragedy such as an incident of school rampage violence, society appears to grasp for an underlying cause in an effort to regain equilibrium.

Society has a tendency to promote a sense of *machismo* for young men. During the formidable years of adolescence, men feel an overwhelming need to prove their manhood (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). The absence of an opportunity to prove their manhood, or *quien es mas macho* may result in being the target of bullying or subjected to humiliation directly aimed at a young man's manhood, which may lead ultimately to a need to avenge that challenge (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). Humiliation and emasculation are synonymous, and one way to avenge that hurt is to hurt those who caused that pain (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010).

Suicide by mass murder is a predominantly male course of action (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). Kalish & Kimmel explained that men are far more likely to commit suicide than women. Kalish & Kimmel explained that although women make a number of attempts, the methods by which they choose to commit suicide, such as drug overdose, are often methods that allow for post-attempt intervention. Men, on the other hand, tend to be more direct and less worried about what Kalish & Kimmel reported as Stack and Wasserman's 2009 theory of the "beautiful corpse" (p. 18). Conversely women are less likely to shoot themselves in the head because of the damage it will do to their physical appearance (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010).

Prior to 1982, most of the school shootings were the result of young Black men on other young Black men who lived in the inner city and the shootings were carried out on a specific target for a very specific reason (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). Redding and Shalf (2001) argued that even with laws surrounding a zero-tolerance approach to the carrying of firearms onto school property, the numbers of expulsions for firearm possession falls short of the number of students who are reported to have possessed firearms. Redding and Shalf (2001) also noted that inner-city students are more likely than rural or suburban students to have access to guns, but most of the recent incidents of school rampage violence have been committed by students in

rural or suburban schools. Kalish & Kimmel (2010) reported that since 1982, most of the school

rampage shootings were carried out by Caucasian men from middle- to upper-middle class

families in suburban and rural areas. For example, Steve Kazmierczak, a student at Northern

Illinois University, simply went up on a stage and proceeded to shoot 24 people. Six people died

that day before he took his own life (Kalish & Kimmel, 2010). Kalish & Kimmel (2010)

reported in detail that the Columbine killers specifically targeted fellow students, whom they

claimed in their manifesto had made fun of them, or whom they perceived to have wronged them

in some way.

There have been some incidents of school rampage violence in which the targets have

been symbolic targets and not an intended individual (Rocque, 2011). Although a majority of

the shooters have fit into a specific profile, not all shooters can be profiled as men, Caucasian,

middle class. Cho Seung-Hui, April 16, 2007, terrorized the campus of Virginia Tech for two

hours, leaving behind the carnage of 32 dead and 17 injured before committing suicide (Kalish &

Kimmel, 2010). To the point, "We argue that the similarities with other sub-urban rampage

shooters are, in the end, more telling than these differences. Or, better put, that the similarities of

both form and content are necessary to an adequate explanation of the differences" (Kalish &

Kimmel, 2010, p. 453). Rachel Kalish and Michael Kimmel have written expansively on the

topic of violence and masculinity. Although no pair of scholars has cornered the market on this

area of research, clearly Kalish and Kimmel have brought a new perspective of incidents of

school violence by suggesting that it be viewed from a masculine perspective.

Approaches to Averting Incidents of School Violence

The cause or causes of school violence are only a starting point. If violence cannot be

averted and the unthinkable happens, schools, law enforcement, and communities are faced with

the aftermath of incidents of school rampage violence. What follows an incident of school violence often comes in the form of policy and changed practice. The sections which follow (zero tolerance, restorative justice, risk management and profiling, culture and climate, effectiveness and role of police in schools, and legislative acts) provide a review of selected policies and practices that have been focused upon in an effort to avert or minimize school rampage violence.

Zero Tolerance

Zero tolerance is one such approach to minimizing incidents of school rampage violence. Zero tolerance, as defined by Borum et al. (2010), is a means of preventing serious infractions by imposing harsh punishments. Zero tolerance is an approach to school discipline that has become a common practice in schools, but not necessarily one that comes without question (Borum et al., 2010). Borum et al. (2010) called the use of suspensions and expulsions for even minor offenses a "theory of deterrence" (p. 28). Schools use suspensions and expulsions as means of issuing harsh discipline in an effort to keep students from violating school codes of conduct.

When zero tolerance was first deployed as a common approach to maintaining discipline and order within the school, the primary focus was to keep firearms and illegal drugs off school grounds (Cornell & Mayer, 2010). Cornell & Mayer (2010) indicated that the use of zero tolerance has moved from the elimination of guns and drugs on school campus, to an overall, and often used, method of school discipline that has expanded far beyond the aforementioned primary focus. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and a number of researchers have expressed very serious reservations about the effectiveness of zero tolerance as a means to create or maintain a safe school environment. Zero tolerance is not the most impactful method of averting incidents of school violence (Ward, 2014).

Borum et al. (2010) also noted that schools use "target hardening" (p. 28) as a means of creating a safer school environment. By employing zero tolerance in conjunction with installing cameras, metal detectors, and adding police, schools gain a sense of being safe from incidents of school rampage violence (Borum et al., 2010). In 1973, prompted by the shooting death of a Philadelphia teacher by a student who had a reported history of school discipline issues, teachers requested a desired written code of conduct and felt that such a document would help create an environment that resulted in students and staff having a better understanding of expectations and limitations (Bayh, 1975). The tougher stance on discipline, perhaps, gave the teachers a sense of security in knowing that students might be more apprehensive about breaking the rules if the discipline was made much more stringent. The subcommittee went on to report that caution must be exercised when dealing with administrative policies, stating the possibility that discipline method(s) employed may create more problems than they are intended to resolve (Bayh, 1975).

In light of the incidents of school violence, zero tolerance has been increased but has not been as effective as anticipated in curtailing either school disciplinary disruptions or incidents of school violence (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). The American Bar Association and the U.S. Department of Education have both criticized the blanket approval of zero tolerance (Ward, 2014). A zero tolerance approach to school discipline management is still used in some schools. However, a closer examination of zero tolerance as a possible approach to averting school violence is necessary.

Restorative Justice

Unlike zero tolerance, restorative justice focuses on the violation of the school rule and the impact it has on both the perpetrator and the victim. Restorative justice causes schools to

take a more proactive role in getting to the root cause of a problem. Varham (2005) stressed the importance of the need to change the way in which schools approach discipline. School administrators continue to be more authoritarian in their approach to discipline, but should consider a closer examination of restorative justice as an approach to not only prevent future acts of violence and rule breaking, but to help create a more positive culture of respect among those who break school rules, and the victims of that behavior (Varnham, 2005).

Skiba and Peterson (2000) discussed research centered around the perception of school disruption and school violence. If school administrators are more focused on sending a message that schools are safe simply because they have zero tolerance policies in place, they may be missing a vital piece of the school violence puzzle. Skiba and Peterson (2000) stressed the importance of approaching school discipline as a means of preventing school violence by implementing an approach of treating the whole child from a social perspective rather than harsh disciplinary model. Skiba and Peterson (2000) noted the definition of *discipline* as, ". . . from the same Latin root as the word *disciple: discipere,* to teach or comprehend" (p. 342). Zero tolerance is far shorter on teaching than is restorative justice. Getting at the cause of the problem, then resolving the issue seems to be a much more productive and positive way in which to approach, and ultimately head-off, potential school violence (Skiba & Peterson, 2000).

Skiba and Peterson (2000) conducted a search of published investigations on school security measures. In their search, which compared a number of published articles retrieved in the search and a number of evaluations or research studied, Skiba and Peterson (2000) found that conflict resolution and classroom behavior management were two areas that yielded both the highest number of articles published and number of evaluations or research studied. There is a

need to further examine alternative methods of managing discipline, and the possibility of a

connection between methods of discipline approaches and incidents of school rampage violence.

Risk Management and Profiling

Beyond the need to examine effective ways in which to manage school discipline, early

detection and intervention are additionally vital components in preventing incidents of school

violence and worthy of closer examination (Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001). Additionally, risk

management and profiling are two methods employed in averting incidents of school rampage

violence. The deployment of risk management practices requires a fundamental change in how

students are viewed, and profiling must be carefully managed to avoid false identification.

Does there exist a common set of behaviors with a student who carries out a school

rampage incident? The question becomes, *what do we look for in student behavior?* Mulvey

and Cauffman (2001) noted that, "After all, for every killer youth, there are many others with the

same behaviors or attitudes who never come close to killing their classmates" (pp. 797-798).

Herein lies the difficult task of identifying characteristics in youth without making an erroneous

judgement in profiling students (Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001). Mulvey and Cauffman (2001)

stress four important considerations in the identification process of preventing violence: (a)

predicting behavior without false profiling; (b) understanding that the act of violence or behavior

is often "embedded in a social and transactional sequence of events" (p. 798); (c) understanding

that adolescents are not yet fully developed in their physical, emotional, or psychosocial

development cycle; and (d) understanding that we do not yet have enough information or

research to know which intervention works best.

To contrast the findings of Mulvey and Cauffman (2001), Webber (1997) focused on an

examination of characteristics and programs to address behaviors that might lead to incidents of

violence. Webber (1997) pointed out that even as a baby, characteristics such as irritability or

lack of fear can be an indication of future acts of violence. Webber (1997) reported that children

who hail from broken homes, or come from an environment rife with dysfunction and poverty

are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior. Conversely Mulvey and Cauffman (2001)

argued that such a statement by Webber (1997) potentially set the stage for false profiling.

Profiling individuals from such limited knowledge as a method of preventing future incidents of

school-related shootings should be avoided (O'Toole, 2000).

Early identification of risk is only the first step in possibly preventing an incident of

school rampage violence (Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001). It is important to look more closely at

characteristics of student behavior and to identify behaviors that manifest to a degree of

becoming potentially dangerous. Although early identification might be just a start, arming

school personnel with information to help assist in the identification of harmful behaviors might

be a key factor in averting incidents of school rampage violence.

School Climate and Community Culture

There is, additionally, a need for continued monitoring of the adolescents and a need to

create a positive climate in the school (Mulvey & Cauffman, 2001). School policies and

procedures are both challenged and changed as incidents of school violence occur; however, a

significant body of literature indicated that school safety ultimately begins with the climate and

culture of the school, and falls on the shoulders of school leadership to create a culture in which

safety is clearly highlighted (Fein, 2002). In 2000, the Colorado legislature, along with several

other states, mandated that schools create safety plans (Elliott et al., 2002). Elliott et al. (2002)

created a manual for schools and communities to use as a guide to help schools initiate

partnerships with community agencies to create safety plans. Elliott et al. (2002) acknowledged

that states had laws to address school safety, but also pointed out that if the laws, policies, and

procedures could not be understood by those who were responsible for implementing them, the

laws were not effective.

The manual developed by Elliott et al. (2002) is of significance to the topic of school

rampage violence in both date and location. The manual was written in 2002 in Colorado,

shortly after the mass school shootings at Columbine High School. It was widely reported at the

time of the Columbine shootings that one possible cause was the climate in the school. Reports

of bullying, favoritism, and alienation flooded the media as possible reasons for the murders.

Elliott et al. (2002) were charged with writing a manual, or guide for schools, in response to the

Colorado Safe Communities – Safe Schools (SCSS) Initiative, which encouraged greater

communication among agencies in the hope of reducing incidents of school rampage violence.

The manual also provided schools with additional tools to create safe learning environments.

The manual helped established a specific process by which schools and communities can

approach school safety by maintaining a focus upon *Safe School Planning, Information Sharing,*

Searches and Seizures, and Accountability and Liability. The focus of the manual was on

collaboration among the key agencies. "Attempting change without considering the legal

ramifications can be counter-productive and lead to policies that are legally unsound" (Elliott et

al., 2002, p. 1). The manual created by Elliott et al. (2002) was designed to foster relationships

between educators, law enforcement, mental health providers, and the community in an effort to

ensure gaps are closed in identifying, communicating, and engaging all parties involved in

school safety. The sharing of information between agencies is integral to the successful

identification of potential incidents of school rampage violence (Elliott et al., 2002). Also, as

noted in Elliott et al. (2002), the subjects in the study conducted by Terry (2010) indicated that

communication and cooperation among multiple agencies were important to avert incidents of school rampage violence.

A culture of trust that is created when open communication is encouraged among students, staff, and the community could very likely be better than metal detectors, security cameras, and zero-tolerance policies at preventing incidents of school violence (Greene, 2005; Patterson, 2007). The involvement of key stakeholders in the development of the culture of the school is integral to a genuine sense of "connectedness and trust" (Greene, 2005, p. 243). Students must be included as key stakeholders when school climate and culture are discussed if issues that have the potential to lead to incidents of school violence are expected to be addressed successfully (Greene, 2005; Patterson, 2007). Greene (2005) also found that having stability in leadership, as well as rules that are perceived as fair to students are important contributing factors in development of culture.

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan issued a report on school climate and culture (Duncan, 2014). Secretary Duncan's report urged schools to examine more closely the climate and culture of the school, as well as the discipline measures employed to address both minor and major school matters of discipline. In the opening letter, Secretary Duncan noted, "Simply relying on suspensions and expulsions, however, is not the answer to creating a safe and productive school environment" (p. i). To Secretary Duncan's point, it is important to look at what is happening within the school, and to a greater extent, outside the school as a way to avert incidents of school rampage violence. Can school violence be averted by increasing communication among multiple agencies working together? Can violence be prevented if schools, law enforcement, and mental health agencies work together to provide help for students? Both questions are of importance and worthy of further study.

Police in Schools

The practice of creating safe schools by placing law enforcement officers in schools is not a new practice. In 1958, in Flint, Michigan, the first police-school liaison program was implemented. A few short years later in 1962, in Tuscon, Arizona, police officers were placed in elementary schools for the first time. To further stress the importance of the relationship between law enforcement and schools, Attorney General Janet Reno enacted the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) in 1994. Reno had a goal of increasing the law enforcement ranks by 100,000 nationwide. Ten years later, Deputy Attorney General James Comey secured $20.7 million in grants for the purpose of hiring and training 194 school police officers (Patterson, 2007).

Support for increasing the number of school resource officers and implementing a variety of school safety programs can be evidenced by the simultaneous growth in funding that has been made available through federal and state grants. Unfortunately, what is not as evident is the level of clarity in the roles, responsibilities, and relationships between law enforcement and educators once the police are in the schools. Research shows that the presence of School Resource Officers helped build positive relationships, and thus contributed to making schools safer (Greene, 2005; Rosiak, 2009).

In 1998, then mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani, assumed all school security and placed New York Police Department police officers in the schools (Brady, 2007). In 2004, the mayor of New York City, Michael Bloomberg, joined forces with the school chancellor and the police commissioner to launch the New York City Impact Schools Initiative (Brady, 2007). Although results of the New York City Impact Schools Initiative did not produce results to support the initiative (Brady, 2007), it is representative of how schools, communities, and law

enforcement have viewed the teaming of community efforts, and the use of increased SRO

presence to combat incidents of school violence.

Some of the challenges with an SRO program are the defining of roles, co-mingling of

federal dollars, and fundamental approaches in philosophy of school management, discipline,

and violence. When an SRO is brought into the school environment, there is often a confusion

of chain-of-command. Although the SRO is a fully-commissioned law enforcement officer

employed by the local police department, there is a blurring of lines as to whom the officer

answers (Rosiak, 2009). Additionally, there is often a difference in how a police officer

approaches school discipline and acts of violence compared to that of a school administrator

(Rosiak, 2009). Getting beyond these differences, and working together to build a positive and

productive relationship is not impossible, but is, however, extremely important. Finding ways in

which to combine efforts to increase communication between schools and law enforcement are

worthy of further exploration and research.

Legislative Acts

Legislators have worked diligently for a number of years to make educational institutions

safer places for students. Laws have been enacted over the years to help combat incidents of

school rampage violence. Many laws and policies have been enacted as a direct result of

incidents of school rampage violence. After the horrific shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, state

lawmakers feverishly sought to devise ways in which similar incidents might be averted in the

future (Shah & Ujifusa, 2013). Shah and Ujifusa (2013) reported that within months of the

Newtown, Connecticut, shooting incident, legislators filed nearly 400 school safety related bills.

The bills filed ranged from arming teachers with guns to adding more safety drills (Shah &

Ujifusa, 2013). Although nearly 400 bills were proposed, not all bills gained legislative support (Shah & Ujifusa, 2013).

There are several examples of legislation that have been enacted as a result of incidents of school rampage violence. South Carolina's Safe School Climate Act was enacted in 2006 in response to the death of two students (Terry, 2010). The South Carolina Safe School Climate Act stressed the importance of anti-bullying measures, awareness, and a litany of other important measures to be implemented in the name of safety (Terry, 2010). Terry (2010) reported that a survey conducted with over 120 South Carolina educators showed that most of those surveyed knew about the legislation and understood that their school districts had implemented policies to address the legislation; however, Terry (2010) went on to report that of those same educators surveyed, 63% responded "no" or "don't know" when asked, "Do you think that the Safe School Climate Act (June 2006) exerts the needed pressure on schools and school districts so public school students feel free from harassment, intimidation, and bullying?" The result of the survey indicated that perhaps the Safe School Climate Act might be ineffective as a stand-alone measure for preventing school violence (Terry, 2010); however, being aware of the Safe School Climate Act is not enough. The effective implementation of legislation, such as the aforementioned Safe School Climate Act, requires that educators who are asked to implement the Safe School Climate Act must be properly trained, compliant in following the directives indicated in the act, and accept the act as a meaningful step toward making their schools safer (Terry, 2010).

Cornell & Mayer (2010) reported that three important legislative acts, each intended to increase school safety, were initiated between 1986 and 1996: The Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act of 1986; Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990; and Modified Gun-Free School Zone Act of 1996. Additionally, in 1975, the Senate Committee on Judiciary conducted a subcommittee

study to investigate juvenile delinquency based on investigations from 1971-1975 (Bayh, 1975).

U.S. Senator Evan Bayh and other legislators culminated their study in *Our Nation's Schools—A*

Report Card: "A" in School Violence and Vandalism.

In August 1973, the subcommittee study collected data from surveys sent to 757

superintendents of schools with enrollments of 10,000 students or higher (Bayh, 1975). The

survey return showed a rate of 68.1%, representing 516 responses, and of those returned, 220

were incomplete, but useful (Bayh, 1975). Bayh's report showed further discussion was held

between subcommittee members and 50 school security directors to gain a deeper insight into the

incidents of criminal activity on school campuses. Additionally, the security directors were

helpful in gleaning additional information for the subcommittee as they examined future federal

legislation. Bayh (1975) reported that a 1964 study of teachers resulted in 3% indicating that

discipline problems were an issue at their respective schools; however, in general, teachers

reported 70-80% as "exhibiting good to excellent behavior." By 1972, 54% of teachers reported

that classroom disruption ranged from moderate to critical (Bayh, 1975).

Although Bayh felt that it was an important enough topic to convene a senate committee,

the numbers from a joint report from the U.S. Secret Service and the Department of Education

might indicate otherwise, as in 1970 there were four incidents of targeted school shootings

(Warnick et al., 2010). That number jumped to 28 in the 1990s, but Bayh was working from the

1973-1975 statistical data. At the time Warnick et al. (2010) published their report, there had

already been 25 reported incidents. What it did indicate, however, was that Bayh and others

were aware that the incidents of school violence were a matter of concern and a topic that had

enough political sway to make it to the top of the nation's agenda.

More legislation was enacted in 2004 when President George W. Bush wanted to address the issue of mental health by establishing The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (Mills et al., 2006). The New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (NFC) proposed 6 goals and 19 recommendations to help transform mental health systems (Mills et al., 2006). Although the initiative was well-meaning, as with most government programs or initiatives, devoid was the necessary funding and resources to carry-out the initiative to successful implementation (Mills et al., 2006). The lofty goal of addressing issues surrounding mental health interventions in youth was, and remains, an important part of addressing and averting school rampage violence. School mental health programs that include partnerships with key stakeholders, and that are well-organized, can have a positive impact on averting incidents of school violence (Mills et al., 2006; Patterson, 2007).

It is evidenced by the number of legislatives acts, bills, laws, and policies enacted as a result of incidents of school rampage violence, that legislators have an interest in helping make schools safer and avert future incidents of school rampage violence. What is not always as evident is the perspective of legislators on the reason why incidents of school rampage violence happen in the first place. Further, the level of communication among law enforcement, school administrators, and legislators is not clearly defined in the literature. An important element to legislative policy development might come in the form of stronger relationships and better communication among these individual groups of stakeholders.

Adolescent Psychology

In addition to safety efforts through policy, approach, programs, climate, and legislation, substantial post-mortem research has been conducted on incidents of school rampage violence. The media throws schools into the forefront of a news frenzy after such events occur, thus

prompting closer examination of what is happening to the children to cause this level of violence.

Perhaps even more important than conducting a thorough post-mortem of school rampage

incidents through the lens of media reports, getting to the heart of why they occur in the first

place might provide valuable insight into the psychology of who these children behind such

violent acts are. Substantial research has been conducted on adolescent psychology. Entire

college courses are taught and degrees are conferred in the area of adolescent psychology.

Having a better understanding of adolescent psychology may be one way in which schools can

better identify potentially dangerous behavior in students.

Understanding, or even an awareness of, various tools to better identify students may be

helpful in early intervention. Safipour, Tessma, Higginbottom, and Emami (2010) examined the

use of an instrument called the Jessor and Jessor scale of social alienation to look at social

alienation among adolescents in Sweden as it related to incidents of violence. Belonging to a

community, having an innate desire to belong to a larger group, and being accepted is important

to adolescents (Safipour et al., 2010). In the absence of this sense of belonging, the probability

for adolescents to engage in risky and dangerous behavior increases (Safipour et al., 2010).

An approach to averting mass rampage violence events that is gaining in importance is

loving-kindness meditation (Hucherson et al., 2008). Loving-kindness meditation is a method

which assists adolescents to develop a stronger sense of social connectedness (Hutcherson et al.,

2008). Based somewhat on meditation effects of eastern Buddhist's theory Hutcherson et al.

(2008) stated, "Western science has only recently begun to recognize the benefit not just of

counter-acting negative, antisocial emotion, but also of fostering positive prosocial emotions and

behaviors" (p. 720). There is a natural human need to belong and be accepted. A controlled

study conducted by Hutcherson et al. (2008) examined whether social connection could be

created toward strangers. This type of study may seem a bit unusual as it relates to averting

incidents of school rampage violence; however, the study does emphasize the importance of

achieving a sense of inner peace, and perhaps a method by which students might learn to control

their emotions.

Early identification of potentially dangerous behaviors in adolescents may be of

importance to averting incidents of school rampage violence. Gaining greater insight into

adolescent psychology and awareness of available tools to help make such identification should

be further examined. If schools are able to make early identification, and provide effective

intervention strategies, perhaps incidents of school rampage violence will decrease.

Perpetrator Demographics

Examining incidents of school rampage violence and taking a closer look at the

psychology behind the causes, raises more unanswered than answered questions. Warnick et al.

(2010) stated that the victims in the school rampage violence incidents are very rarely the

students with whom the shooter had personal negative encounters. At Columbine High School,

Kyle Velasquez, a special education student, was certainly not one of the reported "jocks" who

had tormented the two shooters (Warnick et al., 2010). To decipher the *who,* the *why,* and the

what from the detail of each horrific event is a difficult task. Add to that confusion the fact that

many of the shooters themselves become celebrities after these incidents (Warnick et al., 2010)

and finding the answers becomes even more convoluted.

To better understand the *why* of the incidents of school rampage, a clear and well

documented accounting of the *who* is important. This is perhaps, the most difficult perspective

from which to write as it asks the education-focused researcher to examine more closely what

may be happening in the lives of students on a daily basis; happenings which may or may not be

fully grasped depending upon personal experiences. School rampage shooters are children, who through no fault of their own, come to school with the burden of traumatic life stories.

School rampage shooters are students who become perpetrators of mass violence. They are students who have more often than not come to school, sat in classrooms, turned in assignments, laughed with friends in the cafeteria, and perhaps even smiled at and bonded with staff and other students. School rampage shooters are human beings who have lived what society might determine to be a normal, nurturing life in some cases, and quite the opposite in others. A closer look at the human being behind the tragedy is examined not for the sake of documenting gratuitous traumatic history, violence, and gore, but rather to provide a deeper understanding of who some of the school rampage shooters are, the lives they lived prior to the incidents, and perhaps start to piece together some of the *why* from the knowledge of the *who* and the *what*.

The school rampage shooters examined closely for the purpose of this literature review are Brenda Spencer, Evan Ramsey, Luke Woodham, Eric Harris, and Dylan Klebold. Each of these school rampage shooters have been chosen based on their family histories and reported possible diagnoses. This list is not exhaustive but sufficed to show, for the purpose of this literature review, a sampling of *who* school rampage shooters are. School rampage shooters who committed suicide, a true diagnosis of their possible mental disorders, and accurate reporting of family histories should be viewed as limited with possible inaccuracies. For the purpose of this literature review, the focus remained on the research conducted by Fast with documentation from other research where necessary. Having first become interested in school rampage violence in 1998 after the Jonesboro, Arkansas, school shooting, Fast, who had worked with troubled teens and their families, began to question the *why*, or what he referred to as "factor X" (Fast, 2008, p.

11). Fast and his team wanted to substantiate their suspicion that factor X had multiple influences and intensity.

After any school rampage incident, the media presents various perspectives of the perpetrator (Welton et al., 2014). O'Toole (2000) indicated that the media often leads educators, law enforcement, and the wider community to believe that the profile of a school rampage shooter is that of someone who is a loner seeking revenge for some past bullying incident and just happens to have easy access to weapons. In looking at the past of any school shooter, it is important to remember that understanding the individual's past is important, but O'Toole (2000) warned, "retracing offender's past and identifying clues that in retrospect could have been signs of danger can yield significant, useful information" (p. 3). Historical information on past shooters, albeit important as O'Toole stated, is not necessarily a predictor of future incidents of school rampage violence.

Taking into consideration O'Toole's precautions of profiling, this literature review serves to merely reveal the background of five school rampage shooters in four rampage incidents. The purpose of exposing only limited information is twofold: first, to provide an overview rather than a detailed accounting of who these shooters were (are); and second, to provide an accounting of the school rampage incidents sans numerous and graphic details of the violent acts committed by the shooters. Information, for the purpose of this literature review as it relates to suggested diagnosis, was gleaned primarily from one source, Fast's (2008), *Ceremonial Violence: A Psychological Explanation of School Shootings*, but is not intended as a method of formal diagnosis. Fast has been cited in many other sources that relate to incidents of school violence.

Brenda Spencer was a 16-year-old girl living with her father in San Carlos, California when she committed her act of school rampage violence on January 29, 1979. Brenda's parents

were divorced, but Brenda had been observed by relatives and neighbors as being a smart, happy, and quiet girl (Fast, 2008). Brenda Spencer, from the front door of her home across the street from an elementary school, shot and killed a school principal, school custodian, and wounded eight elementary children (Fast, 2008).

Evan Ramsey, also 16 at the time he committed an act of school rampage violence, was the son of an alcoholic mother, and a father who was serving a 10-year sentence for bombing the *Anchorage Times* (Fast, 2008). Evan was placed in foster care, and by the age of 14 had attempted suicide twice (Fast, 2008). On February 19, 1997, Evan went to school and killed a student with whom he had an on-going disagreement, the school principal, and wounded several others (Fast, 2008).

Luke Woodham, like the aforementioned Evan Ramsey and Brenda Spencer, was also 16 years old when he brutally murdered his mother and two classmates. Prior to the divorce of his parents, Luke lived a simple, easy life. After the divorce of his parents, Luke began to display troubling signs of anti-social behaviors and aggression (Fast, 2008).

Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, at the time of their act of school rampage violence both lived comfortable upper-middle class lives (Fast, 2008). Both Harris and Klebold came from intact families. Although both boys had been at one time involved in the juvenile justice system, there did not appear to be anything on their juvenile criminal records to raise cause for concern (Fast, 2008). This act of school rampage violence that resulted in the murder of 12 classmates and a teacher, and left several others seriously wounded before taking their own lives, was considered by many to be the impetus to what appeared to be a number of school rampage violence incidents (Welton et al., 2014).

Spencer, Ramsey, Woodham, Harris, and Klebold were responsible for several deaths and injuries, yet they represent only a small number of students who have committed acts of school rampage violence. Acts of school rampage violence occurred both before and after the four recounted here. All of these students at one time or another in their lives experienced love, happiness, and some level of nurturing (Fast, 2008). It is worth noting that Spencer, Ramsey, Woodham, Harris, and Klebold shared similarities in proximity of age at the time of their crimes. Both Spencer and Woodham had parents who were divorced. Ramsey, although his parents were married, lived in a single-parent home primarily due to the fact that his father had been incarcerated.

Summary

Dwyer, Osher, Warger (1998) reiterated the fact that schools are still one of the safest places for children and that less than 1% of all violent childhood deaths occurred on school property. Dwyer et al. (1998) also highlighted the importance of community effort in attempts to avert or prevent future incidents of school rampage violence. The identification of possible common themes among psychologists and social scientists, law enforcement, legislators, and school administrators relative to the search for variables associated with school rampage violence, may also reveal other important information such as: "What did we miss? or What could we have done?" as communities examine ways in which to avert incidents of school violence.

In August 1998, President Clinton responded to an incident of school rampage violence at Thurston High School by directing then U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, and then Attorney General U.S. Department of Justice, Janet Reno, to research and develop a guide for educators that would provide information on ways in which educators could better identify

warning signs of potential dangerous capabilities in children (Dwyer et al., 1998). The guide

was a culmination of expert research and experience from chiefs of police, school personnel,

psychologists, and others. The guide was supported by organizations such as National Parent

Teachers Association, National Mental Health Association, National Association of School

Psychologists, National School Boards Association, American Federation of Teachers, and more

(Dwyer et al., 1998).

        The aforementioned document is just one of many guides available to schools that

express the importance of a collective effort of multiple agencies gathering research and

experience in an effort to create safer environments in schools. A series of such guidelines,

"Safe and Secure: Guides to Creating Safer Schools" has one set of guides, Guide 5, dedicated to

the importance of building relationships between schools and law enforcement (Atkinson, 2002).

In the forward in Guide 5, "Fostering School-Law Enforcement Partnerships," Atkinson (2002)

began with:

>   School safety requires a broad-based effort by the entire community, including
>
>   educators, students, parents, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and faith-based
>
>   organizations, among others. By adopting a comprehensive approach to addressing
>
>   school safety focusing on prevention, intervention, and response, schools can increase the
>
>   safety and security of students. (p. iii)

The literature suggested that averting incidents of school violence goes beyond the resources of

the schools. The need to involve the community in the development and implementation efforts

to prevent or avert incidents of school rampage violence was stressed consistently in the

literature. Further, the literature also supported that a collective effort of open and consistent

communication among agencies in cooperation with key stakeholders to address issues of mental

health, resources, and connectivity to the larger community are advocated practices (Brady,

2007; Greene, 2005; Collins, Watts, Waters, & Nikitopoulos, 2009; Patterson, 2007; Rosiak,

2009).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Incidents of school rampage violence, although rare, tend to have a great impact on schools and communities. The goal of all schools is to avert acts of school violence and to foster awareness for ways in which schools can work within local communities to address issues that might lead to acts of school rampage violence. Qualitative research was conducted to examine three perspectives about school violence: law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine specific perspectives of school rampage violence from law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators. The desired outcome of this research was to provide additional insight into ways in which schools can avert future incidents of violence.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators see as common characteristics among children who have shown a propensity toward violence?

2. What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators?

3. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators perceive as the most effective approach for averting future incidents of school violence?

Research Design

Qualitative methods were utilized to conduct this research. According to Marshall and Rossman (2010), a qualitative method is noted as well suited to study life experiences, perceptions, and the social sciences. Qualitative research provided a rich depth of knowledge for this study. Qualitative research, much like detective work, is employed as a research method by which the researcher deeply explores and explains a chosen research topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2010).

"The themes, patterns, understandings, and insights that emerge from fieldwork and subsequent analysis are the fruit of qualitative inquiry" (Patton, 2002, p. 5). Qualitative research lends itself well to grounded theory methodologies (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research allows the researcher to approach the data collection without constraints of predetermined themes. I approached the digitally-recorded interviews without having predetermined categories or themes identified. The categories and themes emerged as the digitally-recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed through a method of moving from open coding to help broad themes emerge, to axial coding to develop and further refine recurring themes and categories. I avoided early determination of categories. Early determination of categories can lead the researcher to unintended limits or barriers to rich research (Seidman, 2013). To avoid the pitfalls of early presumption and identification of themes, I moved cautiously through the coding process. To further ensure accuracy of data interpretation and avoidance of predetermined themes, I used the assistance of a second coding by Dr. Marilynn Quick, an independent outside source.

Description of Sample

Qualitative sampling relies on a purposive sample. The purposive sample is employed to gain a deeper insight into the development of theory (Devers & Frankel, 2000). Devers &

Frankel (2000) expressed the importance of the researcher to carefully identify the sample, and then secure participation. Securing participation may take several steps and attempts. A prudent researcher will research the potential obstacles prior to the start of the initial data collection (Devers & Frankel, 2000).

The sample, narrow in focus, was broad in regional selection and demographics. The theoretical sample consisted of six law enforcement personnel who worked for a minimum of three years as a school resource officer, patrol officer, or school safety specialist. Additionally, one legislator instrumental in proposing legislation directly related to school safety was interviewed. Finally, three school administrators who had experienced school violence, had been involved in averting violence, or are known for their innovative approach to involving the community in averting incidents of school rampage violence were chosen for in-depth interviews.

Saturation in research is a point at which the researcher has a comprehensive amount of data indicated by a repeating of themes or ideas expressed by several interviewees (Morse, 1995). I was able to reach saturation with law enforcement. At the time of the last interview with a member of law enforcement, no new or revealing information was presented. The point of saturation with law enforcement indicated a sufficient and thorough amount of data for the purpose of this study as several interviewees noted common thoughts and ideas.

Saturation was not met to completion among the administrators as a single group, but was met when taken as a whole with the other two groups. The three administrators interviewed discussed themes individually that crossed over into comments made by others in this interview group, as well as common themes discussed by both the law enforcement officers and the legislator. Saturation was not reached with the legislator as only one legislator was interviewed.

However, similar to both law enforcement and school administrators, the legislator did address some of the same topics and ideas as the other two groups of interviewees. The data, once triangulated among the three interviewee groups, did result in a pattern of emerging homogenous and consistent themes as saturation was approached.

Interviews with *elites*, such as legislators, can be challenging (Clifford, 2014). An important part of interviewing an elite is knowing the history of that particular subject, and then approaching the interview more along the lines of a traditional journalist (Hochschild, 2009). In an interview with an elite, the interviewer delves more deeply into the participant's answers. To go further, the researcher also takes the time during the interview to ask probing questions into *why* the interviewee gave a certain answer, and perhaps how that would compare to an answer given in a previous interview (Hochschild, 2009). I conducted due-diligence as I sought all applicable information from past interviews through Internet searches on articles, name search, and topic search prior to the elite interview. In a more traditional interview, one not with an elite, the researcher might stop short of making such a connection between what the participant had just said, and what was known to have been said in a previous interview (Hochschild, 2009). The information gleaned from the question would be more one-dimensional. Three purposes of interviewing an elite are to examine recent historical change or policy, to determine if further study should be conducted through other means, and to provide insight into prior analyses (Hochschild, 2009).

I gained access to some of the participants, specifically the legislator, through the assistance of third party contacts. I drew upon personal and professional resources to facilitate an initial contact with some of the participants. To ensure openness, honesty, and transparency in the process of data gathering, participants were notified in advance by phone, letter, or email.

In that correspondence, the participants were given information about the purpose of the

research, the details surrounding the audio recording of the interview, and an approximate length

of time for the interview. Participants were informed that they were to remain anonymous, and

that a pseudonym was to be used. Initial correspondence was followed-up with a phone call to

confirm, and to answer any questions prior to my arrival.

It was imperative that I learned as much about each participant as possible prior to the

interview. This knowledge assisted me in making connections and verifying information that

was shared during the interviews. Having prior knowledge helped the interviewees understand

that they were valued, and that I conducted proper research on the work they had done.

Data Collection

Theoretical sampling, according to Glaser and Strauss (2009) is a process by which

theory development includes collecting, coding, and analyzing data. From data that is collected,

the researcher then decides what data to collect to develop a theory. Glaser and Strauss (2009)

also indicated that the data collection is "controlled by the emerging theory" (p. 45). I employed

elements of this type of data collection in my research.

I conducted one-on-one, in-person or on the phone, interviews with six law enforcement

personnel, one legislator, and three school administrators. The interviews focused on the

individual's perspective of school rampage violence. I asked participants open-ended questions

focused on school rampage violence, and asked follow-up or additional questions depending on

the nature of the answers that participant interviewees provided. The conversation in which we

engaged was rich, informative, and relaxed in nature. All participants appeared to be

comfortable and eager to share their story and experience.

Each formal interview lasted no more than 60 minutes. I anticipated, and only needed, a single interview with each person as no follow-up interviews were needed for clarification or additional information. During the interview, I took additional notes using a small notebook and pen to record additional information during the audio-recorded interview.

The interviewee were provided an Informed Consent (Appendix A). Names were not used in the final analyses of the research. To maintain anonymity of the interviewee, participants were assigned a random numerical-alpha identification. The numerical-alpha identification is two random numbers, an alpha character representing the category of interviewee, and a number to indicate date of the interview. Specifically, for example, *participant x,* a legislator interviewed on July 28, 2015, was identified as interviewee 58L72815. A pseudonym was then assigned to the numerical-alpha identification and used in all written documentation to further protect the identity of the interviewee. Additionally, I utilized a participant matrix (Appendix B). The participant matrix was destroyed by way of computer deletion and cross-shredding of paper material at the conclusion of the research. Digitally-recorded interview data were deleted from all hard drives and devices when the study was completed. Interview responses were transcribed and coded for further analysis as described in the next section of this chapter.

Data Analysis

Interview transcript analyses were formulated from an inductive approach to identify recurring patterns in the data through the use of thematic codes. An inductive approach was appropriate in this study as it allowed themes to emerge naturally from the data. Employing inductive analysis allowed patterns, themes, and categories to emerge from the data. Patterns, themes, and categories emerged after the data were collected, rather than prior to the data

collection, thus eliminating the possibility of imposing biases onto the data during analysis (Patton, 1990, 2002).

A multi-step coding process was utilized to systematically analyze transcribed data (Roberts, 2010; Tesch, 1990). All transcribed audio-recordings were read thoroughly. As the transcribed recordings were read, marginalia notes were written on ideas and thoughts that occurred during the reading. One initial specific transcription was chosen for deeper analyses for possible underlying meaning. After the analysis of the specific transcription, the same method was applied to several others. From this deeper analysis, similar themes began to emerge for clustering. A systematic documentation of themes were categorized into columns. The aforementioned themes were abbreviated as codes and applied to the text during subsequent readings. Through this process, new themes emerged. Related themes were grouped, and categories emerged. I began to connect like themes and narrowed the categories. The abbreviation for each category and alphabetized codes were then finalized. Data material was assembled for a preliminary analysis.

Open and axial coding were used to analyze data collected from interviews. Initial coding was the process by which data were broken down into discrete parts, examined, and then compared for similarities and differences (Saldaña, 2009). Coded data were categorized into subcategories for refinement to narrow the data and further explore theoretical concepts (Saladaña, 2009). Qualitative data analysis was sufficient to develop themes and categories; however, no theory emerged from the data.

Open coding provided an initial framework to explore theoretical concepts in analysis of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). From the open coding, axial coding was used to further develop a

thorough analysis of data as recurring themes emerged. Axial coding is the process of disaggregating larger themed categories into smaller subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

As recommended by Glaser and Strauss (2009), I studied the perspectives of school rampage violence "…without any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to the research, 'relevancies' in concepts and hypotheses" (p. 33). Data were examined for similarities and differences, and resulted in generalization of relationships. The examination for similarities and differences, as Glaser and Strauss (2009) cautioned, resulted in suggested rather than tested hypotheses. Such data may be used for comparative analysis to formulate substantive theory. The data collected for this research were not sufficient for moving beyond substantive into formal theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2009).

Limitations of the Study

The research was qualitative and, therefore, emphasized that I was the instrument for data collection. As a school administrator, and wife of a retired police officer, I had to use restraint. My background lent itself to natural biases regarding incidents of school rampage violence. It was imperative that I refrain from personal bias. I employed the method of utilizing a second outside source to code random samples of transcribed audio-recorded interviews.

This study was also limited in participant selection. One legislator was interviewed due to difficulties in connecting with other legislators. Additionally, only three administrators were interviewed. The number of participants was sufficient to reach saturation in two of the three interviewee groups when all data were combined.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the method employed in this study. The chapter provided a description of the method by which the sample for the research was chosen

and further provided an explanation of the data collection method, as well as an in-depth

examination of the data analysis. Limitations of the study were presented as well.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter I describe the results of my study. I discuss the processes of coding that were applied to the transcribed interviews, and the themes that emerged from the data. Each of the three research questions are examined as they relate to the data that were collected. Family dysfunction, mental illness and drugs, similarities and differences, and effective methods for averting violence are included.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine specific perspectives of school rampage violence from law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators. The desired outcome of this research was to provide additional insight into ways in which schools can avert future incidents of violence.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators see as common characteristics among children who have shown a propensity toward violence?

2. What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators?

3. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators perceive as the most effective approach for averting future incidents of school violence?

Participants

I digitally recorded interviews with six law enforcement personnel. Five of the law enforcement personnel were currently serving as active duty, fully sworn officers of the law.

The law enforcement officers currently held high-ranking positions within their respective departments, or served as school resource officers. The sixth law enforcement personnel interviewed was currently serving as a school safety specialist.

Three school administrators were also interviewed. One of the three currently served as a building level principal in an urban school district, and the second administrator was a school superintendent. The third administrator, since retired, served for over 20 years as an assistant principal, and had been directly involved in an incident of school rampage violence.

As noted as a limitation to the study, achieving necessary connections with legislators were indeed difficult. After several attempts, I received confirmation from one legislator. The legislator I interviewed had previously served in law enforcement and retired from that position to begin a career in politics. Additionally, the legislator had served on several committees that directly impact law enforcement funding, training, and interaction with schools. This particular legislator has a proven track record of being favorable to education in the area of safety and funding. An additional limitation was that the study was narrowed to three administrators. Saturation was not met as an individual group of administrators, but was achieved as indicated by theme repetition when taken as a whole with other participant groups. Responses from administrators did begin to repeat those of law enforcement in some areas. I recommend that more school administrator participants are interviewed in future research.

Interviews

With the permission of the interviewee, the interview was digitally recorded on an audio device. The interview was then transcribed through the use of Cabbage Tree Transcription Service. Cabbage Tree is an independent audio transcription service that transcribes audio

recordings for a fee. Audio recordings were sent digitally to Cabbage Tree Transcription

Services and returned to me in written, transcribed format through Dropbox.

The interviews were conducted in person or on the telephone after permission and

informed consent were properly obtained verbally and confirmed by signature according to

guidelines in Appendix A. Each interviewee was asked a series of predetermined questions and

additionally encouraged to engage in general conversation beyond the questions about incidents

of school violence to glean data in an effort to answer the three guiding research questions.

Interviews were conducted in an informal manner to elicit a deeper and richer conversation with

the interviewee. It was my intent to establish complete professionalism, comfort and confidence

with the interviewee during the interview process. At no time did any interviewee refuse to

answer a question, or engage in conversation beyond the initial question that had been asked. All

interviewees appeared to be engaged in the conversation, and willing to share with me their

knowledge and experiences.

Open Coding

The process of open coding was applied during this portion of the research. To avoid

biases or premature conclusions of data, each transcribed interview was read initially sans

predetermined themes, categories or use of refined coding. All transcripts were read without

preconceived theory (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). After the first reading, I conducted additional

readings of the transcribed interviews and began to employ open coding. During the open

coding process in the research, I avoided the use of any subcategory coding as a safeguard

against premature conclusions being drawn. During the subsequent readings, as coding

categories began to develop, a systematic method of highlighted, colored coding was utilized.

After each additional reading, specific colors were used to help sort possible emerging

categories. No codes were noted during these aforementioned readings of the transcribed interviews.

As the transcribed interviews were read and thoroughly reviewed multiple times, the process of open coding progressed. During the open coding process, I maintained focus on the three guiding research questions. From the reading, review, and open coding process, the following structural open coding themes began to emerge as significant areas in which to begin a further and more refined breakdown of specific categorical codes: (a) why violence happens, (b) contributing factors at school, (c) ways to identify students, (d) ways to avert incidents, and (e) what schools are missing. From these five coded areas, several subcategories began to emerge and were coded upon subsequent reading of the transcribed interviews (Table 1).

To further ensure accuracy at this stage of my research, and to avoid premature development of themes and categories during the opening coding and axial coding process, the use of an independent second coding was utilized. Dr. Marilynn Quick, Advisor, assisted me by reviewing the initial coding process and subsequent refined coding of random transcribed interviews.

Table 1

Main Coded Areas, Code Description, and Codes Used

Main Coded Category	Code Description	Code
Why violence happens	Social disconnect	WVH-SD
	Mental illness	WVH-MI
	Anger or disagreement	WVH-AoD
	Parenting or family dysfunction	WVH-PoFD
	Starving for attention or fame	WVH-SFAoF
	Student position of power/pride	WVH-SPoP
	Social media (to include video and games)	WVH-SM
Contributing factors at school	Bullying	CFaS-B
	Culture	CFaS-C
	Students who are not engaged	CFaS-NE
	Peer pressure	CFaS-PP
	Teacher reaction to student behavior	CFaS-TR
	Lack of safety training	CFaS-LoT
	Training of new teachers	CFaS-T
	Students not fitting in at school	CFaS-NFI
Ways to identify	Student is withdrawn or introverted	WTI-WoI
	Angry, behavior issues	WTI-A.BI
	Family or social dysfunction	WTI-FoSD
	Criminal involvement	WTI-CI
	Decline in grades	WTI-GD
Ways to avert	Early identification of issues	WTA-EI
	Communication among agencies	WTA-CaA
	Student engagement	WTA-SE
	Positive school culture	WTA-PC
	Addressing issues	WTA-AI
	Positive interaction with peers	WTA-PIwP
	Awareness	WTA-A
	Communication with parents	WTA-CwP
	Communication with students	WTA-CwS
	School resource officers	WTA-SRO
	Relationships	WTA-R
	Training	WTA-T
What schools are missing	Training	WSaM-T
	Empowerment	WSaM—E
	Communication	WSaM-CM
	Discipline in schools	WSaM-D
	Culture and positive environment	WSaM-CaE
	Safety knowledge	WSaM-SK
	Funding	WSaM-F
	Common sense approach	WSaM-CSA
	Additional School Resource Officers	WSaM-SRO

Note. This table reflects the categories, written description of codes, and refined codes utilized through the process of open coding to determine emerging themes in data.

Axial Coding

After all transcribed interviews were read, open coded, highlighted, and refined into specific codes, initial calculations of data were tallied and axial coding was applied to further refine the emerging themes within the five main coded categories. After axial coding was applied, the number of times each code appeared in the transcribed interviews were tallied and charted. From the initial five categories and 42 codes, I determined that a need existed to narrow the scope and focus of the collected data and combined categories of codes into smaller, more meaningful emerging themes.

Table 2 indicates responses provided by interviewees on why they believe violence in schools happens. The data collected in Table 2 was broken into two categories showing a breakdown of what can be considered external or internal causes. Specifically, an external cause is one that the perpetrator is perceived to have been influenced by something outside of their locus of control. The interviewee indicated to me that he believed these influences to have been a contributing factor that were somehow thrust upon the perpetrator, or potential perpetrator, from an outside force. Conversely, an internal cause is one that the youth would have no, or very little, control over.

Table 2
Axial Coding: Why Violence Happens

Category	Law Enforcement	Administrator	Legislator
External causes			
Social disconnect	3	2	0
Position of power	8	4	3
Social media	8	2	0
TOTAL	19	8	3
Internal causes			
Mental illness	9	0	1
Anger	0	4	0
Family dysfunction	17	6	5
Seeking attention	5	1	0
TOTAL	31	11	6

Note. The category of *Why Violence Happens* was subdivided into two causes to narrow the focus of possible causes being either external or internal.

Table 3 looks at contributing factors at school. By a natural division of common participants in a school, students and teachers, Table 3 shows factors within the school that may contribute to the incidents of school rampage violence, or the severity of a single incident. What is interesting in the results shown in Table 3 is that bullying, although receiving the most mentions, was not indicated as a major contributing factor to incidents of school rampage violence. Even more interesting, is the lack of mention of it by the legislator. Schools are currently mandated by law to conduct training and establish policies about bullying, yet this particular category did not get mentioned significantly by the participants. Additionally worth noting is the difference in the number of mentions of bullying by law enforcement compared to that of both the administrator with two coded mentions, and the legislator with zero coded mentions.

Table 3
Axial Coding: Contributing Factors at School

Category	Law Enforcement	Administrator	Legislator
Students			
Bullying	4	2	0
Not engaged	1	2	0
TOTAL	5	4	0
Teachers			
Culture	4	5	0

Training	0	14	0
TOTAL	4	19	0

Note. The category of *Contributing Factors at School* was subdivided into two main contributing groups of students and teachers as these both have a significant impact on the day-to-day operations of a school.

Table 4 looks at ways in which students might be identified as students in need of services to avoid potential incidents of school rampage violence. The observations of these students logically would take place in either school, or outside of the school setting. Although school personnel might have knowledge of criminal activity, this category was placed in the "Not observed in school" for the sake of this research as it was indicated by law enforcement to be something that they often are the first to observe, or an event occurring outside the school setting in which they would first come into contact with the student. Additionally, family dynamics may well be observed by law enforcement outside the school setting, but participants believed that teachers and administrators are most likely the people who will have firsthand knowledge of a student's home environment.

Table 4
Axial Coding: Ways to Identify

Category	Law Enforcement	Administrator	Legislator
Observed in school			
Emotional	3	6	1
Family dynamics	1	1	0
Grade decline	0	4	0
TOTAL	4	11	1
Not observed in school			
	3	0	0
Criminal activity			
TOTAL	3	0	0

Note. The category of *Ways to Identify* was subdivided into two main categories of ways in which designated behaviors were best observed in students.

Table 5 shows participant responses to ways in which school rampage violence might be averted, or at best, minimized. Major areas that were identified: communication, relationships, resources, and school action. Each of the aforementioned categories were then further coded into subcategories for further analysis. All of the categories into which the data were subdivided in Table 5 indicate a powerful and noteworthy number of participant mentions. Law enforcement

clearly indicated that communication among agencies is vital to averting incidents of school rampage violence. Conversely, and causing pause for concern, school administrators did not see communication among agencies as a method by which incidents of school rampage violence might be averted. A clear disconnect is indicated and should be studied further.

Table 5
Axial Coding: Ways to Avert

Category	Law Enforcement	Administrator	Legislator
Communication			
Among agencies	37	2	2
With parents	2	0	2
With students	8	5	0
TOTAL	47	7	3
Relationships			
Building of	32	18	1
Student engagement	2	6	1
Culture	4	12	0
Peer interactions	0	4	0
TOTAL	38	40	2
Resources			
SRO	3	8	2
Training	21	9	0
TOTAL	24	17	2
School action			
Early identification	13	10	1
Provide resources	3	6	0
Awareness of issues	5	3	0
TOTAL	21	19	1

Note. The category of *Ways to Avert* was subdivided into four main categories to emphasize areas in which respondents placed importance of averting violence in their coded responses.

Table 6 provides guidance for school administrators in that it shows what schools are missing when addressing school violence and safety. Three categories, safety awareness,

resources, and environment were examined and then further refined into subcategories. Of importance in Table 6 are both training and empowerment. Training, as viewed by law enforcement, is an area in which they indicated they have an expertise to share with school personnel, but feel school personnel are clearly lacking at this point in time. With fewer coded responses, but one that elicited far more passion than any other topic among law enforcement, was empowerment. Among the six law enforcement personnel, empowerment was mentioned a remarkable 17 times. Empowerment is a topic that is recommended for further development of policy and practice among school personnel, and one that is clearly indicative from the perspective of law enforcement to be of great importance in averting or minimizing incidents of school rampage violence.

Table 6

Axial Coding: What Schools Are Missing

Category	Law Enforcement	Administrator	Legislator
Safety awareness			
Training	22	3	0
Empowerment	17	1	0
Knowledge	9	1	1
Common sense	15	1	2
Communication	9	1	3
TOTAL	72	7	6
Resources			
Funding	3	2	10
SRO	1	1	0
TOTAL	4	3	10
Environment			
Discipline	0	1	0
Culture	1	1	0
TOTAL	1	2	0

Note. The category of *What Schools Are Missing* was subdivided into three main categories of how areas in which schools might need to focus.

In a final analysis of the axial coded data, data from *What are schools missing* were

combined with data coded under *What are ways in which we can avert violence*. There were

elements of obvious data overlap, so rather than maintain the data under two separate themed

categories, the subcategory data was combined and subsequently charted under *Ways to Avert*.

As a result, five tables of themes became four. Subcategories of WSaM-SRO and WTA-SRO

were combined. SRO (School Resource Officer) remained under the subcategory RESOURCES.

Subcategories of WSaM-T and WTA-T were also combined. Subcategory T (training) moved

from RESOURCES to SAFETY AWARENESS. Data was adjusted and recalculated

accordingly. Tables 5 and 6 reflect coded data prior to the combing of data, and other tables

within this chapter reflect the changed data.

Research Question 1: Common Characteristics

   Family Dysfunction. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators

see as common characteristics among children who have shown a propensity toward violence?

To help answer this question, I focused upon both external factors and internal factors

contributing to possible reasons why violence happens at school. External factors were: social

disconnect, a need to show power over a particular situation, and social media. Internal factors

consisted of: mental illness, anger issues, family dysfunction, and attention seeking. On average,

all three participant categories indicated that family dysfunction, with a 59.6% affirmative

response (Table 7), as a contributing factor to school violence. Participant 22LE111315, Hunter,

stated,

   Well, I think we kind of hit on it with parenting. It's an age or time in our lives, that

   when you and I were growing up, we respected people. The police were not wrong. The

   teacher was not wrong. For some reason, there's just this disrespect for education,

   period, and authority.

Anthony, participant 95LE112415, further supported the data and confirmed,

But the root of a whole lot of that is the family structures broke down, and so you got

kids who are raising themselves on the Internet, or their group of friends. So I think that

that's a lot of it.

Both the participants clearly stated that there was a functional issue with the way in which

children are parented, and that there is a possible link between dysfunctional families and the

propensity toward violence in schools.

Closely tied to what was reported from law enforcement, school administrators concur

with the connection between school violence and family dysfunction. Julius, participant

22A111015, confirmed the connection with, "…majority of the behavior, I would say, is

somewhat learned just from the environment that they've come up in." Julius went on to say,

"… there is no strong male role model in the household." To further exacerbate the problem of

family dysfunction and the connection it has with school violence, Julius, a 20-year veteran

school administrator stressed that single parent homes are an added variable to the issue of

school violence. Julius said, "It's a lot to do with single parent households where especially

young men are the parent in the household, are the adult male in the household." Julius further

explained that when it comes to young men who are given so much responsibility, to challenge

that sense of responsibility may lead to an explosion of violence—violence if challenged by

other students, or by adults. Open coding resulted in law enforcement responding with 54.8%,

school administrators with 54.5%, and the legislator with 83.3% indicating family dysfunction

was an area of high concern. Overall, 28 out of 48 coded responses from participants spoke to

the area of family dysfunction as a high concern when it comes to identifying students who may

be at risk for committing an act of school violence. David, participant 88L111515, had

experience in law enforcement, politics, and was married to an educator. When asked why he

felt it was important to pass legislation that pertained to school safety, he said, "Things that should be done by parents at home are not being done. Subsequently, we're putting the blame and putting a lot of this load, responsibility on the teachers, and I abhor that. I abhor that." The passion with which David spoke was a strong statement to support the need to focus on what is happening with the family dynamics and the correlation between family dysfunction and school violence. In Chapter 2, I provided a brief overview of selected perpetrators. In a study of several school shootings, it is overwhelming to note the dysfunctional make-up of the families and situations from which the perpetrators hailed. Even the perpetrators who came from two parent households, reported some level of family dysfunction. However, a child can come from what appears to be a stable family, a good home, have solid values, and still be subjected to ineffective parenting practices.

Participant 34LE120115, Trevor, who also had over 20 years of experience in law enforcement, stated, "I think the downfall and our society's downfall is that the parents aren't parents the way they used to be as far as the discipline goes." Trevor continued,

Now, parents don't want to discipline their kids. They want to be their friends. They want to give them everything that they didn't have, which is great, but on the same thing, we're raising a bunch of entitled children now who have no consequences.

To Trevor's point, consider the life of Dylan Klebold. Prior to the time one were to read of the horrific Columbine massacre, Dylan Klebold might have been viewed as an average, rather privileged adolescent who dabbled in a bit of youthful trouble here-and-there. His parents provided a home for Dylan and his brother. The family attended the local Lutheran church, and Dylan was active in the school drama program. On the surface, this seemed like a fairly average, comfortable family setting; however, a deeper examination revealed that Dylan's parents were so

engaged in their own lives that they did not pay very close attention to their son. The fact of the

matter is that a considerable amount of the massacre planning was done in plain sight and would

have been readily apparent had Dylan's parents been paying attention to their son.

Law enforcement, administrators, and a legislator all made a connection between family

dynamics and violence. Trevor said, "Nowadays, it's easier to just say, 'Just go to your room,

get on the Internet, go play a game. Do whatever.'" I am not sure a sadder statement can be

made about the lack of parenting that is taking place—especially when a strong correlation

between family dysfunction and school violence is seen.

Mental Illness and Drugs

Although not as strong for an overall percentage, but showing a 29% response among law

enforcement officers was mental illness and drug use. To compare, law enforcement responded

29%, administrators 0%, and the legislator with one affirmative response at 16.6% noted mental

illness and drug use as contributing to incidents of school violence (Table 7). The legislator

interviewed in this research had a strong background in law enforcement which could have had

some influence on his response. Anthony was an SRO, and had an extensive law enforcement

background. Anthony spoke about the connection between the mental state of students and

school violence. As an SRO, Anthony had seen firsthand the increase in mental health issues

impacting student behavior at school. From students diagnosed with bi-polar disorder to drug

addiction issues, Anthony was acutely aware of the changing dynamics of students' mental well-

being and how that can increase incidents of school violence. Anthony stated, "So you've got

kids that are just going through issues, depressed." Anthony believed that there is a connection

between mental illness and serious drug use. He further supported the fact that schools need to

be watching for this type of mental illness and get the student help as soon as possible. Anthony went on to state,

> There are all these other things that we have available to them that we need to be looking
> at because the kid who has now got a serious drug problem because his home life is so
> screwed up and he is dealing with those issues, he's just as big of a concern as this
> violence. You know what I'm saying? That could turn into violence. That's a fight or
> that's – who knows whether that's a suicide. These are all the other things that we need
> to be looking at.

Ike, participant 58LE112015, was a high-ranking officer of the law. Ike served as an SRO for many years; he had experienced life as a road patrol officer in a city that had seen an increase in all areas of crime. In speaking with Ike about the changes in both law enforcement and school administration, Ike made it very clear that children are changing, and school administrators need to be more aware of what these changes mean as they relate to school violence. Ike, as an SRO, encountered a principal who referred to marijuana as "grass" and made light of the fact that a student was caught with it. The principal often questioned Ike about why he bothered arresting students for simply having "grass" in their possession. Ike, realizing that perhaps there was a philosophical difference here, requested a meeting with the principal and the superintendent. Upon explaining the connection between drug use—even "grass" in small amounts—and school violence, the superintendent sided with Ike in his approach addressing the drug issue in the school that was a growing concern among law enforcement. Ike, much like Anthony, believed that the school had a responsibility to address mental illness issues whenever possible. Ike had a clear understanding of the problem schools face when it comes to dealing with mental illness. Ike said,

We have a kid that we deem unstable, the school requests that they see some kind of

counselor or psychiatrist before they come back but there are no guarantees. All the

psychologists or psychiatrists will say at the time that I saw him if he's not in danger

himself at the time, that's all they're writing so there are no guarantees.

There was a noted discrepancy with the role of mental illness as it relates to school

violence between what law enforcement and the legislator saw as a concern, and what

administrators saw as a concern. Although the sample size of three administrators was a

limitation for the perspective of administration, data showed that not one of the three

administrators commented on mental illness as a concern from their perspective to confirm the

connection between mental illness and school violence. School personnel spend as much, if not

more, time with kids than parents during the school year. School personnel, teachers,

administrators, nurses, guidance counselors, social workers, and several others were in a position

to identify and intervene when it came to mental illness and drug use among youth. Tom,

participant 93A110415, personally tackled a machete-yielding student and never once mentioned

mental illness as it related to this student. Hunter, however, did mention mental illness when

speaking about the very same incident. Hunter served as one of the responding police officers to

the incident in which Tom was directly involved. Hunter reported that the student pled guilty

under insanity and was placed in a facility. Tom, however, did not make mention of mental

illness in relation to this incident.

Table 7

Data Pertaining to Question 1: Internal

Category	Law Enforcement		Administrator		Legislator		Total across respondent categories	
Internal	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Mental illness	9	29%	0	0%	1	17%	10	21%
Anger	0	0%	4	36%	0	0%	4	9%
Family dysfunction	17	55%	6	55%	5	83%	28	60%
Seeking attention	5	16%	1	9%	0	0%	6	12%

Note. % of *N* coded responses for each area was rounded to nearest number. This table shows data to support coded responses as related to Question 1: What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators see as common characteristics among children who have shown a propensity toward violence?

Research Question 2: Perspectives of Why Violence Occurs

Question 2 focused on the examination of both the similarities and the differences among the three perspectives. Specifically, what are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators? Analysis of the data required that all of the collected data be reported separately in terms of whether the data revealed similarities and differences. Data tables were used in both of the two categories as some data in the combined themes showed a strong similarity in coded responses, and other data showed a strong difference.

Similarities. Data presented in Table 7 showed that across all three categories of participants, family dysfunction was referred to, or discussed in depth several times in the respective recorded interviews with an overall total of 60% coded responses. Participant 88L111515, David, stated,

So I don't have any hard quick answers as to why we have problems and why we don't,

but I know that too many children are coming from single-parent homes nowadays.

There's no direction for them when they get up in the morning. They're expected to get

up, dress themselves, get to school, no breakfast, nobody there to make sure they do their

homework because there's a single parent.

David went on to say, "When you have a child, it's your responsibility, it's not society's

[responsibility], it's not the school's [responsibility], it's your responsibility." David spoke to

the point that there seemed to be a lot of blame placed everywhere but on the parents, and he

believed that the parents should be the ones held with ultimate responsibility for what happened

to their children.

Participant 58LE112015, Ike, spoke similarly when he said, "So I don't know that parents

discipline their kids like they used to." Ike further stated, "So, I think a lot of these kids have

grown up to feel sense of entitlements. Like they are owed something because it's all part of the

process." Another law enforcement participant, Hunter, said, "Because now, we're going back

to the parents should be teaching their kids about. The parents should know what's going on and

what their child is saying." Both Ike and Hunter mentioned how a lack of parenting caused

concern for them in law enforcement, and how they saw this as a contributing factor to incidents

of school violence. Even Julius, a school administrator noted, said that single parent homes were

a concern for school personnel.

Another area indicating a strong similarity among the three participant categories was

early identification (Table 8). Although each participant spoke about slightly different situations

relative to their respective positions, each mentioned early identification. Specifically, law

enforcement personnel mentioned early identification from a perspective of keeping an eye open

for possible dangers, or situations that might be happening with students who manifest in a change in behavior. Trevor cautioned school personnel to be aware of a change in student behavior and to watch for behavior that is out of the ordinary for any particular student. Trevor said,

> Just keep an eye open. Somebody's walking a little bit slower than they normally do, ask them what's going on, or if they want to see a counselor or the SRO, or perhaps go to a teacher's room for a few minutes.

Hunter agreed by noting that, "If a kid is saying he's being bulled, we have to listen. It has to start with students and teachers. If you see something, say something." To make an even stronger point, Hunter continued, "How far does a kid go until they break?" Yet another comment by Ike, "So if that kid had some type of traumatic situation happen to them. . .like if we arrest Stevie Smith's dad and the school doesn't know that. So how do we get that information to the school?" Ike stressed the importance of making sure the school has the right information to help with an early identification of a student who might be experiencing something stressful in his or her life, and how important it is to make sure the school has that information for intervention services to be given. From a school perspective, Participant 33A111715, Pete, talked about the importance of having additional school counselors to assist with the growing need of early identification in schools. Pete talked about his own district,

> . . .and we now have a full time counselor in every elementary school, all 18 of them. It's just a matter of, again, it's prioritization. In our middle schools and high schools, each have one also. So every school has a counselor in them now. Full time for small group or large group or individual counseling.

Pete further stated,

It's, again, prioritizing what's important and that, to me, is ensuring the environment is

being taken care of in terms of peace and security and maybe the needs of kids who had

those illnesses or those who are wanting to draw attention to themselves by acting out.

Even the legislator, David, concurred with law enforcement and administrators on the topic of

early identification. David said,

And if you're a worker, your teachers spot an individual they think more consideration is

needed on how to be monitored. What do you do if they'd had your attention? How do

you go about contacting the parent? Most of the time the parents can say, 'There's

nothing wrong with my child, don't come here.' They don't want to be confronted with

reality.

Each participant, although based on slightly different topics of thought, talked about how

important it is to early identify students in crisis to avoid incidents of school violence.

Table 8
Data Pertaining to Question 2: School Action

Category	Law Enforcement		Administrator		Legislator		Total across respondent categories	
School Action	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Early identification	13	62%	10	83%	1	100%	24	69%
Providing resources	3	14%	0	0%	0	0%	3	8%
Awareness of issues	5	24%	3	17%	0	0%	8	23%

Note. % of *N* coded responses for each area was rounded to nearest number. This table shows data to support coded responses as related to Question 2: What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators?

A theme upon which all three participant categories agreed was on the importance of building relationships. Thirty-two law enforcement responses were coded, 18 administrator responses, and one response from the legislator reflected an overall response coding of 64% (Table 9).

Table 9
Data Pertaining to Question 2: Relationships

Category	Law Enforcement		Administrator		Legislator		Total across respondent categories	
Relationships	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Building relationships	32	84%	18	45%	1	50%	51	64%
Student engagement	2	5%	5	15%	1	50%	9	11%
Culture	4	11%	12	30%	0	0%	16	20%
Peer interactions	0	0%	4	10%	0	0%	4	5%

Note. % of *N* coded responses for each area was rounded to nearest number. This table shows data to support coded responses as related to Question 2: What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators?

David, when speaking about teachers and their relationships with students stated,

> Number one is that teachers are in the front line. They see the children at their best and they see them at their worst, and they know the medium. And we have to rely on those people, because they're the experts so to speak.

David talked about how important it is for administrators to listen to the teachers when they say a student needs help. Teachers know the students, they talk with them, they spend time with them, and they know them. David said, "If they bring in a problem to us, we need to listen to them. We need to listen to them."

Tom also talked about the importance of building relationships. In speaking about ways in which we can stop school violence from happening, Tom stated, "I think we can slow it down by good communication between students, teachers, and parents. Keeping open lines of communication and trying to identify kids that might have problems and working with them before they get more serious." From another administrator's point of view, Julius stated,

Find what they really, really are happy with about school, get to know them, and continue to build relationships with students because relationships, I can tell you right now that – if you read again when I'm talking about the shooters, very few of those teachers or administrators can really give you a lot of detail about those kids because nobody had relationships with them.

Relationship building is more than just that special bond between student and teacher, or student and a staff member. Relationships that were also seen as valued among the participants were those that were created and fostered between the school and law enforcement. Hunter spoke to the importance of relationships that create open communication and sharing of information. Hunter said,

I know that our school resource officers are so busy because they are, but they need to know every little thing that's happening in that school. If a principal finds a knife on a kid and just takes it away and says, 'We're going to handle this internally' that's fine, but you should let our officer know because if we do have a strong relationship our officer should say, 'Okay, hand internally, but thank you for letting me know. I'll document if for my records.'

Hunter expressed concern, however, that this type of relationship and communication was not always happening, "I don't think that's happening. I don't think that we hear about every little

scuffle and that's probably almost impossible. But we would like to try to hear about everything that's happening."

One way to be more involved, and to build those relationships is for law enforcement to be involved more in school activities. Ike said,

You got to get involved with things whether it's helping out a prom or the prom fashion show, work the football games, or in basketball a lot of times, I go to the student section, I'd spell out [name of school omitted for anonymity], I just did that the last homecoming. So it's those little things that you can do to build that trust and rapport with them.

Differences. A significant area of difference noted in perspectives among law enforcement, administrators, and the legislator was in the area of mental illness. Law enforcement mentioned mental illness, as it relates to school violence, in 29% of the coded responses. To the contrary, of the three administrators interviewed, not one mentioned mental illness, and the legislator only made one reference to mental illness as a contributing factor to incidents of school violence (Table 7).

In the category of students who dealt with issues of anger, neither law enforcement personnel nor the legislator mentioned anger as a contributing factor; yet, two of the three school administrators, both whom served at the building level, were noted as having responded that 36% of their coded responses related to students with anger issues. The data supported that administrators did mention anger issues whereas law enforcement and the legislator did not (Table 7). Participant 93A110415, Tom, who dealt directly with an incident of school violence said, "Maybe he was mad at his life because of the situation with the parents and all that – being pushed around from parent to parent." To that point, Julius talked about students who might be dealing with issues outside the school, but having those issues impact what is happening within

the school. Tom and Julius, came from two very different educational settings, but each brought

up the topic of outside influences that impact the demeanor of students at school.

Another area of difference in perspectives was training. As reflected in Table 10,

responses on training, or lack of training, for school personnel were recorded 14 times. Data

presented in Table 10 indicated that culture was mentioned four times by law enforcement, five

times by administrators, and not mentioned at all by the legislator. The training that was

mentioned ranged from lack of proper training for teacher candidates, to cultural competency,

and safety. Julius, the administrator with substantial experience in urban settings said,

> If you take them out in the hall, you can pretty well say what you want to them, but if
>
> you're going to act aggressively towards them, just from their background that they're
>
> not going to be, in their words, a 'punk' – they're not going to back down. They're not
>
> going to become all of a sudden passive. They're going to become aggressive.

Julius also stated,

> We did have cultural competency training in this situation, this particular situation I'm
>
> talking about. This was actually a first year teacher who probably had the same mentality
>
> as the kid, had been taught always, 'Don't show weakness, especially early on. Don't let
>
> them think they're in charge.'

Julius spoke about training that was received through university teacher programs. Julius

expressed that perhaps young teacher candidates were not receiving enough training in the area

of classroom management, and as a result, perhaps that was contributing to explosive behavior in

classrooms, and ultimately acts of school violence. Julius, spoke directly to the aforementioned

situation and went on to explain that it was a sad situation because an otherwise young teacher

with potential did not make it in the classroom because the young teacher was not properly

trained to deal with aggressive student behavior. Julius added that it went back to his earlier

theme of some students being the man of the house, "So, therefore, challenging the adult male is

a challenge to them personally, they feel. They're the ones who have to be strong in the

household so they feel that that carries over to the school."

Table 10
Data Pertaining to Question 2: Teachers

Category	Law Enforcement		Administrator		Legislator		Total across respondent categories	
Teachers	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Culture	4	100%	5	26%	0	0%	9	39%
Training	0	0%	14	74%	0	0%	14	61%

Note. % of *N* coded responses for each area was rounded to nearest number. This table shows
data to support coded responses as related to Question 2: What are the differences and
similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a
legislator, and school administrators?

Administrators had a much higher coded response than either law enforcement or the

legislator on the importance of communication with students. However, both law enforcement

and the legislator showed a much higher frequency of coded responses on the importance of

communication among agencies. Law enforcement responded with 37 of their responses as

communication among agencies as indicative of averting school violence. The legislator

responded with two, and school administrators also had only two of the coded responses on

communication among agencies. Even communication among parents is different among the

three participant groups (Table 11).

Table 11

Data Pertaining to Question 2: Communication

Category	Law Enforcement		Administrator		Legislator		Total across respondent categories	
Communication	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Communication among agencies	37	79%	2	29%	2	67%	41	72%
Communication with parents	2	4%	0	0%	1	33%	3	5%
Communication with students	8	17%	5	71%	0	0%	13	23%

Note. % of *N* coded responses for each area was rounded to nearest number. This table shows data to support coded responses as related to Question 2: What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators?

Hunter made a powerful statement when he said,

We have to take that to the next level. If something major happens, we have to have the

school administration with our administration. Making decisions together, not about the

police tactics that's going on, but what we're going to do as a community. Because at

that point, that's what we are.

Anthony, in speaking about the relationship between the SRO and the school administration said,

There's been, I think, one occasion in four years here where we didn't necessarily agree

on something out of the thousands of incidents. They basically treat me as a team

member. I sit in on the administration meetings. I bring information to them. They

bring information to me. I mean for me, it's good to be friends with the principals here

now as I was with guys I work for on the road.

Anthony continued,

Generally, they'll ask our opinion on things. I've heard other schools where it's like they're isolated and it's, 'We're going to do it our way. We're going to do it our way.' And it's not like that at all here.

In the interview with Anthony, it was clearly evident that he, as the SRO, had a very positive relationship with the school administration. Anthony also expressed concern for other schools in the area that might not have that same relationship, and the detriment that can have on securing school safety measures. Anthony confirmed that,

I think it's the people that are here. We're usually all on the same page. I mean they'll do their thing, and if it's something that I feel needs to be an arrestable [sic] thing or something that I'm going to write up, then we'll do it.

Participant 4LE102815, Gabe, who had years of experience as a school safety specialist, spoke about the sharing of information centered around school safety training,

. . .in '05 we did an advanced training twice a year and a basic training. That was all the training that we did. I don't think it was enough, and what we were missing were the stakeholders locally because you can get your school safety specialist but then we would find out – I'd call the school after an incident and they weren't sure who their school safety specialist was. So this person was coming to the training just keeping their stuff and getting your certificate and not doing anything with it. So we needed to break that somehow.

Pete responded with one of the two responses coded from administration on communication. Speaking about communication between school administrators and agencies that can help provide assistance with early identification and intervention with students who show signs of violent tendencies, Pete said,

I think they need to have conversations with law enforcement. They need to install a

unity team in the community. It consists of community leaders. If you live in a diverse

community, bring those people in, bring the law enforcer folks in and have conversations

about school violence and those types of things, and services.

The legislator, in speaking on the importance of communication stated,

I think that along with that, administrators need to be in touch with their legislators on a

one-on-one more often. Call them in and say, 'Listen up. I want to talk to you. What's

going on down state?' But we need to work more with the legislators and bring the ideas.

We don't have all the ideas down state. The people out there got the idea, and we're just

forcing it to put them in the law and get credit for – it's the people out there that come

bring us great legislation forward.

Research Question 3: Averting

Effective methods. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators

perceive as the most effective approach for averting future incidents of school violence? This

question prompted the most discussion among the participants. Question 1 is noteworthy in that

there is an important element in questioning why students commit acts of school violence;

however, it is ultimately the unified goal to avert an incident of school rampage violence from

happening in the first place. As seen in Table 11, there was a strong emphasis on

communication.

Data indicated the importance of averting incidents of school rampage violence fell under

the category Safety Awareness (Table 12). Both school administrators and law enforcement

showed a strong propensity in their responses toward the importance of safety training when it

comes to averting incidents of school violence. The subcategory of *safety knowledge* actually

faired rather low in coded response. When asked about what he felt schools were missing when

it came to school safety and averting incidents of school violence, Tom said, "I'd like to see

training for administrators both at the collegiate level, and then even afterwards, because there's

a lot of older people that are out of school, but they should be required to take that class." Julius

spoke about tabletop exercises. Tabletop exercises are a practiced method of training for

emergency situations. Usually conducted with the school safety team, the group is gathered

around a table and given multiple school emergency scenarios to resolve. Julius expressed

support for tabletop exercises,

> We're not tacit in the way that we handle that. We go a little bit more aggressive…both
>
> myself and my superintendent is on that. It's just about being prepared if we ever do
>
> have a situation. I think that's the key, is making sure that – you can't stop every
>
> situation, but the thing you can do is make sure that you're prepared for it.

Pete, at the district level talked about training with his staff,

> Then every school has a safety and security plan plus we do multiple safety sessions
>
> where we have an active shooter training. We actually have the teachers all walk out in
>
> the hallway and we have the police come in or someone dresses like a bad guy.

Table 12
Data pertaining to Question 3: Safety Awareness

Category	Law Enforcement		Administrator		Legislator		Total across respondent categories	
Safety Awareness	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Safety training	43	46%	12	75%	0	0%	55	48%
Empowerment	17	18%	1	6%	0	0%	18	16%
Safety knowledge	9	9%	1	6%	1	17%	11	9%
Common sense	15	16%	1	6%	2	34%	18	16%
Communication general	9	9%	1	6%	3	49%	13	11%

Note. % of N coded responses for each area was rounded to nearest number. This table is showing data to support coded responses as related to Question 3: What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators perceive as the most effective approach for averting future incidents of school violence?

Ike and other law enforcement participants spoke about the training he and other law enforcement and school personnel had received through the Indiana School Safety Specialist Academy and how supportive his school administration was for him to attend as an SRO. One of the benefits he gained from that training was the fact that he could speak with other SROs and engage in professional conversations about school safety. When Gabe, a school safety specialist, spoke about the same statewide training mentioned by Ike, emphasized the importance of the training and the way in which the training had changed to accommodate the growing number of school violence concerns. Gabe said,

So we wanted to reach out to those people and get them some training and then kind of

make them I guess put our own safety specialist on the hot seat and everyone knows

where you are and what you do and you have to be something with it. It's been really

popular. What we found was – so we're filling up the regional trainings now but the

same people are still also going to advanced. So it's not decreasing our numbers. If

anything, it's increasing them. But we're also getting the message out to more people.

Gabe continued,

And then the content has changed quite a bit in that we're trying to give our people more

things that they can take and use immediately because we were very conceptual and a lot

of studies, research says this and this. So what? What do we leave with? So we've tried

to give our people something they could actually take and implement immediately in staff

meeting because we also know we're not the priority.

Empowerment, which showed a lower response occurrence than training in Safety

Awareness, was worth noting because when empowerment was mentioned, it was mentioned as

an important topic in averting violence, or at least minimizing devastating outcomes when

violence occurs. It was also worth noting that of the 18 responses coded in the subcategory of

empowerment, 17 of those were from law enforcement, and one was from a school administrator

(Table 12). Gabe was adamant when he said, "It is empowerment. They have to be empowered.

That's one of the things that we keep pushing out with regards to drills." Gabe continued,

Yeah. I'm just thinking about those off times and the empowerment of teachers. What

we're seeing with a lot is that they don't call the drill from the office, is that if they

empower your whole staff to call a lockdown, which they should because anyone can pull

a fire alarm, anyone should be able to call a lockdown. You should have a particular staff

member do that and then another staff member do that.

Anthony also spoke about empowerment. Anthony said,

Look, if you hear something, you need to just – and what I found which was interesting

to me was that they didn't realize that if there was a problem that they could go into a

lockdown, especially with some of the elementaries [sic] where we would go in and say,

'Okay, now if something happens, what do you do?' and the answer was, 'Well, it was

when the principal tells me.'

More to the point, he said that when he asked elementary teachers about their ability to call the

lockdown, they responded with, "Well, can we do that?" Anthony explained his frustration with

their response with,

I mean I'm trained to think that everybody has got a gun and everything is a crisis.

You're trained that I'm teaching kindergartners and I don't need to deal with this because

–however the world has changed. Now, we're colliding, and so we need to let you know

that there are things you can do.

Hunter was also passionate about the importance of empowerment, "The thought that it

can happen here. We're missing that it can happen here. I think we're also missing the fact that

we have to empower our teachers to make the right decisions in school situations, in serious

situations." Hunter continued, "I think we have to empower our teacher to make decisions."

Empowerment was emphasized as an area in which school personnel need to be more focused

when conducting school safety drills. The participants indicated that if administrators empower

teachers to call the intruder lockdown drills, or pull the fire alarms during fire drills, that could

very likely make the difference between life and death in an emergency situation.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the process by which I gathered and analyzed

qualitative data through the process of open and axial coding. Additionally, this chapter also

provided substantial qualitative data from transcribed interviews from three perspectives of law

enforcement, administrators, and a legislator. From the coded data themes emerged and

subsequent development of categories and subcategories resulted. Five themes began to emerge from the data, which were later narrowed to four.

Why does school violence happen: Participants from three perspectives spoke openly about their thoughts on how family dysfunction and changing family dynamics have an impact on why incidents of school violence continue to happen. Participants also explained and provided information on their thoughts and concerns about mental illness and why it is important for schools to address the issue of mental illness more quickly and thoroughly.

What are contributing factors at school: Data for this particular theme were examined and revealed ways in which students contribute, and ways in which teachers contribute factor into incidents of school violence. Participant data also revealed that early identification is important to factor in the efforts to address and avert school violence.

What are ways to identify potentially dangerous students: This theme was not as strongly represented in specific data.

What are ways in which we can avert violence: The theme "What are schools missing" was combined with this theme. Of all the themes, the data from participant interviews associated with this theme provided the highest number of responses from participants. Participants spoke in detail about communication, relationships, school action, and safety empowerment issues.

Data were collected and coded in an effort to draw reasonable conclusions on the three guiding research questions. Data collected clearly support that among the three perspectives to varying degrees, family dysfunction and mental illness are both believed to be contributing factors to incidents of school violence. Additionally, law enforcement and legislator participants strongly believe that communication among agencies is integral to averting incidents of school violence. Data also indicated that among law enforcement, administrators, and a legislator, there

is a strong connection between the importance of building relationships and averting incidents of

school violence. In Chapter 5, I discussed further the implications of the data gathered, and

made recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance (2009), "No two schools are exactly alike, so it is impossible to establish one plan that will work well in all schools" (p. 1), and further stipulated that, "Violence prevention programs work best when they incorporate multiple strategies and address the full range of possible acts of violence in schools" (p. 1). School violence continues to be not only an important topic, but a timely topic as incidents of school rampage violence continue to occur in the United States and throughout the world.

This chapter includes a summary of the study with findings from qualitative data supported by literature from Chapter 2, implications for ways in which schools avert incidents of school violence, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

Law enforcement, school administrators, and the legislator came from a diverse background, and all brought with them various perspectives of school violence. The approach to averting incidents of school violence from the perspective of law enforcement, school administrators, and the legislator is different.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine specific perspectives of school rampage violence from law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators. The desired outcome of this research was to provide additional insight into ways in which schools can avert future incidents of violence.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators see as common characteristics among children who have shown a propensity toward violence?

2. What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators?

3. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators perceive as the most effective approach for averting future incidents of school violence?

Background

In Chapter 4, I compiled qualitative data shown in data tables, and rich quotes pulled from the transcribed interviews conducted with the research participants. Schools are still considered safe, especially when compared to the safety of children when in their own neighborhoods (Muschert, 2007). Comforting as it is to know that in general most people feel schools are still safe places to be, the fact remains that incidents of school violence continue to occur. One incident is one too many, thus, examining potential gaps in the perspectives of who is committing acts of school violence, looking at similarities and differences in the perspectives of why violence happens, and looking at ways in which school violence can be averted is necessary. As currently as the moment at which this chapter was written, multiple news sources reported yet another tragic incident of school rampage violence occurred at a Canadian high school.

Participants

I conducted this study by meeting with and interviewing six law enforcement personnel, three school administrators, and one legislator. The identity of each participant was protected

through the use of a participant numbering system, pseudonym, and use of one common gender. The study focused on obtaining the perspective of each participant group. Although questions were adjusted slightly for each participant group, the general prevailing topics indicated in my three guiding research questions were at the forefront. As afforded by qualitative research, each participant willingly engaged in deeper conversations beyond the interview questions.

Participants ranged in age, gender, and experience among the three groups. Among the law enforcement participants, I included school safety specialists, school resource officers, and ranking law enforcement officers with school resource experience. Within the school administrator participant group, I interviewed a retired assistant principal, current principal, and superintendent. All of the administrators had experienced one form or another of an incident of school violence. The legislator I interviewed afforded a unique perspective both from the legislative policy side, and law enforcement. The legislator had been a high-ranking law enforcement officer prior to engaging in politics at the state level.

Procedures

In Chapter 3, I indicated that a qualitative study was the best approach to obtaining data for this study. I also indicated that according to Marshall and Rossman (2010), a qualitative method is noted as well suited to study social sciences and life experiences and perceptions. My qualitative study was designed to answer three research questions:

1. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators see as common characteristics among children who have shown a propensity toward violence?

2. What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators?

3. What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators perceive as the most effective approach for averting future incidents of school violence?

Also in Chapter 3, I noted that it was my desire to interview no fewer than three law enforcement officers, three school administrators, and one legislator. In the end, my study was conducted through interviews with six members of law enforcement, three school administrators, and one legislator. Each interview conducted lasted between 30-60 minutes. No follow-up interviews were required of any participant.

From the transcribed interviews, open coding and axial coding methods were employed. An inductive approach was used in this study to allow patterns, themes, and categories to emerge from the transcribed interviews. Themes and categories emerged only after the data were collected to eliminate the possibility that my own biases could be imposed during data collection and analysis.

Research Question One –Common Characteristics

What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators see as common characteristics among children who have shown a propensity toward violence? All three participant category respondents indicated that family dysfunction was a contributing factor to school violence. As indicated in Chapter 4, one of the most noted common characteristics among students who committed acts of school rampage violence, was the common thread of family dysfunction.

Family dysfunction. In Chapter 2, I provided a brief overview of school rampage violence offenders: Brenda Spencer, Evan Ramsey, Luke Woodham, Eric Harris, and Dylan Klebold. Of the five aforementioned offenders, only Harris and Klebold came from intact families. A deeper study of individual cases of school rampage perpetrators would most likely

show that most of the perpetrators came from families that would be considered dysfunctional, or

impacted by divorce, substance or physical abuse, or a newly coined term, "affluenza" other

factors that are categorized as contributing to family dysfunction. As O'Toole (2000) reminded,

historical information on shooters was important, but not necessarily a predictor of future

incidents of school rampage violence. My own mother came from a single parent home in a time

(1940s) when such a thing was nearly unheard of. To rely simply on dynamics of family

construction would be an over-step in assumption.

In the subcategory of family dysfunction, Table 7 presented an overall coded response

result of 60% noted among the participant groups. This was a strong overall percentage for

coded responses related to family dynamics and dysfunction; however, I caution that it is

important to use family dysfunction as an initial indicator of potential needs of students not being

met at home, and not necessarily as students who need to be watched closely for mass homicidal

tendencies. As a school leader, I am very aware of the fact that many students come from single

parent homes, or even intact homes where parents are so busy with their own lives that the

children become emotionally neglected. I looked at the 60% coded response rate as one to give

me pause, not one to use as a strong indicator.

Research Question Two - Similarities and Differences

What are the differences and similarities in the perspectives of why violence occurs in

schools among law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators? The participants each

offered a variety of valuable information on their perspective of incidents of school rampage

violence. The coding process revealed that within the perspectives there were both similarities

and differences. Some of the similarities and differences were due to the experiences each of the

three participant groups had experienced in their lives and in their professions. Of the

similarities, of note were both early identification and the need to build strong relationships.

Two areas in which there were noted differences in coded responses were mental illness and

communication among agencies.

Early identification. In connection with both family dysfunction and mental illness, a

strong area of coded response was shown in Table 8 in the area of early identification. All three

participant categories responded to some level with regard to the importance of early

identification having an impact on averting incidents of school violence. Law enforcement had

13 coded responses, school administrators had 10, and the legislator had one.

In Chapter 2, Mulvey and Cauffman (2001) talked about how early detection and

intervention were vital components to prevent incidents of school violence. Mulvey and

Cauffman (2001) went on to indicate that looking at risk management rather than predictive

behavior required a fundamental change in how students are viewed. As I cautioned in the area

of family dysfunction, so did Mulvey and Cauffman (2001), "After all, for every killer youth,

there are many others with the same behaviors or attitudes who never come close to killing their

classmates" (pp.797-798).

After the shooting at Thurston High School in 1998, President Clinton directed his U.S.

Secretary of Education and the Attorney General to research and develop a guide for educators

that would provide information on ways in which educators could better identify warning signs

of potential dangerous capabilities in children (Dwyer et al., 1998). So, as far back as 1998, and

to note that is prior to Columbine, the government recognized that there was a need to assist

schools in finding ways of early identification of students who might have a propensity toward

committing such acts of school rampage violence. From the data that were gathered in my

research, it was clear that law enforcement, schools, and a legislator still believed that early

identification was integral to averting incidents of school rampage violence.

Relationships. Coupled with early identification, a similarity in coded responses was

also found in the area of building relationships. Again, all three participant categories mentioned

the importance of building relationships as it related to averting incidents of school violence.

Law enforcement responded with 32 mentions of building relationships, school administrators

responded with 18, and the legislator was coded with one. Responses from the participants in the

subcategory of building relationships went beyond the basic importance of relationships between

teachers and students. The participants spoke in depth about how important it is for law

enforcement and administrators to have strong, positive, open relationships.

Culture was kept as a subcategory of relationships for the purpose of this research. In

Chapter 2, I noted that school climate and culture were an important element in schools' safety,

and so much so that in 2000, the Colorado legislature, along with several other states, mandated

that schools create safety plans (Elliott et al., 2002). The manual created by Elliott et al. in 2002

specified ways by which schools and communities approach school safety through specific

attention to planning, sharing of information, and collaboration. Without the building of these

important relationships, Elliott et al. (2002) acknowledged that there were gaps in identifying,

communicating, and engaging all necessary parties in issues pertaining to school safety.

Mental illness. Table 7 showed Law enforcement mentioned mental illness nine times,

the legislator made one mention, and school administrators did not mention mental illness at all.

This result surprised me. Anyone who has viewed the horrifying video of Harris and Klebold in

their final few minutes of homicidal terror leading up to their suicides cannot possibly think that

mental illness was not a factor in what happened that day. Even a quick study of school rampage

violence perpetrators gives any administrator pause to consider the role mental illness might have played in the lives of those students.

A noted disconnect of services between schools and mental health exists. As mentioned in Chapter 2, in 2004, President George W. Bush wanted to address the issue of mental health by establishing The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (Mills et al., 2006). Although the initiative was well-meaning, it was devoid of the necessary funding and resources to carry-out the initiative to successful implementation (Mills et al., 2006). The lofty goal of addressing issues surrounding mental health interventions in youth was, and remains, an important part of addressing and averting school rampage violence. School mental health programs that include partnerships with key stakeholders, and are well-organized, can have a positive impact on averting incidents of school violence (Mills et al., 2006; Patterson, 2007).

What is encouraging, however, is that as late as January 2016, the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents circulated information about free youth mental health training. The training is called Youth Mental Health First Aid and is geared toward school personnel. Training is provided through the National Alliance of Mental Illness, Indiana Family & Social Services Administration-Division of Mental Health and Addiction. I view this as an important and encouraging breakthrough in the recognition of the issues surrounding mental illness in students. So, although administrators did not mention mental illness as a concern when it comes to incidents of school rampage violence, there is hope that the topic is starting to come to the forefront and be addressed by educators.

Communication Among Agencies. With a strong and notable overall 72% coded response in the subcategory of communication among agencies, this was an area of importance. Law enforcement participants responded with a strong 37 mentions of the importance of

communication among agencies. Communication among agencies coded higher than communication with parents and communication with students combined. Although, when the data were taken separately, the administrators' responses indicated that communication with students more important than communication among agencies. Administrators responded with five, whereas law enforcement had eight responses, and the legislator did not have any coded responses to the important of communication with students. As indicated in Chapter 2, Elliott et al. (2002) noted that subjects in a study conducted by Terry (2010) indicated that communication and cooperation among multiple agencies were important to avert incidents of school rampage violence. Greene (2005) and Patterson (2007) both spoke to the point that a culture of trust created through open communication could very likely be better than metal detectors, security cameras, and zero-tolerance policies at preventing incidents of school violence. A series of guidelines, "Safe and Secure: Guides to Creating Safer Schools" contains one set of guides, Guide 5, dedicated to the importance of building relationships between schools and law enforcement (Atkinson, 2002). In Chapter 2, I commented in summary that literature does suggest that averting incidents of school violence goes beyond the resources of schools, and that it was important to develop and maintain relationships and open communication. Yet, I recorded a much stronger response from law enforcement and the legislator on the importance of communication among agencies than from school administrators.

Research Question Three: The Most Effective Approach for Averting Violence

What do law enforcement, a legislator, and school administrators perceive as the most effective approach for averting future incidents of school violence? The data in Chapter 4 revealed that two areas were integral in averting incidents of school violence, or at least in

minimizing devastating results if violence does occur: (a) safety training and (b) empowering all staff.

Safety Training. In Chapter 2, I reported that Daniels et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative investigation into averting incidents of school rampage violence. What they found was similar to what Terry (2010) found in that training was integral to averting school rampage violence. Two of the three participant groups indicated that safety training was important to averting incidents of school violence.

With the help of the Indiana Department of Education, training for a variety of school personnel has become a reality. The Indiana School Safety Specialist certification program has grown so popular over the past several years that they just recently had to change to a larger capacity venue. Training for educators and law enforcement has changed over the years. Prior to Columbine, law enforcement standard operating procedure was to stand-down and wait to engage until all units were in place. What law enforcement learned from that incident was to go in as quickly as safely possible and engage to remove the danger. From the educators' perspective, what was learned from Columbine was to go into automatic "lockdown" mode – to hide, be silent, and remain in place until given the all clear by an officer of the law. Both law enforcement and educators continued to practice these methods until the unthinkable happened in Newtown. At Newtown, the police engaged; they followed their new method of engagement. What schools learned was to run, hide, fight. Schools are now being instructed to use a variety of methods to minimize damage.

Empowerment. The numbers do not represent the stern words of warning conveyed in Chapter 4 by those participants who spoke about empowerment. Participants noted in their conversations that this was an area in which schools could no longer operate under *status quo.*

Administrators, the participants urged, must begin to loosen the reins on authority and empower

all staff to be the ones who take action in drills. Far too often administrators are the ones who

control the time, date, and manner in which a drill is called. It was clear from the comments

made by participants that they believed more harm may come to schools if teachers and other

staff were not given additional authority when it comes to being proactive in averting incidents

of school violence. Again, this is an area that could have also been discussed further in

differences, but was included here to stress the importance of how empowerment is an element

important for educators to learn when it comes to averting, or minimizing the effects, of school

violence. Empowerment was included in this chapter because the participants who spoke about

empowerment, spoke passionately about it being important. Participants spoke with strong

conviction about the connection between empowering teachers and staff to make decisions, to

pull the fire alarm in the drill, to call the lockdown drill, to share vital information, could make

the difference between life and death in a school rampage incident. The participants recognized

that too often staff feel compelled to notify the principal when something was wrong; however,

they cautioned that if this cycle is not broken for this type of training, a situation may develop

where help is needed, but not notified unless the principal first grants permission. With a strong

tie to training, empowerment becomes a newly added element to what educators need to consider

when conducting planned training.

Implications for Research and Policy

In Chapter 2, I noted that incidents of school violence are rare, and schools are still

viewed as relatively safe places for children to be (Elliott et. al., 2002; Flanner et al., 2013). I

continue to hold that belief. Further, I continue to hold the belief that regardless of how safe

schools are believed to be, educators and administrators must never let down their guard when it

comes to continued assurance of providing safe environments in which children can learn and teachers can teach. School shootings are sensationalized by the media, thus, making it seem as if there is imminent threat of horrific violence on a large scale every day. The implication of this research, and the need for schools to constantly examine safety measures and safety practice and training policies lies in the need to focus attention on opening the lines of communication with multiple agencies, provide meaningful and best practice safety training, and to remain vigilant in properly identifying students in need in an effort to provide early and on-going assistance. There are gaps in all of the aforementioned areas.

Communication among agencies must happen. During my interviews with law enforcement personnel, I gleaned a desperate sense of a desire to be more involved in what was happening in schools. Not simply to be in the know about criminal incidents, but to be allowed to be a part of creating training programs, to be invited into the schools to meet with students, to talk with them, to get to know them. SROs expressed the importance of the special and trusting relationship that must be formed between themselves and the school administration. There remains a line of responsibility, of power, of authority among law enforcement and administration, and it is clear from the interviews that this is cause for concern when it comes to creating an environment of safety.

Additionally, creating a culture where open communication with other community resources is also important to creating safe schools and averting incidents of school rampage violence. Fully understanding that laws protect the privacy of individuals when it comes to medical and psychological conditions, it would behoove school administrators, law makers, medical professionals, and law enforcement to find ways in which to gather forces to change

laws in an effort to loosen those restrictions when it comes to the sharing of potentially vital information about students who are showing a propensity toward acts of violence.

Training must be done in conjunction with law enforcement. Educators are the experts in teaching and learning, but law enforcement are the experts in safety. The power lies in the combination of these two entities to work together and create training methods and opportunities that will save lives. Oddly enough, schools routinely conduct fire drills every month; yet, it is difficult to find documentation of the last school fire that took the lives of multiple students and/or staff. To the contrary, drills that address the need to lockdown because of an armed intruder are only required twice a year. Since I started this research, there have been at least three reported incidents of school shootings involving fatalities, but not one school fire with the same outcome.

Countywide safety task forces are starting to be formed throughout Indiana, but from the three in which I have been directly involved, it has not been until recently when the Porter County sheriff took over the one that covers my school district did I begin to see an emphasis on addressing training that directly impacts how to keep schools safe from acts of violence, and how to properly train educators in this area. This is a start, but must be one that is shared with others throughout the state if all of our students and staff are to be kept safe from harm, or at best, minimize the impact of acts of violence when they do occur.

Creating the environment in which school personnel can put forth efforts to identify students early on who are showing signs of violent tendencies—albeit family dynamic issues, mental illness, or other issues that impact their lives. In conjunction with communication among agencies, school personnel must be willing to build relationships with outside agencies who are experts in the field of adolescent psychology and sociology. As indicated in Chapter 2, a

plethora of research has been conducted by psychologists and social scientists in regard to averting incidents of school violence. Teachers and educators must work with legislators to enact laws that protect educators from liability when it comes to identifying and helping students who are showing signs of mental illness.

Finally, I strongly recommend that school leaders formally empower all staff to take the initiative to be the first line of defense in an emergency. When we think about school drills, albeit fire, tornado, or lockdown, I challenge fellow administrators to allow staff to lead and conduct the drill. I encourage school administrators to empower their entire staff to confidently identify and report suspicious or dangerous behavior in their students. Further, I encourage administrators to release their power of authority when it comes to determining the time, date, and manner in which a lockdown drill may be conducted. If this simple surrender of perceived power is willingly shared with staff, in the event of an actual active shooter or dangerous situation, the staff will feel a natural and unfettered ability to do what needs to be done. A great wave of fear should come over every administrator when they think about the precious time that may be lost in an emergency situation if a teacher feels it necessary to follow training and wait to engage in saving the lives of students simply because that is the way in which she was trained…in other words, to wait for the principal to call the course of action.

Recommendations for Further Research

All participants shared with me a variety of perspectives. Each person I interviewed clearly had ideas and suggestions for ways in which schools can do a better job of averting incidents of school violence. The participants in this study spoke both passionately and openly about their opinions, experiences, and beliefs surrounding school rampage violence. During each interview, it was not at all difficult to engage the participants in conversation beyond the

original set of questions each was asked. From the responses, it was very clear to me that law

enforcement officers need to be our partners in averting incidents of school violence, and our go-

to experts in establishing more effective school safety measures.

The data gathered in this study was obtained by interviewing 10 participants. Although

saturation was reached with the law enforcement participants, the number of participants could

easily be increased to gain an even richer level of information from all participant groups. It was

difficult to get more than one legislator to participate. I was able to make contact through a

personal acquaintance who works at the State House with two legislators, but one of the

legislators I was hoping to interview never responded to my attempts at contact. I believe that

information gained from the perspective of legislators could be of great importance for school

administrators who desire to gain a better understanding of the process by which bills and laws

are enacted. Having such an understanding would help school administrators feel more

comfortable reaching out to legislators and engaging them in important conversations about

averting school violence.

Summary

In summary, this study provided valuable information about ways in which to avert

incidents of school violence. The purpose of this chapter was to summarize the study, findings,

and ways in which the results can be used to help schools create a safer environment for students

and staff. Qualitative methods were used to gather data on the perspectives of law enforcement,

school administrators, and a legislator. In Chapter 2, this study revealed an important aspect of

the dearth of formal research that has been conducted by school administrators in the area of

averting incidents of school rampage violence. The participants shared their respective views on

incidents of school rampage violence, and ways in which they feel are important to avert school

violence. School administrators and school policy makers can take ideas from this research that will serve as meaningful methods by which they can better engage in conversations with the greater community, legislators, and law enforcement to improve both methods and policies in the area of training and identification of mental illness, family dysfunction, and a variety of other issues that may lead students to commit incidents of school rampage violence.

My research findings, although not developing into a complete grounded theory, has set the stage for future theory development on the topic of averting school rampage violence. Shown in Figure 1 is a visual summary of the development of relationships among the variables identified as key findings in my research. The chart shows multiple connections among the variables to *empowerment* of staff members as a key factor in averting or minimizing incidents of school rampage violence. Further study should be conducted to explore possible connections among these variables to empowerment. The connection of variables with empowering staff may develop into a theory on how schools can better prepare through actions and/or policy development to avert future incidents of school violence.
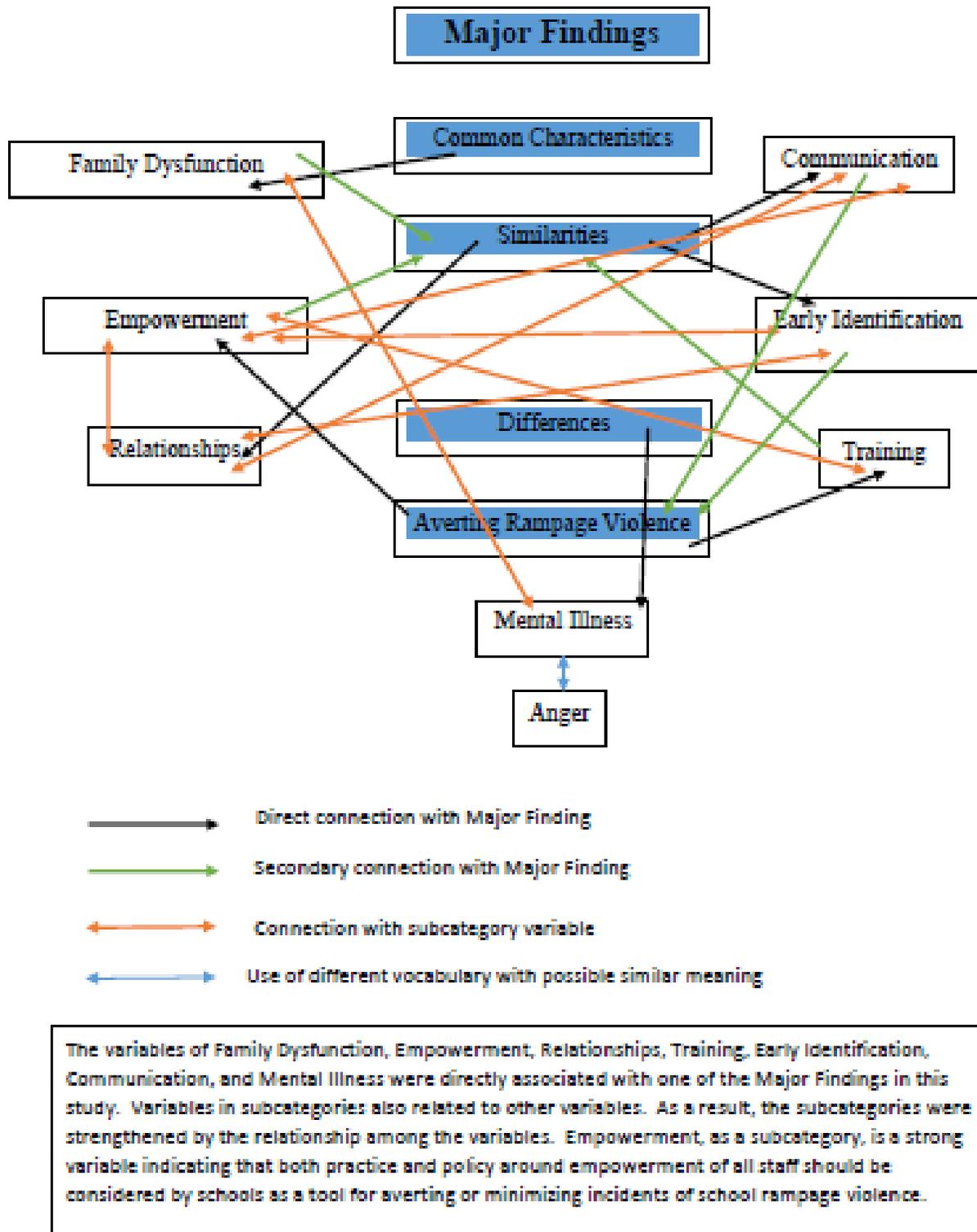
Figure 1. Visual Summary of the Development of Relationships Among the Variables Identified as Key Findings.

REFERENCES

Atkinson, A. J. (2002). *Guide 5: Fostering school-law enforcement partnerships*. [Safe and secure: Guides to creating safer schools]. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Retrieved from https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/book5.pdf

Bayh, B. (1975). *Our nation's schools—A report card: "A" in school violence and vandalism. Preliminary report of the subcommittee to investigate juvenile delinquency, based on investigations, 1971-1975.* Washington, DC: Senate Committee on the Judiciary. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED104006.pdf

Borum, R., Cornell, D.G., Modzeleski, W., & Jimerson, R. (2010). What can be done about school shootings? A review of the evidence. *Educational Researcher, 39*(1), 27-37. Retrieved from http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1533&context=mhlp_facpub

Brady, K. P., Balmer, S., & Phenix, D. (2007). School—police partnership effectiveness in urban schools: An analysis of New York City's impact schools initiative. *Education and Urban Society, 39,* 455-478. doi:10.1177/0013124503\7302396

Clifford, S. (2014). *DISM: Duke initiative on survey methodology*. *Tipsheet – interviewing elites.* (2014). Retrieved from http://www.dism.ssri.duke.edu/pdfs/Tipsheet%20-%20Elite%20Interviews.pdf

Collins, E., Watts, C., Waters, J., & Nikitopoulos, C. (2009). Understanding violence: A school initiative for violence prevention. *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 37,* 275-288. doi:10.1080/10852350903196282

Cornell, D. G., & Mayer, M. J. (2010). Why do school order and safety matter? *Educational Researcher, 39*(1), 7-15. doi:10.3102/0013189X09357616

Daniels, J. A., Volungis, A., Pshensihny, E., Gandhi, P., Winkler, A., Cramer, D. P., & Bradley, M. C. (2010). A qualitative investigation of averted school shooting rampages. *The Counseling Psychologist, 38*(1), 69-95. doi:10.1177/0011000009344774

Devers, K. J., & Frankel, R. M. (2000). Study Design in Qualitative Research—2: Sampling and Data Collection Strategies. *Education For Health: Change In Learning & Practice (Taylor & Francis Ltd)*, *13,* 263-271. doi:10.1080/13576280050074543

Duncan, A. (2014). *Guiding principles: A resource guide for improving school climate and discipline.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf

Dwyer, K., Osher, D., & Warger, C. (1998). *Early warning, timely response: A guide to safe schools.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://cecp.air.org/guide/guide.pdf

Elliott, D. S., Grady, J. M., Heys, L., Ntepp, R., Williams, S. (2002). *Safe communities ~ Safe schools safe school planning and law related issues: A tool for community violence prevention efforts.* Boulder, CO: University of Colorado-Boulder, Institute of Behavioral Science. Retrieved from http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.186.782&rep=rep1&type=pdf

"Examining School Safety and Gun Violence in America." (2014). *Curriculum Review*, *54*(4), 8-9. Retrieved from http://eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.indstate.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=35608f66-82e4-4eff-8fe7-3d838e64bbce%40sessionmgr113&hid=119

Fast, J. (2008). *Ceremonial violence: A psychological explanation of school shootings*. New York, NY: Overlook Press.

Fein, R. A. (2002). *Threat assessment in schools: A guide to managing threatening situations and to creating safe school climates*. Collingdale, PA: DIANE Publishing.

Flannery, D. J., Modzeleski, W., & Kretschmar, J. M. (2013). Violence and school shootings. *Current Psychiatry Reports, 15*(1), 1-7. doi:10.1007/s11920-012-0331-6

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (2009). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Transaction Publishers.

Greene, M. B. (2005). Reducing violence and aggression in schools. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse: A Review Journal, 6,* 236-253. doi:10.1177/1524838005277406

Hochschild, J. L. (2009). *Conducting intensive interviews and elite interviews*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Retrieved from http://scholar.harvard.edu/jlhochschild/publications/conducting-intensive-interviews-and-elite-interviews

Hutcherson, C. A., Seppala, E. M., & Gross, J. J. (2008). Loving-kindness meditation increases social connectedness. *Emotion*, *8,* 720-724. doi:10.1037/a0013237

Kalish, R., & Kimmel, M. (2010). Suicide by mass murder: Masculinity, aggrieved entitlement, and rampage school shootings. *Health Sociology Review, 19,* 451-464. doi:10.5172/hesr.2010.19.4.451

Langman, P. (2008). Rampage school shooters: A typology. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *14*(1), 79-86. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2008.10.003

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

May, D. C., Fessel, S. D., & Means, S. (2004). Predictors of principals' perceptions of school resource officer effectiveness in Kentucky. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 29*(1), 75-93. doi:10.1007/BF02885705

Mayer, M. J., & Leone, P. E. (1999). A structural analysis of school violence and disruption: Implications for creating safer schools. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *22*(3), 333-356. Retrieved from http://www.popcenter.org/problems/bomb_threats/ pdfs/mayer&leone_1999.pdf

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mills, C., Stephan, S. H., Moore, E., Weist, M. D., Daly, B. P., & Edwards, M. (2006). The President's new freedom commission: Capitalizing on opportunities to advance school-based mental health services. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review, 9*(3), 149-161. doi:10.1007/s10567-006-0003-3

Morse, J. M. (1995). The significance of saturation. *Qualitative health research*, *5*(2), 147-149.

Mulvey, E. P., & Cauffman, E. (2001). The inherent limits of predicting school violence. *The American Psychologist, 56,* 797-802. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.56.10.797

Muschert, G. W. (2007). Research in school shootings. *Sociology Compass*, *1*(1), 60-80. doi:10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00008.x

Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. § 3711 (1968).

O'Toole, M. E. (2000). *The school shooter: A threat assessment perspective*. Collingdale, PA: DIANE Publishing.

Patterson, G. T. (2007). The role of police officers in elementary and secondary schools: Implications for police-school social work collaboration. *School Social Work Journal, 31*(2), 82-99. Retrieved from http://lyceumbooks.com/sswjournal.htm

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Redding, R. E., & Shalf, S. M. (2001). The legal context of school violence: The effectiveness of federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts to reduce gun violence in schools. *Law & Policy, 23,* 297-343. doi:10.1111/1467-9930.00115

Roberts, C.M. (2010). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rocque, M. (2011). Exploring school rampage shootings: Research, theory, and policy. *The Social Science Journal*, *49,* 304-313. doi:10.1016/j.soscij.2011.11.001

Rosiak, J. (2009). *Developing safe schools partnerships with law enforcement*. Urbana, IL: Forum on Public Policy. Retrieved from http://forumonpublicpolicy.com/spring09papers/archivespr09/rosiak.pdf

Safe School Climate Act of 2006. South Carolina State Statute 59-63-110 (2006)

Safipour, J., Tessma, M., Higginbottom, G., & Emami, A. (2010). Measuring social alienation in adolescence: Translation and validation of the Jessor and Jessor Social Alienation Scale. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *51,* 517-524. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9450.2010.00810.x

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Retrieved from http://stevescollection.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/8/6/13866629/saldana_2009_the-coding-manual-for-qualitative-researchers.pdf

Saufler, C. (2000). Avoiding Littleton: The best defense. *Journal of Maine Education, 16*(1), 15-17. Retrieved from http://www.safeschoolsforall.com/avoidinglittleton.html

Seidman, I. (2012). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Shah, N., & Ujifusa, A. (2013). School safety legislation: A tally by state. *Education Week, 32*(29), 21. Retrieved from http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/04/24/29safety-graphic.h32.html

Skiba, R. J., & Peterson, R. L. (2000). School discipline at a crossroads: From zero tolerance to early response. *Exceptional Children*, *66,* 335-346. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265024759_School_discipline_at_a_crossroads_From_zero_tolerance_to_early_response

Small, M., & Tetrick, K. D. (2001). School violence: An overview. *Juvenile Justice, 7*(1), 3-12. Retrieved from https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/188158.pdf

Stack, S., & Wasserman, I. (2009). Gender and suicide risk: The role of wound site. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 39*(1), 13-20. doi:10.1521/suli.2009.39.1.13

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques (*2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strong, K., & Cornell, D. (2008). Student threat assessment in Memphis city schools: A descriptive report. *Behavioral Disorders, 34*(1), 42-54.

Terry, T. (2010). Blocking the bullies: Has South Carolina's Safe School Climate Act made public schools safer? *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, 83*(3), 96-100. doi:10.1080/00098651003655902

Tesch, R. (1990). Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools. New York, NY: Falmer Press.

U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, & International Association of Chiefs of Police. (2009). *Guide for preventing and responding to school violence* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: International Association of Chiefs of Police.

U.S. Department of Education (2014). *Guiding principles: A resource guide for improving school climate and discipline.* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf

Varnham, S. (2005). Seeing things differently: Restorative justice and school discipline[1]. *Education and the Law*, *17*(3), 87-104. Retrieved from http://sharepoint.tcrsb.ca/ycmhs/ webpage/RA/Relevant%20Literature/Seeing%20Things%20Differently.pdf

Ward, S. F. (2014). Less than zero: Schools are rethinking zero tolerance policies and questioning whether the discipline is really effective. *ABA Journal, 100*(8), 54.

Warnick, B. R., Johnson, B. A., & Rocha, S. (2010). Tragedy and meaning of school shootings. *Educational Theory, 60,* 371-390. Retrieved from http://adams-jeffcohazmatauthority.org/documents/tragedyandmeaningofschoolshooting.pdf

Webber, J. (1997). Comprehending youth violence: A practicable perspective. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*(2), 94-104. doi:10.1177/074193259701800203

Welton, E., Vakil, S., & Ford, B. (2014). Beyond bullying: Consideration of additional research for the assessment and prevention of potential rampage school violence in the United States. *Education Research International, 2014*(2014), 1-9. doi:10.1155/2014/109297

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Study Title A Multidisciplinary Approach on School Rampage Violence: Perspectives from Law Enforcement, A Legislator, and School Administrators

Principal Investigator
Mrs. Julie K. Lauck, Ed.S., Ball State University jlauck65@gmail.com 574-850-6167 (cell)

Study Purpose and Rationale
The purpose of this study is to understand a variety of perceived causes of school rampage violence from the perspectives of law enforcement personnel, a legislator, and school administrators in an effort to avert future incidents of school violence. Examining school rampage violence through the perspective of law enforcement personnel, a legislator, and school administrators, an assumption of a broader perspective of a multi-causal approach may emerge. Through the gleaning of knowledge from literature by psychologists, and interviews from law enforcement personnel, a legislator, and school administrators, this study may impact how schools approach incidents of bullying, social alienation, policies and procedures, and the inclusion of all students.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria
- Participants have a right to participate or not.
- You have been selected to participate in this study for one or more of the following reasons: 1. You are an expert in your profession as it relates to youth and school violence; 2. You have firsthand knowledge of legislative actions and/or committee work related to the development of laws or legislative actions that impact school violence; 3. You are directly involved in the day-to-day operations of a school in the capacity of a current or former school administrator or school resource officer; or, 4. You have been directly involved in an incident of school violence in your capacity of school administrator or school resource officer.
- You must be 21 years or older to participate.

Participation Procedures and Duration
If you agree to participate in the study, the primary investigator, Mrs. Julie Lauck, will ask you to answer predetermined questions along with follow-up questions and clarifying questions related to your knowledge and experience of school violence.

Audio Tapes
To ensure accuracy, interviews will be digitally recorded by audio device. Interviews will not be video recorded. The interview is expected to last 60-90 minutes. Once the interview is concluded, a transcription of the interview will be coded, categorized into emerging themes, and analyzed. Mrs. Julie Lauck and a transcription assistant will have access to the digital recordings. The narrative transcripts will be stored on a password protected laptop in the possession of the researcher, Mrs. Julie Lauck. All digital recordings will be destroyed at the completion of the research. Do I have your permission to digitally record this interview?

My initials in the following box indicate my permission to audio tape the interview:

Data Anonymity

Names will not be used in the final analyses of the research. To maintain anonymity of the interviewee, participants will be assigned a random numerical-alpha identification. The numerical-alpha identification will be two random numbers, an alpha character representing the category of interviewee, and a number to indicate date of the interview. Specifically, for example, *participant x,* a legislator interviewed on July 28, 2015, is identified as interviewee 58L72815. A pseudonym will then be assigned to the numerical-alpha identification and used in all written documentation to further protect the identity of the interviewee. Additionally, I will utilize a *participant matrix* (Appendix B). The participant matrix will be destroyed by way of computer deletion and cross-shredding of paper material at the conclusion of the research. Digitally-recorded interview data will be deleted from all hard drives and devices when the study is complete.

Storage of Data

Data will be stored on a password protected laptop computer kept in the possession of the researcher, Mrs. Julie Lauck. Interview data will be deleted when the study is completed.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this study.

Benefits

The benefit to you from your participation will be the collective information gleaned from the study, and the ability to apply the knowledge to your individual field of study, profession, legislation, or school.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at any time for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions of the investigator before signing this form and at any time during the study.

IRB Contact Information

For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu."

Study Title A Multidisciplinary Approach on School Rampage Violence: Perspectives from Law Enforcement, A Legislator, and School Administrators

Principal Investigator

Mrs. Julie K. Lauck, Ed.S., Ball State University jlauck65@gmail.com 574-850-6167 (cell)

Consent

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project entitled, "**A Multidisciplinary Approach on School Rampage Violence: Perspectives from Law Enforcement, A Legislator, and School Administrators"** I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate. I understand that I will receive a copy of this informed consent form to keep for future reference.

To the best of my knowledge, I meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation (described on the previous page) in this study.

_____   _____

Participant's Signature   Date

Researcher Contact Information
Principal Investigator:
Julie K. Lauck, Ed.S., Doctor of Education Student
Department of Educational Leadership
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
Cell: (574) 850-6167
Email: jlauck65@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT MATRIX

37LE102615 Joe	Removed general information about 37LE102615
4LE102815 Gabe	Removed general information about 4LE102815
22LE111315 Hunter	Removed general information about 22LE111315
58LE112015 Ike	Removed general information about 58LE112015
95LE112415 Anthony	Removed general information about 95LE112415
34LE120115 Trevor	Removed general information about 34LE120115
22A111015 Julius	Removed general information about 22A111015
93A110415 Tom	Removed general information about 93A110415
33A111715 Pete	Removed general information about 33A111715
88L111515 David	Removed general information about 88L111515