



Situational Awareness Report

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School Attacks and Plots Since the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting

December 2013

(U//FOUO) NJ ROIC Intelligence & Analysis Threat Unit ~ IAU201311-2404

Overview

(U//FOUO) Almost one year ago, on December 14, 2012, the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting attack took place in Newtown, Connecticut. On that day, 20-year-old, Adam Lanza forced his way into the school and proceeded to kill 20 first-grade students and six adult employees. This attack constituted the second worst school shooting in United States history, exceeded only by the Virginia Tech massacre in April 2007.

(U//FOUO) In the year since Sandy Hook, there have been a combined total of 22 actual school attacks and disrupted plots nationwide with some of the attacks resulting in the deaths of students and school personnel. The New Jersey Regional Operations Intelligence Center (ROIC) has examined recent reporting on the Sandy Hook attack and the incidents over the last year and provides the following analysis to law enforcement, school resource officers (SROs), and administrators to assist in school security planning efforts.

Sandy Hook Elementary School Update

(U//FOUO) On November 26, 2013, the Connecticut's Attorney General released their report on the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Evidence has shown that the shooter planned his actions, including taking his own life, but there is no clear indication why he targeted the school. The report concluded that the shooter acted alone and that anyone who associated with or communicated with the shooter prior to the shootings did not conspire with him or criminally aid him.

(U//FOUO) A search of the shooter's home revealed numerous items illustrating his preoccupation with mass shootings, in particular the Columbine shooting. These items included news articles, a book about school shootings, and a spreadsheet on mass murders. Electronic evidence and digital media also revealed topics about firearms, weapons, and magazine capacity. In previous school shootings, student shooters have also used a variety of outlets, including computer activity, to express their emotions, plan their attacks, and search for violent Web sites.¹

(U//FOUO) Prior to the release of this report, Adam Lanza's toxicology report was released in October 2013, confirming that he had no drugs or alcohol in his system and that there was no chemical or medical explanation for his actions.²

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Key Findings of School Attacks and Plots in 2013

(U//FOUO) The following patterns and characteristics have been identified across the nation in school shootings and plots that have occurred in 2013:

- Male students between the ages of 14 and 28 conducted a majority of attacks. The remaining incidents were conducted by adult males ages 30 and above.
- Two attacks involved the shooter committing suicide.
- Several types of schools have experienced an attack or plot; these include elementary schools (six), high schools (ten), and higher education facilities (six).
- Students using a single firearm conducted a majority of the attacks.
- Several shootings have occurred outside the school, and in some of those cases, SROs and administrators have intervened to halt the attacker.

New Jersey Disrupted Plots

(U//FOUO) While no school shootings have occurred in New Jersey, law enforcement officials have arrested several students in the last four years on charges that they plotted to attack their schools. These incidents include:

- (U) On September 6, 2013, police arrested a fifth-grader from Wall Township (Monmouth County) for allegedly plotting to conduct an attack similar to the Sandy Hook massacre. When the student made general threats against his classmates, he was removed from school and enrolled in an alternate program.³ While his threats were being investigated, law enforcement also discovered on the student's computer, a hit list of 40 students whom the fifth-grader planned to harm.⁴ Despite the possibility that the student appeared to fantasize about conducting an attack, local law enforcement treated the threat seriously and anticipates juvenile charges in the near future.⁵
- (U) On November 29, 2012, a Trenton (Mercer County) high school student was prevented from shooting his classmates. After several classmates attacked the student in the cafeteria, the student fled his school and returned home in a taxi to obtain a handgun and sawed-off shotgun. While enroute back to the school, the student told his plan to the taxi driver who saw the gun and attempted to delay his return to school. Before arriving at the school, the student exited the vehicle, allowing the driver to contact law enforcement officers, who were able to arrest the student.^{6 7}
- (U) On December 11, 2009, police arrested two students for planning to attack the Bridgewater-Raritan Regional High School (Somerset County) after another student informed school administrators about the threat. Law enforcement uncovered shotguns, rifles, and materials for constructing homemade explosive devices at the two students' residences.⁸ One of the suspects was a student at Bridgewater-Raritan Regional. The second suspect, who was a senior at a nearby school, assisted in the planning by providing shotgun shells and driving his friend to a local hardware store to purchase piping and wiring to construct their devices.⁹ In 2010, one student pleaded guilty in family court to cause widespread injury or damage and was sentenced to three years in a treatment facility, while his accomplice was enrolled in a juvenile program.¹⁰

Shootings Outside School Buildings

(U//FOUO) In the past year, five school attacks have occurred outside the confines of a school building, which allowed the shooter to avoid security measures inside the school. Among these incidents, three attacks resulted in the loss of life at a college campus, an elementary school and at a bus stop. Two of these attacks also resulted in the students fleeing the attacker to seek shelter inside their elementary school and nearby campus buildings.^{11 12}

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- (U) On November 3, 2013, an errant bullet fired from a considerable distance wounded a 21-year-old student, who was celebrating homecoming weekend at North Carolina Agricultural & Technical (A&T) State University.¹³
- (U) On October 21, 2013, in Sparks, Nevada, a 12-year-old student at Sparks Middle School shot and killed a math teacher and wounded two students on the school campus, but outside the school building.¹⁴
- (U) On June 7, 2013, 23-year-old John Zawahri engaged in a shooting rampage in Santa Monica, California, that killed five, wounded several, and concluded on the Santa Monica College campus.¹⁵
- (U) On January 31, 2013, in Atlanta, Georgia, at Price Middle School, a 15-year-old student shot and wounded a classmate in the courtyard.¹⁶
- (U) On January 29, 2013, Jimmy Lee Dykes, a 65-year-old resident of Midland City, Alabama, killed a bus driver and kidnapped a five-year-old boy after several students exited the bus.¹⁷

(U//FOUO) Throughout the day, students are not always inside a classroom that can be locked down in the event of an active shooter incident. Students and teachers can be outside – waiting to enter the school, changing classes, engaging in recess, walking to other buildings on campus, or boarding or exiting school buses. In addition to the potential that outside violence can spread onto school grounds, outside shootings can also create more havoc when a crowd of students is attempting to flee the shooter.

Actions by School Personnel

(U//FOUO) In several incidents, an SRO, teacher, or administrator has subdued a shooter or disrupted a plot by discovering a student's disturbing writings. Fellow students are also a crucial component in recognizing and reporting "warning signs" from other classmates. School personnel who take quick and appropriate action to prevent an attack from escalating demonstrate the value of properly trained employees. The ability to prevent an attack is also possible when school personnel report a student's threatening language and writing to their supervisors and law enforcement, who can then investigate the threat. Examples of quick action taken by school officials include:

- (U) On October 21, 2013, a student at Sparks Middle School, in Sparks Nevada killed a math teacher and wounded two students outside the school. The teacher, prior to being killed, confronted the shooter allowing other students the opportunity to run to safety.¹⁸
- (U) On September 28, 2013, a Stonewall Jackson High School SRO, in Edinburg, Virginia, obtained information about a student planning an attack in spring 2014. Once law enforcement received this information, the student was arrested and charged with one felony count of conspiring and aiding and abetting acts of terrorism.¹⁹
- (U) On August 30, 2013, after a student shooter wounded a 15-year old at Carver High School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, an SRO apprehended and arrested the student.²⁰
- (U) On January 31, 2013, an off-duty Atlanta police officer who was working part-time as an SRO at Price Middle School in Atlanta, Georgia, disarmed a 15-year-old student shooter after he shot and wounded a 14-year-old student in the neck.²¹
- (U) On January 4, 2013, a teacher at Russell County High School in Seale, Alabama, discovered a student's notebook that described his attack plan. While the student claimed that his journal was a work of fiction, law enforcement discovered at his residence several containers filled with pellets, with holes drilled for fuses.²²

Weapons Use

(U//FOUO) While Adam Lanza used only one firearm – a .223-caliber Bushmaster semiautomatic rifle – to kill his victims, he also brought two handguns with magazines and a shotgun that he left in a car outside the school. In the past year, the majority of students who attacked their school had access to a weapon with limited ammunition. While several shooters injured and/or killed their victims, the number of fatalities did not parallel the number of deaths at Sandy Hook.

(U//FOUO) In 2013, the number of fatalities in actual attacks was also largely contingent upon the shooters' motives with regard to whether they were interested in targeting a single person or attacking a large number of victims. Analysis has shown that a shooter with a grudge against a specific classmate or school administrator usually uses one weapon with limited ammunition to only kill or harm the intended victims. In contrast, school shooters who are interested in attacking as many victims as possible were often found to be in possession of more than one weapon, with extra ammunition.

Plots and Attacks

(U//FOUO) The following list provides information regarding the plots and attacks that have occurred since December 2012:

Date	Shooter and Plotters	Sex	School	Type of School	Location	Incident	# of Fatalities Excluding Shooter
December 14, 2012	Sammie Chavez	M	Bartlesville High School	High School	Bartlesville, Oklahoma	Plot	0
December 29, 2012	Unknown (Minor)	M	Cedar Creek High School	High School	Galloway, New Jersey	Plot	0
January 4, 2013	Derek Shrout	M	Russell County High School	High School	Seale, Alabama	Plot	0
January 10, 2013	Bryan Oliver	M	Taft Union High School	High School	Taft, California	Shooting	0
January 15, 2013	Sean Johnson	M	Stevens Institute of Business & Arts	Higher Education	Saint Louis, Missouri	Shooting	0
January 22, 2013	Trey Foster	M	Lone Star College	Higher Education	Houston, Texas	Shooting	0
January 30 - February 4, 2013	Jimmy Lee Dykes	M	Midland City Elementary School	Elementary School	Midland City, Alabama	Shooting	1
January 31, 2013	Unknown (Minor)	M	Price Middle School	Elementary School	Atlanta, Georgia	Shooting	0
February 8, 2013	Hunter Mack	M	Walpole Elementary School	Elementary School	Walpole, New Hampshire	Shooting	0
March 18, 2013	James Seevakumar	M	University of Central Florida	Higher Education	Orlando, Florida	Shooting	1
April 12, 2013	Neil Allen MacInnis	M	New River Community College	Higher Education	Christianburg, Virginia	Shooting	0

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May 24, 2013	Grant Acord	M	West Albany High School	High School	Albany, Oregon	Plot	0
June 7, 2013	John Zawahiri	M	Santa Monica College	Higher Education	Santa Monica, California	Shooting	3 on campus and 2 outside school
August 20, 2013	Michael Brandon Hill	M	McNair Elementary School	Elementary School	Decatur, Georgia	Shooting	0
August 30, 2013	Christopher Lamont Richardson, Jr.	M	Carver High School	High School	Winston-Salem, North Carolina	Shooting	0
September 28, 2013	Unknown (Minor)	M	Wall Township Intermediate	Elementary School	Wall, New Jersey	Plot	0
September 28, 2013	Unknown (Minor)	M	Stonewall Jackson High School	High School	Edinburg, Virginia	Plot	0
October 21, 2013	Unknown (Minor)	M	Sparks Middle School	Elementary School	Sparks, Nevada	Shooting	1
October 24, 2013	Philip Chism	M	Danvers High School	High School	Danvers, Massachusetts	Attack	1
October 29, 2013	Unknown	n/a	A&T State University	Higher Education	Greensboro, North Carolina	Shooting	0
November 11, 2013	Anjohnito Willett Jr.	M	Brashear High School	High School	Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Shooting	0
December 4, 2013	Jamorian Eddie Patrick Bell	M	West Orange High School	High School	Winter Garden, Florida	Shooting	0

Implications for New Jersey

(U//FOUO) As stated in the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness 2013 New Jersey Terrorism Threat Assessment, the threat to schools is assessed as **MODERATE** because of the threat of an active shooter incident.

(U//FOUO) In the past year, school shootings have occurred outside the confines of the school, as well as inside the building. In several instances, school personnel have acted to prevent an attack. Among these attacks in the past year, male students using a single firearm have been responsible for a majority of the incidents.

(U//FOUO) Schools remain a target not only from students who exhibit emotional problems, an inability to cope with stress, and those who have been bullied, but also from outside attackers. The shootings at Sandy Hook illustrate the threat posed by outside attackers and how unpredictable their attacks can be when they are able to remain undetected by law enforcement and school administrators.

(U//FOUO) The number of attacks and plots suggest that a school shooting can occur at any type of educational institution, no matter the size of the school or student enrollment.

Suspicious Activity in New Jersey

(U//FOUO) Recent incidents demonstrate the importance of encouraging students, teachers, school resource officers, and school administrators to report suspicious activity. Suspicious activity can include not only behavior by students, but also by strangers lurking around the school grounds.

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(U//FOUO) In 2013, the most frequently reported type of incident in the New Jersey Suspicious Activity Reporting System (NJSARS) for K-12 schools was unsubstantiated bomb threats, followed by suspicious persons. For colleges, it was suspicious persons on campus.²³

(U//FOUO) Any suspicious activity with a possible nexus to terrorism in New Jersey should be reported immediately following existing protocols specific to respective counties. Activity can also be reported to CT Watch located at the ROIC by dialing 2-1-1 or (866) 4SAFENJ (866-472-3365), or by e-mailing Tips@NJHomelandSecurity.gov.

Contact Information

(U//FOUO) Any agency with information or comments/questions about this document should contact the NJ ROIC Intelligence and Analysis Threat Unit at (609) 963-6900, ext. 6243, or njroicanalysis@gw.njsp.org.

¹ (U//FOUO) NJROIC, *School Shooting Commonalities*, November 15, 2012.

² (U) *The Courant*, "Newtown Killings: Full Report Confirms NO Drugs In Adam Lanza's Body," October 29, 2013. Available online at: http://articles.courant.com/2013-10-29/news/hc-sandy-hook-landa-toxicology-20131029_1_peter-landa-adam-landa-toxicology-report

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⁴ (U) *New York Daily News*, "NJ Fifth-Grader Faces Juvenile Charges After Planning Attack On Middle School," September 6, 2013, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/new-jersey-fifth-grader-planned-massive-attack-middle-school-cops-article-1.1448178>

⁵ (U) *Manasquan-Belmar Patch*, "Wall Township Fifth Grader Intermediate School In Mass Casualty Plot," September 6, 2013, Available: <http://manasquan.patch.com/groups/schools/p/wall-township-fifth-grader-targets-elementary-school-in-mass-casualty-plot>

⁶ (U) *Star Ledger*, "Trenton High School Student Arrested Before Returning to School to Shoot Fellow Classmates," November 30, 2012. Available online at: http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2012/11/trenton_high_school_student_ar.html#incart_river

⁷ (U) *Star Ledger*, "Cab Driver Who Foiled Trenton School Shooting Quits Job, Fearing Retaliation," November 30, 2012, Available online at: http://www.nj.com/mercer/index.ssf/2012/11/cabbie_who_foiled_trenton_scho.html

⁸ (U) *NJ.com*, "Uneasy Students Return after Bridgewater-Raritan High School Bomb Threat," December 14, 2009, Available online at: http://www.nj.com/news/local/index.ssf/2009/12/uneasy_students_return_after_b.html

⁹ (U) *Star Ledger*, "Second Teen Arrested in Bridgewater Bomb Scare, December 12, 2009, Available online at: http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2009/12/second_teen_arrested_in_brideg.html

¹⁰ (U) *Star Ledger*, "Bridgewater-Raritan High School Student Pleads Guilty to Threat that Closed School," March 10, 2010, Available online at: http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2010/03/bridgewater-raritan_high_schoo_1.html

¹¹ (U) CNN.com, "'Please Don't Shoot': Wounded Survivor, 12, Recalls Nevada School Attack," October 25, 2013, Available online at: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/24/justice/nevada-school-shooting-survivor/>

¹² (U) *New York Times*, "Four Dead in Santa Monica Shooting," June 7, 2013, Available online at: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/08/us/santa-monica-college-shooting.html?_r=0

¹³ (U) Associated Press, "1 Shot at North Carolina A&T State University," November 3, 2013, Available online at: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/shot-north-carolina-state-university-20767525>

¹⁴ (U) *CBSNews.com*, "2 Dead, 2 Wounded in Nevada Middle School Shooting," October 21, 2013. Available online at: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201_162-57608450/2-dead-2-wounded-in-nevada-middle-school-shooting/

¹⁵ (U) *CNN.com*, "Santa Monica Shooting Victim Dies, Bringing Toll to 5," June 9, 2013. Available: <http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/09/justice/california-college-gunman/>

¹⁶ (U) Associated Press, "Price Middle School Shooting: Wounded Student Recovering After Fellow Teen Opened Fire," January 31, 2013. Available online at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/31/price-middle-school-shoot_n_2595189.html

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²² (U) *Columbus Ledger-Enquirer*, "Russell County Sheriff: Admitted white supremacist teen planned to bomb high school," January 6, 2013. Available online at: <http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/2013/01/06/2334878/russell-county-sheriff-teen-planned.html>

²³ (U//FOUO) New Jersey Suspicious Activity Reporting System