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READINESS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM TO RESPOND TO AN ACTIVE SHOOTER ON A CAMPUS

Erin K. Newberry
Southeastern University - Lakeland

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READINESS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM TO RESPOND TO AN ACTIVE
SHOOTER ON A CAMPUS

By

ERIN KATHLEEN NEWBERRY

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SHOOTER ON A CAMPUS

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ERIN KATHLEEN NEWBERRY

Dissertation Approved:

Jessica Rafidi

Jessica Rafidi, EdD, Dissertation Chair

Thomas J. Gollery

Tom Gollery, EdD, Committee Member

Monica Ilse

Monica Ilse, EdD, Committee Member

Jim Anderson

Jim Anderson, PhD, Dean, College of Education

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my twins, Cooper & Lacey - may you always be happy, healthy, and safe. I pray that one day you will both have children as brilliant as you and love you unconditionally, just as you have loved me. This journey has, once again, proven our resilience and reminded us that we will always have each other – even on our worst days. We are stronger together. I have raised you both to always keep family first and in your hearts – just as my family raised me. To my loved ones, thank you for the continuous support and encouragement, even when I chose this research study over precious time. I have given up non-returnable time for long enough; now, we can get back to our family fun!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank those who have inspired me to continue my research. Many friends have encouraged me, reviewed my work, and just let me cry. As many times as I wanted to quit, I was always given those reminder words to keep fighting one fire at a time. SEU staff and faculty have embraced my global views and kept me on the straight and narrow, while keeping in mind my personal expedition. My dissertation committee has given me the support and guidance needed to remain afloat in some of the most difficult times of my life. My weekly calls that became daily calls with Dr. Rafidi are going to be missed. Our time became very much needed, and I thank you. My new-found source of time will certainly be nice to reallocate to get my life back. Dr. Gollery speaks numbers which I understand – a fondness of quantitative measures comes few and far between. Thank you for helping to guide my thoughts. Dr. Ilse has helped remind me of the importance of policy and protocol in facets of my professional world that will remain engrained. Those with a systems mindset blend well. Your guidance allowed me to enhance my professional world gracefully. To my editor, Dr. Bratten – here’s to the next series of new book ideas. I don’t know how I survived without you. I would like to thank God for providing me the strength to carry on my calling as a servant leader and to continue this research study. May others see God’s work through the lens of this research study. And finally, I want to remind myself this was worth all the sacrifices because a wise man once told me, “if it were easy, everyone would do it.”

Abstract

Philanthropic efforts and community responses to mass school shootings have generated an evolutionary change to the legislation surrounding school safety. An in-depth review of major school-related active-shooter incidents indicated a prioritized need for change across school campuses. Recent laws in the state of Florida created the eminent responsibility of site-based administrative teams in collaboration with the local sheriff's office, to effectively implement and participate in synergistic crisis planning. While school safety has been at the pinnacle of community leaders' political platforms for over 20 years, researchers have almost exclusively concentrated on identifying the role of the School Resource Officer (SRO) on a campus and explored perceptions of how safe students feel. This research study was designed to extrapolate the perceptions of the administrative team's readiness to respond to a campus crisis through the lens of the assigned school safety team. A survey instrument was designed and validated by the researcher, and voluntary respondents completed the survey items using Likert-scale responses. Leaders of school safety teams recruited members to voluntarily complete the survey. Data were collected by survey, and the results of the survey were aggregated into trends. Online surveys allowed for confidentiality; the data were securely kept. Participation in the study was delimited to members of school-level Active Threat Plan (ATP) safety teams as designated by building-level administrators represented in the study. The findings from this research study reflect levels of effective active threat plan implementation. The results and recommendations for change, along with professional development needs, are presented.

Keywords: emergency management; school safety; active threat plan; response to crisis; school safety teams; school shooting; mass school shootings; School Resource Officer (SRO)

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to identify to what extent the current Active Threat Plan (ATP) protocol is effective, and to determine what changes, if any, are needed to ensure administrative teams are ready to respond to an active shooter incident from the perspective of assigned safety teams on a school campus.

Due to the vast number of school shootings, the safety of students, faculty, and staff within a school campus is in question. The construct of social justice within school violence became prevalent enough within the public K12 and charter school sector that the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) developed the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative (OJP.gov, 2018). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was instituted by former President Jimmy Carter in 1979 and has guided federal and local agencies in the preparation, prevention, and response to crises (FEMA, 2020). As a federal agency, FEMA has a regional hierarchy supporting all 50 states and has worked with the OJP and NIJ (FEMA.gov, 2020). Additionally, the OJP has served as the federal government's largest funding source for criminal and juvenile justice programs. The NIJ (nij.ojp.gov, 2020) is the research and measurement agency within the OJP. According to the OJP (2018), the School Resource Officer (SRO) is a sworn law enforcement officer assigned to a school campus to ensure safety and crime prevention.

Referred to as *Parkland*, an active shooter incident was the catalyst for change within the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE, 2018). In response to the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (MSD), Senate Bill (SB) 7026, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, was passed and affected every school in the state of Florida (SB7026, 2018). The state of Florida legislature, as an interorganizational system, allocated \$400 million in funds to cover the following areas: mental health, firearm safety, and school safety (FLDOE, 2018). Florida school districts were required to implement protocols for monitoring and reporting mental health concerns. Florida school districts are also authorized to be selective regarding participation in Guardianship programs.

Specific to school safety and prior to SB7026, the already-instituted required safety drills and protocols had been researched and improved to increase survival of individuals during crises such as mass school shootings. Post SB7026, the Office of Safe Schools (OSS) was codified and provided tools to support site needs assessments for school safety (SB7026, 2018). As a proactive approach and prior to the Parkland incident, SROs and school-based administrators in a medium size district in Florida implemented tactics to increase awareness and decrease incidents as research indicated estimated response time of emergency personnel taking longer than the estimated time of active shooter event (T. Ferguson, personal communication, February 7, 2020).

Background of the Study

The Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) is a state agency that has served as the governing body for education in the State of Florida (FLDOE, 2018). The catalyst for change within FLDOE occurred when an active shooter incident took place on February 14, 2018, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas (MSD) High School located in Parkland, Florida within the

Broward County School District. The community response to the MSD crisis increased civil awareness. Alongside the large interest group known as the National Rifle Association, many political figure heads and elected service leaders rallied in debate over policy changes related to the topic of gun control. In addition, the community responded with a plea for increased school safety. The mass shooting at Parkland resulted in the state of Florida instituting a new legislative bill – Senate Bill (SB)7026 The Marjory Stoneman High School Safety Act (SB7026, 2018).

The new law, SB7026, affected every school in the State of Florida (SB7026, 2018). This organizational level change, as described by Burke (2018), had to have a starting point. After the passing of SB7026, various student support personnel were required to adhere to requirements to ensure the safety and mental health of students (SB7026, 2018).

Additionally, SB7026 outlines the implementation of Sentinel Programs at the local level in the state of Florida; the concept of Sentinel Programs has existed in other states prior to Florida’s SB7026. In the state of Florida, implementation of Sentinel Programs was deemed a policy choice of each school district.

Across all states, Sentinel Programs created opportunities for appropriately trained personnel to carry concealed firearms in an effort to support the response to an active shooter incident. “The South Dakota legislation is written in such a way that local communities have complete control of whether or not they implement the ‘sentinels’ program” (Minshew, 2018, p. 129). Specific to Florida, SB7026 “provide[d] \$162 million for safe-school officers and require[d] a safe-school officer at each school in the state. Safe-school officers must be sworn law enforcement officers” (SB7026, 2018).

The Marjory Stoneman High School Safety Act required such personnel at every school and had a compliance deadline of June 2018 – three months after its enactment, which was approximately one month after Parkland's mass shooting (FLDOE, 2018). The inception of SB7026 was announced less than 10 days post Parkland. According to Birkland (2016), rather than addressing school safety and the perceived gun reform needs that were raised by the public after the Columbine High School shootings in 1999, President Clinton “launched a study of how the entertainment industry markets ‘violent’ movies, music, and video games to children” (p. 129). Birkland (2016) concluded that after the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting in 2012, more than a decade after the Columbine school shootings, the “president did very little to promote gun control, and what efforts were attempted in Congress to tackle the issue failed” (p.128). Birkland (2016) also suggested that social decision-making was the science behind policy change; therefore, the focus on gun control took away from legislative accomplishments related to school safety.

Based on the Investigative Assistance for Violent Crimes Act of 2012, the NIJ was available to work alongside state and local authorities to investigate incidents like mass school shootings (FBI.gov, 2020). Specifically, after an active-shooter incident a task force is commissioned by the NIJ to report and reflect upon the investigative findings, as well as include recommendations for change. Experts relevant to each active-shooter situation serve on the task force to provide a scientific vantage point of the recommendations made by the task force, which is often made up of diverse professionals; for example, a school board member, a sheriff, and a mental health counselor (nij.ojp.gov, 2020). Creswell (2013) was instrumental in the foundational work for a case study related to a campus crisis. The case study methodology typically consists of conducting observations, reviewing documents, and interviewing

individuals. The case study approach enables a researcher to provide an in-depth understanding of a certain case or comparative cases (Creswell, 2013). Johnson (2018) described the history of the shooter and situation at MSD, along with information regarding prior knowledge of concern regarding the shooter and the lack of proactive responses from professionals. Johnson (2018) recommended change specific to the need for training of mental health professionals and law enforcement. Overall, Johnson (2018) provided a brief synopsis of the shooting and lack of efforts provided by both the Broward County Sheriff Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Johnson (2018) also described the lack of adequate training for mental health counselors. In order for multi-tiered schools to better support students, school personnel should be aware of situations that could impede student learning such as threats of violence like a mass shooting. Specifically, when students are witnesses to violent acts, those students are more prone to acts of violence. According to Johnson (2018) individuals who resort to violence possess behavioral factors in common with other individuals with violent behavioral patterns. Examples could include owning or hoarding a multitude of deadly weapons or internet search history patterns indicating a deep interest in learning about or viewing images of weapons. School shooters and mass murderers are often described as individuals possessing multiple weapons or a fascination with weapons, especially guns (Johnson, 2018). Policy change is necessary and may begin at the family level, as well as self-reporting procedures for constructs like stress and mental health needs.

According to the foundational research conducted by Creswell (2013), the case study research approach involved the study of a real-life situation. Creswell (2013) presented details of what a university experienced when a student brought a gun on campus and shot at fellow classmates in the classroom. The following were interviewed: students involved, students in

general, police, staff, and counselors. Various stakeholders were interviewed in order for the researcher to discover what event(s) happened, what could have been done to prevent the event(s), what may mentally retrigger individuals affected, and what strategies should be implemented to curtail similar event(s) (Creswell, 2013). After the school shooting at MSD, Johnson (2018) stated, “All [staff and students] acted without regard for their own safety to help save others and many paid with their lives” (p. 1). At the time of this manuscript, the MSD case is still under investigation due to the relevance of the case, along with the legislative changes involved (Johnson, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Kotter (2018) recommended transformational change through an eight-step process. As a theorist in leading change, Kotter’s (2018) first step in the process is of utmost importance and is potentially the phase in which half of organizations fail without creating the feeling of why change is needed. An active shooter incident is an external factor that creates a critical need for change. Effective leadership structure must include a chain of command, and the individual leaders must work toward the end goal with synergistic interdependence. According to Kotter (2018), “an ability and a willingness to work across the hierarchy while also working with people across all levels and functions” (p.15) is the framework successful leaders must pursue.

The school-based administrative staff, along with the SRO, provides the interagency coalition, as Kotter (2018) suggested. Kotter (2018) described that the common vision provides a strategic path to guide leaders from the past to the needed future. Parallel to Kotter’s (2018) process, the need for a school-based administrative team to effectively respond to a campus crisis is crucial; therefore, a common critical response vision and a set emergency protocol should be present. Likewise, according to Ingle (2017), the “overall vision of any organization’s potential

[is] known; [therefore], great leaders listen actively, carefully, and completely” (p. 28). The protocol is set by the SRO’s agency but must be embraced by the school-based team. Consequently, appropriately designed and adequately implemented professional development opportunities for the administrative staff is key.

Conceptual Framework

Kotter (2018) presented the Eight-Step Process leading to the organizational change.

Figure 1

Kotter’s Eight-Step Process

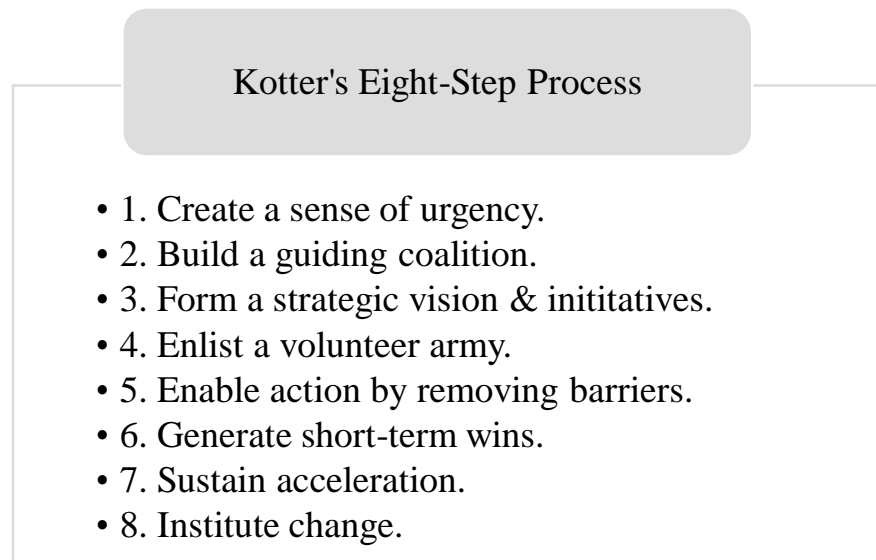


Figure 1 depicts a visual representation of the eight steps outlined by Kotter (2018). As reflected in Figure 1, the Eight-Step Process Kotter (2018) described for organizational change is a concept used to effect transformational change. Movement through the process allows for necessary change much like a problem-solving cycle or decision-making tree. Transformational change takes time to be effective and sustainable. According to Kotter (2018), the sense of urgency is “concentrating on the window of opportunity that is open today but may close

tomorrow” (p.10). A mass shooting on a campus is the opportunity for school districts to react. Further, Kotter (2018) explained a method for an organization to address critical needs with assessment inquiry. The state and legislative requirements overlay the assessment inquiry portion of the process. Specifically, Kotter (2018) has recommended the correlational analysis of the “stakes [of] success” versus the “consequences [of] failure” (p.11).

The structure presented by Kotter (2018) is an instrumental tool each school could utilize to ensure interagency preparation and response to an active shooter incident are effective. The participants in this study represented Kotter’s (2018) fourth step, a massive group of people needed to institute the common urgency responding to the opportunity. The study will show if the need to remove barriers or refine a protocol, as discussed by Kotter (2018) in the fifth step of his theory for effective organizational change, is necessary. While Kotter’s (2018) the sixth and seventh steps reflect celebration and forward movement, the eighth step, institution of change, will be presented in the discussion of the study’s findings.

Problem Statement

School shootings are trending upwards and maintaining relevance (T. Ferguson, personal communication, February 7, 2020). A few high-profile incidents include (a) Columbine High School, 1999, in Littleton, Colorado; (b) Sandy Hook Elementary School, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut; and, (c) Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, 2018, in Parkland, Florida. An active shooter scenario typically results in destruction and fatalities in under five to eight minutes (T. Ferguson, personal communication, February 7, 2020). Normal response time for trained authorities is typically four to six minutes (Minshew, 2018). Facility knowledge for school resource officers and administrative teams is critical. If emergency response teams do not know the layout of the school campus, valuable time is wasted, which could result in increased

fatalities; therefore, it is imperative an effectively implemented active threat plan (ATP) is present on every campus (Minschew, 2018). A crucial responsibility for an administrative team is to implement protocol and effectively respond to an ATP incident.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to reveal to what extent the ATP protocol is effective, and to determine what changes, if any, are needed to ensure administrative teams are ready to respond to an active shooter incident from the perspective of assigned safety team members.

Significance of the Study

This study was significant in light of the fact that all Florida school-based administrators are required to work with SROs to implement ATP protocol (SB7040, 2020). After the implementation of SB7026, the Office of Safe Schools was codified and provided tools to support site needs assessments for school safety, and requirements were instituted to ensure the safety and mental health of students (SB7026, 2018). Based on industry experience, safety teams from a medium size school district in the state of Florida were chosen as participants in this research. In an effort to explore the perceptions of interagency participants and the readiness of the administrative team to respond to a campus active shooter incident, secondary principals were also chosen to serve as the proxy for the study. The readiness of administrators to respond to an active shooter situation from the perception of the school safety team had minimal research-based data available. First-hand feedback from stakeholders is relevant data to collect and analyze in order to devise targeted professional development for administrative teams.

Overview of Methodology

Methodology

A survey instrument was designed and validated by the researcher, and voluntary respondents were invited to participate in and respond to the survey items with Likert-scale responses. Leaders of school-based safety teams invited members to complete the survey. Data were collected, and the results of the survey were aggregated into trends. Online surveys allowed for security of the survey, and the data were securely kept and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

Research Questions (RQ)

RQ 1: To what degree did study participants perceive their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

RQ 2: To what degree did study participants express satisfaction with their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

RQ 3: Considering the identified elements of ATP, which element manifested the greatest degree of response effect by study participants?

RQ 4: Considering elements of pre-drill, drill, and post-drill events associated with the district's ATP, which element was most associated with and predictive of study participant perceptions that their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP was sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

Research Hypotheses

H₀ 1: There will be a statistically significant effect for study participant agreement with perceptions regarding their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation.

H₀ 2: There will be a statistically significant effect for study participant perceptions of satisfaction regarding their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation.

H₀ 3: All school staff members are sufficiently trained and proficient in executing the district's ATP will reflect the greatest degree of study participant response effect.

H₀ 4: The ATP element of "pre-drill" activities will represent the most viable, statistically significant predictor of study participant perceptions of their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation.

Data Analysis

The study's data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequencies (n), percentages (%), mean scores (M), and standard deviations (SD) represented the descriptive statistical techniques used for comparative and illustrative purposes. Internal reliability of study participant response to survey items on the research instrument was evaluated using the Cronbach's alpha (α) statistical technique. The probability level of $p \leq .05$ represented the threshold value for statistical significance of finding for the inferential analyses associated with the study's four research questions and hypotheses. Magnitude of effect numeric values were interpreted using the conventions proposed by Sawilowsky (2009). The analyses of study data were conducted using IBM's 27th version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Delimitations

This study is delimited to one school district, as participants who completed the survey are safety team members within one district. The researcher is an administrator in the same school district; therefore, a possibility of biased opinions based on colleagues' perceptions of the researcher could create delimitations. The researcher is a member of a safety team within the district of the study, therefore a delimitation of participants was created when the researcher self-selected out of participating in the study.

Definitions of Key Terms

Active shooter refers to an individual who is located at a school campus and is armed with a firearm, firing shots, or both (FBI.gov, 2020).

Active threat refers to the behaviors demonstrated by an active shooter that pose a threat to the regular day-to-day activities of a school campus (FBI.gov, 2020).

Active Threat Plan (ATP) refers to the policy outlining the systematic procedure designed to respond to an active threat on a school campus (FLDOE.org, 2018).

Mental health refers to the psychological status of an individual (FLDOE.org, 2018).

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (MSD) refers to the high school campus in Parkland, Florida that endured an active shooting incident resulting in casualties and further resulted in state-wide legislation to ensure the safety of students. MSD is used interchangeably with "Parkland" (SB7026, 2018).

School Safety Team refers to a group of school-based personnel assigned to facilitate ATP drills and report results of the drills to the state department of education (SB7040, 2020).

School Resource Officer (SRO) refers to a ranked, sworn law enforcement officer assigned to protect a school campus (SB7040, 2020).

Principal refers to the lead school-based administrator (FLDOE.org, 2018).

Summary

In an effort to identify the readiness of assigned administrative staff for active shooter incidents in K12 schools, the researcher analyzed well-known mass school shootings and the level of response and readiness based on community response and the final submitted commission reports. According to Seeger (2005), organizational crisis is described as un-routine and unplanned. This study examined the effectiveness of the implemented ATP in a medium size school district in Florida and determined if any areas of weakness needed to be refined.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to identify to what extent the current Active Threat Plan (ATP) protocol is effective, and to determine what changes, if any, are needed to ensure administrative teams are ready to respond to an active shooter incident from the perspective of assigned safety teams on a school campus. After the implementation of SB7026, the Office of Safe Schools was codified and provided tools to support site needs assessments for school safety, along with requirements instituted to ensure the safety and mental health of students (SB7026, 2018). Following laws in place for school safety purposes, schools across the state of Florida employed school safety teams to help implement safety and mental health monitoring requirements. Minimal research exists substantiating the effective ATP protocol and implementation of safety plans.

Active Shooter Incidents

According to King and Bracy (2019), Columbine High School students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold were responsible for the tragic mass shooting at their school on April 20, 1999. Harris and Klebold arrived on campus and killed 12 students and one teacher, as well as injured 24 others; additionally, Harris and Klebold took their own lives (King & Bracy, 2019). The community blamed the negative influence of music by Marilyn Manson as the culprit behind the killings; however, safety team authorities shifted blame to Harris and Kelbold and cited the negative effects from bullying and from untreated suspected mental health illness (King & Bracy,

2019). The Columbine tragedy included shootings and homemade bombs even though the bombs did not detonate. No known active shooter action plans were developed; rather, a response to the campus shooting and interagency involvement included the deployment of the Immediate Action Rapid Deployment tactic (OJP.gov, 2018).

Michael Moore wrote, directed, and produced *Bowling for Columbine* (Moore, 2001), a feature documentary film. Similar to Kotter's (2018) step four of the Eight-Step Process, Moore (2001) enlisted himself into the aftermath of the massacre at Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. Moore's (2001) film depicted the events and community response to the mass school shooting at Columbine in April of 1999. Moore hoped to decrease school mass shootings with the production of the film (Moore, 2001). The presentation of the film served as a media outlet to respond to the mass shooting at Columbine. Moore (2001) was instrumental in bringing awareness to the Columbine case and making strides to have ammunition removed from the shelves of a local department store. Subsequent to the mass shooting and film depicting Columbine, language use of the term "the Columbine effect" became a linguistic marker of a tragedy. According to Muschert (2019), "the Columbine Effect" brings bias to a particular incident that mimics the mass school shooting.

Adam Lanza was responsible for the school shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in December 2012 (Bonanno & Levenson, 2014). According to Bonanno & Levenson (2014), Lanza shot and killed six staff members and 20 first-graders at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut. He murdered the victims in the school after killing his own mother in their home. The Sandy Hook case is historical due to the type of victims, specifically elementary aged children. Community response to this incident resulted in anti-bully programs and attention to dedicated kindness activities on school grounds. Diagnosed mental illness and gun control

were major themes of investigation as a result of the Sandy Hook tragedy. The sale of certain types of guns and accessories were the topic of legislative initiatives (Bonanno & Levenson, 2014). The Sandy Hook active shooter devastation remains the deadliest school shooting in American history, according to Bonanno & Levenson (2014).

Nicholas Cruz was responsible for an active shooter incident that took place on February 14, 2018, at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School located in Parkland, Florida within the Broward County School District. The community response to this crisis, often referred to as “Parkland”, increased civil awareness and social justice. The Parkland case was scrutinized for the lack of emergency response to the incident. According to Johnson (2018), numerous reports indicated that several Broward County Sheriff deputies were outside of the school taking cover when they should have entered the building to confront the gunman. This was reported by Coral Springs Police officers who has [*sic*] responded to the shooting. Then the school resource officer, also a Broward County Sheriff’s deputy, left the school building the gunman was in rather than confront the gunman. (p.1)

Johnson (2018) described school faculty and students as heroes who “acted without regard for their own safety to help save others and many paid with their lives” (p. 1). A key statement from the article is Johnson’s (2018) open-ended phrase: “the investigation into this shooting and the Sheriff’s office response is under investigation” (p. 1). As of the publication of this manuscript, the case is still open.

One of the major responses to Parkland was preparation for student walkouts and protests related to gun control. Guidance from the district office was vital because the potential for campus disruption due to student protests and violation of civil rights existed within educational institutions (OJP.gov, 2020). Articulating school policies and rules within the context of students

exercising their civil rights can be difficult; as well, enforcing disciplinary action for those students participating in the walkouts and protests is challenging when balancing civil rights demonstrations and maintaining regular school operations. The differentiation occurs when protest-type activities cause disruption to the campus. Students have the right to assemble and the right to freedom of speech – both must be paired together for friendly protests and not for chaotic rioting (OJP.org, 2020).

An open forum with student leaders was established at MSD (Johnson, 2018), along with effective community guidance, so that student groups were able to create appropriate parameters for protest to ensure their safety and maintain their civil rights on their campus. Students in various school districts across the state of Florida organized campus activities such as silent sit-ins and walkouts. Ribbons were given out to show strong support of the “Stand Up” movement, which was designed to virtually pair other Florida schools with MSD for local political community events. The “Stand Up” event allowed leaders to discuss community concerns and answer questions to students regarding civil rights and voting procedures. Statewide campus movements, such as peaceful protests and Stand Up, turned into national marches, and the overarching effect was a heightened awareness of the MSD case (Johnson, 2018).

Interagency Collaboration

The Gun Free Schools Act of 1994 (USC4141, 1994) required each state to maintain a law supporting the expulsion of any student found in possession of a gun on a school campus; and, each state and local authority has autonomy to review individual cases with potential expulsions. According to FLDOE’s (2020) School Environmental Safety Incident Reporting (SESIR) Codes and Definitions, the “possession of any instrument or object that can inflict serious harm on another person or that can place a person in reasonable fear of serious harm” (p.

1) is reportable to the state upon a student's disciplinary action within the school house. In an effort to create a safer school environment, Florida's Office of Safe Schools implemented a procedure to report high-level acts of crime. The reporting method is via the "SESIR which grew out of the public's concern that children be safe in the school environment" (FLDOE.org, 2018, p. 1). The tracking of the SESIR (FLDOE.org, 2018) data was designed to allow schools to monitor serious incidents and intervene appropriately with disciplinary action. The school principal is required to report high-level crime data to FLDOE.

In addition to school-based procedures, the local sheriff's office (SB7040, 2020) must work alongside the administrator when a disciplinary referral includes a SESIR indicator of "report to law enforcement". According to the SESIR (2020) procedures, "the presence of, notification of, or consultation with a Law Enforcement Officer or SRO, is not sufficient for an incident to be coded as 'Reported to Law Enforcement'" (p. 1); therefore, an official action taken by the agency would exist in conjunction with the disciplinary referral (such as a filed report, assigned case number, arrest, or any combination of the actions listed).

SB7040 allowed for school districts in Florida to collaborate and contract with a local sheriff's agency for the safety need(s) of the school (SB7040, 2020). The development of a skilled Sentinel/Marshall program occurred to potentially provide a quicker response time to a school campus under an active shooter attack versus that of a non-instituted Sentinel/Marshall program, thus limiting the number of potential deaths (T. Ferguson, personal communication, February 7, 2020). Unfortunately, due to the upward trending of mass school shootings, the laws and required reporting system for acts of violence in Florida schools are not a preventive of a shooting on a campus.

Taylor's (2013) mixed-methods research study on perceptions of zero-tolerance aligns with the literature of SESIR implementation. Taylor (2013) studied the perceptions of the implemented policy and utilized the following research question, "Are there differences in the perception of ZT policies among Florida Administrators and SROs?" (p. x). A MANOVA and chi-square analysis were conducted, and results of the analysis revealed school administrators (N=165) and SROs (N=179) did not have a statistically significant difference in perceptions related to the staff's implementation of the ZT policy (Taylor, 2013). Based on the results of the survey study, perceptions of those who serve on a school safety team feel the implemented policy of an ATP must be adhered to with fidelity. The overall importance of interagency collaborations related to violence on a school campus is validated. Taylor's (2013) qualitative findings, gathered from interviews, described the need to increase awareness of specified roles for administrators and resource officers on a campus.

School Resource Officers (SROs) are specially trained, sworn law enforcement officers or deputies of law enforcement agencies. Sentinel or Marshall programs were a topic of exploration within the Senate and House. Funds for increased security officers at schools were allocated to meet the SB7026 (2018) deadlines for implementation. Although budget cuts were slated for education at the time of SB7026 (2018), \$4 million dollars were allocated for officer salaries in order to make schools safer. The implementation of Guardian programs as opposed to Sentinel programs in which certified agents of protection – non-sworn law enforcement officers – in addition to increased volunteers to monitor the school campus were a suggested area to be implemented with minimal costs for communities. Emergency first responders who were not appropriately trained may have extended response time to active threats and increased fatalities when inappropriately responding to campus active shooter situations. However, appropriately

trained Sentinels or Guardians would decrease response times to active threats, and shortened response times would lead to fewer fatalities overall in an active shooter situation. Collaboration between Sentinels and school-based administrators defines interagency communication as outlined in SB7040 (2020). Interagency response time, along with effective communication with school safety teams is vital.

Audet dit Lapointe (2016) conducted a quantitative research study to discover the perceptions of how safe teachers felt with an armed SRO on campus. The research question, “Is there a difference in teachers’ perception of school safety between Mississippi public high schools and middle schools with SROs from those schools with [school safety officer] SSOs?” was hypothesized to reflect minimal significance in perceptions of 193 teachers in feeling safe (p. 17). Audet dit Lapointe (2016) utilized an F-test and power analysis to compare perceptions of how teachers felt about their safety specific to the presence of an SRO/SSO. An SSO, or school safety officer, is synonymous with SRO (SB7040, 2020). The results of the study indicated the teachers felt safer when the SRO/SSO was present on campus as opposed to no SRO/SSO present on campus (Audet dit Lapointe, 2016). The identification of clear and concise roles of both the SRO and SSO in this study was an additional factor that contributed to teachers’ perceptions. A gap in literature validated a need for more research in the area of school safety. Protocol mandates and the role of interagency members is validated within current literature. Overall, minimal research was available within the school safety construct, specific to readiness of safety teams to respond to crisis events.

Based on rising trends in the late 1970s, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) instituted interventions to help reduce school violence and disruptive behaviors (OJP.gov, 2020). Then, a partnership with the Department of Education ensued with drug-free schools at the epicenter

(OJP.gov, 2020). Likewise, in response to H1N1, which is a strain of the influenza virus (CDC, 2019), the “Uniform Systemwide Procedures and Reporting” of the Campus Emergency Management was codified. The State University System of Florida and Board of Governors (BOG) requires each institution to have an emergency management plan (FEMA, 2020). According to Field (2018) Oakland University devised an active shooter plan in which every student was issued a hockey puck. The plan was designed for each student to have a hockey puck to throw at an active shooter, if needed (Field, 2018). The Oakland police chief assisted with conceptualizing the idea for students be able to throw the pucks at the intruder to ward off the intruder (Field, 2018). According to its website, the University of Florida Emergency Management (UFEM, 2019) department:

within the UF Public and Environmental Safety Division, the UF Department of Emergency Management (UFDEM) is responsible for coordinating a comprehensive, all-hazards approach by providing the institution with a framework of preparedness through prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery – striving to safeguard University lives and property. This framework allows the University to collectively address major incidents and emergencies. (About Us section)

In addition, the “Florida Board of Governors Regulation 3.001 requires the development and maintenance of an emergency management program and Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan for the University” (UFEM, 2019, p. 2). In response to the shooting at MSD, Florida Senate Bill (SB) 7026 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act was passed, affecting every school in the state of Florida (SB7026, 2018).

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security defined an active shooter as an individual actively attempting or engaged in killing people in an area with people (Agnich, 2015). Alert,

Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (ALICE) is a school safety program developed in 2000 in which an active shooter incident is defined a fast-paced, unpredictable situation (Agnich, 2015). According to Agnich (2015), a company specializing in active shooter training, active shooter events last approximately 10-15 minutes. Schools have taken on active threat planning as the most recent addition of crisis planning. Creswell (2013) was instrumental in his foundational research on a mass shooting on a campus, to include gun violence and multiple victims. Aligned with Kotter (2018), interagency rapport and communication is vital in order to maintain safety within government buildings, specifically educational institutions. Johnson (2018) described the history of the shooter and situation at MSD, along with information regarding the lack of response from professionals with prior knowledge of concern, regarding the shooter.

Social Justice

As Kotter's (2018) Eight-Step Process depicts, community plays a role in the aftermath and recovery to a major crisis. According to the Center for Economic and Social Justice [CESJ] (2021), Community refers to social justice and is defined as an individual's perception of what is fair or just. Social mores and individual values play a part in how an individual may feel or perceive a situation to be unfair. Subjectivity of the individual as creating a level of bias for a situation or problem could differ, dependent on the individual (King & Bracy, 2019). According to Ingle (2017), the context of a situation, whether subjective or objective in nature, will shift and need to be "assessed and refined related to human context" (p. 38). For example, when a physical fight breaks out between two students at a school, both students will usually receive disciplinary action. Although one of the students may be the aggressor over the other; both participated in the fight, therefore the discipline creates a sense of unfairness to the non-aggressor. Contrarily, what is fair and just would be the accountability of both students. Further, the non-aggressor may feel

a consequence should not have been issued and trigger due process by attempting to appeal the consequence (King & Bracy, 2019). A mass shooting at a school could be considered unjust related to school safety, especially from the perspective of a survivor of a deceased student slayed by an active shooter. In some circumstances, an active shooter on a school campus may feel treated unjustly or dismayed, or the active shooter could be the victim of bully-like behaviors from other students. The expectation of the state of Florida is that administrators to ensure the safety of students as well as an active shooter, while maintaining social justice for all facets of an active shooter incident (SB7040, 2020). Despite what individuals may feel is or is not just, a framework to support social justice has been created to reinforce basic civil rights and the justice system. Ideally, the social justice construct, paired with the law's required safety plans, can be effectively implemented while using Kotter's (2018) process.

Community

Humanistic leaders with emotional and social intelligence respond to their students after a tragic event on a campus with grace (Burke, 2018). According to Richell (2018), Ty Thompson was the school Principal during the MSD tragedy. Thompson offered a humanistic promise, "I will hug each and every one of you as many times as you need and I will hold you as long as you need me to" (Richell, 2018, p. 1) in an emotional video to the school. Similar to needed organizational changes subsequent to the MSD tragedy, a humanistic leader with social intelligence skills is the best candidate to get a school through such a tragedy and subsequent changes. According to Maslow's (1943) foundational research, humans need to move through the hierarchy of needs in order to achieve self-actualization. Sousa (2017) explained that emotional connections made with learning allowed other experiences to shape; therefore, emotion-driven experiences create implications for students' academic success. Positive

emotions such as joy and happiness are additive to learning; whereas negative emotions such as fear and anger are subtractive to learning (Sousa, 2017). For example, a mass shooting at a school could cause fear in a student, therefore the student may experience an inability to concentrate in class.

Kotter's (2018) step two in the Eight-Step Process is the building a coalition phase. The humanistic approach within organizational change allows "highly-motivated [individuals to] believe that their behavior will lead to certain rewards, that these rewards are worthwhile" (Burke, 2018, p. 184). Likewise, Gavin (2005) stated, "as time passes, [supervisors] must manage the mood so that employees' emotional states support implementation and follow-through" (p. 106). The state of Florida strives to support all students in the state with a multi-tiered system of supports to include mental health (SB7026, 2018). In order to better support students, school personnel should know of situations that could impede student learning due to students' emotional states. Specifically, when students witness violent acts, a situation has been created in which a student is prone to acts of violence. According to Johnson (2018),

violent personality includes those predisposed to engage in violent behavior who possess specific factors correlated with violent behavior ... permissive or abusive parenting appears to play a significant role as well for the basis of the offender's behavior. A fascination with weapons, especially guns, collecting and often firing the guns, and possessing multiple weapons are correlated with school shooters and mass murders. (p. 4)

Further, Johnson (2018) stated, "it is everyone's responsibility to report any person to law enforcement when aware of concerns for potential violence. Psychology and law enforcement professionals understand the risk factors and should always take any

concerning behavior or threat seriously” (p. 4). Thus, providing multi-tiered supports from varying individuals is a foundation for building community, or coalition (Kotter, 2018).

Kaufman (2018) conducted a comparative case study to analyze the relationship between mental illness and school shootings. Community building through varied levels of support from varying individuals may begin at the family level with the family knowing about and teaching children the self-reporting procedures for constructs like stress and mental health needs (Johnson, 2018). Connecting school, family, and law enforcement to outline interagency and community building, Johnson (2018) wrote, “mental health professionals must report any concern immediately to law enforcement and follow-up with law enforcement frequently to ensure the concerns are being addressed” (p. 3). Thus, community is built through strategic partnerships among various stakeholders.

Similar to Kotter’s (2018) formulation of initiatives phase, critical theories of learning and development of college students in the constructs of cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains became the concentration for public K12 schools. According to Johnson (2018), public K12 high school students needed mental health supports after surviving a school shooting. Several MSD graduates attended higher educational institutions with few wrap-around services available upon entering as freshman. Johnson (2018) focused on the lack of suicide prevention supports and the accountability reporting requirements of the schools. The institutions of SB7026 forced all public K12 schools to abide by public safety rules. Specific to the crisis response at MSD, required tools within SB7026 (2018) such as therapy dogs and increased

numbers of student services team members were needed to help students and staff cope with the aftermath of the school shooting.

Aligned with Kotter's (2018) initiatives phase, two major Florida colleges – one of which has Parkland shooting survivors in attendance – were analyzed and found to have implemented some innovative practices through various student services in the departments of student development. According to Florida State University (FSU), a department was created to provide support outside of the academic classroom in order to support academic success throughout the college career (2019). The New Student & Family Programs (NSFP) exists to aid in the transition of our new students and their family members to Florida State University (FSU, 2019). The NSFP department was created to work with students from admission to Florida State University through the end of the first academic year through interactive engagement on social, emotional, and academic levels (FSU, 2019).

Similarly, the University of Florida (UF) created a department to assist students academically, socially, and emotionally (UF, 2019). The University of Florida also provides a preview program for incoming first-year students. The department was created in a response to MSD (SB7026, 2018) with the knowledge students and families progress through multiple stages of uncertainty during the life transition from high school to college. Because of the development of the student support departments, FSU (2019) and UF (2019) offered many activities, events, and co-curricular clubs and organizations for students. Both institutions created concentrated efforts for student health, well-being, and academic support. Kotter (2018) suggested a fourth step in his process referred to as enlistment. Specifically, collegiate administrative teams serve as this army of volunteers to work on behalf of the students. The school-based armies help to strategically form, or mold, step three of the Eight-Step Process presented by Kotter (2018).

While maintaining Kotter's (2018) strategic vision and initiative stage of leadership, a few colleges integrated wellness into the curriculum, according to Nguyen (2019). Nguyen (2019) conducted a qualitative review of literature of approximately five colleges that provided wrap around serviced to students. The University of Southern California had at least one course in which students can enroll for up to one college credit to explore self-care practices. In an effort to provide students with the opportunity for free counseling services, counselors lobbied for instant self-help coping strategies while students waited counseling appointments. Campus mental health needs increased with 30% more use of the counseling centers and approximately 25% of the student body with diagnoses of mental illness (Nguyen, 2019). Nguyen (2019) described mental health programs in the form of coursework on a trajectory of becoming mandated courses for incoming freshman and campus life developing a culture of care with the overarching theme of self-reflection.

The development of mental health courses, the methodology for delivery, and follow up through course feedback varies by institution (Nguyen, 2019). One campus, the University of Pennsylvania Law School (UPLS) developed an advisory committee comprised of students and faculty, while a different campus recruited upperclassman to facilitate and serve as health partners to underclassman. UPLS developed the pilot program specifically geared toward the stressors law students face (Nguyen, 2019). Nguyen (2019) concluded that educational programs focusing on self-assessment, resilience, and the construct of self-care are important for collegiate students based on the qualitative analysis of college services offered at various college campuses; however, Nguyen (2019) identified a gap in literature related to the supports in place for adult survivors of mass school shootings. Thus, further research is needed to identify and implement longitudinal services for active shooter survivors as they exit the K12 setting and advance to

institutions of higher education. Kotter's (2018) fifth step aligns with longitudinal organizational change by removing the barrier of mental illness for survivors of active shooter incidents.

Ultimately, mandated curricular programs teaching self-determination and self-advocacy for K12 students would help better prepare students for transition into higher education or work force.

Response and Rebuilding

Community event planners often utilize an extensive selection process to choose a city to host major events. The city in which a major event is to be held often experiences interruptions to the normal day-to-day activities; therefore, strategic planning is vital. Tilcsik (2013) described major events as resulting in "punch" or an extreme increase in philanthropic spending. According to Tilcsik (2013), "we examine how different types of megaevents (the Olympics, the Super Bowl, political conventions) and natural disasters (such as floods and hurricanes) affected philanthropic spending of locally headquartered Fortune 1000 firms between 1980 and 2006" (p. 1). According to the canonical research of Eldredge and Gould (1972), punctuated equilibrium is "a core idea in that model—which was lost when it was imported into the social sciences—is that geographic location plays a significant role in determining which populations are subject to abrupt changes at a given time" (p. 135).

Strategic planning of major events with a desire for punch requires attention to organizational change based on the geographic location or re-location of the event and an analysis of the financial impact to the location. Roche (2000) defined major events as "mega-events [that] are large-scale cultural, political, athletic, and commercial events that attract significant media attention" (p. 1). Eldredge and Gould (1972) posited "[the] geographic location not only determines enduring institutional conditions but also demarcates which organizations are exposed to the impact of different punctuating events. Communities matter

both as sites of persistence and as sites of punctuation” (p. 136). Related to organizational change, maintaining an annual event such as Relay for Life at a local high school would have benefits of persistence surrounded by the familiarity of a community. On the contrary, a fundraising event hosted at a non-affluent community high school could lose the punch or lack punctuation, and a fund raiser without a punch would create a need for organizational change, namely a change in venue.

Although the literature concentrated on the aftermath of tragedies in the community or school campus, when the community hosts major events during the recovery, often “a local esprit de corps emerges, causing a rise in helping behaviors, such as donations and volunteering” (Eldredge & Gould, 1972, p. 116). Thus, acting on helping behaviors leads to the healing and recovery of victims, families, and survivors and impacts the nature of organizational change. Philanthropy often facilitates recovery.

According to Seeger (2005), organizational crisis is described as “very un-routine and unexpected within the [company] that specifically threatens the overall vision. These crisis situations are low in probability with high uncertainty. After such described crisis, often times organizations have no choice but to rebuild and reorganize” (p.138). As noted by Eldredge and Gould (1972), “negative effects of disasters may offset the above-described mechanisms. First, because disasters cause significant physical and economic damage, they may limit the philanthropic capacity of local firms” (p. 117). The events of 9/11 created positive change for Cantor Fitzgerald, which lost two-thirds of its employees as a result of the 9/11 terror attacks. Although disastrous, the events of 9/11 created positive philanthropic change for the Cantor Fitzgerald firm, in which three positive organizational changes were cultivated to include: positive social interactions and relational leadership; tithing or philanthropic efforts and servant

leadership; and, crisis to renewal and strengths leadership. The Chief Executive of Financial Services for Cantor Fitzgerald stated, “I want the company to honor the people we lost. Before, we were about succeeding in business. Now, we are about honor and pride” (Thompson, 2011, p. 23).

According to Thompson (2011), “Walczak [a bonds trader employee at Cantor Fitzgerald] switched from trading bonds to securities in the post-9/11 reorganization, in one of many vital acts of restructuring. He ‘needed’ to get back to work” (p. 23). This type of relational interaction allows for the ‘family’ approach to response to crisis. “By all accounts, the hard-charging boss became the sensitive father figure in the recovery efforts” (Thompson, 2011, p. 23). According to Thompson (2011) “the workplace often doubles as a surrogate family because of overlapping responsibilities, shared interests, and unspoken comradeship that develop over the many hours spent together daily. Belonging to a group creates positive synergy that leads to team spirit” (Thompson, 2011, p. 23). The Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund was implemented only 3 days after the events of 9/11, and over time has morphed into a philanthropic foundation serving natural disaster victims. The foundation also donates 100% of Cantor Fitzgerald’s proceeds on September 11th of each year, which honors the anniversary of the tragedy.

Conversely, the A.K. Rice Institute for the Study of Social Systems (AKRI), change that was part of a well thought out plan turned disastrous. According to Noumair (2010), change is intentionally planned within an organization. Kotter (2018) described a dedicated flow of transformational change with the Eight-Step Process. The mission of the AKRI morphed from two different ideals – membership and education – into education as the primary focus (Noumair, 2010). As the AKRI underwent transformational change by formulating one shared vision, the organization fell apart. While funding was an external factor that ultimately affected AKRI; the

mindset of making money had to be changed, with steps taken by the Institute in a strategic way in order to effect change. Noumair (2010) presented a lack of a common goal as a barrier for AKRI. When the roles of leaders were not clearly stated, the opportunity for chaos increased and the overall systems of an organization failed. According to Senge (2006), “At its simplest level, a shared vision is the answer to the question, ‘What do we want to create?’” (p. 192). Likewise, Kotter’s (2018) third step in the Eight-Step process posits that everyone shares that vision. All employees within an effective organization must work toward the organization’s shared goal together, interdependently. According to Noumair (2010), “the post hoc analysis makes explicit lessons learned ... in their differentiated roles (p. 478). Unfortunately, internal factors that contributed to the fall of AKRI would be from the false ‘united front’ that the leaders set forth. Parallel to AKRI, when implementing an Active Threat Plan (ATP), a school must have an organized method for direction and implementation of the process; otherwise, the time to respond to crisis will increase and lead to delayed success in bringing the crisis to an end.

Miller’s (1978) contributions focused on the actions of concrete components in fulfilling the critical subsystems “required by systems at each level” (p. 1). The linear protocol aligns with the process of Kotter (2018). Throughout the case study for AKRI, although appearing to follow a systematic way of enveloping an organization, the Institute’s methodology was not maintaining critical subsystems with regard to operations and leadership leading to the need for organizational change. Kotter’s (2018) process allows for slow and steady revisits to previous steps to ensure effective change.

Change

Parallel to Kotter’s (2018) conceptual framework of the Eight-Step process for organizational change, Burke (2018) presented two types of organizational change. The first type

of change, evolutionary change, is compared to Darwin's theory of evolution in that revolutionary change takes time; yet, revolutionary change "occurs in leaps, spurts, and disruptions" (Burke, 2018, p. 99). The second type of change is revolutionary change, or continuous "improvements, incremental steps to fix a problem or change a part of the larger system" (Burke, 2018, p. 78) that could occur to address an immediate problem. McChrystal (2011) presented the evolutionary change of language, skill set, and perceptual concepts of electronic media as it relates to leadership as a paratrooper in the military. Changes in language occur over a long span of time. Applying Burke's (2018) concepts, McChrystal's (2011) leadership during 9/11 was considered revolutionary change. McChrystal (2011) described his pre-flight jump routines as status quo. However, because McChrystal's team was mid-jump when the attacks of 9/11 occurred, the jump transformed from status quo to a landing of a different world (McChrystal, 2011). As the situation on 9/11 changed from pre-flight to landing, McChrystal (2001) was able to lead the squad to a successful landing. McChrystal trusted that the squad was going to follow his leadership and instruction, and the paratroopers systematically landed and packed their gear successfully. Thus, McChrystal's experience during the 9/11 jump illustrated the concept of revolutionary change because organizational change occurred rapidly to address an immediate problem.

Goleman & Boyatzis (2008) described social intelligence and utilized the construct as a descriptor for leadership. According to Goleman and Boyatzis (2008), "A more relationship-based construct for assessing leadership is social intelligence, which [is defined] as a set of interpersonal competencies built on specific neural circuits (and related endocrine systems) that inspire others to be effective" (p. 3). In addition, "recent studies of the brain show that leaders can improve group performance by understanding the biology of empathy" (Goleman &

Boyatzis, 2008, p. 1). Based on prior success on implementing strategy at one business, a Fortune 500 company hired a new top executive in order to create exponential growth within the company (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). After only nine months, the top executive was not performing to the employer's expectations and was required to participate in coaching sessions. Additionally, the employer implemented a 360-degree evaluation. The performance feedback from 360-degree leadership evaluations return data reflecting a particular skill set for a humanistic leader, including constructs such as: organizational awareness or cultural backgrounds, stress, inspiration, and teamwork (Bracken, Rose, & Church, 2016). Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) stated,

To measure an executive's social intelligence and help him or her develop a plan for improving it, we have a specialist administer our behavioral assessment tool, the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory. It is a 360-degree evaluation instrument by which bosses, peers, direct reports, clients, and sometimes even family members assess a leader according to seven social intelligence qualities. (p. 5)

A leader must possess the ability to be attuned to and empathetic toward others (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008).

Paul Levy led a humanistic and strategic change at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) to include methods that were both theory-based and application-based (Garvin & Roberto, 2005). The change theories "overlap, and in reality, organization[al] change more often than not is explained through multiple theoretical lenses" (Burke, 2018, p. 201). According to Burke (2018), change must be purposeful and adaptive; also, the content and process of change must be strategic. Change theory is specific to meeting pre-set goals, along with reassessment of those goals to ensure change. Change theory correlates with the changes led by Levy at BIDMC

in that Levy issued a specific plan with timelines and a framework to include the employees (Garvin & Roberto, 2005). The plan was rolled out in four phases and included a persuasive element. While specific and detail-oriented, the proposed changes failed as Levy did not truly consider the needs of the employees. At critical intervals reinforcement to “ensure that the desired changes take hold and there is no backsliding” (Garvin & Roberto, 2005, p. 106) must be implemented. Thus, humanistic leaders bring about change. Kotter (2018) detailed the need for open communication, alongside a group of like-minded and humanistic individuals to be effective change-agents using his Eight-Step Process.

Gap in Literature

Subsequent to an exhaustive search for and analysis of existing research related to the evolutionary change of federal and state laws, specific to school safety, response to crisis within the business world and major community events, the presence of law enforcement on a school campus and the perceptions of safety, interagency collaboration, gaps remained as related to school administrators’ perceptions of readiness to address an active shooter incident.

Specifically, a gap in professional literature existed related to the readiness of administrators to respond to an active shooter situation from the perception of school safety teams. School safety teams are comprised of law enforcement and school administrators; therefore, as key stakeholders in the process of crisis response, a need existed to elicit feedback in order to devise professional development opportunities for administrative teams.

III. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the extent to which ATP protocols were effective and predictive of school readiness to address an actual crisis situation. A quantitative, non-experimental research design was utilized to address the study's topic and purpose (Fraenkel, et. al., 2019). Moreover, a survey research methodology was used to specifically elicit study participant perceptions of elements deemed central to the study's overarching construct. Four research questions and hypotheses were presented in an effort to address the study's topic and research purpose. Chapter three contains the reporting of the essential elements associated with the methodological aspects of the study.

Sample/Sample Selection

The study's sample was accessed in a non-probability, convenient/purposive manner (Mills & Gay, 2019). Study participants were accessed in one medium size school district located in the southeast region of the United States. Participation in the study was delimited to members of school-level ATP committees as designated by building-level administrators represented in the study. An acceptable response rate of at least 50% was established at the outset of the study. The response rate achieved in the study of 59% exceeded the 30% to 40% threshold customarily achieved through internal surveying and the desired response level established at the outset of the study (Fluid Surveys, 2014).

Statistical Power Analysis

Statistical power analysis using the G*Power software platform (3.1.9.2, Universität Düsseldorf, Germany) was conducted for sample size estimates associated with statistical significance testing. The study's statistical power analysis was delimited to anticipated medium and large effects, a power ($1 - \beta$) index of .80, and a probability level of .05.

In research questions one through three, the one sample *t* test was used for statistical significance testing purposes. An anticipated medium effect ($d = .50$) would require 27 study participants and 12 study participants for a large effect ($d = .80$) to detect a statistically significant finding. In research question four, the multiple linear regression statistical technique was used for statistical significance testing purposes within the predictive modeling. An anticipated medium effect ($f^2 = .15$) would require 77 study participants to detect a statistically significant finding, and an anticipated large effect ($f^2 = .35$) would require 36 study participants to detect a statistically significant finding.

Research Instrumentation

The study's research instrument was a researcher-created survey (see Appendix A) in the absence of an existing standardized instrument specifically designed to address the study's construct. As a result, the validation of the study's research instrument was addressed through a three-stage validation process. The first stage, a subjective, content validity judgment process followed the outline provided by Bruce and Lack (2009). Subjective judgement is generally understood as a process whereby experts give an opinion or estimate of a response to a question or problem based on intuition and guessing in the absence of objective data (Bruce & Lack, 2009). The process, using subject matter experts (SMEs) in the area of school readiness for crises and active shooter situations, provided the themes that formed the survey items represented in

the study's research instrument. No specific statistical information was achieved in the subjective content validity judgment stage of the instrument validation process.

The study's research instrument, developed in the wake of the first stage of the validation process, reflected the use of 5-point scaling for Likert-type survey instruments promoted by Norman (2010). Among the many advantages of using a 5-point Likert scale in the surveying process Norman (2010) noted,

parametric statistics can be used with Likert data, with small sample sizes, with unequal variances, and with non-normal distributions, with no fear of coming to the wrong conclusion, and these findings are consistent with empirical literature dating back nearly 80 years. (p. 631)

The second stage of instrument validation was achieved through a piloting of the study's research instrument. The Cronbach's alpha (α), statistical technique was used to evaluate the internal reliability of pilot study participant response to the instrument. An alpha level of at least $\alpha = .60$ to $.70$ was sought for validation purposes in the pilot study phase (George, et. al., 2018). In the posteriori phase of instrument validation, the Cronbach's alpha (α) statistical technique was again utilized to assess the internal reliability of participant response to survey items once study data were collected.

Study Procedures

A researcher-designed survey instrument was developed with 14 items, utilizing a drill checklist (see Appendix B) used by a medium size school district in Florida as a guide. The survey was set up with Qualtrics (2021) Online Survey in order to guarantee that all participants would receive the same survey items. By design, respondents did not have to answer personally identifiable questions. Participants are currently not meeting in large in-person groups, due to the

COVID-19 pandemic. The online survey, therefore, was designed keeping in mind the need for respondents to participate from the safety of their homes or offices and to maintain confidentiality. COVID-19 response requirements called for physical distancing served as a limitation; however, the technological format allowed for a simultaneous mass distribution of the survey.

Principals of secondary schools were chosen to serve as the proxy of the survey because they are the leaders of school safety teams. The researcher used a district tool to identify the names and emails of each principal. The link for the online Qualtrics survey was emailed to all secondary principals, along with a letter explaining the survey and invitation to participate. Voluntary participants verified informed consent prior to responding to the survey. The directions requested that principals serve as a proxy and send the link for the survey. Principals recruited two to five members of the school's safety team to voluntarily participate in the survey. The survey design maintained a systematic method for each stem, and safety team members utilized a 5-point Likert scale for responses. The survey window was open for 14 days. Data were collected by survey, and the results of the survey were aggregated into trends using IBM's 27th version of its Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The researcher was an employee in the same school district that was chosen for the study; therefore, to avoid bias strict adherence to the study procedures to maintain appropriate data management was maintained. Data were securely kept on a laptop and transferred to a thumb drive, which was locked up and will be destroyed 5 years after the completion of the study.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

Four research questions and hypotheses were specifically posed to address the study's topic and problem statement. Descriptive, inferential, and associative statistical techniques were

utilized in the analyses of the study's research questions and hypotheses. The probability level of $p \leq .05$ represented the threshold value for a study finding to be considered as statistically significant. The effect size conventions of Sawilowsky (2009) were adopted and used for qualitative interpretation purposes of numeric d and r effect size values.

The following represents the four research questions and hypotheses specifically posed for study purposes.

Research Question 1

To what degree did study participants perceive their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

H_a 1

There will be a statistically significant level of study participant agreement with perceptions that school level of compliance with the district's ATP is sufficient to address and actual crisis situation.

Research Question 2

To what degree did study participants express satisfaction with their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

H_a 2

There will be a statistically significant level of study participant perceptions of satisfaction that their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP is sufficient to address and actual crisis situation.

Research Question 3

Considering the identified elements of ATP, which element manifested the greatest degree of response effect by study participants?

H_a 3

All school staff members are sufficiently trained and proficient in executing the district's ATP will reflect the greatest degree of study participant response effect in research question three.

Research Question 4

Considering elements of pre-drill, drill, and post-drill events associated with the district's ATP, which element was most associated with and predictive of study participant perceptions that their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP was sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

H_a 4

The ATP element of pre-drill activities will represent the most viable, statistically significant predictor of study participant perceptions of their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation.

Data Analysis

Preliminary, foundational analyses were conducted as a segue to the formal analysis of data associated with the study's four research questions and hypotheses. Evaluations of missing data, internal reliability, and descriptive information associated with the study's independent and dependent variables were conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The analysis and reporting of study findings associated with the preliminary analyses and the research questions were conducted through the use of the 27th version of IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

In research questions one through three, frequencies (*n*), percentages (%), mean scores, and standard deviations (*SD*) represented the descriptive statistical techniques that were used to

address all three research questions. The one sample t test was used to assess all three research questions for statistical significance testing purposes. The probability level of $p \leq .05$ represented the threshold for statistical significance of finding for each research question. The magnitude of effect was assessed using the Cohen's d statistical technique. Sawilowsky's (2009) conventions of effect size interpretation were applied to the effect sizes achieved in research questions one through three (small, medium, large, very large, and huge).

Research question four was associative and predictive in nature utilizing three independent predictor variables. As such, the multiple linear regression test statistic was employed to assess predictive robustness of the respective independent variables within the predictive model. Predictive model fitness was assessed through the interpretation of the ANOVA table F value. An F value of $p \leq .05$ is considered indicative of a viable predictive model. Variable slope (t) values represented the means by which the statistical significance of the three independent predictor variables were interpreted. A slope value of $p \leq .05$ was considered statistically significant. Standardized β values were utilized as the basis for effect size measurement and for comparative purposes, with subsequent transformation into r and r^2 values. The major assumptions of multiple linear regression were assessed by either statistical means (multicollinearity, normality of residuals, independence of error, and outliers) or visual inspection (linearity and homoscedasticity).

Summary

Chapter III contained a formal reporting of the elements associated with the study's research methodology. The study's research design was quantitative and non-experimental, utilizing a survey research methodological approach. The sampling technique used to access study participants was non-probability by definition and convenient/purposive by specific

technique. Research instrument validation was conducted in three distinct stages. Four research questions and hypotheses were formally presented to address the study's topic and research problem. Chapter IV contains a formal reporting of the findings achieved in the study.

IV. RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the extent that ATP protocols were effective and predictive of school readiness to address an actual crisis situation. A quantitative, non-experimental research design was used to address the study's topic and purpose. A survey research methodology was utilized to elicit study participant perceptions of issues central to the study's overarching construct.

The study's sample was accessed in a non-probability, convenient manner, consisting of school-level ATP committee members. The study's research instrument was a researcher-created and validated Likert-type survey. Instrument validation occurred within three distinct phases. Internal reliability at the pilot study stage well-exceeded the desired threshold of $\alpha = .80$. Four research questions and hypotheses were stated in an effort to address the study's topic and research problem. Descriptive, inferential, and associative/predictive statistical techniques were used in the analysis process. The data achieved in the study were analyzed and reported using IBM's 27th version of its Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Foundational Findings

Analyses were conducted in a segue manner prior to the formal analysis of the study's four research questions. Evaluations of missing data, internal reliability of study participant response to survey items on the research instrument, and preliminary analyses of the study's essential data arrays were specifically conducted.

The study’s essential data arrays were evaluated for omissions using descriptive statistical techniques. As a result, the study’s extent of missing data was considered minimal (0.25%; $n = 1$) and inconsequential (Schafer & Graham, 2002). Moreover, the study’s achieved completion rate of 99.75% far exceeds the customary level of 56.28% generally achieved in the surveying process for surveys with nine to 14 items (Liu & Wronski, 2018).

The internal reliability of study participant response to survey items on the research instrument was conducted using the Cronbach’s alpha (α) statistical technique. The internal reliability level of study participant response to survey items on the research instrument was considered excellent at alpha (α) = .92. Cronbach alpha levels of $\alpha \geq .90$ are considered to be excellent levels of internal reliability (Field, 2018; George & Mallery, 2018).

Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to assess the response effect within the three distinct dimensions of ATP elements (pre-drill, drill, and post-drill). The greatest response effect “huge” was evident within the dimension of ATP pre-drill activity. The dimensions of “drill” and “post-drill” reflected very large degrees of response effects within the survey.

Table 1 contains a summary of finding for study participant response effect within the three dimensions of ATP element activity.

Table 1
Response Effect Comparison: ATP Dimensions

ATP Dimension	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>
Pre-Drill	29	4.34	0.57	12.59***	2.34 ^a
Drill	29	3.95	0.78	6.58***	1.22 ^b
Post-Drill	29	4.09	0.71	8.32***	1.55 ^b

*** $p < .001$ ^a Huge Effect ($d \geq 2.0$) ^b Very Large Effect ($d \geq 1.20$)

Findings by Research Question

Four research questions and hypotheses were posed to address the study's topic and problem statement. Descriptive, inferential, and associative statistical procedures were utilized in the analyses of respective research questions and hypotheses. The probability level of $p \leq .05$ was adopted as the threshold for a statistically significant finding. The effect size conventions of Sawilowsky (2009) were used for qualitative interpretation of numeric d and r effect size values.

The following represents the findings achieved for the four research questions and hypotheses posed for study purposes.

Research Question 1

To what degree did study participants perceive their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

The one sample t test was used to assess the statistical significance of study participant mean score response to perceptions that their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation. As a result, study participant mean score response to research question one of 4.07 ($SD = 0.84$) was manifested at a statistically significant level ($t_{(28)} = 6.84; p < .001$). The magnitude of effect for study participant response to perceived school level of compliance with the district's ATP as being sufficient to address and actual crisis situation was considered very large ($d = 1.27$).

H_a 1

There will be a statistically significant level of study participant agreement with perceptions that school level of compliance with the district's ATP is sufficient to address and actual crisis situation.

In light of the statistically significant level of mean score agreement manifested in research question one, the alternative hypothesis ($H_a 1$) was retained.

Research Question 2

To what degree did study participants express satisfaction with their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

The one sample- t test was used to assess the statistical significance of study participant mean score response to perceptions of satisfaction with their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation. As a result, study participant mean score response to research question two of 4.43 ($SD = 0.74$) was manifested at a statistically significant level ($t_{(27)} = 10/19; p < .001$). The magnitude of effect for study participant response to perceived satisfaction with their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as being sufficient to address an actual crisis situation was considered very large and approaching a huge effect ($d = 1.94$).

$H_a 2$

There will be a statistically significant level of study participant perceptions of satisfaction that their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP is sufficient to address an actual crisis situation.

In light of the statistically significant level of mean score agreement manifested in research question two, the alternative hypothesis ($H_a 2$) was retained.

Research Question 3

Considering the identified elements of ATP, which element manifested the greatest degree of response effect by study participants?

The ATP element of “Notification of drills adhere to proper notification procedures” (Mean = 4.69; $SD = 0.54$) reflected the greatest degree of study participant response effect within the elements of ATP at $d = 3.12$. One other ATP element reflected a huge effect of study participant response: the ATP element of “All school facility measures are in compliance with the district’s ATP” ($d = 2.53$). Nine ATP elements reflected very large degrees of response effect within the survey ($d \geq 1.20$). The lowest degree of study participant degree of response effect was reflected in the element of “Proper procedures are adhered to by students during drill execution” at $d = .67$.

H_a 3

“All school staff members are sufficiently trained and proficient in executing the district’s ATP” will reflect the greatest degree of study participant response effect in research question three.

In light of the superior effect of study participant response to the element “Notification of drills adhere to proper notification procedures,” the alternative hypothesis (H_a 3) was rejected.

Research Question 4

Considering elements of pre-drill, drill, and post-drill events associated with the district’s ATP, which element was most associated with and predictive of study participant perceptions that their school’s level of compliance with the district’s ATP was sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

The multiple linear regression (MLR) statistical technique was used to assess the associative and predictive ability of the three stages of ATP with regard to study participant perceptions of their school’s sufficiency of compliance with the district’s ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation. The predictive model used in research question four was

viable ($F_{(3, 25)} = 10.29, p < .001$), accounting for 55.2% ($r^2 = .552$) of the explained variance of data in the model's dependent variable of study participant perceptions of their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation.

As a result, the element dimension of "pre-drill" activities represented the most robust correlate ($r = .73; p < .001$) and only statistically significant predictor of study participant perceptions of their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation.

Table 2 contains a summary of finding for the predictive model used to address research question four.

Table 2

Predicting study participant perceptions of their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation by ATP Element

Model	β	SE	Standardized β
Intercept	-0.49	0.88	
Pre-Drill	1.28	0.34	.87***
Drill	0.05	0.25	.05
Post-Drill	-0.29	0.26	-.24

*** $p = .001$

H_a 4

The ATP element of "pre-drill" activities will represent the most viable, statistically significant predictor of study participant perceptions of their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation.

In light of the associative and predictive superiority of pre-drill element activities in research question four, the alternative hypothesis (H_a 4) was retained.

Follow-up Analysis: Predicting ATP Satisfaction by Element

A follow-up, ancillary analysis was conducted to evaluate the relative associative and predictive abilities of the three dimensions with regard to study participant perceptions of satisfaction with their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation. Using the MLR statistical technique for predictive purposes, the predictive model used in the ancillary analysis was viable ($F_{(3, 24)} = 12.25$, $p < .001$), accounting for 60.5% ($r^2 = .605$) of the explained variance of data in the model's dependent variable of study participant perceptions of satisfaction with their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation.

As a result, the element dimension of "pre-drill" activities represented the most robust correlate ($r = .75$; $p < .001$) and only statistically significant predictor of study participant perceptions of satisfaction with their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation.

Table 3 contains a summary of finding for the predictive model used to address the follow-up, ancillary analysis.

Table 3

Predicting study participant perceptions of satisfaction with their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation by ATP Element

Model	β	SE	Standardized β
Intercept	-0.07	0.82	
Pre-Drill	0.69	0.31	.49*
Drill	0.20	0.21	.21
Post-Drill	0.15	0.22	.15

* $p = .03$

Summary

The findings achieved in the study were reported in Chapter IV. The study's extent of missing data was minimal and considered inconsequential for subsequent analytic purposes. The internal reliability of study participant response to survey items on the research instrument was considered excellent. Study participants perceived their school as sufficient in its compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation and were also satisfied with their school's sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation. The ATP dimension of "pre-drill" activity was most associated with and predictive of study participant perceptions of school sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP in effectively addressing an actual crisis situation, as well with satisfaction with their school's ATP sufficiency of compliance with the district's ATP. Chapter V will contain a thorough discussion of the findings achieved in the study.

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify to what extent the Active Threat Plan (ATP) protocol is effective, and to determine what changes, if any, are needed to ensure administrative teams are ready to respond to an active shooter incident from the perspective of assigned safety teams on a school campus. Results of the review of the findings by research question indicated perceived readiness, along with practice of the ATP protocol as intuitive as a whole process. Additionally, the data set affirmed three major areas of correlational indicators: pre-drill, drill, and post-drill. Chapter five contains a thorough discussion of the findings as outlined in chapter IV.

Foundational and Formational Findings

Foundational and formational findings were examined to determine the underpinning of the study design. Data were collected through a survey instrument that was analyzed for internal reliability because the survey was created by the researcher. The collected data set was intact and was highly reflective of the overall construct of the intention of the research. The reliability, as measured by internal consistency, had an alpha of over .9 which indicated minimal amounts of missing data, thereby reinforcing the trustworthiness and credibility of findings within the researcher-designed survey questions.

Research Question 1

To what degree did study participants perceive their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

Evidence in the findings for research question one suggested a large effect indicating that the school safety team's perception of the level of compliance with the district's ATP is sufficient. As hypothesized, the perception of the team affirms that an actual crisis situation could be effectively addressed, due to the school level of compliance with the district's ATP.

The importance of this finding was that the results of the data validated the structure of the ATP. Based on participants' perceptions, it is clear that members of the school safety teams are satisfied and can effectively get a school through an incident. Safety team members' confidence in the design of the ATP indicates a stronger confidence in carrying out steps of the protocol with fidelity. Stronger adherence to the plan will allow for the plan to be standardized and appropriately assessed for programmatic improvements because adherence to the plan will filter out behavioral and procedural deviations. Evidence is significant and in light of lack of literature, this research adds to the body of knowledge and substantiates the need for further replications of this study.

Research Question 2

To what degree did study participants express satisfaction with their school's level of compliance with the district's ATP as sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

Evidence in the findings for research question two supported a statistically significant level of satisfaction with the level of the schools' compliance with the district's ATP. As a result, study participant mean score response to research question two was 4.43. Additionally, a

magnitude effect was near huge and was reflective to the satisfaction of the safety team. The hypothesis was retained.

Lack of satisfaction with compliance to an ATP plan was identified within literature; specifically, results of the literature review indicated “non-satisfactory” as perceived by the community’s response to the tragedy at MSD. However, the results of this study contradicted the MSD literature. Employee performance is directly correlated to employee perceptions of satisfaction within the workplace. Historically, as Eldridge (1972) explained, rebuilding efforts and rising community support begins immediately following a crisis. Likewise, when satisfied employees trust in the safety plans implemented, the response to a crisis is more likely to allow institution of change. Thus, the results of this study indicate employees are satisfied with their school site’s compliance and will, therefore, be more productive and trusting while at work. This research study results indicate a near huge effect which supports the survey design and structure of the ATP protocol as implemented at each school safety team’s location.

Research Question 3

Considering the identified elements of ATP, which element manifested the greatest degree of response effect by study participants?

The ATP contained 15 elements. The element of “Notification of Drills adhere to proper notification procedures” reflected the greatest degree of study participant response effect reflecting a mean of 4.69, thereby indicating school level compliance and staff satisfaction with the district’s ATP. The ATP element of “All school facility measures are in compliance with the district’s ATP” also reflected a huge effect, while nine ATP elements reflected very large degrees of response effect; however, the lowest degree of study participant degree of response effect was

reflected in the element of “Proper procedures are adhered to by students during drill execution. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected, despite the large effect related to the drill notification.

This research validated school compliance with implementation of the ATP and staff satisfaction with the school’s plan implementation. Additionally, throughout the 15 ATP elements, only one significant area – student compliance – was represented in the lowest degree based on participant response. The low satisfaction with perceptions of student compliance suggests staff believe students must adhere to the compliance of the drilling procedures but do not comply. COVID-19 may have negatively influenced the result on this student-specific element due to the precautions that were implemented by the selected district. Based on the required shutdown of the state and aligned with the flexibility of school district choices to implement drills or avoid drills during the shutdown, the drills were not completed during the timeframe of the data collection. Additionally, reviewed literature validated the concept that some students have been desensitized to active shooter drills. Thus, some students do not comply with drill procedures, and some students do not regard the drills as necessary.

Research Question 4

Considering elements of pre-drill, drill, and post-drill events associated with the district’s ATP, which element was most associated with and predictive of study participant perceptions that their school’s level of compliance with the district’s ATP was sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation?

Three elements of the ATP (pre-drill, drill, and post-drill) were studied. Upon disaggregated analysis, a statistically significant predictive ability for the pre-drill stage of the ATP emerged. The other two elements – drill and post-drill – did not appear significant in the

results. Thus, the participant perceptions suggest sufficient compliance and ability to respond to a crisis effectively.

This research indicated compliance for the pre-drill stage. Pre-drill described the phase of the ATP related to the protocol. Results of the review of literature validated the need for a strong protocol as described in Kotter's (2018) framework as well as within the state's requirements of safety plan implementation. Commission reports subsequent to well-known active shooter incidents included recommendations for the creation and implementation of ATP protocol. Fire drills and active shooter drills are common practices within schools; and, the significance of the pre-drill stage was the only predictor of participant compliance. Results of data analysis indicated student-specific lack of compliance in the drill stage. The COVID-19 pandemic leading to operational changes from regularly scheduled drills to infrequent drills may have negatively impacted participant responses. Limiting the time and space needed for a school-wide crisis drill during COVID-19 served as a limitation and contradicted literature and commission report recommendations. Results of the literature review indicated the constructs of command center and reunification, or post-drill, served as critical to the drill protocol. This study calculated a lack of compliance in the post-drill stage; therefore, professional development targeted on post-drill practice is necessary. The state of Florida legislation outlines requirements for professional development and practice of all phases of the drill. Kotter's (2018) framework aligns with the need for a complete cycle in order to understand the strength and weak areas of the protocol in order to refine where needed.

Study Limitations

Limitations associated with the current study included the design being non-experimental and non-probability. Additionally, the population from which the respondents were drawn from

one medium size district in Florida; therefore, the results cannot generalize across the state or nation. Although participation rate was robust, COVID-19 interfered with the response time for reporting. Due to the changed drilling procedures during COVID-19, the perception of the process could have been hindered because the survey was sent out during a time when drilling and drilling procedures were guided and superseded by COVID-19 restrictions.

Implications for Professional Practice

The findings of this study contained implications for professional practices that support the overall strength of the school site safety committee. Perceptions of the safety committee in this study support the need for follow-up training related to the student response. The review of literature implied students had a desensitized view of repeat drilling and practice of the ATP protocol; therefore, the area of reunification – post-drill – should be practiced and modeled. Implementing active shooter drills with appropriate fidelity devoid of over-drilling, to curtail desensitization, must occur for safety team members to feel satisfied that all stakeholders demonstrate readiness to address an actual active shooter incident. The state of Florida does not have a template for districts to follow regarding the design and set up for ATP models; therefore, educational leaders should consider mandating a standardized protocol with minimal differentiation to be implemented equitably across all Florida schools. Further, the Florida Educational Leadership Examination blueprint does not reflect assessment of school safety related to protocol, design, and implementation of appropriate ATP plans; and, no safety courses are required within state-approved educational leadership master’s degree programs. Thus, future professional practice should include standards-based training and assessment of educational leaders’ mastery of school safety legislation and safety plan protocol.

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future studies include a replication of the same design and survey for elementary schools within the original district. Repeating this study within the safety teams within elementary schools would be critical to reflect from a larger range of grade levels. The credibility of the researcher-designed survey was established through validation procedures; therefore, surveying other districts at the secondary level would be beneficial in order for the state to utilize the ATP examined in this study as a structure for less effective districts. Additionally, the study can be replicated in surrounding districts to ensure commonality, especially due to school choice availability in Florida. The model should be parallel and consistent between districts. Replication of the study outside of the COVID-19 environment may produce different results; therefore, the study should be completed again. Prescription for practice, as a result of replicated studies can become a template state-wide. State requirements for educational leadership programs can and should include coursework for safety and crisis planning (Wooten & James, 2008), with validation requirements to include revision of the Florida Educational Leadership Exam (FELE) to include more simulated questions centered on safety and crisis management. Currently, SB7026 requires the site-based administrator to be responsible for school safety, yet no standardized certification examination in Florida assesses administrator competency in school safety.

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify participants' perspectives as to what extent the ATP protocol is effective, and to determine what changes, if any, were needed to ensure administrative teams are ready to respond to an active shooter incident. A researcher survey instrument was created, implemented, and validated. Data was collected and statistically analyzed to identify trends.

Overall, participants indicated satisfaction with the ATP design, schools' implementation of the ATP, notification of drills, and pre-drill activities. Results of the data analysis indicated participants' concerns that students are desensitized to drills. Despite some limitations present in the study, the conclusions of the study added to the gap in research related to safety teams' perceptions of readiness to respond to an active shooter incident. Overall, more research is recommended in the form of replicating this study to discover readiness across all grade levels at all schools in Florida. Recommendations were made to increase the rigor of educational leaders' training and assessment of competency related to school safety. Society expects school leaders to provide a safe learning environment for all students; therefore, schools bear the responsibility of employing leaders who are ready and able to protect all students even in the event of a tragedy such as an active shooter incident.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Dissertation Survey

Directions: *Using the following 5-point scale, please select the response that best reflects your perception of each of the survey's items related to the district's Active Threat Plan (ATP) for your school:*

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

All school facility security measures (door locks; safe areas; crisis box) are in compliance with the district's ATP.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

All school staff members are sufficiently trained and proficient in executing the district's ATP.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

ATP “Pre-Drills” have included proper planning and have been conducted satisfactorily and in coordination with the county’s 911 Communications Center.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Adequate staff are assigned to drills for efficient observation, control and monitoring purposes.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

ATP “Pre-Drill” planning adequately reflects the need for accountability of staff members in the drill process.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Notifications of drills adhere to proper notification procedures.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain

- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Proper procedures are adhered to by all school personnel during drill execution.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Proper procedures are adhered to by students during drill execution.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Post-drill observations are consistently and accurately recorded in a timely manner.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Communication during the drills is consistently clear and effective.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree

- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Adequate review and discussion of drills by teachers with students are consistently occurring.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Adequate debriefing and discussion of drills is consistently provided by school administration to school staff.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Overall, I am satisfied with my school's compliance with the district's ATP.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Overall, my school's level of compliance with the district's ATP is sufficient to effectively address an actual crisis situation.

- 5- Strongly Agree
- 4- Agree
- 3- Uncertain
- 2- Disagree
- 1- Strongly Disagree

Appendix B

Active Threat Plan Drill Observation Report

School: _____ ATP Drill Scenario: _____

Date: _____ School Safety Team Point of Contact for Drill: _____

Time: Drill Began _____

Drill Ended _____ SRO / SSG Assigned: _____

Logistics / Security				
Y	N	Task Complete	N/A	Check the appropriate column to the left of each planning element.
				Do all classroom doors have the locks installed that locks the door automatically when closed?
				If a teacher is out of their assigned classroom, will their key open other classroom doors if necessary to find the nearest point of refuge? What are your suggestions if not the case?
				Do you have a designated person to deploy your school's crisis box for arriving law enforcement?
				Is your crisis box up to date with required items i.e. master keys, gate keys, radio, roster, etc.?
				Have teachers and staff identified a "hard corner" – " safest area " within their respective classrooms/workspace that offers the most protective cover from an external threat? Work with your SRO/SSG/SSO to help evaluate scope of applicability in your building if not already.
				Are the designated "safest areas" free of furniture and other items that would preclude students from accessing this space in an emergency?
				Are staff members familiar with procedures for handling students with special needs?
				Have all staff members completed the online ATP, E-Learning course? If not who needs training?

Pre-Drill Planning				
Y	N	Task Complete	N/A	Check the appropriate column to the left of each planning element.
				ATP drills should not be scheduled or executed without coordination through your SRO/SSG/SSO, as it requires coordination with the Pasco County 9-1-1 Communications Center.
				Did you convene a pre-drill planning meeting with the school's safety team and key stakeholders prior to drill (i.e. law enforcement, fire, admin., key staff)?
				Use a map of your campus to divide the property up and depict areas of responsibility (AOR).
				The SRO/SSG/SSO should work with school administration to assign a safety team member to each AOR prior to drill day to serve as " evaluators and safety monitors " for the drill.
				Evaluators and safety monitors must be assigned to interior and exterior AOR's. You must account for those who choose to evacuate outside of a building (or remained outside if already out).
				Do you have adequate staff assigned to the drill to maintain control, accountability, and observe all areas of the campus where students/staff may go during your drill? Does each drill safety evaluator have an assigned radio for use during the drill?
				Have all staff members completed the online ATP, E-Learning course? If not who needs training? Have substitutes on campus watched the main ATP training video for high school or middle school as appropriate (9:30)?
				In the event of a late bus , assign a staff member with a radio to remain at the bus loop to take students off the bus and have them remain at the bus loop (or designated area), until the drill is completed.
				Designate a staff member with a radio to the main entrance where students or parents enter to alert them a safety drill is being conducted, and to remain at location until the drill is completed. Ensure P.A. system and radios are functional and charged.
				Students and staff watch the designated pre-drill video prior to the drill execution (as applicable).