



# School Violence Initiative

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Herman Goldstein Award Submission

Project Submitted By

**The Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center**

In partnership with

**Clark County School District Police Department**

**Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department**

**Henderson Police Department**

**North Las Vegas Police Department**



## PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Title: School Violence Initiative

### Scanning

Clark County is located in Southern Nevada and serves a preK–12<sup>th</sup> grade population of over 309,000 students. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the United States. A drive-by shooting of a high school freshman in February 2008 sparked community outrage and calls for police action to address shootings in and around schools. An analysis of school shootings, using the CHEERS criteria as defined by Eck & Clark (2003), determined that this was a problem that could be addressed using a problem-oriented policing approach.

### Analysis

Police and crime analysts worked together to (1) learn more about the scope and nature of the problem, (2) evaluate existing police tactics, strategies, and protocols, and (3) identify “best practices” for preventing school shootings. An investigation using the problem analysis triangle revealed information previously unknown to the public and police. An evaluation of existing police tactics found that critical information was being mismanaged. The analysis revealed three significant weaknesses with the existing approach:

1. Misplaced Resources – school shootings were not strictly a gang issue
2. Information Silos – information sharing was not standard practice
3. Lack of coordination and accountability – the four police agencies involved in responding to incidents were not working together to address the issue

### Response

The School Violence Initiative (SVI) was developed to improve the collection, management, and dissemination of intelligence related to school violence. The SVI incorporates nine interventions that work in tandem to address the weaknesses identified in the analysis and are supported by research evaluations:

- |  |                                 |   |
|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Use of the Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center | 4. Routine Planning Meetings    | 7. Incident Action Plans                    |
| 2. School Liaison Officer                              | 5. Public Service Announcements | 8. Training CCSDPD Analysts                 |
| 3. Communication/Accountability Protocol               | 6. Social Network Monitoring    | 9. Identification of Core and Watch Schools |

Challenges to strategy implementation include: (1) inability to conduct sophisticated statistical analyses, (2) buy-in from field officers, and (3) data redundancy.

### Assessment

Since the implementation of the SVI in March 2008, no school shootings have occurred, despite increases in school enrollments. Additional analyses of school knife recoveries and gun assaults in the Las Vegas Valley suggest that tactical and spatial displacement have not occurred, and a diffusion of benefits may have resulted. Qualitative data also demonstrates the effectiveness of the SVI. In total, the evidence suggests that the SVI has been highly successful and has produced additional unanticipated benefits for police and the community.

**(391 Words)**

## SCANNING

### School District and Jurisdiction

The Clark County School District (CCSD) is located in Southern Nevada. It is the fifth-largest school district in the United States and provides educational services to children and young adults living in an area that spans 7,910 square miles and five police jurisdictions: the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD), the Henderson Police Department (HPD), the North Las Vegas Police Department (NLVPD), the Boulder City Police Department (BCPD), and the Mesquite Police Department (MPD). The school district is responsible for more than 309,000 students within 352 schools.

Over the past century, Clark County grew at a rapid pace (see Table 1), making it difficult to keep up with demand for necessary police coverage and safety resources in communities. To help manage civil unrest in and around schools in the 1960s, the school district hired security officers as a “stop-gap” for local law enforcement. But, by 1971, county officials recognized the need for a professional police force within schools and established the Clark County School District Police Department (CCSDPD). The CCSDPD currently operates to ensure school safety and protect school property with a staff of 41 civilians and 163 sworn police officers.

**Table 1: Clark County Population**

| Year | Pop <sup>1</sup> | %±     |
|------|------------------|--------|
| 1910 | 3,321            | --     |
| 1920 | 4,859            | 46.3%  |
| 1930 | 8,532            | 75.6%  |
| 1940 | 16,414           | 92.4%  |
| 1950 | 48,289           | 194.2% |
| 1960 | 127,016          | 163.0% |
| 1970 | 273,288          | 115.2% |
| 1980 | 463,087          | 69.5%  |
| 1990 | 741,459          | 60.1%  |
| 2000 | 1,375,765        | 85.5%  |
| 2010 | 1,951,269        | 41.8%  |

### School Violence

Preventing violence in and around schools has always been a priority for CCSDPD and the local police agencies that serve Clark County. However, one particular incident pushed the issue of school violence to the forefront of official and public discourse.

On February 15, 2008, Palo Verde High School freshman, athlete, and honor roll student, Christopher Privett, was shot and killed while walking home after school with a group of friends. The shooting took place 20 minutes after the school day ended. Two other high school students, Gerald Q. Davison, 16, and Ezekiel Williams, 18, were charged with and convicted of the murder. The two teens were known associates of a local hybrid gang referred to as “Squad Up.” This homicide sparked community outrage and community leaders called for quick police action.



**Christopher Privett**

For more information about this case and links to related articles concerning community reaction, please follow this link: <http://bit.ly/ngNyk>

Within two weeks of the shooting, a Town Hall Meeting was held at K.O. Knudson Middle School. Clark County Sheriff Doug Gillespie attended the event alongside several other community leaders (see Table 2 for a few examples), community members, and local high school students. The Sheriff subsequently made preventing school shootings a top priority for the LVMPD, and a team of officers and crime analysts were tasked with finding new and innovative strategies to prevent these incidents.

**Table 2: Participating Community Leaders**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Walt Rulffes</b><br>- CCSD Superintendent                    |
| <b>Moises Denis</b><br>- Assemblyman/Nevada PTA President       |
| <b>Cherie Townsend</b><br>- Juvenile Justice Service Director   |
| <b>Robert Hunter, Ph.D.</b><br>- Clinical Psychologist          |
| <b>Mike Privett</b><br>- Father of victim/middle school teacher |

Adopting a Problem-Oriented Policing Model to Reduce School Violence

Although school shootings are often considered random and unpredictable acts of violence, an initial analysis conducted by the analytical manager of LVMPD’s crime analysis unit, Patrick Baldwin, revealed that school shootings in Clark County met each of the six required elements necessary to define a problem.<sup>2</sup>

The analysis of the **CHEERS** criteria, as defined by Eck & Clarke (2003), revealed:

- **Community** – Incidents of school violence negatively impact, either directly or indirectly, a large portion of the community. Such events endanger the safety of the students, staff, teachers, and police officers within CCSD schools. Further, since the vast majority of students are under the age of 18, those most at risk are a particularly vulnerable population.
- **Harm** – The harm stemming from these incidents include an increase in citizen fear of crime, psychological damage in children, destruction of property, loss of confidence in police and school leaders, and serious injury or death.
- **Expectation** – The public exchange during the Town Hall Meeting and citizen outcry documented in newspaper editorials, media coverage, blogs, and article comments (see the link provided related to the Privett shooting) clearly demonstrated the public’s expectation for the police to intervene and find solutions to this problem.
- **Events** – School violence can be broadly defined, but incidents involving deadly weapons (most commonly guns) were of most concern to the community. A cursory analysis of incidents occurring in CCSD educational environments since 2000 found that school shootings involved three types of dangerous behaviors: predatory (e.g., an offender who intentionally preys on a specific victim), conflict (e.g., gang-on-gang violence), and endangerment (e.g., innocent bystanders in a drive-by shooting).<sup>3</sup>
- **Recurring** – The murder of Christopher Privett was not the first school shooting to occur in or around CCSD schools, nor was it the last. A search of crime event records found that gun violence occurred in these locations, or in school buses or at school bus stops, on the following dates:

|                   |                   |                    |                    |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| February 18, 2000 | November 3, 2005  | September 21, 2006 | *February 15, 2008 |
| January 21, 2004  | December 8, 2005  | January 9, 2007    | February 22, 2008  |
| May 18, 2005      | September 8, 2006 | December 11, 2007  | February 26, 2008  |

\*Christopher Privett shooting

Although these incidents are less common than other forms of street crime, the potential consequences, as outlined under the harms listed above, make this historical pattern particularly problematic.

- **Similar** – All of the incidents involved shootings that killed or injured CCSD students, or placed them at great risk of death or injury. Expectedly, guns on and around school locations and modes of mass student transportation pose a major threat to public safety.

The CHEERS analysis suggested that the problem of school violence, and school shootings in particular, could be addressed using a problem-oriented policing approach. This led to more detailed analyses of previous gun-related violence at CCSD public schools and police response to these incidents.

## ANALYSIS

Three objectives were identified during the second phase of the project: (1) analyze previous shooting events to learn more about the scope and nature of the problem, (2) evaluate existing police tactics, strategies, and protocols, and (3) utilize external resources to identify “best practices” for preventing school shootings.

### Scope and Nature of the Problem

The problem analysis triangle was used to investigate the causes of the school shootings. In particular, characteristics of the victims, offenders, and places in which the events occurred were analyzed to learn more about the underlying conditions that precipitated each of the shootings. This analysis revealed information that ran contrary to widely accepted beliefs, including those held by police, about the nature of these 12 events.



**Problem Analysis Triangle**

Source: popcenter.org

### *Victims*

Of those killed, injured, or closely missed in each of the shootings, nine were students or groups of students while three others were members of the general public. In eight cases, a student was the intended target.

High school students were the most common victims (8), although middle school students were also victims in one incident.

### *Offenders*

In half of the incidents, CCSD students were identified as the parties responsible for the shootings. Five cases involved non-student offenders. One shooting incident was the result of police firing into a vehicle driven by a non-student who erratically drove to the parking lot of a high school, nearly ran down an officer, and refused to stop following police directives.

The most significant finding was that less than half (5) of the shootings were the result of gang activity or affiliation.

### *Place*

Although described as incidents of school violence, not all of the events occurred on or in front of school property. Five shootings took place at schools, six occurred in route to or from schools, and one occurred at a school bus stop. There were no specific repeat locations.

Of the shootings that took place on school property, three occurred at high schools. The other two shootings occurred at a middle school and an elementary school.

A summary of the problem triangle analysis is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Problem Analysis Summary**

- Most, but not all, victims and offenders were students
- Student victims included both middle and high school students
- Less than half of the shootings were gang related
- Shootings occurred in different locations – not all shootings took place at high schools

### Existing Tactics, Strategies, and Protocols

Representatives from each of the Clark County police agencies (CCSDPD, LVMPD, HPD, NLVPD) and school district employees came together through a series of focus groups to discuss existing responses to school violence. Discussions concerning recent school shootings quickly revealed a major coordination weakness. This weakness was exacerbated by (1) the number of agencies involved, (2) the size of the LVMPD and the number of specialized units, and (3) the absence of a formal communication protocol.

Analyses of the circumstances leading up to shooting incidents found that ***several calls for service or reports from students, parents, or school administrators typically preceded each event.*** However, this information was not being collected in a systematic way or quickly disseminated to those who could immediately intervene. Although a School Intelligence Log was emailed daily and a weekly violence report was generated, no instant verbal notifications were disseminated and timely information was not reaching the proper individuals.

In addition, these meetings uncovered an overreliance on the LVMPD's Gang Unit in addressing school shootings. The Gang Unit played a significant role in investigating and responding to these cases, even though many of these incidents were not gang-related.

### Research on "Best Practice" Models for Preventing School Shootings

The POP guides available through the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing website were identified as potential resources for developing solutions. The guides, "Drive-By Shootings," "Gun Violence Among Serious Young Offenders," and "Bullying in Schools" offered insight into potentially effective responses.

Additionally, partnerships were established with students and criminal justice faculty at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to bring additional expertise and resources to the project.

## Major Findings

The analysis revealed three significant and actionable findings related to weaknesses associated with the existing approach.

1. **Misplaced Resources.** Although community members, including the police, believed that school shootings were strictly the result of gang issues, the analysis found that this was untrue. As a result, the existing overreliance on LVMPD's Gang Unit led to less effective responses and wasted resources.
2. **Information Silos.** Information concerning school shootings was often available before the incidents occurred. Students, parents, school officials, and the public were reporting useful information. However, the four police agencies lacked a formalized procedure for information sharing. This made it difficult, and often impossible, to identify patterns and intervene to prevent potentially fatal events.
3. **Lack of Coordination and Accountability.** No protocol was in place to quickly compile and disseminate information to appropriate personnel. There was no person(s) responsible for these tasks, nor was an infrastructure in place to facilitate this exchange of information.

## **RESPONSE**

The diffuse, rather than acute or focused, pattern<sup>4</sup> of school shootings uncovered during the analysis phase prevented a strictly time- and place-based, or "cops on dots," approach to disrupting shooting opportunities. Additional patrol was not seen a feasible or effective long-term solution. The analyses revealed that **improved collection, management, and dissemination of intelligence** would provide the best approach to preventing school shootings and other forms of school violence that often serve as precursors to these events.

During the response phase, the project adhered to a reiterative problem-solving approach.<sup>5</sup> Assessments and analyses of situations, responses, and outcomes continued throughout the implementation of the interventions, and these evaluations continue today. Responses were selected based on the (1) information obtained through the initial and on-going project analyses/assessments, and (2) potential to build upon existing, but underutilized, resources. Together, these responses represent what is known as the **School Violence Initiative (SVI)**.

### School Violence Initiative

The SVI represents a formal collaboration between four police agencies that serve Southern Nevada: the Clark County School District Police Department (CCSDPD), the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD), the Henderson Police Department (HPD), and the North Las Vegas Police Department (NLVPD). The Initiative incorporates nine interventions that work in tandem to reduce opportunities for school shootings and violence. The use of multiple responses to address a specific problem is supported by research. The most successful crime-reduction strategies typically use a comprehensive series of interventions.<sup>6</sup>

*Response #1: Use of the Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center (SNCTC)*

The SNCTC is a centralized collaboration center and information clearinghouse for 20 different Federal, State, and local agencies (see Table 4). It functions as a 24/7 “all-crimes / all-hazards” fusion center designed to respond to incidents within Clark County.

Housing the SVI within the SNCTC allows analysts and officers to engage in horizontal information sharing. Those working on investigations related to school violence have access to real-time information and partner agency databases. It also supports the **action research** model advocated by problem-oriented policing experts.<sup>7</sup> Crime analysts work alongside police command staff and officers to develop and refine interventions to increase effectiveness.

The SNCTC was the first fusion center in the U.S. to utilize fusion center infrastructures and resources to share and streamline school violence information. It has helped to reduce misplaced resources through access to better data, eliminate information silos that are typically associated with police work, and improve coordination efforts among agencies.

**Table 4: SNCTC Partners**

- Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department
- Henderson Police Department
- North Las Vegas Police Department
- Clark County School District Police Department
- Clark County Fire Department
- Department of Homeland Security
- Transportation Security Administration
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- City of Las Vegas Fire Department
- Nevada Department of Public Safety
- Federal Air Marshals
- Silver Shield
- Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
- Boulder City Police Department
- Las Vegas Emergency Management
- Nevada National Guard
- Clark Country Marshalls
- Nevada High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
- Clark County District Attorney
- Las Vegas Convention Authority

*Response #2: School Liaison Officer*

The SVI significantly strengthened the partnership between the SNCTC and the CCSDPD by embedding a CCSDPD school liaison officer within the fusion center. The liaison position allows the CCSDPD officer access to criminal databases (e.g., the LVMPD gang system) and real-time incident systems managed by multiple agencies across Southern Nevada. The liaison can immediately communicate with CCSDPD officers and school personnel if an incident occurs in a neighborhood surrounding a school. The liaison’s responsibilities include reviewing the daily incident log to discern emerging trends. The liaison officer also has access to, and control over, 12,000 cameras that provide real-time visuals of activities on and around school campuses, thus increasing the live intelligence capacity of the SNCTC.<sup>8</sup>

The creation of the school liaison officer position within the SNCTC has helped to overcome previous problems with information sharing. It has also improved coordination between CCSDPD and other county agencies.

*Response #3: Communication and Accountability Protocol*

Sheriff Doug Gillespie issued Directive #PO-012-11 to resolve questions regarding procedural responsibilities for handling information on potential school violence (see Appendix A).<sup>9</sup>



The protocol has helped to reduce misplaced resources and increase coordination/accountability by (1) requiring immediate dissemination of relevant information and follow-up by the LVMPD watch commander, (2) calling for distribution of information to the most appropriate officer or supervisor – and to the gang unit only if warranted, and (3) improving the quality of data collected to track school-related incidents.

#### *Response #4: Routine Planning Meetings*

Representatives from the four police agencies involved in the SVI (CCSDPD, LVMPD, HPD, NLVPD) meet on a regular basis to review the effectiveness of existing protocols, plan for upcoming events, discuss emerging trends, and engage in brainstorming sessions to identify new methods of intervention.<sup>10</sup> This taskforce meets at least four times a year: before the first week of school, toward the end of the fall semester, before spring break, and before the last week of school.

Planning meetings help to address each of the weaknesses found to be associated with intervention efforts prior to the SVI. Still, the most important function of these meetings is to ensure that current protocols remain effective or change as new intelligence is received and analyzed.

#### *Response #5: Public Service Announcements*

Those involved in the SVI provide regular public service announcements (PSAs) to increase communication between police and the public.<sup>11</sup> These PSAs provide an opportunity to share information about potential hazards that threaten school safety, or offer guidance to parents to keep children safe during high-risk times (e.g., spring break).

Although the project analysis found that school officials, parents, students, and the general public were actively reporting information to police, PSAs offer a forum to encourage additional information sharing.

An example of a recent SVI PSA can be found at <http://bit.ly/NlqAwj>

#### *Response #6: Social Network Monitoring*

Past incidents revealed that concerned parents and students provide the best intelligence related to potential school shootings. Even if not directly reported to police, a tremendous amount of information is publically available on social networking sites, such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. SNCTC crime analysts conduct random and targeted (e.g., when a tip is received concerning a particular individual) reviews of these sites to find leads concerning student weapon possession, recent altercations that may prompt future violence, and tensions that are building between students or student groups.<sup>12</sup> This information is then used to direct resources to specific locations (e.g., house parties) or investigate threats made against other students.

Analysis of social networking information helps to prevent misplaced resources by identifying factors that are instigating violence or threats of violence in particular circumstances. This allows effective and meaningful coordination with appropriate specialized police units or social service organizations.

*Response #7: Incident Action Plans*

Pre-established tactics are used to deal with issues commonly encountered on specific school days. Although school shootings have not occurred on these days, historical analyses found that fights and other disturbances that lead to later incidents tend to increase on the first and last day of the school year. The adopted tactics for these days include setting up an operation center in the fusion center, staging various specialized units across the Las Vegas valley to provide rapid response to problems, and developing Incident Action Plans within each police area command.

These operations increase accountability and coordination of police resources during high-risk time periods.<sup>13</sup>

*Response #8: Training CCSDPD Analysts*

The SNCTC provides specialized training opportunities for CCSDPD analysts. SNCTC resources have been used to send analysts to professional conferences and classes designed to enhance the analytical skills of personnel.<sup>14</sup>

This training has helped to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the CCSDPD crime analysis unit and encourage greater collaboration among analysts across agencies.

*Response #9: Identification of Core and Watch Schools*

Since the data intelligence capacity of the SNCTC permits the analysis of emerging school violence trends based on documented incidents, calls for service across the county, and school district data concerning violent students, specific schools are classified by the SVI taskforce as “Core Schools” (i.e., schools with chronic problems) or “Watch Schools” (i.e., schools identified as having emerging problems). For the 2011-2012 school year, 7 Core Schools and 11 Watch Schools were identified.<sup>15</sup>

Although repeat school shooting locations were not identified, the places in which the shootings occurred were not random. The Core and Watch lists allow police to conserve and direct resources to high-risk schools.

Summary of Interventions

Table 5 provides a visual summary of the link between the SVI interventions and the strategy weaknesses identified during the analysis phase.

**Table 5: Link Between Interventions and Weaknesses Identified During the Analysis Phase**

| Identified Weaknesses               | Response # |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |
|-------------------------------------|------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|
|                                     | 1          | 2  | 3  | 4 | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  |
| Misplaced Resources                 | X          | -- | X  | X | -- | X  | X  | -- | X  |
| Information Silos                   | X          | X  | -- | X | X  | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Lack of Coordination/Accountability | X          | X  | X  | X | -- | -- | X  | X  | -- |

## Challenges to Strategy Implementation

There were three major challenges to the implementation of the SVI interventions.

1. **Inability to conduct sophisticated statistical analyses.** The nature of the problem addressed through this problem-solving effort makes it difficult to identify complex temporal or spatial patterns. School shootings, while devastating in their consequences, remain a relatively rare event. Nevertheless, analyses found information that ran counter to beliefs long-held by police and the community and this information proved instrumental in developing effective interventions.
2. **Buy-in from field officers.** Officers were initially dismissive of the immediate notifications generated by the SNCTC. However, the directive issued by the Sheriff helped to change officer perceptions and actions.
3. **Data redundancy.** The reporting and re-reporting of information by different sources (e.g., parents, school officials, on social networking pages) is a resource burden. As information travels among social circles, some threats are reported more than once, with slight variations in details. This increases the likelihood that police will expend resources on false positives.<sup>16</sup>

## ASSESSMENT

### Outcome Assessment

The SVI was initiated in early March 2008, making four years worth of post-implementation data available for assessment. Figure 1 shows that **following the implementation of the SVI, no school shootings have occurred**, despite increases in CCSD enrollment (>5,000).

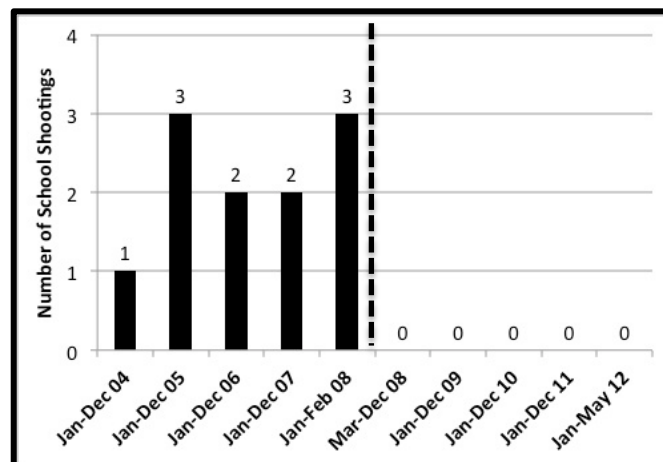


Figure 1: School Shootings (dashed line represents Initiative implementation)

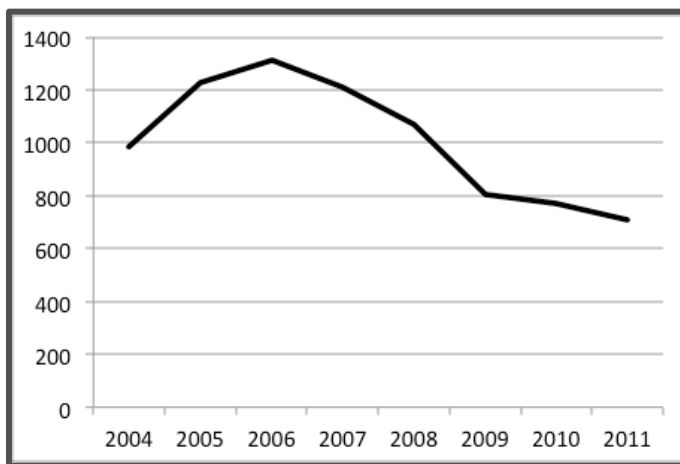
Table 6 shows that weapon recoveries of handguns and knives on and around school campuses declined substantially between school year 2007-2008 and 2010-2011. Preliminary data from school year 2011-2012 suggests that these recoveries continue to decline (7 handguns, 105 knives). The decrease in knife recoveries provides partial evidence to suggest that **tactical displacement is not occurring**.

**Table 6: Weapon Recoveries**

|          | 2007-2008* | 2010-2011 | %±     |
|----------|------------|-----------|--------|
| Handguns | 25         | 8         | -68.0% |
| Knives   | 163        | 121       | -25.8% |

\*Data not available for previous years

Spatial displacement of gun violence away from schools and into surrounding neighborhoods does not appear to be an issue. Figure 2 shows that gun violence in the greater Las Vegas area has continued to decrease following the implementation of the SVI. This suggests that the SVI may have produced a *diffusion of benefits* in surrounding communities.<sup>17</sup>



**Figure 2: Gun Assaults 2004-2011**

The absence of school shootings, the reduction in weapons recoveries, and some evidence to indicate a diffusion of benefits suggests that the SVI has been successful in preventing school shootings.

In addition to the admittedly limited quantitative data, qualitative examples of successes associated with the SVI interventions help to demonstrate the problem-solving project's effectiveness.

- The CCSDPD obtained intelligence that two gangs were planning to engage in a shootout between two bus stops. This information was sent to the SNCTC, allowing police to respond and prevent the incident from occurring.
- A possible pipe bomb threat was reported to school officials, who then notified the CCSDPD. Coordination with the school liaison within the SNCTC allowed officials to quickly determine that the threat was not credible.
- A CCSD parent reported a posting on MySpace in which a student stated that he was going to bring a gun to school. The school relayed the information to the SNCTC, where it was distributed according to the established communication protocol. Detectives were quickly able to obtain a search warrant to search the MySpace page and investigate the student.
- The SNCTC crime analysts identified a pattern of disturbances and fights immediately following the time in which a continuation school ended classes. Key stakeholders associated with the SVI were able to persuade school district officials to alter the time in which students were released and disrupt opportunities for such behavior.

### Future Project Directions

The SVI continues as a work in progress. Protocols are modified as incident debriefings help to identify ways to improve existing procedures. Recently, three new objectives have been defined by the SVI taskforce:

1. **Expand the SVI protocols to private schools.** To date, all existing private schools in Clark County have been identified. The SNCTC's Terrorism Liaison Officers (TLOs) have met with private school officials and obtained contact information.
2. **Continue to facilitate public reporting.** Partnerships with faculty at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, have been established in order to explore potential methods of promoting the SVI and encourage more information sharing between the public and the SNCTC. A new social media company, AlertID, is working with the SNCTC to develop applications that would allow the public to report suspicious behaviors or incidents directly to the fusion center.
3. **Improve ability to extract data from social networking sites.** The SNCTC is working with a software company to build a data-mining program that will enhance collection and analysis of information from public sites.

### Unanticipated Benefits of the SVI

Although the original impetus of the SVI was to prevent school shootings, the interventions used to prevent these events have also helped police identify trends and respond to other forms of school violence (e.g., bullying).

The unique role of the fusion center in carrying out the SVI objectives has garnered national attention. The success of the SVI was featured in the 2010 Information Sharing Environment Annual Report to Congress. Also, at the February 2010 National Fusion Center Conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana, United States Attorney General Eric Holder specifically referenced the SNCTC's work on the SVI as a "best practice" model.

*"I'm proud of what's been accomplished, in a very short time, by our fusion centers...I've seen this for myself. In October, I traveled to Las Vegas, where Lieutenant Tom Monahan of the Las Vegas Police Department led me on a tour of the Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center that he runs. During the brief time I was on site, a potential crisis was identified and averted. That day, the actions of the fusion center staff – and their community partners – in all likelihood prevented a gang-related shooting. Because the fusion center team members had established a relationship with the local school security community, they were able to communicate clearly and act quickly. Most importantly, they were able to protect, and likely save, lives."*

~ Eric Holder, U.S. Attorney General

### Final Note

In March 2012, the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing released a publication that asked, "Can police prevent school shootings?" The outcome of this POP project suggests that, while not all violence may be preventable, a coordinated and comprehensive response can have a notable impact on shootings in and around schools.

**(3,812 words, excluding tables/figures/endnotes)**

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/nv190090.txt>
- <sup>2</sup> See Step 14, “*Use the CHEERS test when defining problems,*” in Clarke & Eck (2005)
- <sup>3</sup> Eck & Clarke (2003)
- <sup>4</sup> Ratcliffe (2004)
- <sup>5</sup> For a detailed explanation of this approach, see Scott & Plant (2011)
- <sup>6</sup> See Response #2, “*Use of a comprehensive series of strategies to address problems,*” in Sampson (2002)
- <sup>7</sup> See Step 7, “*Be guided by SARA, but not led astray,*” in Clarke & Eck (2005); and Response #4, “*Involving researchers*” in Braga (2003)
- <sup>8</sup> See Response #5, “*Developing an effective communication strategy,*” in Braga (2003)
- <sup>9</sup> See Response #5, “*Developing an effective communication strategy,*” in Braga (2003)
- <sup>10</sup> See Response #2, “*Convening an interagency working group,*” and Response #3, “*Placing responsibility on the working group,*” in Braga (2003)
- <sup>11</sup> See Response #9, “*Continuing communication,*” in Braga (2003)
- <sup>12</sup> See Response #7, “*Tracking current tensions and past altercations,*” in Dedel (2007); and Response #11, “*Searching for and seizing juvenile guns,*” in Braga (2003)
- <sup>13</sup> Response #3, “*Placing responsibility on the working group,*” in Braga (2003)
- <sup>14</sup> See White (2008)
- <sup>15</sup> See Response #1, “*Focusing on proximate causes,*” in Dedel (2007); and Response #8, “*Monitoring areas where bullying can be expected,*” in Sampson (2002)
- <sup>16</sup> See Step 37, “*Know that to err is human,*” in Clarke & Eck (2005)
- <sup>17</sup> Guerette (2009)

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## **KEY PROJECT PERSONNEL**

### Clark County School District Police Department

Captain Tony York

Jathniel Velazquez, School Liaison Officer

### Henderson Police Department

Captain Todd Peters

Lieutenant Joe Kurian

### North Las Vegas Police Department

Captain Frank DeMartino

Captain Justin Roberts

### Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department

Sheriff Douglas Gillespie

Undersheriff Jim Dixon

Captain Patrick Neville

Captain John McGrath

Captain Brian Greenway

Captain Mike Dalley

Captain Tom Roberts

Lieutenant Tom Monahan

Patrick Baldwin, Manager of Crime Analysis Unit

### Project Contact

Patrick Baldwin, Manager

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Southern Nevada Counter-Terrorism Center

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**APPENDIX A**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b><i>P</i></b>ROCEDURAL</p> <p><b><i>O</i></b>RDER</p> |  | <p><i>Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department</i></p> |  |
| TO   | : ALL PERSONNEL  | March 17, 2011   | <small>Directive No.</small><br><b>PO-012-11</b> |
| SUBJECT  | : Watch Commander Responsibilities regarding School Violence Calls   |  | <small>Effective Date</small>                    |
| Additional Information                                     | : New policy being implemented department wide, through Patrol, to resolve questions regarding the procedural responsibilities related to potential school violence. |  |  |
| Accreditation Standards                                    | : 42.1.6   | Dept. Manual Reference:                                | 5/105.13 NEW                                     |
| Approval Signature   | :  | Douglas Gillespie, Sheriff                             |  |

When the Department receives information regarding the potential threat, or a rumor of a potential threat of violence at one of the Clark County School District schools, it is the policy of this Department to take immediate action to dissipate such possible violence. This policy outlines the procedural responsibilities regarding such information.

**ANSEC Watch Desk:**

1. Receives information regarding the potential or rumor for potential school violence to occur at a public or private school.
2. Immediately sends out a school advisory and contacts the on duty watch commander for immediate follow up via telephone/pager.

**Watch Commander:**

1. After receiving information from the ANSEC Watch Station, contacts the respective area supervisor for immediate follow up, if warranted.

**Area Supervisor:**

1. After receiving information from the Watch Commander, generates a call via MDT for documentation. If officer response is required, calls Communications to create an event for dispatch and response. If no response is required, Area Supervisor closes out the event with appropriate 400 code and disposition.
2. Ensure appropriate action is taken on information and ANSEC Watch Desk is contacted after the action is taken with the results. Will utilize the letter "S" for School Violence, in conjunction with the 400 code. Codes that already have a letter after the IDF code, will have the letter dropped and the suffix "S" added. (i.e. 416A will be 416S when clearing). This will aid in tracking school incident /violence calls.
3. If an officer responds, it will be upon the officer to clear his/her call with the correct suffix.
4. Area Supervisor or designee will ensure the information is entered on the LVMPD Electronic Briefing System. (3/11) ■

TP