



Case Study

How School Resource Officers Can Help Implement Behavioral Threat Assessment Strategies that Work



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With students facing more pandemic-related pressures than ever and those stressors causing some students to act out in self-harm or harm to others, there's never been a more critical time for schools to take a proactive approach to safety and get troubled students the help they desperately need.

One of the best ways educators can achieve this is by implementing a successful behavioral threat assessment (BTA) program. A BTA functions as a tool for preventing violence by helping students in crisis get the support they need before their behavior escalates. Here we discuss how school resource officers (SROs) fit into the BTA process and how one school district successfully incorporated BTA to enhance their culture of safety.

The Impact of an On-Campus SRO for School Safety

SROs play a key role in preventing school violence, using the relationships they've developed within the community and among the student body to identify concerning behaviors proactively.

Having an encouraging rapport between the SRO and students establishes trust, which helps students feel more comfortable reporting a problem. With that being said, the overall safety of a school does not rest solely on the shoulders of the SRO. It's crucial that SROs, teachers, administrators and psychologists work together to ensure that multiple perspectives and resources are considered when addressing concerning student behavior.

As Chief of Police and Emergency Manager of Aubrey Independent School District (ISD) in Aubrey, Texas, Scott Collins says the role of SROs in Texas evolved after the introduction of [Senate Bill 11](#), a school safety act funded by the state's legislative session.

Once the bill was put in place, he says Aubrey ISD formed a multi-disciplinary team of professionals - a key member being the SRO - to conduct behavioral threat assessments. "We had a licensed school psychologist, we had district administration, a school counselor, and then two outside team members that were educators within the district. And we started building the team," he explains.

Thanks to the resources and perspectives his team provided, they learned of a student who was sharing suicidal ideations on social media. With this information, Collins intervened, visited the student's home and spoke to the parents.

Mo Canaday's Perspective on Why SROs Play an Important Role in Schools

Executive Director for the National Association of School Resource Offices (NASRO) Mo Canaday views the role of SROs as a way to bridge the gap between students and law enforcement. Canaday emphasizes the importance of SROs forming strong relationships with students, staff and parents.

"It still goes back to that foundation of the relationship," Canaday says. "When we're in a good relationship with students, faculty and parents, we're able to better see when a student is veering off of the path."

"[An SRO's role on the BTA team] is being a part of the educational process, being an informal counselor, and a law enforcer," Canaday says.

Most issues do not need to end in arrest, Canaday says. Instead, every situation should be evaluated holistically, as various factors may play a role in a student's behavior. Perhaps the student is dealing with issues at home or is the victim of bullying at school. SROs should consider an approach that will not only deescalate the student's behavior but also provide them with the support and resources they need to move on to a safer, more successful path. To hear more on why SROs play an important role in schools, view this [on-demand webinar](#).

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How Collins Leveraged Navigate360 for Successful Behavioral Threat Assessments

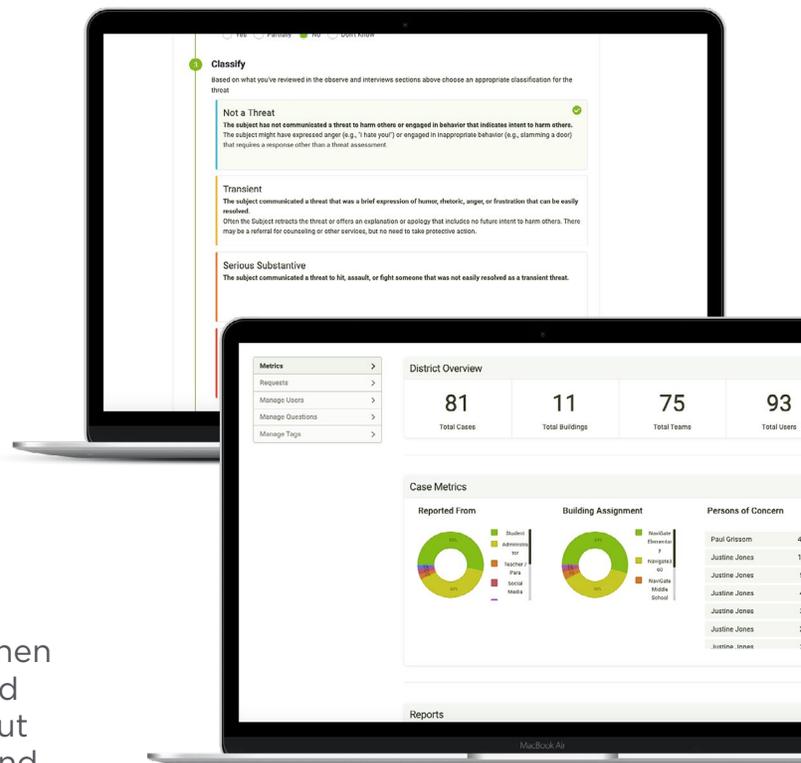
Preemptively identifying a behavioral threat can prevent a violent incident from taking place altogether. That's why Chief Collins uses **Navigate360's Behavioral Threat & Suicide Case Management program** to document and organize notes for student behavioral reports as well as refer to former write-ups. This also helps schools manage cases over time, offering wellness checkpoints that assist with gauging a student's progress.

"If you have a case six months down the road with John Doe student, you can look at the case notes and see if this is a behavior [or] if this is part of his disability," Collins says. "[It helps to discern] what might be linked to this [behavior]."

Navigate360's Behavioral Threat & Suicide Case Management platform is a comprehensive documentation tool that streamlines the collaboration of school staff with other team members and outside agencies. Collins says his team initially kept notes within a Google doc, but that became cluttered as more and more documents were added.

When writing out BTAs, Collins says personal connections to students can impede an objective evaluation. With **Navigate360's Behavioral Threat & Suicide Case Management** in place, emotion is taken out of the equation. This reduces bias and ensures a consistent behavioral threat assessment process across teams.

BTAs are an invaluable tool for determining when a student is in trouble, resulting in a safer – and more aware – school community. To learn about how Navigate360 can help protect students and support SROs and other school leaders in your district with violence prevention solutions that work, contact us today.

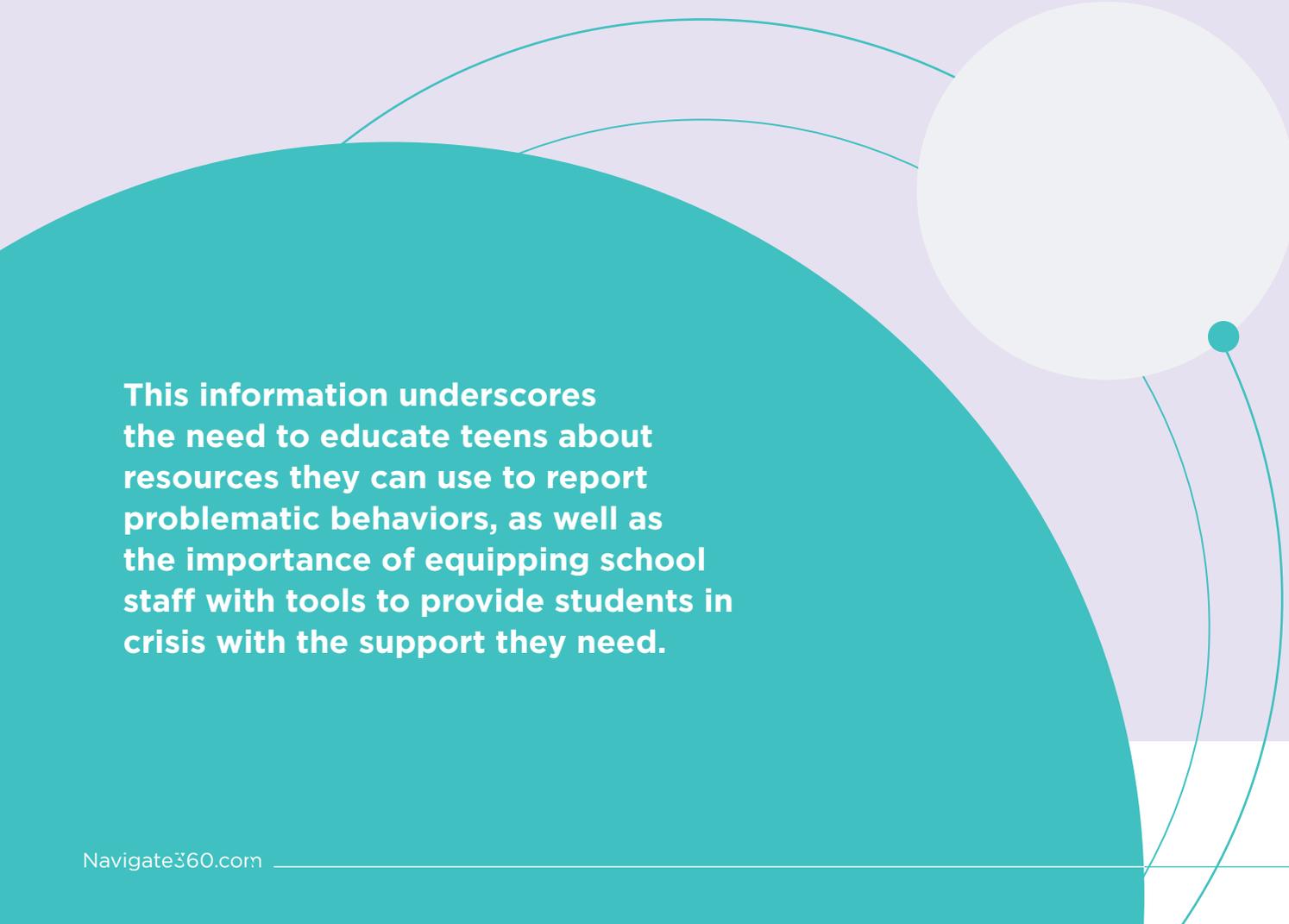


Keeping the Pulse of Student Sentiment on Safety

In order to develop a current and clear understanding of how teenagers between the ages of 16 and 17 are feeling about their safety and wellbeing, Navigate360 partnered with John Zogby Strategies to develop the Navigate 360 | Zogby Safety & Wellbeing Poll. The data, collected in December 2020, sheds light on the current state of teen mental health.

According to the poll, more than half of the teens surveyed know of someone who has considered self-harm or suicide. These results are alarming, especially when considered alongside data that shows only 36% of teens know who to call and where to report a threat, and less than half (42%) believe their school is doing its best to create an atmosphere of physical and emotional safety.

Concerningly, only 55% of teens believe that school leaders think safety is a priority, and just 42% believe schools are spending enough time and money to keep students safe.



This information underscores the need to educate teens about resources they can use to report problematic behaviors, as well as the importance of equipping school staff with tools to provide students in crisis with the support they need.



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how Navigate360 can
help you protect your
school community.**

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