

ENHANCED SITUATIONAL AWARENESS TO INCREASE SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

PREPARED BY

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GuardianAngel

SUMMARY

The reaction to the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, is different. From the impassioned response led by the brave students who survived the tragedy to the leadership provided by elected officials, like the recently formed Select Committee on School Safety in North Carolina, it is clear that this time is different. And rightly so – our children deserve solutions. Given the scope of conversations taking place and the plethora of ideas being proposed, it is imperative to remain focused on solutions that will provide a comprehensive mitigant to these senseless acts.



To do this, we must recognize that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Parkland proved that armed guards are not the sole answer. As reported in the [New York Times](#), “[t]he only armed sheriff’s deputy at a Florida high school where 17 people were killed *took cover outside rather than charging into the building when the massacre began.*” While it is disappointing that an armed officer was unable to neutralize the threat attacking the defenseless students inside the school, it is evidence of the absolute uncertainty that arises in a threat scenario. And in a situation like this, it is easy to Monday morning quarterback. After all, very few people are prepared to run towards gunfire.

As a company whose executives have over 100 years of combined experience in military service and federal and municipal law enforcement, we have developed and deployed risk mitigation solutions to protect critical assets and personnel in some of the world’s most hostile environments.

From our experience, we seek to move the conversation towards actionable solutions that can have an immediate impact. This paper will recommend solutions to mitigate risk and minimize the potential loss of life during an Active Assailant attack on an educational institution while in session.

OVERVIEW

Since 1990, there have been twenty-two elementary and secondary school armed assailant events in the U.S. that resulted in two or more deaths. In the past five years, there have been five (5) incidents that have resulted in the death of 27 victims. In the late 90s, there were seven (7) events totaling 32 victims. Various media outlets report as many as 290 incidents of “school shootings” during this same time frame. However, much of that data was provided by independent sources that define a “school shooting” as broadly as the discharge of a firearm in the vicinity of a school; the discharge of a firearm where the projectile falls on school property; incidents where schools were shot at, regardless of whether it was vandalism, school was in session or other; and suicides or attempted suicides. Importantly, according to a list compiled by Ranker, five (5) of the top ten (10), and 13 of the Top 25 deadliest school shootings occurred on college campuses across the nation.

“In the past five years, there have been five (5) incidents that have resulted in the death of 27 victims.”

Regardless of the statistics, we cannot tolerate another shooting.



In all of the incidents, a firearm was the weapon of choice for the assailant. In a few of these incidents, the assailant was focused on a specific individual or groups of individuals. In these targeted shootings, an after-action review by law enforcement of social media accounts or documents authored by the assailant(s), the intended targets were individuals with whom the assailant had a past relationship (girlfriend/teacher) or groups the assailant felt some type of animosity toward (as in the case of Columbine where the assailants specifically targeted individuals wearing baseball style caps associating them with “jocks”).

In most cases, the victims of the assailant were selected indiscriminately. As was the case of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, and most recently of Parkland, the assailant randomly selected victims as they presented themselves.

In the case of Sandy Hook, the victims were elementary aged school children that were attacked inside their classroom. In Parkland, the assailant triggered the fire alarm and ambushed victims as they presented themselves leaving their classrooms to exit the building.

In the over whelming majority of these events, the assailant(s) had an association with the school; the assailant was known or thought to be a danger to himself or others by other students or teachers; the assailant had presented signs of aggression via direct threat, previous instances of violence, social media posts or other; were white males which were commonly regarded as “loners” or otherwise socially disengaged (isolated from?) with their fellow peers.



CHALLENGES

While we can see a definitive commonality between assailants, their tactics, and indicators of the threat in the majority of these events, solutions to mitigating the risk of mass casualties as a result of an attack are complex. No one solution can adequately ensure or minimize the threat posed by an active assailant.

Examples of currently employed solutions and the expected outcomes are included on the following pages.

9-1-1 SYSTEMS

While the 9-1-1 system is an invaluable resource and the recognized mechanism in the United States by which victims of crime or witnesses to an event notify law enforcement, it is not entirely effective during an active assailant event. Depending on the source material reviewed, it is known that during an active assailant event, 9-1-1 is not notified of an event in progress until 30 seconds to 3 minutes after the event has begun. This lag inhibits the response of first responders to the scene to engage the assailant, can contribute to higher casualty rates, and even allow for the offender to flee the scene prior to the arrival of law enforcement. 9-1-1 notification relies on victims and/or witnesses to have access to a phone, which in many instances is simply not available.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS (SRO'S)

In many, if not most urban environments, SROs are a commonly employed deterrent to crime occurring on school premises. While there is no argument that a highly visible, uniformed presence of Law Enforcement personnel is an effective deterrent to crime, this solution in and of itself will not prevent an active assailant event nor stop it as Parkland proved. The assailant, with knowledge of the SRO's routine, can plan the event when the SRO is not present. The deployment of SROs in every school across the state is definitely worth exploring further, but it is not practical as an immediate solution as it would be extremely taxing on limited law enforcement resources in smaller, more rural cities and counties across.

CONTROLLED ACCESS SYSTEMS



Controlled Access systems are routinely deployed throughout the public and private sector. These systems require one of two actions by a person wanting to gain access into a facility. These are: 1) RFID card readers, wherein an employee or student would have to present an identification card embedded with an RFID chip and swipe the card over the reader, disengaging the locking mechanism; 2) Manually activated systems, which require the person to engage a two-way speaker device located outside the entry point and state their identity and intended purpose to someone inside the facility, who would then manually disengage the locking mechanism with the push of a button. While there is no question that controlling ingress and egress into a school facility is the first line of defense in any security solution, both of these options by themselves, have proven to be ineffective in active assailant scenarios.

First, an RFID identification card issued to a student of the school would allow the assailant “authorized” access into the facility to begin the attack. Secondly, in a manual scenario, and as we witnessed in Sandy Hook, the assailant simply breached and gained entry by discharging multiple rounds into the glass door of the facility. There are few examples of access control systems that have been integrated into a comprehensive platform that can log activity and initiate lockdown procedures based upon predetermined rules.

CAMERAS

While video surveillance cameras are a commonly deployed technology by many school systems across the state, Parkland provides more evidence that this alone is unreliable. In the same [New York Times report](#), there was a “20-minute delay in school surveillance video,” which confused responding officers trying to find the shooter. Integration of camera systems into a unified platform, that is programmed to orient around an emergency notification and shared with law enforcement, can increase the effectiveness of the system for response and event reconstruction.

AUDIBLE ALARMS

Audible alarms are an excellent option to alert large groups of individuals simultaneously to initiate a pre-determined response. However, they can also be manipulated by the assailant to randomly present victims of opportunity, as was the case in Parkland. Further, in instances where a specific “active assailant” alarm is activated, there are few examples of the integration of the alarm into a single platform that works with other technology, such as automatic locks on classroom doors, to protect students in otherwise safe locations, such as the classroom.

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

We have discussed characteristics of active assailant events, the people that perpetuate the events, commonalities of the events, and current prohibitive measures deployed by schools. We will now discuss how we take this knowledge and build a comprehensive, affordable, and effective solution that gives society the best chance of mitigating the impact that active assailant events pose to all of us.

Technology that is integrated and available to everyone involved in active assailant events is the key. From students, to teachers, administrators, 9-1-1 communications, and law enforcement first responders, everyone needs to be recognized as a stakeholder in the detection, response and mitigation of these events.

We at TigerSwan know, based upon decades of experience in critical incident response and mitigation the most important goals that must be achieved are:

1. The immediate safety and security of potential victims,
2. Isolating the attacker
3. Reducing notification time to law enforcement
4. Effective, real time, and reliable communications from the scene to law enforcement.

TigerSwan's Enhanced Situational Awareness (ESA) platform, GuardianAngel, meets these objectives and allows for the integration of access control systems, camera systems, e-911 dispatch, personal security devices for all teachers and administrators, mobile application deployment for students, automatic locking mechanisms on classroom doors and lastly the ability to push live video streams to first responders of the event, while it is occurring, allowing responding law enforcement to immediately locate and engage the assailant(s) within the facility.

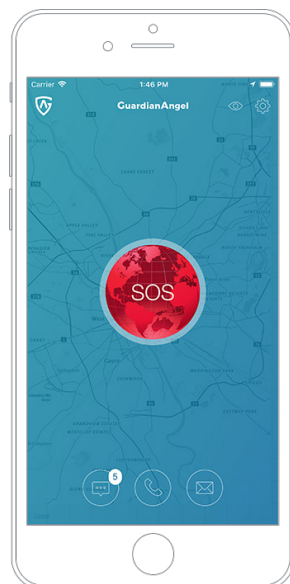
We recommend the following implementation across the public education enterprise in order to achieve the Enhanced Situational Awareness provided by GuardianAngel and create an immediate and seamless integration between the physical environment and emergency response community:

PHASE 1

1. Installation of the GuardianAngel platform at the state EOC which would act as the central monitoring facility during an emergency.

A centralized monitoring will not detract from the local emergency response. It will provide executive branch and legislative branch updates on these events as they are occurring; enabling broader coordination of law enforcement response to these events as needed and enable more efficient management of post-event resource requests from Emergency Management area coordinators and local officials.

2. Upload existing floorplans for every school in the state in order to have an operational view into the physical environment. This will serve as a compliment to the geospatial view the Platform affords.



Certified Public
Answering Point

Access to NENA 9-11
Registry

Peace of Mind Wherever
You Are

Receive Taylored
Notifications for your
Area

Stay Alert to Changing
Circumstances

PHASE 1 (CONTINUED)

3. Create tenants or site-specific environments for every K-12 school throughout the state and provide a manager's view at every school property to Administration and SROs.
4. Introduce the GuardianAngel App to school personnel so that all staff have a communication device integrated into the Platform that offers an Emergency SOS button as well as the ability to provide information updates via text, photo and video. This ability is critical during an emergency because updates from the classroom can be shared automatically and in real-time across the local environment and the broader emergency response enterprise.
5. In addition to the phone app, other reporting devices are available to enable emergency notification and informational updates for those that do not desire a phone app.
6. Configure all "emergency" notifications to point to 9-1-1 regional call center with simultaneous notification to the State's Emergency Management monitoring facility. This includes after-hours alarms.
7. Host, maintain and provide system upgrades via our federally compliant, encrypted cloud-based platform.

PHASE 2

8. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the physical property of each school to identify security vulnerabilities and document those in GuardianAngel. This will inform monitoring protocols for school Administration and SROs.
9. Document and update security response plans for each school that incorporates information learned during the assessment process.
10. Increase integration of compliant access control systems, video surveillance systems, alarm systems, personal security devices for teachers and administrators, automatic locking systems for classroom doors that will operate within GuardianAngel so that there is a unified command and control security system as opposed to disparate systems.
11. Provide active threat training for students and faculty to periodically drill on response procedures.

SUMMARY

The need for enhanced security measures at schools in America is abundantly clear. We are hopeful that the impassioned response to the massacre in Parkland will finally motivate lawmakers to propose security policies that are actionable and proactive and not reactive.

TigerSwan is uniquely positioned to offer one such solution. Our collective experience in combat, military intelligence, law enforcement, and asymmetric threat mitigation informs our understanding of the threat facing our most vulnerable citizens – children at school. The GuardianAngel platform can provide a seamless bridge between faculty in schools and the emergency response teams in their community.

SOURCES

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TigerSwan has offices on five continents and can monitor its GuardianAngel technology globally with response capabilities in 50 countries.

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