

Maverick Moments for October 2024

How we handle a threat at MLS.

I just thought that I would share parts of our threat assessment protocol that we use at the school district to evaluate any threat. Our threat assessment team (usually administrators, SRO officer and law enforcement as well as counselor) gathers information and assesses the situation to understand what's causing concerns and if an individual poses a threat of violence.

First, it is important to us that we have multiple ways to report any threat (Staff, students, parents, and social media, anonymous). The type of threat determines the protocol utilized and the level of involvement and communication. We Identify, Gather, Assess and Manage. Meaning that we identify the concern, gather relevant information, assess the concern based on the totality of the information that is available, then manage the concern by implementing an intervention to prevent harm where possible and reduce the impact of the situation.

We consider all threats! All threats are investigated and many involve cooperation between our administrators and law enforcement. We utilize our SRO office knowing that most are time sensitive and decisions must be made quickly. We interview students, witnesses; parents as needed to fact-check, corroborate and confirm information. Our response is based on facts, deductive, dynamic and responsive.

The level of threat is something that we work on determining. How serious/credible is the threat? Can and are they prepared to carry it out? There is usually a pathway to violence that includes ideation, planning, preparation and implementation. We look at parenting plans, question parents, consult law enforcement for additional investigation and determine the threat level and appropriate response. The central question is whether the subject poses a threat, not just, whether the subject has made a threat.

Communication and response depend on the level of threat. It usually involves communicating to law enforcement and parents (always the parents). We also do not want to cause panic or cause a copycat attention. We do not want to create the attentive environment where action may take place. Our responses range from working with law enforcement, locking down our building, cancelling school, cancelling events, etc.

Our goal is always to prevent incidents before they happen by identifying behaviors and circumstances that could indicate a threat. Identifying, reporting and addressing safety concerns can help reduce the threat of violence and enhance student safety.