



School Safety Newsletter

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Colorado STEM School Where Shooting Happened Didn't Have a Sheriff's Officer due to Prior Dispute

NBC News, May 11, 2019

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/colorado-stem-school-where-shooting-happened-didn-t-have-sheriff-n1004636>

The Colorado STEM school where a shooting this week left one student dead and eight injured did not have a resource officer on duty after a dispute last year with the county sheriff's office. The sheriff's office for Douglas County, Colorado, in suburban Denver, has released documents showing that it did not renew its contract with the school last year after a dispute over the assigned deputy's role.

Sheriff Tony Spurlock "did not feel the STEM School could follow the requirements of the agreement" about the resource officer, he said in a statement on Friday. STEM School Highlands Ranch, a charter school with 1,850 students in elementary grades through high school, said schools with resource officers have also unfortunately experienced violence.

The school partnered with the county sheriff's office from 2013 through 2018 to have a resource officer (SRO), the school's statement said. "That partnership was excellent from our perspective, but we began to have challenges with the SRO assigned to us in 2018."

After the dispute, the school still had a daily part-time, off-duty sheriff's deputy with a squad car in addition to full-time private security, the statement said. "That combination gave us a significant increase in protection for our staff and students," the statement said. "The unfortunate fact is that schools with and without SROs have experienced violence."

The sheriff's office documents show that when there was a resource officer at the school, their duties included providing counseling on law enforcement matters, investigating public safety issues and "serve as a first-responder as needed."

The records show that the assigned officer in 2018 had become ill. In some instances, the sheriff's department provided a substitute officer to fill in during the remaining school year. The school's discontent with the situation appeared to grow after it started receiving complaints from surrounding businesses over traffic and long drive lines around its building, according to the sheriff's office documents.

The school expected the resource officer to help with traffic and became upset when the sheriff's office asked the deputy to prioritize other duties. This eventually led the school to send a letter to the sheriff and ask for a partial refund.

The sheriff agreed in writing to waiving some fees but said, "It appears we do not share a common understanding of the role our school resource officers play in educating our community's youth and protecting our schools."

Student Kendrick Castillo died during Tuesday's shooting after he, alongside other classmates, rushed one of the two shooters. The two suspects in the violence are expected to appear in court on Wednesday.

The private security guard hired by the school was credited with taking one of the suspects into custody during the shooting, NBC affiliate KUSA reports. The investigation is also looking at whether the private guard fired on a responding sheriff's officer.

*Protecting our
future through
information
sharing*

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Police Identify Parkrose High Student Who They Say Carried Shotgun into School

Oregon Live, May 18, 2019

<https://www.oregonlive.com/news/2019/05/police-identify-parkrose-high-school-student-who-they-say-carried-shotgun-into-school.html>

Portland police Saturday identified the teenager they say carried a loaded shotgun into Parkrose High School -- and caused a massive scare Friday -- as Angel Granados Dias.

Dias, 18, was booked into the Multnomah County Detention Center at 12:03 a.m., some 12 hours after he reportedly was subdued and taken into custody.

Police also released a photo of the shotgun they say Dias brought into the school.

Dias was lodged on accusations of possession of a loaded firearm in a public place, reckless endangerment and two counts of possession of a firearm in a public building, according to jail records. Police indicated that Dias is accused of attempting to discharge the shotgun at the school, as an element in one of the charges.

Dias is being held in lieu of \$500,000 bail. He is scheduled to appear in Multnomah County Circuit Court at 2 p.m. Monday.

No one answered the door at Dias' house Saturday. A relative who lived next door said the family isn't ready to talk publicly.

Police on Saturday declined to answer further questions.

Parkrose School District's superintendent didn't return a message seeking information Saturday.

Police have not said whether any rounds were fired.

It's unclear what the gunman's intentions might have been -- whether he intended to hurt himself or to hurt others, too. Classmates and friends of Dias' said he had been very sad and lonely after a breakup with his girlfriend.

According to a letter sent out by Superintendent Michael Lopes Serrao on Friday, school officials appeared to have received a heads-up about a potential danger. The superintendent wrote that earlier in the day "two Parkrose students informed a staff member of concerning behavior from one of their peers" -- prompting security staff to respond.

Senior Alexa Pope, 17, said a security guard had entered her government class in the Fine Arts Building looking for the student, whom police later identified as Dias, but didn't find him.

Five or 10 minutes later, Pope said, the student walked into the classroom with the gun. He wasn't pointing the gun at anyone in the room, although it did appear that he was aiming it toward himself, Pope said.

Witnesses said he wore a black trench coat and looked distraught.

"We saw that and we all couldn't process this," Pope said. "All my classmates were just like sitting looking at him like 'That's our classmate. Like he wouldn't do anything to us. He wouldn't harm us.'"

But they were still in enormous fear. Pope said when her boyfriend yelled "Run!", she and others sprinted out through a back door of the classroom.

Witnesses say Dias was tackled and then held down by a school security guard, Keanon Lowe, until police arrived. Lowe also was a star wide receiver for the Oregon Ducks during his college years and is a track and field and football coach at Parkrose High.

No one was hurt.

Lowe has been praised as a hero. He sent out three Tweets filled with gratitude and reflecting on how he "didn't see any other choice but to act."

Friends and classmates say Dias had shown an interest in guns and seemed to be having a particularly tough time recently. They wonder whether his only intention Friday was to send out a cry for help.

Monthly Webinars!

First Wednesday
of Every Month

at 10 am

(Except January,
July, and
August).

Next Webinars

Wednesday,
June 5, 2019

Each webinar has a
round table
discussion at the
end. Questions are
always welcome!

To participate, you
must be a vetted
member. For more
information please
email
schoolsafety@isp.
state.il.us

Police Identify Parkrose High Student Who They Say Carried Shotgun into School (Continued)

Senior Ashton Caudle, 18, described his friend as someone who was having recent family, financial and relationship troubles, enjoyed taking long walks, once walking from the school to downtown Portland, and had an interest in guns. Caudle said the friend showed him at least twice a video he took of himself shooting an AK-47 at a chair.

Caudle said he believed it was one of several guns the friend owned and that he would routinely talk about buying gun equipment, like ammunition.

“He never struck me as someone who would harm others, but I wasn’t too sure about himself,” Caudle said. “He made some poor choices but he’s not an evil person.”

Caudle said his friend recently had said he planned to kill himself, and Caudle and others had planned to talk with a school counselor at lunch time.

It’s unclear where Dias might have acquired a gun. Some who knew him said he had remarked about being old enough to buy firearms now that his 18th birthday had passed.

Federal law bans firearms retailers from selling handguns, but not rifles or shotguns, to anyone under age 21. Oregon law allows residents to buy shotguns or rifles starting at 18.

Talking to Your Kids About the STEM School Shooting

The Denver Channel, May 07, 2019

<https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/local-news/talking-to-your-kids-about-the-stem-school-shooting>

HIGHLANDS RANCH, Colo. —Two suspects were taken into custody following a shooting at STEM School in Highlands Ranch Tuesday afternoon. Eight people were injured.

News of another school shooting has shaken the community, adults and children alike. But learning about the terrible violence that broke out at the school can have a bigger impact on our kids.

Metro State University Professor Shawn Worthy said it’s important to first reassure your children that they are safe as they begin to try to understand what happened.

“You reassure them about their safety and the people who are around them to keep them safe,” Worthy said. “That’s what you want to key in on.”

Worthy said it’s important to talk to your kids about their anxiety and about “the craziness of our culture.”

The American Psychological Association recommends limiting your child’s exposure to news of the event because of research showing that some young children believe it’s reoccurring every time footage is replayed.

Teen Suicide Spiked After Debut of Netflix’s ‘13 Reasons Why,’ Study Says

NPR, April 30, 2019

<https://www.npr.org/2019/04/30/718529255/teen-suicide-spiked-after-debut-of-netflixs-13-reasons-why-report-says>

When Netflix's 13 Reasons Why was released two years ago, depicting the life of a teenager who decided to take her own life, educators and psychologists warned the program could lead to copycat suicides. Now, a study funded by the National Institutes of Health shows that those concerns may have been warranted.

In the month following the show's debut in March 2017, there was a 28.9% increase in suicide among Americans ages 10-17, said the study, published Monday in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The number of suicides was greater than that seen in any single month over the five-year period researchers examined. Over the rest of the year, there were 195 more youth suicides than expected given historical trends.

Teen Suicide Spiked After Debut of Netflix's '13 Reasons Why,' Study Says (Continued)

Researchers warn that their study could not prove causation. Some unknown third factor might have been responsible for the increase, they said. Still, citing the strong correlation, they cautioned against exposing children and adolescents to the series.

"The results of this study should raise awareness that young people are particularly vulnerable to the media," study co-author Lisa Horowitz, a staff scientist at the National Institute of Mental Health, said in a statement. "All disciplines, including the media, need to take good care to be constructive and thoughtful about topics that intersect with public health crises."

Lead author Jeff Bridge, a suicide researcher at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, told The Associated Press that an additional analysis found the April suicide rate was higher than in the previous 19 years. "The creators of the series intentionally portrayed the suicide of the main character. It was a very graphic depiction of the suicide death," he said, which can lead to suicidal behavior.

The study found that boys were far more likely than girls to kill themselves after the show debuted. Suicide rates for females did increase, but it was not statistically significant. Nor were there any "significant trends" in suicide rates for people 18-64, researchers said.

In a statement, a Netflix spokesperson said they had "just seen this study and are looking into the research. "This is a critically important topic and we have worked hard to ensure that we handle this sensitive issue responsibly," Netflix said, according to The Associated Press.

The spokesperson noted that the study conflicts with research published last week out of the University of Pennsylvania. That study found that young adults, ages 18-29, who watched the entire second season of the show "reported declines in suicide ideation and self-harm relative to those who did not watch the show at all."

However, that study found, viewers who stopped watching the second season before the end "exhibited greater suicide risk and less optimism about the future than those who continued to the end." The results "suggest that a fictional story with a focus on suicidal content can have both harmful and helpful effects," the authors wrote.

When the show debuted, the National Association of School Psychologists issued a warning statement: "We do not recommend that vulnerable youth, especially those who have any degree of suicidal ideation, watch this series. Its powerful storytelling may lead impressionable viewers to romanticize the choices made by the characters and/or develop revenge fantasies," they said. "Suicide is not a solution to problems."

After the criticism, Netflix added a "viewer warning card" before the first episode. Netflix also added language publicizing the website [13reasonswhy.info](https://www.13reasonswhy.info), which offers resources for people contemplating suicide. Season 3 of the show is expected to be released this year.

If you or someone you know may be considering suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (En Español: 1-888-628-9454; Deaf and Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889) or the Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.

Two 14-year-old Girls Drew Up Plans to Kill 9 People, Police Say

CNN, April 19, 2019

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/19/us/florida-middle-school-girls-murder-plot-trnd/index.html>

Two 14-year-old girls in Florida have been arrested after a teacher discovered their plans to kill nine people, sheriff's reports say.

The Highlands County School Board confirmed in a statement to CNN that two Avon Park Middle School students were taken into custody Wednesday for "a possible plan to harm others off campus," but declined to offer additional details, citing the ongoing investigation.

Avon Park is about 80 miles south of Orlando.

A teacher saw the two girls acting "hysterical" while they searched for a folder in her classroom, according to the girls' arrest reports from the Highlands County Sheriff's Office.

The girls were concerned that they could be arrested, the teacher told police, and one of them said, "I'm just going to tell them it's a prank if they call me or if they find it." The teacher found the folder and a letter inside that mentioned "guns," the arrest reports said.

Inside were eight pieces of paper, the reports said. They contained written plans to obtain guns, kill nine people and remove and dispose of the bodies.

Each girl faces nine counts of conspiracy to commit murder and three counts of conspiracy to commit kidnapping, according to the sheriff's office reports. Andrew Lethbridge, the Highlands County School System Deputy Superintendent, told CNN affiliate WFLA that the threat was being taken very seriously.

"Whether it's in print or something that we say, it matters, and we are held accountable for those words," he said.

This Map Shows if Schools Have Up-to-Date Tornado Shelters

NBC Chicago, May 13, 2019

<https://www.nbcchicago.com/investigations/illinois-school-tornado-shelter-map-509880771.html>

This interactive map shows the results of a public records request by NBC 5 Investigates in Chicago. We asked more than 400 public school districts in the greater Chicago area if they have any schools with tornado shelters that meet the updated requirements of the International Code Council and the National Storm Shelter Association.

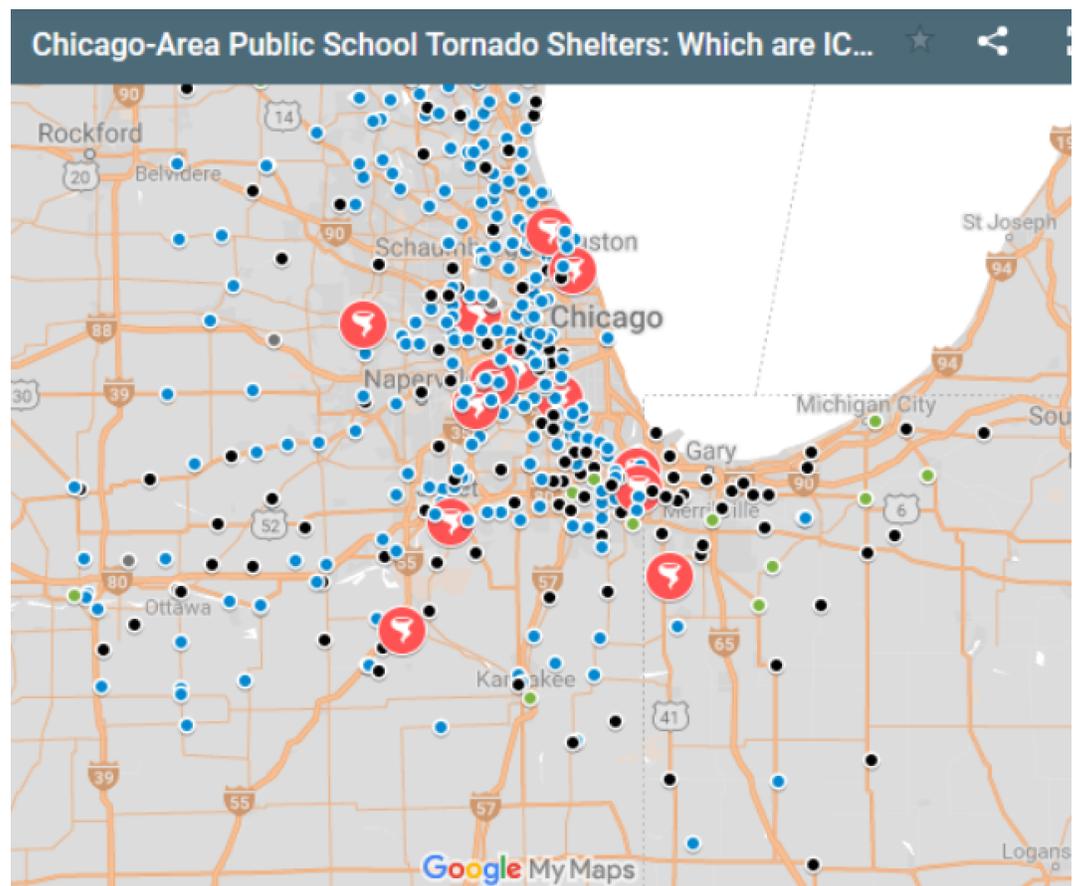
We contacted a total of 401 public school districts. A total of 137 districts did not reply; or asked for more time to gather records; or denied NBC 5 Investigates' request for documents – most always citing security concerns if the district's floor plans and emergency procedures were to be made public.

But 264 local school districts did respond to NBC 5 Investigates. Those districts oversee a total of 1,728 school buildings, but only 16 of them – fewer than one in one hundred – have a tornado shelter that meets the requirements of the ICC and NSSA.

That does not mean the other districts are negligent – not at all: Illinois state law says that any new public school building-- built or more than 50 percent remodelled after January of 2015 -- must have a tornado shelter that meets these specifications. Most schools are therefore not required to, because they were built before 2015. (For those schools and districts that might want to retrofit their buildings, the cost can be prohibitive.)

However, all Chicago-area public schools are required to have extensive safety plans, with detailed instructions of where schoolchildren in each room should go, if there is a tornado warning. Each district is required to do regular drills throughout the school year for a variety of emergency situations, including tornados. Many schools have “go” bags with first-aid supplies and other equipment, packed and ready in each classroom, and teachers are often required to take attendance once their class reaches its shelter location.

NBC 5 found that -- for the large majority of public schools that do not have ICC-500-certified shelters -- children are most often sent to interior hallways or interior rooms, where they are often required to sit down; face a wall; put their heads down, and put their hands over their heads, until the “all clear” signal is heard.



TED TALK: Talking How to Prevent School Shootings

Jillian Peterson, May 8, 2019

TEDxHamlineUniversity

To Watch the 12 min and 33 second video, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ox1dJDs451o>



A Few Tips For Keeping Your Child Safe Online

Federal Trade Commission, April 26, 2019

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2019/04/coppa-few-tips-keep-your-child-safe-online>

Online games and websites for kids are everywhere these days – to the point where it’s commonplace to see toddlers playing with them, too. And while the internet often offers a positive way for children to explore and learn, privacy concerns are lurking. To help protect children’s privacy, the FTC enforces the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which requires websites and online services to obtain consent from parents before collecting personal information from kids younger than 13.

According to the FTC, i-Dressup, a website allowing users to play dress-up games, and its owners violated COPPA by collecting personal information from kids – including names, email addresses, and user names – without obtaining parental consent and failing to take reasonable steps to protect this information. This led to a breach of i-Dressup’s network in August 2016. As a result of the breach, a hacker accessed the personal information and account passwords of over two million i-Dressup users, including at least 245,000 children under 13.

So how can you protect your child online? Here are some tips:

- Talk to your kids about what they’re doing online. Find out which games, social networking sites, and other online activities your kids are into and make sure you are comfortable with them.
- Talk to your children about the implications of providing personal information.
- Help your kids understand what information should stay private. Tell your kids why it's important to keep information like Social Security numbers, street addresses, phone numbers, and financial information private.
- Learn more about how to protect your child when he’s online.
- File a complaint with the FTC if you think a site has put your child’s privacy at risk.

School Safety Newsletter

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