

To: Senate Education Committee

From: Don Tinney, Vermont-NEA

Re: Follow-up notes on School Safety

February 3, 2023

As I mentioned last week, we want to make sure sufficient time and resources—personnel, additional training and coaching—are allocated to the Behavioral Threat Assessment process in each district, particularly our smaller districts with limited capacity. If Behavioral Threat Assessment is not administered with fidelity, it increases the chances of the process becoming profiling. The National Disability Rights Network addressed their concerns about profiling in a report last year.

[The Problems with Threat Assessments in Schools - NDRN](#)

The **National Association of School Psychologists** have published a guide for best practice in Behavioral Threat Assessments in which they state the following:

When not done properly, or when the process is not used in the context of threatening behavior, students may be misidentified or labeled, not provided with necessary interventions and supports, unnecessarily suspended or expelled, or unnecessarily referred to the juvenile justice system. As such, it is imperative that BTAM processes are followed with fidelity and in accordance with IDEA, Section 504, FERPA, and other civil rights and privacy laws. (For more detailed information see: [Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management: Best Practice Considerations for K-12 Schools](#) and [Upholding Student Civil Rights and Preventing Disproportionality in Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management.](#))

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/systems-level-prevention/threat-assessment-at-school/behavior-threat-assessment-and-management-\(btam\)-best-practice-considerations-for-k%20%80%9312-schools](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-safety-and-crisis/systems-level-prevention/threat-assessment-at-school/behavior-threat-assessment-and-management-(btam)-best-practice-considerations-for-k%20%80%9312-schools)

As you know, school safety is an enormously complex issue. We need to continuously review and assess our practices across the nation, including the two major strategies called for in this legislation. Our national organization has joined with the American Federation of Teachers and Everytown for Gun Safety to continue the research and policy review in this most important aspect of education.

<https://everytownresearch.org/report/how-to-stop-shootings-and-gun-violence-in-schools/>