

Why Educators Need More Than Physical Solutions for School Safety

THE CHALLENGE

Today more than ever, students in K-12 face a variety of challenges from bullying to home-related insecurities to mental health concerns that create stress and interfere with their ability to succeed. Sometimes students will demonstrate early warning signs by acting out in inappropriate ways as a result. Schools need to blend defensive and proactive strategies to reduce threats and intervene to provide the right services.

This comprehensive approach tackles the dynamic situations that schools now face. As early intervention systems are implemented, information kept in binders or disparate systems become a barrier for an effective program. Case management solutions help streamline the process of documenting and spotting the signs of potential problems and make it easier to meet government regulations.

*A Holistic Way
to Support
School Safety
and Student
Well-Being*

Evolution of Safety Measures in Educational Institutions

Prior to 1999, most school safety measures consisted of practice drills in preparation for fire or natural disasters, such as tornadoes. The focus shifted due to the increasing number of deadly school incidents. New laws began to be passed that addressed this increased risk and ensure greater school safety.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), over 2,000 school safety related bills were introduced in 52 states and territories between 2018 and 2022. Of those, almost 400 were adopted or enacted and another 300+ are still pending. Bill topics varied widely; examples include increasing mental health services and funding additional law enforcement and school resource officers.

Historically, schools have used physical methods to ensure the safety of students and staff, such as fences, metal detectors, and security cameras. This solely reactive focus has shifted due to the dynamic nature of school safety and educational institutions wanting to add proactive approaches.

Noticing signs or trends of issues before they grow into a real problem has become important. However, maintaining paper-based records and siloed data for managing at-risk students' cases is no longer efficient. This is where technology can help.

A Proactive Approach to Safety

One of the key elements in keeping students safe today is the threat assessment team. These groups play an important role in assessing and managing potential risks within educational institutions. These teams work to recognize threatening behavior, identify who should be informed about threats, establish threat assessment policies, and report data on their assessments. By bringing together professionals like counselors, teachers, and security personnel, they create a support system that's not just reactive but also proactive.

According to the Pew Research Center, around 64% of all schools in the United States reported having a threat assessment team in place during the 2019-2020 school year. Growing by more than 20% since 2016, it's clear that these teams are likely to remain important for school safety in the future. This proactive approach uses case management software to centralize threat assessment, data storage, communication, and modeling/prediction into one system.



Efficiently assess
student risk
level



Manage
intervention
plans



Increase student
well-being
outcomes

The Role of Case Management Solutions

Threat assessment teams work together to identify, evaluate, and address potential threats. Evaluation information and individual plans kept in physical files or multiple disconnected systems are barriers for a holistic approach. Principals and threat assessment teams need situational awareness for proactive and individualized interventions to support and guide students during times of need.

The challenge is making sure the right information gets to the right people at the right time. Your leaders and teams need a unified way to access incident reports, document information, and develop a plan to manage student well-being.

Case management solutions streamline the process of identifying, investigating, assessing, and managing threats and plans through a centralized digital platform. These applications also make it easier to meet the number of new regulations at local, state, and federal levels by simplifying data capture, reporting, and sharing when a “need to know” situation arises.

Manage Interventions Better, Increase Well-Being

Gather and securely
store important
case information

- Centralized location
- Low-level concerns tracked
- Repository for all digital documents

Assess student
risk levels

- Integrated Behavioral Threat Assessment best practices
- Quick access to student information
- Comprehensive reporting for key insights
- Ability to integrate multiple data sources

Manage intervention
plans for safety and
well-being

- Personalized dashboards for managing support and improving success
- Information sharing across multiple jurisdictions
- Trend identification for better assessments and planning

A Holistic Approach to Better Outcomes

In the realm of school safety, a comprehensive and holistic approach is essential to foster better prevention, intervention, and recovery strategies. Case management solutions play a key role in helping threat assessment teams proactively identify and assess concerning behaviors. These applications can contribute significantly to improving outcomes for at-risk students, creating a secure environment within schools, and extending these benefits to the broader communities they serve.

The landscape of school safety procedures has witnessed a transformation towards increased standardization. This shift prioritizes the well-being of both students and staff. Educational institutions are adopting proactive measures in addition to defensive solutions to ensure everyone is well-informed about the appropriate actions to take in various situations. These holistic methodologies combined with standardized safety measures offer peace of mind for students, parents, and the entire community.



Learn more about centralizing your case management information >

About Versaterm

Versaterm is a global public safety solutions company helping agencies transform their organizations by providing innovative solutions, expertise, and an unwavering dedication to customer service. Formed in 1977, we are on a journey to build an ecosystem that will enhance community safety by creating purposeful integrations across the public safety spectrum. We deliver intuitive tools developed for public safety agencies, forensic labs, court systems, schools, and other institutions. Our selective growth strategy focuses on improving customer and user workflows for more efficient and effective operations, leading to better service and more just outcomes. For more information, visit [versaterm.com](https://www.versaterm.com), LinkedIn, or Twitter.