

The Urgent Imperative for Hardening Schools



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Perspective on the Ground

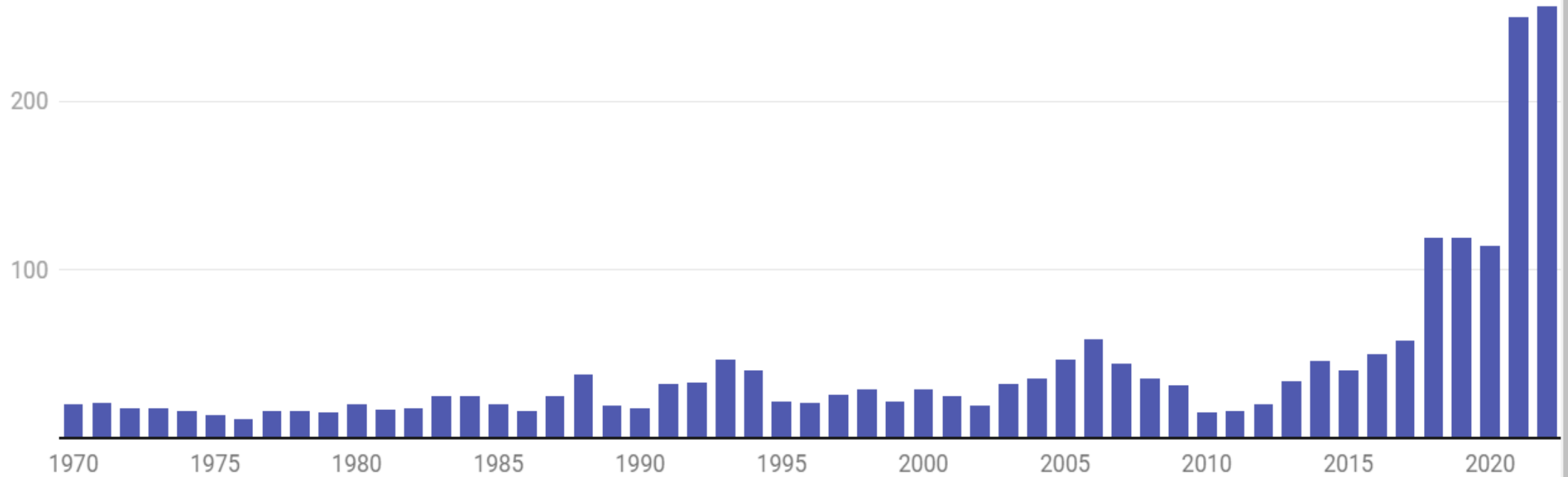
- Of all soft targets, school attacks impact our nation's psyche the most and the ripple effect impacts everyone
- Vast number of schools in the U.S. is making it difficult to evenly address security vulnerabilities
- The situation is not improving; increase of weapons in schools and violent attacks/assaults of all varieties
- Billions spent with minimum progress is causing frustration and a dangerous acceptance of the "new normal"

A Better Way Forward

- Hardening with “left of bang” activities to detect, deter, deflect, defend
 - Expend the majority of resources on preventative activities
 - Examples: keep weapons off school campuses and out of buildings; use layered defense with “tripwires” to detect bad actors and thwart their attack
 - Make target appear harder than it is through security language, signage, vehicles
- Consolidate and provide security best practices for schools to use as a benchmark
- Other possible activities:
 - Provide standardized, all-hazards training with the appropriate tone
 - Deploy a self-assessment checklist with plain language to identify primary vulnerabilities so schools can more effectively apply resources
 - Training on how to find/access resources and navigate the application process

Additional Information

Since 2010, the number of incidents with guns being displayed or fired, or bullets hitting school property, has increased steadily, with significant increases in 2018 and again in 2021.



This data includes all events when a gun is brandished or is fired, or a bullet hits school property for any reason, regardless of the number of victims, time or day of the week.

Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: [David Riedman, K-12 School Shooting Database](#) • [Get the data](#) • [Download image](#)

We can't...

- Wait for new laws, funding or societal outrage/engagement
- Accept the situation as our “new normal” and stop fighting back

We must...

- Aggressively and persistently engage to keep our schools secure
- Use all tools at our disposal

Myriad Challenges

- Perhaps nothing affects the American psyche more than a school attack
 - Large ripple effect, traumatized everyone at the scene and the community
 - The media replays disturbing videos for days, impacting the psyche of the citizenry - including children and adolescents
- The challenge to protect schools is vast
 - 130,930 K-12 schools and 4,000+ universities in the United States
 - 70 million Americans attend school in person, from kindergarten through doctorate
 - There are five million teachers, administrative, and support staff on campuses

The Situation is **Not** Improving

As of 11/29/2022:

- 56 K-12 shootings with injury/death; more than all of 2021 and double 2018
- 15 shootings on college campuses
- 285,000 violent victimization criminal acts in K-12 annually including rape, sexual assault, armed robbery, aggravated and simple assault
- During the 2020–21 school year, 77% of public schools recorded one or more incidents of these acts <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2022/2022092.pdf>

Weapons and Schools

- The Youth Risk Behavior survey from the 2019-2020 school year showed 13% of high school students, or 1.9 million, reported carrying a weapon (gun, knife or club) to school during the previous month
- Other weapons routinely confiscated in schools include boxcutters, brass knuckles and stun guns
- Many students reported carrying weapons as a means of self-defense due to escalating violence in school – **can we blame them?**

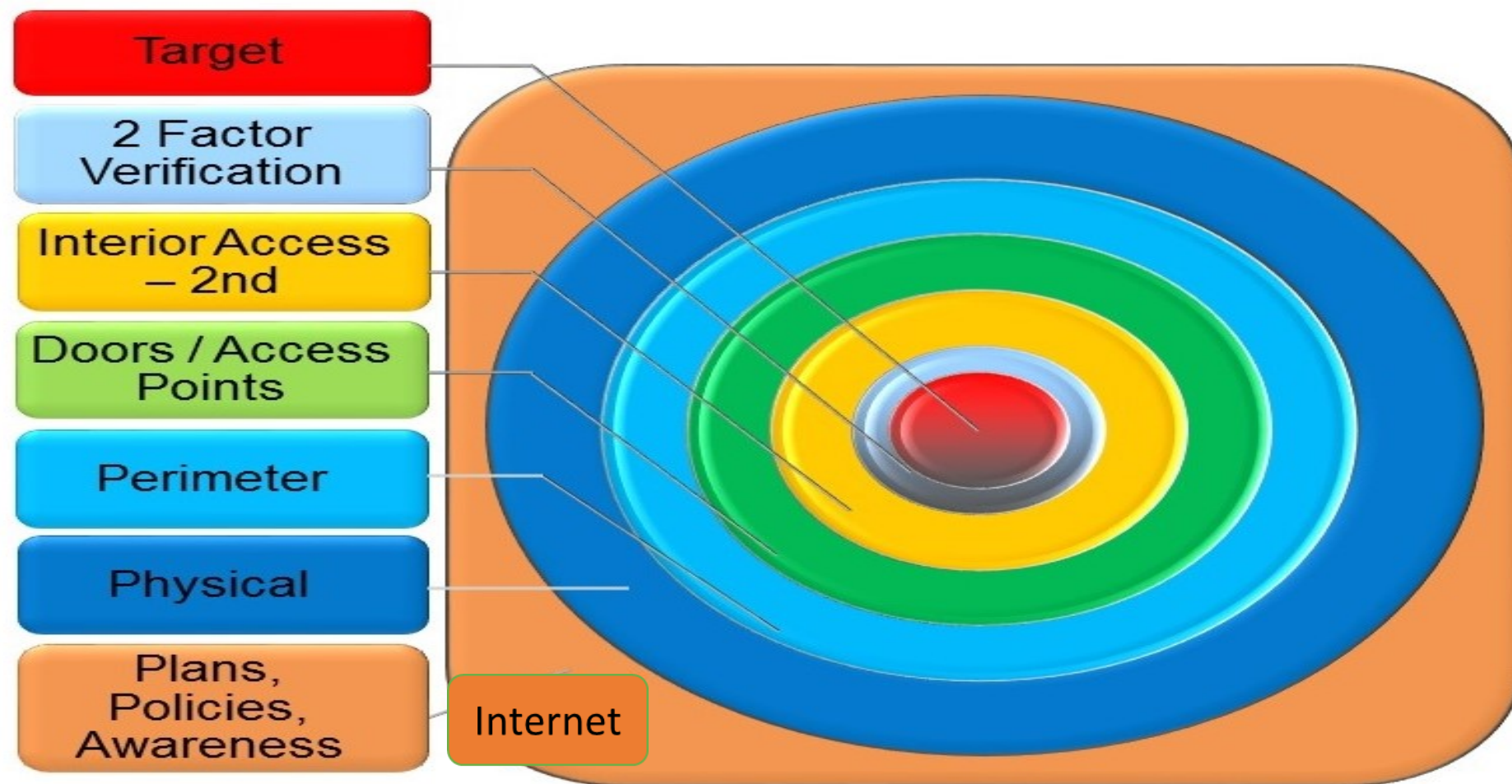
Billions Spent/Little Progress - Why?

- 90% of school shooters (and stabbers) are insiders with unique knowledge and unrestricted access; this amplifies the lethality of attacks
- The hyper-realistic tone of active shooter training in schools by some private security firms is fear- and panic-inducing and counter-productive
- Schools don't know how to...
 - Locate safety/security funds and navigate the complex process
 - Spend this money in the most effective way to raise their security posture
- They also struggle to strike a very achievable balance between convenience, aesthetics and security

“Right of Bang” Security in Schools



Defense in Depth Layers



Lower the Heat: Don't Make Buildings a Target

