

Press Release

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## **Averting targeted school violence the focus of upcoming school safety seminar**

*Event to feature key findings from U.S. Secret Service study on plots targeting K-12 schools that were prevented*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Educators, parents and other professionals are invited to attend the 18th Annual Safe Schools Initiative Seminar to discuss multidisciplinary approaches to quickly identify, assess and intervene with students exhibiting concerning or threatening behaviors.

This free event – “Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools” – will feature a presentation from the United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (USSS-NTAC) on key findings from their most recent study which has analyzed dozens of plots targeting K-12 schools that were prevented.

The half-day seminar, presented by the Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation, is scheduled for Wednesday, March 23, from 8:45 a.m. to noon ET. The event will be accessible both virtually and in-person at the University at Buffalo Center for the Arts on the North Campus. Registration is required. Guests may register [online](#).

The annual event is a forum for hundreds of school stakeholders – educators, law enforcement, first responders, youth professionals, counselors, psychologists, college administrators, school board members, elected officials, and parents and guardians of school-age children – to come together and learn about important topics tied to protecting our children and communities.

“The Safe Schools Initiative Seminar continues to provide an invaluable platform to engage our many stakeholders in responding proactively to school safety issues,” says Michael Bryant, chair of the Erie County Law Enforcement Foundation, and corporate security manager at M&T Bank.

“As targeted violence in our schools continues to be a critical issue, we welcome the U.S. Secret Service back to our program to provide a measured approach to preventing these events,” says Bryant, who is also a former Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service, Buffalo Field Office, and first brought the Safe Schools Initiative Seminar to Western New York and held the event at UB.

Founding sponsors include the U.S. Secret Service, Buffalo Field Office; the UB Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention; the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Western District of New York; and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, New York

Office. The program also receives key support from its seminar sponsor, Utica National Insurance Group.

This year's event will mark the 4th seminar led by the USSS-NTAC.

For over 20 years, the USSS-NTAC has conducted research on the thinking and behaviors of those who commit acts of targeted school violence, in an effort to prevent future acts from occurring. This year's seminar will focus on the findings and recommendations from its latest study, "Averting Targeted School Violence: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Plots Against Schools," which analyzed 67 disrupted plots targeting K-12 schools from 2006-2018 that were thwarted through the efforts of school personnel, law enforcement or others. The key findings from this research indicate that establishing multidisciplinary threat assessment teams and encouraging school communities to report concerning behaviors are critical steps to early intervention and prevention of targeted violence.

"The Secret Service is proud to participate in this year's Safe Schools Initiative Seminar. We hope that sharing the findings and recommendations from this study will provide valuable information for educators and local law enforcement who work tirelessly to make their schools safe," says Jeffrey Burr, the Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service, Buffalo Field Office.

"Learning about their latest groundbreaking research on targeted school violence – the plot elements, prior communications, and behavioral indicators that include experiencing stressors, being bullied and suicidal ideation – will certainly help educators and law enforcement to prevent such acts," says Amanda Nickerson, PhD, director of the UB Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention and professor of counseling, school and educational psychology in the UB Graduate School of Education.

For more information, visit [eclef.org/this-years-seminar](http://eclef.org/this-years-seminar).