Abstract
Many schools across the nation have adopted student threat assessment as a violence prevention strategy. One threat assessment model, the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines (VSTAG), emphasizes the distinction between substantive threats that are serious and transient threats that are not serious. This study investigated covariates of this distinction in a sample of 844 cases from 336 schools. Notably, threats classified as substantive were more likely to involve threats to harm self as well as others (Odds Ratio OR = 9.7), a bomb (OR = 6.7), and/or a knife (OR = 5.0).

Results
Logistic regressions (Tables 2 and 3) examined differences between transient and substantive threats. Substantive threats were more likely than transient threats to involve threats to harm self and others (OR = 9.7, p < .001), a bomb (OR = 6.7, p < .001), and possession of a knife or edged weapon at school (OR = 5.0, p < .001). Threats by students in higher grade levels were 21% more likely to be classified as substantive (OR = 1.2, p < .001). After controlling for gender, grade, and race, a threat case was two times more likely to be classified as substantive when it included warning behaviors (OR = 2.2, p < .001). Substantive threats were more likely than transient threats to be attempted (OR = 39.2, p < .001) and to result in school suspension (OR = 4.8, p < .001), change in placement (OR = 9.3, p < .001), and legal actions such as arrest, charges, or incarceration (OR = 14.8, p < .001).

Discussion
There were consistent distinctions between substantive and transient threats that suggest the teams were using the classification as intended in the VSTAG model. However, the tendency to classify bomb threats as substantive was contrary to the VSTAG model and suggests a training need. As expected, students making substantive threats received more serious consequences such as school suspension, change in placement, and legal action.

The level of agreement between school teams and research coders was comparable to findings from DBM-V field trials (Regier et al., 2013). One study limitation is that this is a retrospective and cross-sectional study that lacks independent assessments of threat characteristics and classifications. As a result, this study is limited to assessing the correlates and consistency of team classifications.

For further information concerning the Virginia Student Threat Assessment Guidelines, please visit: http://curry.virginia.edu/research/projects/threat-assessment. The full report and cited references are available from the author: burnette923@gmail.com.

Figure 1. Threat Characteristic Percentages by Threat Classification (n = 844)

Figure 2. Warning Behavior Percentages by Threat Classification (n = 156)

Figure 3. Threat Outcome Percentages by Threat Classification (n = 844)