

Threat from 1A

The fact that students came forward to report it and we were able to investigate it, and nothing happened, to me that means it worked. And I'm so thankful that students spoke up."

Because the threat was deemed not credible, the district did not decide to make the incident public.

Eugene television station KEZI ran a story on Monday, April 30, questioning the district's decision in not releasing the information when it occurred.

While the incident was a first for the Mapleton district, the act of students threatening violence in schools are surprisingly commonplace.

The Educator's School Safety Network found that just

two weeks after the Parkland, Fla., school shooting, 638 threats were made against schools, according to a March 12 USA Today report. The 638 number is low, considering the figures were gathered solely from media coverage of such incidences.

"I don't know the details of the Mapleton incident, but in general I can tell you there are different types of threats that happen on a regular basis," Florence Police Commander John Pitcher said. "They happen all the time."

There are multiple reasons why a school decides to notify parents of a possible threat, and why they don't.

"It's going to depend on each circumstance," Pitcher said. "It's hard to put out a blanket policy that I think we should do. I do think there's some threats you need to put out to people."

One instance of a threat that should be made public occurred in April in the North Bend School District. In that instance, a student had written

on a bathroom stall that a school shooting would occur, according to Coos Bay newspaper The World, in an April 25 article. In that case, the public was notified, and the school was shut down because the school did not know who made the threat, and when it would occur.

"If we had something like that, where we don't know when it will occur, and we haven't pinned down who has made the threat, we would close down for the day," Siuslaw School District Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak said. "In my mind, they made the right call."

But the North Bend incident was difficult because of how the threat was made and when it was found. The majority of threats reported to officials are verbal, and, in most cases, non-credible.

"We've had kids who have made those angry utterances," Grzeskowiak said. "They'll say something dumb in the moment, it's overheard by somebody else, and other peo-

ple talk about it later in the day. By the time it's made the rounds and comes back to us, and you talk to the kid, what they actually said was not what was reported. That wouldn't be something we would notify the general school population about."

Even if a threat is more specific, such as a student specifically saying they will commit a shooting, it still may not be reported to the public.

"If the kid has said that, we call the police," Grzeskowiak said. "If they find there were no weapons at the home and no ability to carry out an attack, and the student was run through a psychological screening that showed no issues, then it would be disciplinary."

Many of these cases involve students who are just mad and wanted to get attention.

"But they scared people," Grzeskowiak said. "For creating that fear for people that are around them, there would be discipline for that."

These sorts of threats are not uncommon from students.

"I think this is something that kids of have done for years," Pitcher said. "Kids threaten each other all the time. I'm not condoning it, but it's immaturity. For years, schools

have been put in the position where they're trying to determine whether there's something behind a threat or not. Now it's garnered a lot more attention because of instances like Parkland. And schools have to approach them a little differently, with more caution."

Even if there is a confirmed threat with a student that has the motivation to carry out an attack, and the means to do it, the public still may not be notified.

In an article in the Siuslaw News last month covering firearms in America, Pitcher talked of a student who had planned an actual attack.

"When I was a sergeant here, a freshman told the principal about a kid who was making some comments that really had him concerned," Pitcher said. "The principal came to me with the young boy. We talked. There was enough to be concerned about. We went out, talked to the young man's family. There were definitely concerns. He had a gun hidden that he had gotten from his dad, and the dad didn't realize he had gotten it out of his safe.

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